

Bas Cobanli Memorial Race, March 31, 2019

Commentary by Tony Brogan, with additional material and editing by Greg Taylor

On a bright sunny morning, with an unexpected 6 knot northerly breeze ruffling everyone's hair, an enthusiastic group of skippers and crew from 13 boats gathered to listen to Roger Kibble speak of the great SISC racer and competitor Bas Cobanli, and remind us of the role Bas Cobanli played in the founding of the SISC and its race program. After which Roger gave us a course that was designed to take in as many local racing marks as possible in honour of Bas.

In speaking of Bas Cobanli, who passed more than twenty years ago, Roger could have been speaking of himself. Bas was a talented sailor who believed every race was an opportunity to seek perfection. An opportunity to test himself, his skills, and his boat against a fleet of like minded competitors. Roger revealed that Bas was his mentor and it became clear Bas is never far from Roger's mind every time Roger prepares to race.

The course set was slightly shorter than the one planned due to the light air forecast. Roger also thought, because of the configuration of the marks, most boats would remain in view of each other. And, he was largely correct.

The course set was Start at clubhouse, Ben Mohr (P), Welbury Spar (P), Batt Rk (P), Horda Shoals (P), club house finish.

Aboard Radiant Heat (RH), having set up the boat with a sail plan for a longer course, I decided to change my sail plan. As the skippers meeting was a little longer than usual, this left little time to get back to Radiant Heat, re-sort the sails, and be ready for the start. By the time the main was up there was barely 3 minutes to the start. Most of the other boats were already circling like vultures looking for the best starting condition. The northerly breeze was moving the boat well while I readied RH's genoa. The motor was off, and after the genoa was hoisted and trimmed, I fortunately found myself closing with the club end, but with the dock getting uncomfortably close.

Deryn Mor was headed toward me, and Second wind was off to starboard. Grabbing the tiller RH hardened up and was headed for the line. A glance at the start clock told me I was a minute too early. Wheeling around away from the line I had Deryn Mor approaching and so took a long way around to complete my circle passing astern of Deryn Mor. I did not have the time to attend to the genoa sheet so around we came with the genoa back winded. There was Second Wind still to starboard, even closer this time. I judged I could complete the turn without a foul. It was a close thing, but I had Radiant Heat heading for the line, the genoa filling and main gybed, with 8 seconds to spare.

I have no clear picture of what anyone else was doing as I was too busy to look up and around. (I can tell him that with Donna at the helm, Skeena Cloud made her best start of the season while she, at the same time, announced the starting sequence on a squeaky horn. Ed)

Wonder of wonders, although to leeward of the fleet, Radiant Heat moved smoothly in clear air and for a brief period was in the lead. On the right hand side of the course I noted the

danger of the Walter Spit shoals and moved a little left. Oasis to port and boat lengths astern was setting her asymmetric. The other "two bigger boats", Shingebiss and Sorcery X were making good time on the center left. Nearby was my always impeccably sailed nemesis: Imp. Although most boats set their spinnakers RH remained with the Genoa as the apparent wind was oscillating forward and back, often forward of the beam reach. We moved smoothly down the harbour as the boats settled out and the breeze became lighter and more patchy as we slid past Sisters Islands.

Shingebiss and Sorcery X had moved ahead and continued out into Captains Passage. RH now hardened up a little as we rounded Second Sisters, followed closely by Imp, who twice attempted to pass. Being forced to Leeward by the actions of Radiant Heat, Imp was slowed by the air shadow from RH and finally dropped astern. Kay D was close behind, spinnaker up, with two wily and knowledgeable "Tars" in the shape of Martin Herbert and Tony Meek.

Seeing good pressure 'just around the corner' of 2nd Sister, Radiant Heat hardened into the breeze and set sail for Scott Point followed by Kay D a little further back and then Imp, both of which had to douse spinnakers for headsails. RH extended her lead. Meanwhile Shingebiss and Sorcery X continued their private battle and took the great circle route up into Captain's Passage.

Was there a current in the pass or not? Tides showed a mini flood of 2 feet after midday and it was a question in my mind as to whether it would continue to ebb in the pass or not. I decided to ignore the potential current. Looking back briefly, the rest of the fleet was stretched out with the wind getting patchy around them.

RH made good time into the passage and found there was indeed a slight ebb of a half knot. (Wannabe racers like me take note. There was a flood tide but it was still ebbing in the Pass. This is hard earned local knowledge. Ed) Imp and Kay D had found less wind and fallen back. Shingebiss and Sorcery X were a quarter mile ahead and slowing. It was now a close haul through the pass past Piele Point that then eased to a close reach to make Ben Mohr. The wind now eased to a patchy 2 knots or less and the fleet was struggling to make headway. Surprisingly RH continued to move at 2 knots over ground and the boats astern were left far behind as the boats ahead grew larger. Shingebiss struggled hard to round the buoy but made good time after the turn. By the time Sorcery X was around, Radiant heat was 150 yards away from the turn.

The wind was still close to Zero but we continued to make ground and soon we were having a chat with Sorcery X

It was then RH made her only real error of the day as RH decided to try her "whimper". The opposite of the "Whomper" oversized spinnaker used on some of the ocean racing boats. The whimper is a small 50% jib sized .75 ounce sail. Not even the newly hoisted "whimper" could detect any breeze. With dropping the genoa, raising and lowering of the whimper, and re-hoisting the genoa, the boat was "disturbed", losing her momentum, and decided to stop moving. I soon found Sorcery X 300 yards ahead. A lead never to be recaptured by Radiant Heat.

On the return through Captains passage a north wind slowly appeared to be filling in from Trincomali. RH's attempt to go and greet it was thwarted by the ebb current now taking us

west toward the next mark at Welbury. But we were at least getting closer to the wind as we passed Skeena Cloud headed in the other direction, towards Ben Mohr, and into the patchy wind we were thankfully leaving behind. We had previously passed Imp and Kay D.. They were now having their own duel and it was reliably reported that they passed each other 6 times during the race .

The two leaders – Sorcery X and Shingebiss - were now a good 10 minutes ahead having passed from view as they turned the corner towards Welbury Spar. They were next seen as they reached with their spinnakers across to Batt Rock. The breeze filled in for Radiant Heat and we made good speed passing Nose Point and Long Harbour. This same breeze failed to reach behind us, across the other side and Ben Mohr, so the fleet behind Radiant heat was left *hunting for puffs and avoiding holes!!* (I can say we could see the tantalizing breeze Tony speaks of as we *hunted for holes and avoided puffs*. It seemed like that anyhow. Ed)

Rounding Welbury I realized it was close to dead down wind and at best a broad reach, so diving briefly below and retrieving the spinnaker, I scurried around on the deck knotting lines to the sail, fixing the bag, preparing the pole, opening the bag, racing back to the cockpit to re-align the course. Before finally hoisting the spinnaker .

RH held a steady 3 knots and thank goodness for that as I noticed the lead boats were stopped near Batt Rock to, as Gyle would later say, 'wait for me". How kind of them! Looking back, no other boats had yet returned through Captain's Passage. It now looked that, with a bit of luck RH could get to a third place.

Now approaching within 200 yards of Batt Rock, there was little wind and the spinnaker collapsed in on itself. Shingebiss and Sorcery X were 100 yards around the other side and slowly headed for Horda Shoals.. Having a limp spinnaker is unhelpful, so down it came to festoon the cabin floor with multi coloured fabric and a red and green tangle of lines.

Slowly I made the turn. There was a slight flood as RH set off in pursuit, lifted by a strengthening breeze, close hauled toward U 62 on the Prevost shore. Looking back I could see Kay D and Imp making their way toward Welbury Spar from Captains Passage.

The three lead boats made their way into a nice band of breeze up on the Prevost Shore where the tide was ebbing. Horda Shoals was in the strongest current. Only Shingebiss managed to make the mark without a tack, followed closely by Sorcery X and, 400 yards behind her, Radiant heat. Behind us, the two lead boats of the second pack of boats – Imp and Kay D - were beginning their trek towards Batt Rock. The rest of the fleet largely were still marooned in Trincomali Channel and Captains passage.

Rounding Horda, it was apparent the preferred route was to remain high almost close hauled toward Welbury Bay because: (1) the tide was ebbing and the current strengthening, and (2) the wind was better. And so by this route we made our way to Sisters Island and then the finish line in front of SISC. The two lead boats maintained their lead with RH struggling to avoid wind holes to keep moving. Again, as at the start of the race, RH was along the Westerly shore, just avoiding the sand bars, before finally picking up a better breeze that would finally take her across the finish line.

In the meantime, I watched Sorcery X picking the Chain Islands side making up time on Shingebiss who was more in the center. To make the finish line Shingebiss had to turn downwind with the inevitable decrease in speed. Sorcery X squeaked by Shingebiss for line honours.

Well sailed to both. It is clear this battle will be rejoined in every subsequent race these two boats attend.

Well done to the finishers, including to Oasis, who put in another impressive performance. And welcome back to the talented Martin Hebert and a very svelte Vincent Argiro. It was wonderful to have four past-FCR's racing with us in this important annual race: Greg Slakov, Kevin Vine, Bob Jones and Vincent Argiro.

The weather was warm, and sunny. We could do with a little more wind. I do not remember such mild conditions for this time of year. I took off a layer of clothes and enjoyed a sandwich, apple turnover and a cider between marks. (How does he do this? Even with Donna, I don't seem to have time to have a drink of water. Which is likely a good thing, because I definitely couldn't find the time to address the inevitable consequences. Ed)

And now a word from the DNF'ers. The boats that finish may claim some bragging rights, but they surely didn't have as much fun as those of us who didn't complete the race under sail. Take, for example, Second Wind. She decided to do a little fishing while sailing, dragging the bottom looking to catch who knows what. Or maybe it was to give her sister ship – who is in charge of maintaining marks (and who did finish the race) -some additional work by trawling up a SISC club mark. It was quite a sight watching Second Wind, spinnaker drawing, going nowhere. The skipper's cat-like reflexes sawher to release her catch some mile and a half later.

And then there was Skeena Cloud, who instead of racing while in Trincomali Channel, decided to take in the sights. All 360 degrees of them, not once, not twice, but three times. And then check out how the area around Batt Rock compared.

Deryn Mor, really knows how to have fun, she decided in Captains Pass, that it would be loads more fun to return home and fix his lawn mower. Now there is a guy to party with.

Battle Axe is smooth and cool like good jazz. She slides by relaxed, with a knowing smile on the skipper and crews faces.

But no one, and I mean no one, has more fun sailing than the all-women crew of First Draft. Laughter echoed off their boat at the start; a chorus of chortling at Second Sister; guffaws in Captains' Pass as we all drifted about (whereas this ed had steam coming out his ears); hooting, hollering and more laughter at Ben Mohr; and when we next caught them up at Batt Rock, all we heard was the return of joyous laughter; and finally, upon giving up and firing up the engine, we were serenaded with more laughing as they passed by. I am going to propose they emcee the next awards ceremony and gift us with just some of the goings on on their boat.

Next race, excuse me, I meant to say 'romp', will be the joint cruise/race on April 13/14. See you there.

and the results are in!

Place	Boat	SailNo	NHC3	Finish	Elapsed	Corrected	BCR	Points
1	Shingebiss	49077	1.008	15:19:58	04:49:58	04:52:17	1.008	100
2	Radiant Heat	67901	0.968	15:39:35	05:09:35	04:59:41	0.944	92
3	Sorcery X	CAN32	1.05	15:19:42	04:49:42	05:04:11	1.009	85
4	Kay D		0.87	16:56:30	06:26:30	05:36:15	0.756	77
5	Velica		0.915	16:45:32	06:15:32	05:43:37	0.778	69
6	IMP	2107	0.923	16:54:00	06:24:00	05:54:26	0.761	62
7	Oasis	421	0.954	17:05:15	06:35:15	06:17:04	0.739	53
	Deryn Mor		0.856		DNF			8
	First Draft	29921	0.885		DNF			8
	AZZURRO		0.87		DNF			8
	Skeena Cloud	121	0.832		DNF			8
	Second Wind	175	0.973		DNF			8
	Battle Axe		0.859		DNF			8