

## **Round The Island Schooner Race Barbados Advocate January 2<sup>nd</sup> 1936**

The much talked about Round The Island schooner race came off yesterday and excited no small amount of interest. From early morning till dusk, motor cars could be seen flying to different points of the island conveying persons anxious to see the honours carried off by their favourite, while a fairly large number witnessed the race from the decks of the schooners themselves.

The race was unusually interesting for the reason that each one of the competitors had a strong backing, although the consensus of opinion was that the Sea Fox, handled by so experienced and skillful a skipper as Capt. Kennedy, would bring home the bacon.

The expectations of the backers of that craft were fully realized for the Sea Fox, as the result of clever navigation mainly, was early in the race able to out-distance its rivals.

The following is the result of the race with a brief description from one, who in a motorcar followed it around the island. There will also be found an interesting account of the race by Capt. Kennedy himself and a still more graphic and detailed account by Mr. Whitmell which we took over the Radio and which we were able to reproduce through the courtesy of the management of Radio Distribution:-

- 1 – Sea Fox – Capt. Kennedy
- 2 – Rhode Island – Capt. Hassell
- 3 – Lucille Smith – Capt. Cobham
- 4 – Mona Marie – Capt. Hassell

The round the island race was started yesterday morning in very light wind; so light that the start was made almost in Indian file.

The Rhode Island got away first followed by Marion Belle, Lucille Smith, Sea fox and Mona Marie in the order mentioned. The Rhode Island immediately set all sails available and her example was copied by the other boats, the Sea Fox being very conspicuous with her eight sails. In no time the Sea Fox catching all the available light winds in her large sails overtook, and soon out distanced all her rivals. She passed them as if they were anchored, and on reaching the Hastings Rocks was about half mile ahead of the Rhode Island who in turn was leading Lucille Smith, the Marion B Wolfe and the Mona Marie. They sailed in this order until the South Point Light House was reached, when the Mona Marie's tactics served her in good stead. As at the time she was resorting to

"counter" tactics enabling her to establish an overlap on the Marion Wolf and Lucille Smith. Meanwhile the Sea Fox was increasing her lead and was ably handled by her skipper. After passing South Point Lighthouse she was a good mile ahead of the Rhode Island and about two miles ahead of the Lucille Smith, the Mona Marie and the Marion B Wolfe bringing up the rear. They fetched around Chancery Lane going off shore again with the Sea Fox still increasing her lead.

At this stage Marion B Wolfe abandoned the race and returned home. The result of the race became a foregone conclusion when the Sea Fox appeared off the Crane as she was so far ahead of her rivals that her skipper decided to make one final tack to clear East Point Light. In doing this he simply eased her and started for the North Point, romping home an easy winner.

Too much credit can not be given to Capt. Kennedy and his men as everything – tacking, setting sails etc – was carried out with a minimum of effort. The other boats appeared from the shore to be losing time at the tacks. Sea Fox certainly won a great race and the promoters have the gratification of knowing that they provided entertainment for the whole island.

A large crowd waited on the waterfront until the Sea Fox came along side and a number of enthusiasts boarding the vessel lifted Capt. Kennedy shoulder high by way of congratulating him on his very popular victory.

### **A unique spectacle**

Capt Kennedy said over the radio. "I consider it a great honour to have been asked to speak on the radio. I desire to give a brief description of the race because although it seems that nearly everybody was out watching the race nevertheless, everybody was not right on the spot to see the whole of it.

First of all, I will say that we had a very light breeze at the beginning and that all the vessels were well bunched at the start.

As we rounded South Point the breeze freshened up and to my delight my old Sea Fox started to walk out ahead. It was quite a surprise to me because the big Nova Scotia vessels are very fast in a strong breeze and heavy seas, and going to windward I thought the Sea Fox was outclassed, but she did very well and upheld the prestige of her builders.

We rounded South Point forty-five minutes ahead of the Rhode Island. The Mona Marie and the Lucille Smith had, I am told a close

race, being neck and neck all the way. As they finished off Pelican Island the Lucille Smith, so I understand beat the Mona Marie by a few minutes, but the race was concluded in darkness and unfortunately those on shore could not see the finish.

We were accorded a great welcome at the wharf, the populous was out in great force and I believe it was one of the greatest spectacles Barbados has ever seen in a long while. It was certainly unique. In all the world, I may say, Barbados has got the only schooner race in existence because within the last three years in Nova Scotia schooner racing has gone out of vogue due to motorized ships. That being so if Barbados can sponsor schooner racing it can be worked up as something very spectacular and very interesting to the whole island.

In conclusion I wish to thank all the members of the Committee who made this race possible and arranged all the tedious details such as collecting funds to finance the affair. I also desire to congratulate all the other captains who took part on their sportsmanship and pluck in holding up their schooners for so many days without work and without cargo just to be able to compete in this sporting event. I hope that next year we will have a bigger and a better race, a race favoured by better breezes and with a closer finish. And I also hope that everyone will take as much if not more interest in the next race as they have taken in this one."

### **Mr. Whitmell's graphic account**

Mr. Whitmell next gave a graphic description of the race. He said "I am sure that everyone was pleased to listen to Capt. Kennedy. It was very good of him to come all this distance because Wildey is not exactly in the centre of the city. So we are grateful to him for coming up and giving us a talk on the race.

I had a little more time at my disposal as I had nothing to do except sit down and keep out of the way, so I occupied my time in making a few notes of the race as it progressed.

For a start off I will say that I saw the dawn today, the first for quite a while. Of course, I know that a lot of other people saw it too, but they were probably going home to bed while the others and myself interested in the Round the Island Race had just left our beds, much earlier than usual. It was a lovely morning for anything but sailing. It was bright, warm, but there was little or no breeze – just a light air. The Marion B Wolfe was the first off her moorings, followed by the Sea Fox with a very light northeasterly air. The Lucille Smith was next with her hook off the bottom and soon after the Rhode Island was seen coming out of the Careenage on her

foresail and jib. We were in close company with the Marion B Wolfe. We made our way over to the starting line off Pelican and it was pleasing to see that in the light morning air we slowly drew ahead of the Wolfe

We had by now set out maintop sail and we slowly made our way up to the line. At ten to seven we gybed round to get into position for the crossing. At 7am we crossed the line. We were on our reverse course, slightly at the tail of the bunch, with the Mona Marie on our port beam. The Rhode Island and the Lucille Smith leading slightly.

The numbers drawn by the competitors to determine their respective positions, I may mention were, the Mona Marie No. 1; the Sea Fox, No 2; the Lucille Smith, No. 3; the Marion Wolfe, No. 4; and the Rhode Island, No. 5 – all on the port tack. We were setting our outer and flying jibs main topsail and fisherman's stay sail.

At 9.30 am the Wolfe tacked, followed by the Rhode Island, the Mona Marie and the Lucille Smith. We dropped our staysail but we finally tacked at 9.45 am and reset our staysail at 10 am. On the inshore tack the Wolfe was furthest to Leeward on our port quarter, the Lucille Smith was inside of her, the Rhode Island ahead of the last named, the last two being to the leeward of us. The Mona Marie was much close inshore and was forced to go about on the port tack. Shortly after this the Wolfe turned back home. She got out of position but still she had a chance, for had the wind blown up she would have got along as well as the others. Possibly they must have got fed up.

At the South Point Light we picked up a little air, which enabled us to travel better than we had been doing previously. The Crane hotel was abeam at 12.15pm and the position of the boats was Sea Fox leading from the Rhode Island, both on the starboard tack – that is the latter boat was on our port quarter in close proximity to the land. This forced the Rhode Island to tack while we were much further out. We were able to weather Ragged Point shoals with out tacking. That was where our navigator, Mr. Kettlewell of the Yacht Pansy, and our skipper scored points on the other boats. The course was studied, the position of the boat was worked to the best advantage, saving unnecessary tacks and in consequence we were able to increase our lead still further. The Mona Marie and the Lucille Smith were now both about a mile and half behind.

After many minutes' suspense we got round the shoals and then corrected our course for the next point. At 1pm we saw North Point

opening out while we were still free of the shoal and broken water. We were able to ease the sheets and make a better course with the wind almost abeam. It freshened considerably and we started surging a good speed. At this point the other three boats were almost out of sight, astern. The Rhode Island had lost her position by holding on too long on her port tack. I am sorry to say and she lost a tremendous amount of distance. From now on the race was practically over. The other boats were completely out of the picture. They dropped out of sight. It was a pity that the others were not able to give the Sea Fox a run for it, and to some extent this spoiled the competitive aspect. Actually I enjoyed the sail more than any I have ever experienced. It was the first time I have been round the island and I have never realized until now how lovely a place it looked from the sea.

AT 4pm we were off Speightstown and one of the Speightstown schooners came out to meet us and gave us a chase. She sailed remarkably fast. It is astonishing the speed those boats can make. They are beamy but what water they can not part with the bow they push in front of them. Messrs Goddard's' ketch was round there with her topsails and what not, but we left her a long way behind.

At 4.20 pm we were nearly abeam of Hometown when a schooner, presumably the Rhode Island hove into sight astern round the North Point. We were pleased to see that the others had not given up. We thought that they had packed up and gone home and left us alone to it. At 5.20 pm we crossed the line and the race was won.

I may say that the Sea Fox had a number of distinguished visitors on board, among them Capt. Bowring representing representing the Yacht club and Mr. Jester the well known and popular American Consul. He as Consul was on his own ground because the Sea Fox, which is forty-seven years old, is American built and still flies the Stars and Stripes. It is with great pleasure that I heard from Colonel Bowring that the Committee was so impressed with the wonderful interest taken by the whole island and with the number of entries that they have decided to make it an annual contest.

I would like to say in conclusion that my best thanks are due to Captain Kennedy for making this resume possible, and for affording me such a wonderful experience. His boat was in fine trip and no untoward incident occurred which was due to his care and foresight. Ladies and gentlemen I will not keep you any longer. I suppose you would rather hear a musical programme than my voice so I will hand the microphone to Mr. Drayton and he will soon bring you another musical item.