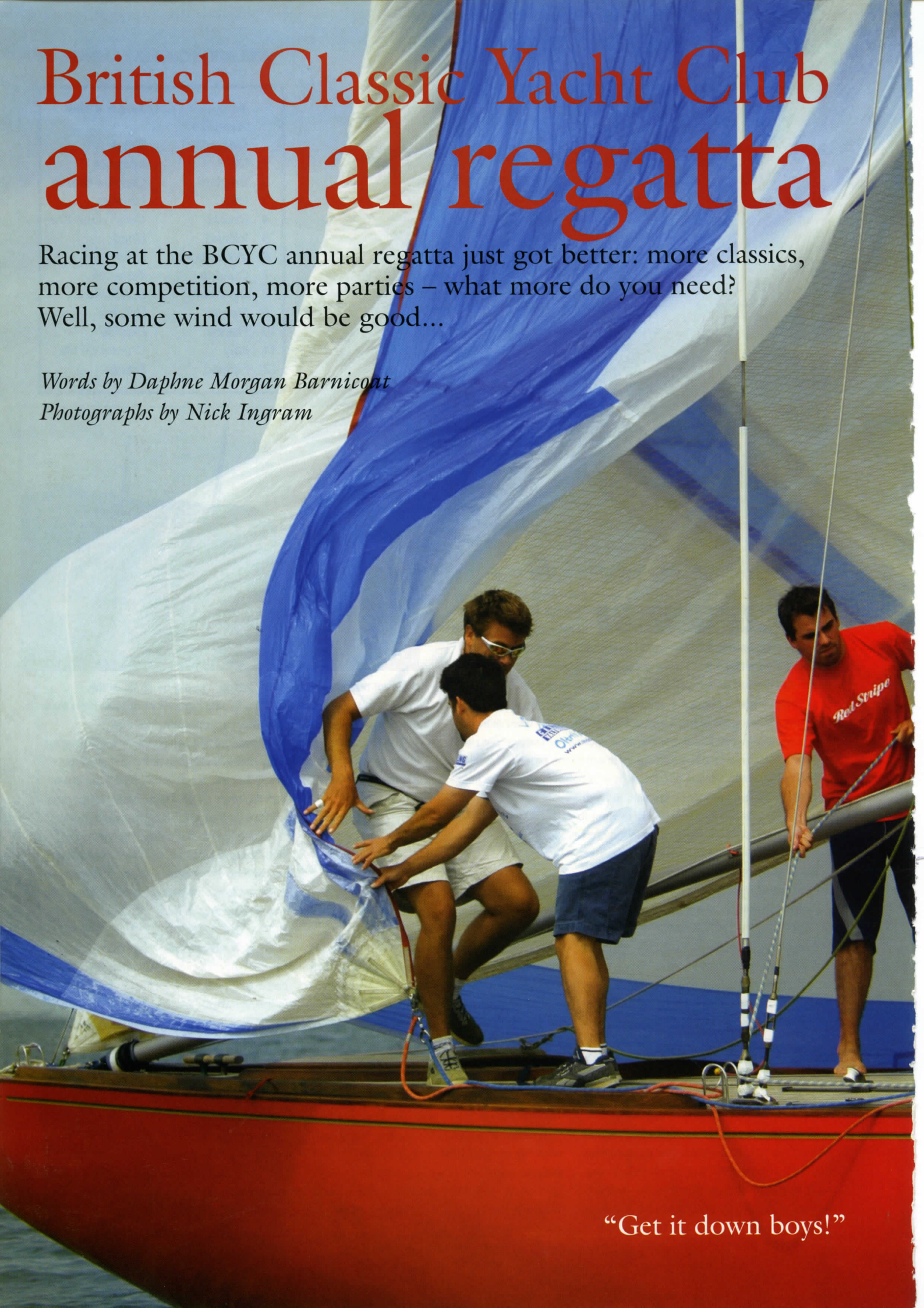


British Classic Yacht Club annual regatta

Racing at the BCYC annual regatta just got better: more classics, more competition, more parties – what more do you need? Well, some wind would be good...

Words by Daphne Morgan Barnicoat

Photographs by Nick Ingram



“Get it down boys!”

God, it's good to get out on the water! Even an extreme lack of breeze couldn't dampen the feeling as 30-odd classics ran the start line looking for the bias in the light airs. The sight of 11 classic Metre boats lining up waiting for the gun was reminiscent of another era on the Solent. The rest of us in the Cruiser and the Cruiser Racer fleet, moving somewhat slower, carved gracefully over at the signal and set off on starboard tack for the first mark. This was the first day of the British Classic Yacht Club's annual regatta and there was an excellent turn

out with boats coming from as far as the Caribbean and France, plus a few more Metre boats and the loyal members who have been here each year since it began in 2002. If there was a feeling that the event is becoming a bit 'samey', some take comfort in the guarantee that they'll see their mates same time same place each year – after all, this is what it's all about and why we love it. It is fascinating to watch the progression in maintenance of each of the boats year after year – Avia Willment's 1925 Frank Morgan Giles-designed 8-M *Siris*, restored by Fairlie Restorations in

2000, positively gleamed on the pontoon alongside her sister ships *Ilderim* and *If. Cetewayo*, David Murrin's pride and joy drawn by Laurent Giles in 1955, was resplendent in her new colour scheme of brown lines and muted cream sail covers, but it was below that she revealed her true secrets (see panel, p37). *Mikado*, Michael Briggs's Clyde 30, was there, fresh from her 100th birthday celebrations and not looking a day older than when she left William Fife's drawing board. Remarkably, she again won the Racer Class – beating the Metre boats to take the trophy.

No mistaking where this crew is from! Queen of the 8-Ms: Avia Willment at the helm of her Fairlie-restored Morgan Giles-designed *Siris*



Chrisando

"I read about this in CB," says

French owner Patrice Vazeux. And so he chose to cross the Channel from Normandy to join the BCYC rather than trek around Bittany to Brest for that festival. It was a home-coming of sorts for his 35ft (10.7m) 1937 HH Lidstone design. She was built in what was E Williams' yard (the Sunbeam yard), next to Harry Spencer's old place in West Cowes. *Chrisando* underwent a restoration in 2000, which found her pitch-pine-on-oak hull to be sound. Patrice replaced the interior as original, redecked her in teak and returned to her original sail plan. A full feature on her history and restoration will be published in a future issue of CB.





The BCYC had it all: from the serious matter of sailing to a hold-up at dagger point at the Caribbean do. Graham Benton flakes *Dirk II's* foresail

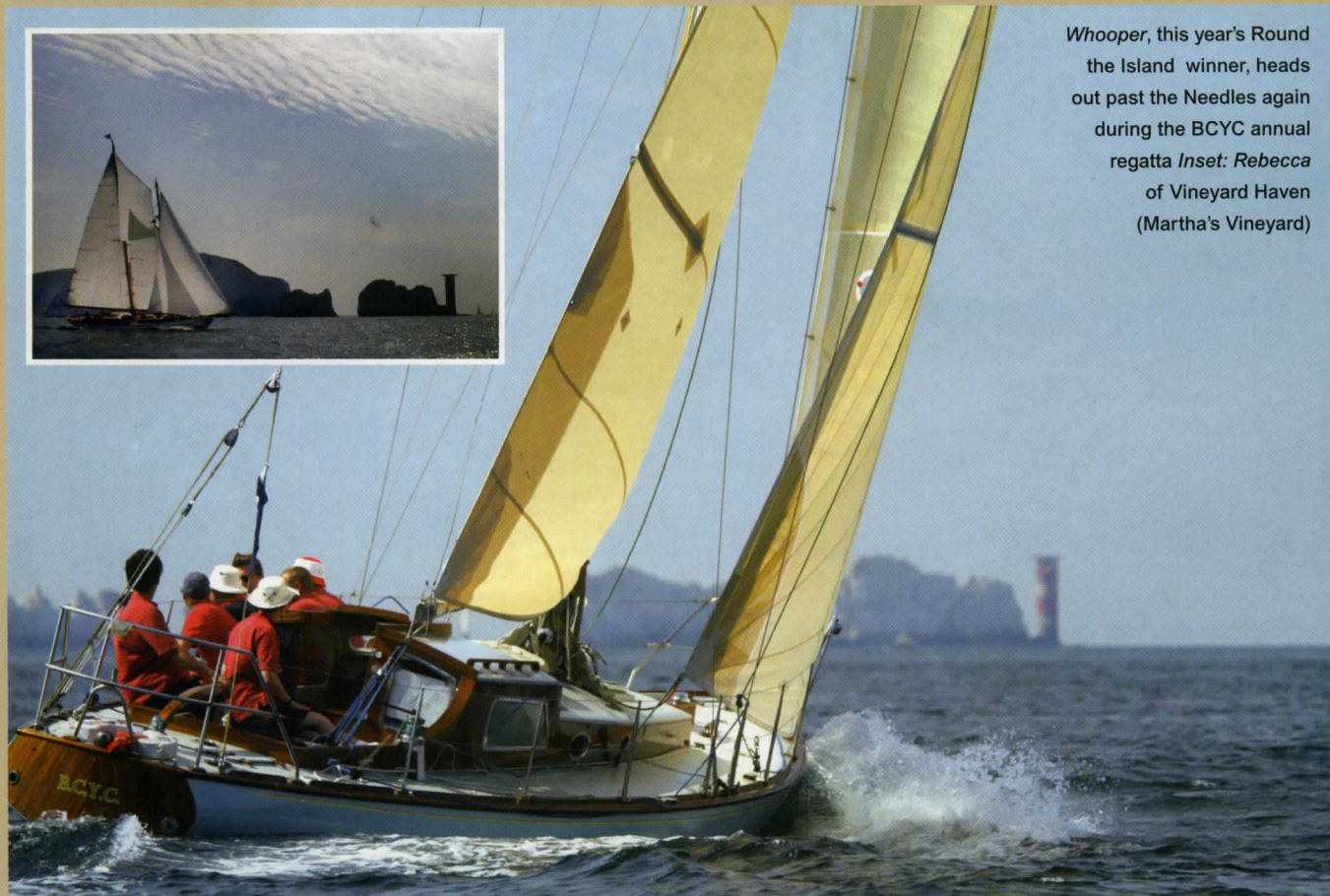


On the last day, the course took us beachside – here aboard *Josephine*

Robin Richardson waves from 6-M *Finvola*. Jurgen Lumshof owner hides!



Whooper, this year's Round the Island winner, heads out past the Needles again during the BCYC annual regatta *Inset: Rebecca* of Vineyard Haven (Martha's Vineyard)



She also romped home to win the Round the Island Race on corrected time, adding the Moonbeam trophy to her jam-packed awards cabinet. Within the Racer Class, the Metre boats also raced scratch with Peter Wilson's *If*, a 1930 Bjarne Aas, winning the 8-M subdivision, while Tom Richardson's 6-M, *Thistle*, a 1947 David Boyd design, won her subdivision.

The competition was just as fierce in the Cruiser Racer Class with Round the Island Race's (the other one) title holder *Whooper* on a winning streak. Giovanni Belgrano's 1939 Laurent Giles gave her sister ship *Cetewayo* a run for her money, winning the Cruiser Racer Class despite some stiff competition from *Cereste*, Jonathan Dyke's 1938 Shoreham 10 tonner.

In the Cruiser Class, Paul Wright's *Vashti*, a 1958 Buchanan Cruiser Racer, won the recently donated Commodore's Cup. The beautiful 72ft (21.6m) Nat Benjamin-designed *Rebecca of Vineyard Haven*, having recently arrived from the Caribbean, won the Concours d'Elegance – she is a modern classic schooner yacht, built by Gannon & Benjamin, and launched in 2001.



Cetewayo, David Murrin's other woman, chases the fleet downwind
Inset: Cockpit action – or not

Cetewayo

Aboard the newly-refitted 1955 Laurent Giles-designed *Cetewayo*, we got off the line in good order, higher and faster than the rest of the fleet, but our luck (skill?) changed shortly into the race as we took a lift in towards the coastguard cottages at the mouth of the Beaulieu River and ran aground. Oops. On the upside, an afternoon aground gave me time to quiz owner David Murrin about the upgrade in his quest for perfection – this is his fifth major refit in 18 years. He has upgraded and moved the engine from the saloon to the portside of the forward cabin, linking it to the prop by hydraulic

drive and creating a considerable difference in trim. "She needed this, as she had always been slightly stern down," said David. In its place, to port, is a spacious galley/nav station, to starboard a pilot berth is in place of the old nav station and all the systems are hidden behind the aft bulkhead to starboard to counter any list. "The way the boat sits in the water is much more elegant and the sheer far prettier. Plus she goes a lot better – if we'd had the right main, we'd have been a rocket ship!"



GARY BLAKE



GARY BLAKE

The brown and cream sets off the varnish

Shoreside there was a relaxed social agenda, taking in yacht club do's, Caribbean hog-roasts and a reggae knees-up – an interesting sight! As far as an event round-up: "It was everything that classic yacht racing should be," was how David Murrin put it. Commodore Tim Blackman added: "Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves and that is the main thing." ☺



Metre boats add extra 'class' to the event



Until next time