

SISC Round SaltSpring Race Report

Written by Tony Brogan (with anecdotes by Bob Jones, Shelley Lipke, Keith Simpson, Tony Meek, and Greg Taylor)

Pictures by Jacquelin Sutton, Suzanne Ambers, Jim Raddysh, John Walker, Eric vanSoeren, and Greg Taylor
May 16/17, 2020

Thanks to the interest of several sailors talking to each other, respecting the required social distancing of course, came the genesis of an idea that with the cancellation of the annual Round Salt Spring Race, we could still sail the traditional Round Salt Spring event, but make it an all-Island event with the Race Committee's COVID-19 protocols in place. That is, boats had to be sailed either single-handed or with members of the same household. Considering that some would be single-handing, it was decided to restrict the race to daylight hours only. Only after we had decided this, that we thought, this may add to the event, not detract from it. Many might find the idea of a stopover attractive. And, if we are doing all this to provide sailors with some relief during this difficult time in all our lives, why not make it a COVID-19 Fundraiser with the funds raised going to the Salt Spring Foundations' COVID-19 Relief Fund?

On the morning of the race, Tony Meek and I looked at each other, pleased and proud. Pleased that it had all come together, and proud of our sailing community for turning up when, let's face it, the forecasts were for less than ideal conditions: wet and not much wind.

Tony Meek needs to take a bow. All the details and organization fell to him. He did a masterful job. And thanks must also go to our Commodore and Board for getting behind the idea.

But the people who deserve the most the credit and thanks are the skippers and crews of the 21 boats who turned up to ready their boats early Saturday on a grey, windless morning. There were the regular racers. Those who were exceptional racers from the past like Don Dashwood. And those who have never raced with us before, like Doug Manton on StarGazer and Associate Member Martin Thorn on Fool in the Rain (an aptly named boat for Saturday). Joining Shelley as non-club boats were Damian Sorochynski on Muse (although Damian and Shelley regularly race with us) and Chris Sanderson and crew on Fine Balance.

The boats readying for the start ranged from Bob DeRoos's 12 ft dinghy and Shelley Lipke's 22' Pocket Rocket, to new member, Ian Wilson's, 54' Jeanneau. Bob, as Tony will tell later in his report, out sailed most of the fleet on Saturday, and if not for the rain and cold leading him to wisely call it quits in the afternoon, may have won the whole affair.

Thanks to all, and now what on to what you are really here for, Tony's Race Report, the pictures, and a few anecdotes.

Tony Brogan's Report

In the early early morning of Sat 16 May 2020 at precisely 08:45, the skippers meeting was conducted by radio, with our Race Director, Tony Meek, announcing the direction of our circumnavigation: Counter-clockwise. The plan was to start the race at 09:00 at our usual starting line, but lack of wind led Race Director, Tony Meek, to move the start out to Second Sister, and delay the start time to 09:30.

The Race Instructions said Saturday's finish time would be between 18:00 and 21:30. Between 18:00 and 21:30 sailors could find an anchorage or dock for the night. But everyone had to quit racing by 21:30. Racing would commence anytime after 05:30 Sunday. The finish time was 18:00.

So far the threatened rain had held off but the forecast, light air, almost no wind, was on full display as all gathered. Every boat reflected in the glassy water. There was barely a ripple, no matter where one looked.

My first view of the fleet was as they motored to the new start line at Second Sister. It was an impressive, diverse armada. At the new line out at Second Sister weather conditions were the same, but the Race Committee decided on no further delays and the start was confirmed as 09.30.

Radiant Heat had sails up and sat near the Ganges Shoals end of the start line, the starboard end, and realized there was just enough breeze to move the boat. Yes, 0.2 and 0.3 of a knot on the GPS was counted as moving. I checked the GPS again for course over ground to see it was NOT tide induced! Ten mins to the start turned to 5 minutes . We moved slowly down the line on Starboard tack, with the fleet all milling around, but no one close enough to RH to bother us.

We were now half way down the line with 3 minutes to go. Boats were following behind, nobody in the way in front. Judging speed and distance I doubted we would get to 2nd Sisters island before the start.

Three seconds to go and we hardened up to promptly (everything is relative in sailboat racing) cross the line . The race was on . We had clear air. We had a knot of speed. It started to rain. Showers, sometimes heavy, sometimes really heavy, were the order of the day. Slowly we progressed toward Welbury. The fleet spreading out already. *(Some who didn't catch the zephyr at the start were sadly left behind: becalmed. Including Ian's stunning 54' Jeanneau. How I wanted to see her racing under spinnaker! Next time – ed)*





The fitful breeze was mostly from the ESE to S, as we made slow progress into Captains passage at the turn of the tide and on into Trincomali. The lead boats slowly stretching out their lead.



Many of the lead boats were a mile or more ahead of those at the rear, but the early afternoon found the tide turned against them on the ebb, and were now drifting backward. At this point, Greg Slakov

on Sorcery X, kindly took a very wet Bob DeRoos and his International 12' in tow, both retiring from the race

We dropped anchor chatting distance from Soul Thyme.



It was time for lunch.

While enjoying our lunch the wind increased from the south, bringing the rear of the fleet to the front! By the time we had weighed anchor, and deployed the spinnaker, we found ourselves in the middle of the fleet again.

Again the fleet began to stretch out as several made their way around Southey Point against the current. But once around they enjoyed a current assist. Others were apparently not so lucky.



(It was at this point Bob Jones taught me yet another sailing lesson. As we approached Southey Point, Bob – like me – was using his asymmetric. I was sailing my angles but Bob set out on a course

that took him wider than necessary, out towards the bottom of Jackscrew Island. Why is he sailing all that extra distance I wondered? I too had gybed out to have set a hotter course to Southey Point but nothing like Bob. He soon showed why. As the wind began to falter near Salt Spring and the current set me closer to Salt Spring robbing me of some of my angle, Bob stayed in good breeze and then tacked on a hot course direct for Southey Point, rounding it at speed, with a bone in his teeth; while I struggled to make the rounding. – ed)

We changed from spinnaker to head sail as we passed Grappler Rock, heading toward Vesuvius. The wind was patchy, Oasis, Soul Thyme and Minke were ahead. Battle Axe not far away. And here comes Skeena Cloud within chatting distance. Yes, we agreed, at 19:00 the tide was due to flood against us. Radiant Heat went left toward the Salt Spring shore and SC stayed right and was rewarded with a fresh breeze and a great run down to join the lead boats as we looked on helplessly. *(Not often I get to hear Tony say that!!!)*

In a while we got our own lesser breeze and passed Parminter Point to eye Duck Bay as our overnight spot. As the Lead boats stopped racing, and made with to Booth Canal or the Vesuvius area, we marked our spot at 21:00 and Ducked into the bay for the night. There was a boat at the deep end of the bay which in the morning we realized was Oasis.

(Battle Axe, Second Wind, and Skeena Cloud quit racing just before 21:00 and ducked into Vesuvius. We found out later that Karisma was tied up at Vesuvius dock with the convenience of a Port-a-potty nearby. On a 22' this is no small thing. Several times over night I was awoken, thinking I was trapped in a snare drum, the rain pummeled the deck overhead so hard. But I was dry. The crew of Battle Axe was not so lucky. One told me her feet were under one newly discovered leak. But with the new brighter day, Battle Axe was soon back to normal: music on, the friendly, eager, crew bantering and laughing as they readied her sails. – ed)

Checking a half dozen times to see if the anchor was holding we had our supper and listened to the rainfall beating like a drummer on the deck above. There was a moment of alarm as the GPS cursor showed us sitting on the neighbouring shore! But the depth meter said 17 feet. Then 32 feet then 18 then 27. Sleep and solace was found by checking the tide book and wind to see that a rising tide and a modest breeze were the culprits. The anchor was fixed!

Sunday dawned and I awoke involuntarily at 2 minutes to five. Colette was sound asleep. It was time to get moving. The ebb tide only ran for a while and we would need to be well through the Narrows before the change and we still had several miles to go.

Marvel of marvels, the wind defied the forecast and was blowing from the south at 6 knots. The clouds were broken and looked like the rain would hold off. Hurriedly dressing and thankful for wet weather gear that that actually worked, I started the engine. Yes, I had remembered to not use the starter battery for the house last night.

Going on deck I saw there was no other movement. The anchor was weighed and stowed. The breeze was blowing us toward open water and with engine engaged I looked for the waypoint to find where we stopped last night, Motoring out to the spot, the main and the genoa were set, and we started our sail again just 11 minutes later than the allowed 05.30.

The Breeze was good. On starboard tack we had a line for the Narrows with 5 knots plus of boat speed. There was a half knot of ebb current with us. As we passed Vesuvius there was no movement from the other boats, but now a minute or two later Battle Axe, Second Wind, and Skeena Cloud were spotted heading out and raising their sails, and there was Oasis a half mile back leaving Duck Bay, and yet farther back were others near Parminter point.

The race was on in earnest with much ground to be made up today if we hoped to finish by the allotted 1800 hours, never mind make up lost time on the lead boats.

Because of our earlier starting time we were a little ahead, a quarter mile or so.

The wind was now blowing out from the channel directly on the nose and we bore off to the right to the Vancouver island side. We went as far as we dared but getting a lift along the shore. So we tacked from one side to the other getting a lift each side. The boats behind seemed further back. *(Yes, we watched as Tony made one well chosen, well-timed and executed tack after another, gradually extending his lead. I watched him carefully. He usually points much better than I and makes up ground this way. But this time, not so much, it was just skill and experience – ed)*

Coming to the right we were centered on Maple bay and the wind was lighter and patchier. It is better to tack as little as possible in light air. Better to run through the light air patches with momentum and increased apparent wind speed even if we need to bare off to do so. Do not pinch but keep the sails full. Maintain boat speed. At least that is what I was telling myself. *(I know have added this to my note book as I tried to outsmart the patches and sail around them. Second Wind too endured the patchy areas. They both made significant distance on me. – ed)*

Now we tacked left into mid channel this time and then on a wind shift again toward Octopus point, getting another lift on the shore but shy of the point. A short tack out to mid channel before turning right down the channel to Bold Bluff. We had a knot of current with us, and we kept a good 3 knots of boat speed. The boats behind were struggling with lighter air and wider tacking angles and were further back. They disappeared from sight as we rounded the bend.

We made good angles down the channel, passing Burial Island. The following boats appeared again, but looked to be close to a mile back now.

Coming out into Satellite Channel we made over toward Musgrave landing and then took the long tack out to the Vancouver Island side toward Cherry Point. It was a surprise to be a half mile shy of the point to suddenly realize we were in 30 feet of water and dropping. A quick tack took us into deeper water and we escaped Boatswain Bank and set a course to Cape Keppel. This course took us very close to the bow of the anchored freighter waiting for trade to increase and on to the Salt Spring shore. We now were set by the flood about 10 degrees and so the decision was made to not try short tacking around the cape but to long tack over to Deep Cove.

Looking back the following boats seemed to be 2 miles behind, just exited the narrows. *(This would be Soul Thyme, Second Wind, and Oasis, who were just ahead of Battle Axe and me. Minke was behind us. And behind everyone, but eating us up, one by one, was Caliente, who impressively passed us in the Narrows, tacking a 38' boat singlehanded, every tack perfect – ed).* As we crossed we had a steady wind lift as the wind now came from the Easterly direction and we lifted and lifted before taking a short tack out and then a tack back toward Colburne Passage. The wind was steady and boat speed about 3-4 knots Tacking away we had a big lift on the Starboard tack now as the wind went SE and we lifted nicely, 40-50 degrees across the passage, despite the current and close reached past Shute Rock and Piers Island.

The following boats were further back now maybe 3 miles.

It was stay away from the Fulford Hole time. This is a reputation that the entrance to Fulford Harbour has earned and maintained. Often it cannot be seen. It lures many an unwary sailor who thinks the direct route to Beaver Point is the way to go. Thus we on Radiant Heat were happy to take advantage

of the wind filling in again through Shute passage and we were well able to pass close by Portland Island without going near Fulford Harbour.

(My goodness, my goodness, my goodness. It reads much more polite than what I want to write. I had heard the stories of the dreaded 'Fulford Hole'. And I heeded them. I looked for it. I was sailing as well as I might expect. I was even clawing back some distance on the leaders. As I finally got past Isabella Point, I got a lift that allowed me to come onto a close reach past Fulford. The wind was steady. The breeze looked fine ahead. It was awesome. Until it wasn't. It was like I was lured into the hole by some dastardly funnel web spider. Everything was fine, I was on the top of the world, and then I was in the grasp of a monster who had no intention of letting go. Okay, you say, we have all sailed into holes. But not only was this the hole of all holes; I did it to myself. I knew its lair was there, but I didn't see it, so assumed it was taking a day off. There are a lot of insect husks in our garden with the same last thought. No smarter than a bug, you say?)

But I might have survived the experience with my mental health intact if I didn't have to watch Minke, Shingebiss, and Evangeline sail right by. I watched as they ate up my lead, but hey, they had the same hole to deal with. But Minke, casually as you might see, slid over to the Portland Island shore, followed by the other two boats. They sedately sailed the shore about 1 kilometer away looking like nothing other than three swans in line gracefully swimming by my parked boat and unhurriedly, steadily sailing off into the distance, where they, just to add salt to my seething self, popped their chutes.

And here is the next sailing skill I must master: patience. I gave up around 15:00. Shelley's account of the race will describe why patience can be rewarded, and is likely more productive than temper tantrums -ed)

We stayed up high away from aiming for Beaver Point with another notorious hole and gradually eased sails with the wind a steady 6 knots or more until we headed for Channel Island with the spinnaker deployed and the wind increased a while to around 8 knots. The current was now with us a good half knot or more and boat speed was a steady 5 knots. The fleet behind disappeared from view as I guessed them to be now 5 miles back.

(Behind Tony, the next three boats were obviously having a battle of their own as recounted by Kieth on Soul Thyme: 'Bob and I were dueling all the way from Sansum Narrows. We managed to shake Second Wind who was ahead up to Musgraves'.- ed)

I am not sure we saw sails behind as we approached the finish line and if we did they were 6 miles back. 300 yards to go, dead down wind and the spinnaker suddenly started to misbehave with the bottom edge curling inward as if the wind was in front and not behind.

It was decided to drop early and down the spinnaker came. The main behaved itself and we finished at a slower speed, well and safe.

Later as I watches Oasis and Soul Thyme finish and the Skeena Cloud motor in, the rain came down in a torrent.

(After Oasis and Soul Thyme, Caliente was the last finisher, coming from behind everyone, he made it into the harbour under spinnaker then ground out a finish in light erratic breezes under white sails. And speaking of Soul Thyme, she is a older 41 Hunter. A boat and model not known for their speed. She even looks slow. But Kieth handles her like a J boat. This plus some awesome sailing skills sees her often sailing through the fleet to take the lead - ed)

Also at the dock the wind was from the North West. Yet later the wind had died. I was feeling sorry for those boats who sailed well yet would not finish.

It was a spectacular day of sailing. I had originally thought that the weather would not allow a finish but proved to be only partly correct. Kudos to those that persisted. Thank you to all those who turned out. It is something to repeat more often.

Thanks you for organizing this Mr. Tony Meek , Admiral of the weekend. A first for us is that this is the first time Colette came racing with me and despite the weather may have enjoyed it enough to do so again!

And, as promised, here is Shelly's treatise on patience.

We discovered we slept in for starters. We began our race at 6:57. We were on Vesuvius dock as we could get to the port a potty on shore. Cooked on a Coleman stove in the rain and slept in semi wet conditions.....shouldn't there be an award for doing it hard? I heard people speaking about steak dinners etc on the radio. Luckily our radio died and we didn't have to hear any more of that talk. Then we motored back to our start position, near Evangeline and north of Duck Bay and the next small bay. Engine died briefly on the way to our start up point so we contemplated having to sail there, only to turn around and sail back. We made it though and had a good sail all the way to the narrows which we fought heavily about 12-1pm. We made it through and then got to Fulford about 15:30, there was wind but it died for about a half hour as we sat off of Portland raised the spinnaker to dry it out and the wind filled in. We had a gorgeous run all the way to Ganges, straight shot no gybes and surfing on the waves. We caught up to Tony and saw Gyle and Evangeline ahead off of the Ganges bay in very little wind. Just off 2nd sister the wind died and we were there to meet the rest of the non-finishers at 6pm. Fun race, Good on Bob and Tony for finishing. Bob's my hero! Simone and I need to practice getting up like the old guys, maybe if we started earlier.....who knows. Lots of fun though. I like the locals only race around with an overnight, it makes it really fun and challenging. I think we should have one of the locals only races every year aside from the nonstop RSS race.

And here is third place finisher, Bob Jones's (out of 21 boats that started and Shelley's hero, perspective:

HE VIEW FROM OASIS

Despite the weather it was a grand weekend, for almost the whole race OASIS was vying with one or other vessel which made for a tiring but exhilarating couple of days.

I will not dwell on the first day, I am sure Tony has written one of his stunning reports already. Tony joined me for the overnight stay in Duck. Peter Toby had kindly offered me his mooring buoy and Tony anchored a little further out. I enjoyed a leisurely evening with both the music machine and the heater running. I would have been wise to turn in earlier.

Easing my head out of the cabin at 0530 Sunday morning RADIANT HEAT heat was gone and remained gone over the horizon for the rest of the day hence this review of Sunday in Tony's absence.

After a scramble OASIS returned to her quitting point the night before and got going under plain sails in about 5knots of wind out of Booth Bay, I could see SECOND WIND, SKEENA CLOUD and BATTLE AXE ahead and SOUL TIME looking impressive about 1/2 a mile to the West. There was a sail in Samsun Narrows ahead of us which could only be Tony on RADIANT HEAT.

OASIS caught up with SECOND WIND off Maple bay but could not get by her, Eric and I enjoyed a great duel all the way to clearing Samsum Narrows with SOUL TIME joining the fray at Burial Island, she was going well. The South Easterly wind eased once clear of the Narrows but it was dry for a change and warming up.

The three of us continued our duel heading to Cape Kepple and in a moment of inattention I noted RADIANT HEAT disappearing behind said point. CALIENTE and SKEENA CLOUD were now clear of the Narrows but looking very upright, the gate had closed. Before Kepple SECOND WIND had dropped behind and SOUL TYME had a commanding lead ahead.

The next hurdle was the dreaded Fulford Hole but it really was not there and a good wind line could be seen ahead. Where was the leading edge? SOUL TYME headed East and OASIS saw a tongue closer to Russel Island. We lucked out and enjoyed a spirited close reach at 6.5 to 7.5 knots along the South Salt Spring Shore, catching up with and passing SOUL TYME. Prior to this CALIENTE was gaining fast but was again stopped in her tracks by the reappearance of the Fulford Hole.

We could see SECOND WIND closer to Portland Island and probably clear of the dreaded Hole. At the Channel Islands OASIS was about 1/2 a mile ahead of SOUL TYME but at this point it all started falling apart. With the asymmetrical spinnaker not pulling beyond 130 degrees off the wind OASIS was going markedly in the wrong direction. Lets try wing on wing, it worked yesterday, but not today.

It was a very fine balance to keep the spin full and the boom out, and we had many failures. SOUL TYME was along the Prevost shore and catching up fast. In some desperation I put OASIS on a safe course about 110 degree off the wind and dived into various lockers until I found blocks and line to make a vang for the boom.

By this time SOUL THYME got ahead at Second Sister . My disappointment was mitigated by a very pleasant run down the harbour wing on wing with the boom firmly locked in place and hardly a touch on the wheel. SOUL THYME was ahead of OASIS over the line having sailed a brilliant race throughout the day.

It was only when turning into the wind after crossing the line I realized no one was in sight astern. I don't know what happened but OASIS was all snug on the dock and I was having a drink with Dorothy when CALIENTE's sail appeared over the spit going very slowly, however she finished before cut off and that is a tribute to perseverance. And here they are, battling it out!



From our Race Director: Tony Meek

Just a moment to reflect how fortunate we are to live where we do .

Surrounded by generous and like minded people.

Surrounded by the natural beauty of the Gulf Islands.

Surrounded by facilities that allow us to indulge in our chosen recreation. Thank you SSISC for facilitating this event See you next year.

And you all don't have to wait another year. Gyle and Sam are busily planning our next race/cruise



event for July 4/5, replacing the cancelled Vendee!

Round Salt Spring 2020 Results

Yacht	club	Saturday	Sunday	elapsed	corrected	new rating	points
Radiant Heat	138	9:30 – 20:30:00	5:41:00 – 13:42:25	19:01:25	18:47:32	132	100
Oasis	164	9:30 – 19:48:00	5:54:00 – 15:28:00	19:52:00	18:52:45	161	95
Soul Thyme	147	9:30 – 19:19:35	5:42:10 – 15:22:21	19:29:46	18:59:57	150	89
Caliente	94	9:30 – 19:43:01	6:35:39 – 17:30:45	21:08:07	22:22:28	100	84

The remaining 15 club boats that started DNF'd and are awarded 5 club points for starting.