

Round Britain 1974 — in a Ballad

From our subsidiary in England we have got a thorough report from Round Britain Race 1974. The report is interesting since it's written as a log-book by two participants onboard a Ballad.

The race is relatively simple: Take a yacht, two yachtsmen and sail clockwise around the British Isles, leaving everything to starboard! Divide course into 5 legs and stop for 48 hours at the end of each.



The adjoining map shows the route and the stops — a nice trip of 1885 miles. 65 boats started. 35 of these were under 35' mono hulls. Celebrities like Alain Colas sailing "Manureva" and Robin Knox-Johnston in "British Oxygen" participated. Our informants, Harold Hudson and Martin Challis, sailed a standard Ballad equipped with twin forestays and a self steering gear.

The following glimpses from the race are quoted directly from the report of the crew:

Leg 1: This first section of the race was uneventful and very slow. Average speed — 4.9 knots. We were 31 st out of 66 starters.

Leg 2: We left Cork expecting to beat down to the South West Corner of Ireland and then to reach or even run as the South West wind freed us. This was not to be — we were headed all the way round the corner and not until our course was East of North, could we run free to Barra. . . . 27th place pleased us as it showed that we had the potential to improve as the race went on.

Leg 3: Castle Bay was left in stormy conditions — wind force 7—8. 80 miles beat to St. Kilda was serious stuff in these conditions. Rounding St. Kilda we were able to free off and run North East towards the Shetland Isles. Mountainous seas. On this leg we did our best noon to noon run — 165.5 miles. Approaching Lerwick in poor visibility of 1/2 mile and gale force winds. 21st. place.

Leg 4: Reluctantly we left the superb hospitality of Lerwick in a force 8 gale. Our route took us

near the oil rigs now prolific in the North Sea. This leg turned out to be a good fast reach with no tacks necessary. Our progress was exhilarating with full sail set — even a Big Boy set outside of the spinnaker and the storm jib set on the back stay. We arrived Lowestoft in 17th position, having taken 78 hours 1 minute to sail 490 miles through the water — an average of 6.3 knots.

Leg 5: The last one! Course distance to Plymouth 305 miles but due to tides we were to sail 420 miles through the water. The finish at Plymouth was off the Royal Western Yacht Club, but first we had to round the end of the breakwater 2 miles out. The breeze fell away and it took us an hour to reach the line against the ebbing tide. We finished our holiday race 24 days 7 hours and 2 minutes after starting.

Conclusion: We started with 64 other yachts, 35 of these were under 35' mono hulls. Out of the total fleet there were 21 retirements most of which were due to structural faults or equipment failure. Albin Ballad finished 7th overall on handicap, and was 5th among the under 35' mono hulls with only one 30' yacht ahead of her. We suffered no failures except for one broken sprayhood toggle.

2184 miles at an average speed of 5.6 knots is a good test for any boat. Albin Ballad passed this test with flying colours and proved beyond doubt her ability to race.

All right! Ballad is a good yacht, but we think the crew definitely made the strongest contribution. Congratulations!