

Wednesday Evening, July 22nd
Report by Tony Brogan and Greg Taylor
Picture by Greg Taylor

Another day where the forecast was wrong, thank goodness. Nowhere I looked forecast a 10-12 knot southeaster. Rather a 2-4 knot easter was expected.

Fleet Captain, seeing the conditions crossed his fingers and gave us Batt Rock (S), Ganges Shoals (S) and home. GS transit with 2nd Sisters light would be a short course if needed. 19.30 would be the time limit. *(Evangeline suggested we build in a reach or two. I declined as the previous race was all reaching and we have cohorts who like the reaches and those who like the strategy involved in upwind-downwind courses. So, to balance things out, I went with the windward-leeward option. And as things turned out, it worked out for Evangeline as they bested the reaching machine - Pturbodactyl - by 14 seconds -FCR)*

Radiant Heat rigged the 115 jib replete with double sheets, inboard the shrouds for close hauled and others outboard the shrouds for off wind reaching.

The spinnaker was rigged and ready.

Turning back to the line after sails were raised we tried a couple of approaches and discovered the wind was steady up the channel with a slight advantage to the port side but not enough to stop us making the approach to the start from the Starboard end.

With 2.5 minutes to go we turned from the line back to the moored boats and hoping we were not too early looped around a buoy and headed for the line with a minute to go. We were set and in full flight when a cry of alarm came from the crew.

A boat was rapidly headed for us on a port tack. Damian aboard Muse had decided to try a port hand start and as he said later had found himself trapped by the fleet bearing down on him, all on starboard, with no way for Muse to find a way out.

Muse crash tacked almost in front of us on our port bow. While we had to head up marginally to avoid Muses's stern we lost no speed and Muse bore off enough to let us by.

(I guess we can't blame Damian. He hasn't been sailing that near to another boat for some weeks. There are few boats to call starboard on you off the WCVI - FCR)

We continued to the left shore where in a short time Ogotogo tacked ahead of us and shortly later SorceryX tacked and bore off behind us. We had had a good start. Ptubodactyl again had shot into the lead . The fleet (how many we had not counted but guessed at 7 or 8) was close behind us, especially Evangeline seemingly enjoying the conditions.

Tacking up the harbour on the first port tack we realised this was the favoured side and we had good speed and direction. Surprise, surprise we were keeping up with the leaders and

stretching from the fleet at back. (I Wish I had more info on the rest of the fleet but I was concentrating on the boat and those ahead). Showing apparent wind to 18 knots quite steady we had RH more in the groove than of late and after two more cross tacks out past 2nd sister in a little over 20 minutes we were closely tailing both Ogopogo and SorceryX who was now a challenge to or ahead of Ogopogo. We all decided on short tacking up the Saltspring side and we criss- crossed each other . Evangeline was showing good speed now and drawing closer. At the next to final crossing before the move out to the channel and to the Batt Rock rounding we were hailed "Starboard" by Evangeline. We preferred a quick tack rather than to duck below.

Evangeline was not to be denied and as she pulled ahead on the windward side we tacked below her back to the Saltspring shore. We now had lost our connection to both SorceryX and Ogopogo who were both tacking out to Batt Rock.

Evangeline followed our tack and was close to us . Looking at the mark RH decided on the early tack and passed astern of Evangeline who went further for a while before tacking to the mark.

We seemed to be 10 degrees shy of making the mark but as we progressed we were lifted enough to be able to make the perfect approach on the starboard tack. We were exactly laying the mark.

Evangeline, now also tacking for the mark, was to weather and back. Realising she had overstood, she was able to ease off a little for extra boat speed and she came on with a rush. We held our course . Would Evangeline get an overlap of RH before we were within three boat lengths of the mark? Evangeline was close to achieving the necessary overlap. But as they say, 'unlike horseshoes or hand grenades', close is not good enough.

(While I could see things were close up ahead; it was like watching sticks waving in the far distance. So with no protest flag being hoisted, obviously all was good. - FCR)

Our rounding was tight, within three feet of the buoy. We gybed and set the spinnaker on an almost dead downwind run. She filled with joy in the continuing breeze and RH felt good on the helm. *(It seems some of that joy filtered back into Tony at the helm. And so it does, when everything goes, feels, and looks right. I know the feeling. It happened, once. - FCR)*

Ptubodactyl was far ahead. Evangeline, not flying a spinnaker, receded from our view. Ogopogo was gybing downwind. She was out to the right, as was SorceryX, who like Evangeline, was NFS. We had boat speed well over 6 knots. They would have to do 7-8 knots of boat speed to make up for the distance sailed gybing to hold us off.

We slowly closed the gap. We gybed the spinnaker on to the starboard side for a slightly better wind angle and watched the lead boats search for the Ganges Shoal mark.

Ogopogo now moved ahead of SorceryX as we chased both down. Now down the harbour we swept, getting ever closer. Ogopogo gained the finish line just minutes ahead of us. SorceryX crossed our bow to the mid channel.

Gybing again to the line SorceryX was a half boat length ahead as we both finished at speed.

This was one of the best sails of the year. The wind was steady at 8-12 knots. There were no holes. There were no blasts of terror or frantic round ups. Just good sunny warm sailing weather thoroughly enjoyed by all.

(That's easy for Tony to say, but on Pturbodactyl, things were a little more frantic for a bit. John recounts they had to do a crash gybe to avoid Pturbodactyl reluctantly evolving into a terrestrial entity. - FCR)

(Meanwhile, things were a bit less exciting in the back half of the fleet with Muse, Skeena Cloud, and Star Gazer making a race of it. Skeena Cloud and Muse traded tacks going out of the harbour. Muse taking a lead that she never gave up after Skeena Cloud tacked out of Stotesbury Bay and Muse kept going, and going, and going. I thought for sure he would be shining his keel before the tack run out. But no, he safely tacked allowing him to make Second Sister without the subsequent tacks Skeena Cloud required. I could see everyone playing the tide up the Salt Spring shore and thought, 'what the hell'. 'What's there to gain in doing exactly the same thing'. I therefore short tacked up to near Batt Rock, avoiding getting too far out where the flood might catch me. I could see it was working. I was gaining on Muse, who was on the SS shore, and the other boats well ahead.*

But then, as Paul said later, 'there seemed to be little advantage to being on the SS shore until the last tack out to Batt Rock'. I could see it when Muse tacked off the SS shore towards Batt Rock. He came out very fast, eating up any advantage I may have gained.

After rounding, I thought about hoisting the spinnaker, but doing 5.5+ knots much of the time, figured the trade-off between the extra speed and potential (likely) screw-ups was insufficient, so gybed down towards Second Sister, before gybing again to take Ganges Shoal (forgetting GS once and DNfing myself was one time too many). I could see that Muse was going to make the same mistake and tried to hail him on the radio, without success.

Behind us, Star Gazer rounded Batt Rock, on his way to his second consecutive finish. He had some bad luck in having the wind falter for a bit. Doug reported, "Wow that was a fun race, great sailing. I am once again excited to report that Stargazer and I crossed the finish line exactly at 1930. Great sail until I rounded Batt rock and then The wind dropped to 4-5 knots for about half an hour, then kicked up a bit. I'm looking forward to a clean hull".

I see a budding Fleet Captain Racing. - FCR)

- *Stotesbury Bay is inside of Ganges Shoal on the SS shore. Recall the white mooring buoy many of with keels use to mark (other than Muse it seems) the start of the no-go zone. Drew Stotesbury takes the videos and pictures of us rounding Second Sister I often post.*



Club			Finish	Corrected		Rating for	club
Rating	Boat	Skipper	Time	Time	Place	Next Race	points
193	EVANGELINE	Sutton	18:28:20	01:20:32	1	184	100
21	PTURBODACTYL	Tulip	18:07:13	01:20:46	2	15	88
135	RADIANT HEAT	Brogan	18:23:10	01:22:32	3	132	75
307	SKEENA CLOUD	Taylor	18:52:10	01:28:10	4	307	63
53	OGOPOGO	Faget	18:18:42	01:29:17	5	56	50
71	SORCERY X	Slakov	18:23:04	01:31:22	6	77	38
384	STAR GAZER	Manton	19:30:00	01:47:51	7	393	25
252	MUSE	Sorochynski	dnf		8	252	13