

## **The Round the Island Schooner Race Barbados Advocate Jan 3<sup>rd</sup> 1936**

### **Viewpoints of Competing Captains Marian Wolfe not properly ballasted**

Judging by Wednesday's exhibition of enthusiastic interest on the part of all classes in the community, schooner racing seems destined to take a foremost place in the hearts of the people of this island.

The surprise is that this commendable form of sport, in which there is no telling what will happen, it being entirely a question of wind and wave, hence the excitement to which it gives rise, has not been indulged in ages before by folk so sea loving as the people of this island undoubtedly are.

Apart from motor cars flying hither and thither, every possible vantage point, every little hillock that offered a favourable glimpse of the race was crowded on Wednesday last. It was impossible from many of these lookouts to tell with any degree of certainty which vessel it was that was described in the distance, but this made absolutely no difference to the punsters. Each one was certain that the schooner to the front was none other than his favourite, and so everyone rejoice.

Yacht racing, it has been said, and the remark applies to schooner racing – is a game of many disappointments. There are days when one may be so well placed or have such a long lead that one may be confident of winning. The landsman would say that the race was over, the first prize a certainty, but there comes a sudden calm, or a shift of wind and in the twinkling of an eye there is a complete reversal of the state of the race. So much depends on the favourableness or contrariness of wind or wave.

There was a unanimity of agreement on the part of the competing captains that had Wednesday last turned out to be as breezy a day as the day before the Sea Fox would not have been able to carry as much sail as she did, and the result would have been far different. Be that as it may one thing is certain: Now that the public has been assured that schooner racing will be an annual event – Capt D.B.L. Hassell of the Rhode Island thinks that it should be oftener than that – now that the various captains have been able to profit by experience, everyone can rest assured that the next schooner race, properly advertised beforehand will attract not only local interest, but interest from abroad, as Mr. H.C. Boyce so truly said.

It is to be hoped, also that schooner racing, now that a start has been made will be placed on a proper footing with regard to rules and regulations governing the running of the sport.

Yesterday a representative of this paper interviewed a number of the competing captains with a view to getting a first-hand account of the race, and the reason or excuse for their defeat.

### **Gods of Fortune**

Capt. I. Cobham, of the Lucille Smith declared that the gods of fortune kissed the captain of the Sea Fox when he stepped on the deck of his vessel on New Year's morning. That being so, Capt. Kennedy had it all his own way, but he felt certain that granted different weather conditions there would have been a different tale to tell.

"So do you mean that you attribute your defeat to the light winds?" asked our representative.

" To a large extent. But an explanation is necessary. I have no desire to belittle the achievement of Capt. Kennedy. In fact, I desire to congratulate him on his victory, but there is this to be said: The morning was so calm that the heavier vessels were unable to get underway as readily as the Sea Fox, especially as they had no topsails which would have materially helped them on the light wind. The light winds blow overhead and only vessels with topsails can profit by them.

Apart from that I blundered as a result of accepting promiscuous suggestions, offered in good faith no doubt, during the course of the race. Off Chancery Lane I made three short tacks and lost so much ground in consequence that the Rhode Island and the Mona Marie were able to get out of sight. The fact that I was able to overtake the Mona Marie, and was beaten by the Rhode Island by only ten minutes proves conclusively, I think, that had I a better knowledge of the course I should have been able to make an even better showing than I did.

As far as the Rhode Island was concerned if that vessel had to go as far as the Garrison Point we would have beaten her. As it was the Lucille Smith was beaten by only a few minutes, and that was all due to the kind of breeze we encountered. When we reached the line the Rhode Island had just crossed and gone about to go to her anchorage"

Captain Cobham was confident that the Lucille Smith properly trimmed and handled would easily beat the Rhode Island and the

Mona Marie and he was willing to challenge the owners of either boat to a match race any day.

### **Had the best of Start.**

Capt. D.B.L. Hassell of the Rhode Island who ran second in the race said that he carried 90 tons ballast, which meant that in the light winds his schooner could not do justice to herself, even although he had the best of the start.

Had there been a stronger breeze such as blew the day before he would have been able to give the Sea Fox a better run and the public would have had more fun.

"What about the extra pieces of sails the Sea Fox was able to carry?" asked our representative. "Did that make much difference with the result?"

"We did not carry more than five pieces as we expected a good breeze on New Year's Day. With a strong breeze five pieces would have been sufficient for us. We raised no objection to the Sea Fox carrying eight pieces of sail, but on the next occasion we will see to it that we are not caught napping in that respect"

"There is another matter to which I would like to refer," said Captain Hassell. "The prizes being offered of £10 for first, £6 for second and £4 for third place hardly justify one in making the sacrifice necessarily involved in taking part in these races. I have no desire to appear captious, but you would be surprised to know that I came over in ballast from Trinidad especially for the race and would still have been considerably out of pocket even if I had won the first prize."

" I am of opinion" he concludes, "that some enterprising sportsman or firm should offer a suitable cup to be competed for, that the races should be held more than once a year to justify the extra expenses involved in getting additional sails, and that the prize money should be substantially increased. It should be something in the vicinity of \$500 or \$600 for the first prize. If that were the case every schooner owner would then be induced to take a livelier interest and it would then become a paying proposition to one and all"

### **Too heavily loaded.**

Capt. Leverock of the Marian Wolfe was asked by our representative to explain why it was that he turned back so early in the race. He said that first of all, he was carrying a cargo of 160 tons, which was much too much for the light breeze with which they were favoured.

Apart from not being properly ballasted, his vessel had not been dry docked or cleaned for a year and she needed recoppering. The condition of her bottom offered a lot of resistance to her progress. "Further, " he continued " I would say that my boat was built for cod fishing and to race her against a yacht like the Sea Fox was like racing a thoroughbred against a creole. Anyway I am hoping that if ever I am able to enter the race again it will be under more favourable conditions"

### **More Sails Needed.**

Our representative also interviewed Mr. H.C. Boyce, the Hon. Secretary of the Round the Island Schooner Race.

"Would you mind giving us your opinion of the race?" asked our representative.

"I consider that the race was a very successful one, but I think our Nova Scotia vessels, being of a heavier build than the Sea Fox, needed more sails and in one or two instances lost ground in the tacks they took.

The Fox gained three miles at least on the Rhode Island as the result of the tack the latter took off Crane. The Rhode Island went too far to the south-east and I think the Lucille Smith made too short a tack, or too many short tacks, and lost much ground in consequence.

It was in my opinion regrettable that the Wolfe found it necessary to turn back, but it was fortunate that none of the others took the cue from her, and kept on their course, despite unfavourable conditions. I am glad to see that schooner racing is to become a regular fixture, and I hope that later we will have other vessels from farther afield competing."

We may mention that a meeting of the Committee responsible for the running of the race will be held on Saturday next, when the exact amount to be paid as prize money will be declared.