

**ROBIN ELSEY**

**CORNISH YOUTH SAILOR**

## **ROLEX FASTNET RACE**

**14 AUGUST 2011**

Hi All

This is just a quick update to let you know how things are going in my preparations for the Rolex Fastnet Race. The build up to this awesome race has been going well.

### **THE YACHT**



**DAVID AISHER'S J/109**

**YEOMAN OF WIGHT**

## **THE CREW**

### **BRITISH KEELBOAT ACADEMY SQUAD MEMBERS**

HENRY SMITH, Skipper, 22 years old, from Oxford, studying at Plymouth University

STEVE AIKEN, 23 years old , a sail maker from Southampton

JAMES BROWN, 24 years old, from Southampton, studying at Exeter University

ROBIN ELSEY, 18 years old, from Falmouth, Cornwall, just finished 'A' Levels

ALEX GARDNER, 21 years old, a sailing instructor from Isle of Wight

SAM MATSON, 20 years old, from Ottery St. Mary, Devon, studying at Plymouth University

JAMES O'MAHONY, 21 years old, from Cork, Ireland, studying at Southampton University

NEIL PAYNE, 20 years old, from Leicester, studying at Portsmouth University

Last weekend we took part in our final race before the Rolex Fastnet Race. This was the RORC Channel Race which was over 122 miles round marks in the Channel starting from Cowes. The winds were fickle to start with but they filled in later so that conditions were great without being as extreme as the Round the Island Race. We all worked well together as a crew, honing the skills we will need for the Fastnet. We definitely got the food right too so there were no problems of hunger and dehydration thus we could all keep our energy levels up.

The race was scheduled to take 24 – 36 hours but in the end we took 21hours and 27 minutes. We were first in our IRC3 Race and were overall winners. Which was a totally epic result which has put us on a high before the big race.

Henry the skipper is quoted in a recent RYA article

Henry Smith, Yeoman of Wight's skipper and BKA member, commented: "It was a great team effort and we are absolutely delighted with our win. We entered the race with a number of aims in preparation for the Fastnet Race, with our priority being to finish top three in class three and to be top J109. We then set out to improve the crews watch transitions as well as increase familiarity with the boat and sail choices.

"Preparation for the event was a similar approach to other events previously attended. The crew met the day before to prepare the boat and food, checking and packing sails and double checking safety gear.

"The most positive element of this race was the crew's proactivity, ensuring we had the correct sail up at all times - proving crucial to the overall result."

I am now in Cowes working for Artemis doing corporate sailing with Sam Matson for Cowes Week. We are sailing Artemis' Offshore Academy's Figaros which are great to sail. The aim is to give our corporate clients an enjoyable experience, so the racing is much more relaxed. This is proving to be great fun and if the clients are having as enjoyable an experience as I am having all is well.

Although now that Cowes Week has started and we are racing in the IRC2 Class races my competitive streak is becoming more uncontrollable! We may not be so competitive under handicap but we are amongst ourselves and other Figaros.

I was interviewed by Radio Cornwall the other night and so the people in Cornwall are behind us which is great.

We have got some generous sponsors for our Rolex Fastnet campaign. We have been sponsored by RYA, UKSA, David Aisher and Michael Boyd. RORC have also waived our entry fees. Dorset Cereals have provided us with cereal bars and Super High Fibre Muesli so our stomachs are taken care of!

We have just heard great news from Simon Bennett that Neil Pyrde are going to provide us with offshore sailing gear. Neil Pyrde used to sponsor me during my Laser sailing career and I have always found that their sailing clothes are brilliant and totally wearable. Their offshore clothes will be invaluable keeping us warm and dry in whatever conditions are thrown at us during the race. They will also do wonders for our team image as we will now look very professional. A proper team!

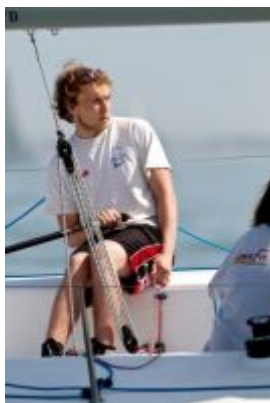
However you have all helped me get to where I am today so I hope you all will accept my thanks. You will be able to follow us on <http://www.marinetraffic.com/ais/> just type in Yeoman of Wight and you should see where we are. Can be quite addictive! You will then know when we are due to finish in Plymouth – look forward to seeing you there with the champagne!

WISH US LUCK

[Robinelseyracing@live.co.uk](mailto:Robinelseyracing@live.co.uk)

07743409623

## YOUNG CREWS GAIN VALUABLE OFFSHORE EXPERIENCE IN ROLEX FASTNET



A number of youth teams will compete in the Rolex Fastnet Race this year including the All-American Offshore Team's Reichel Pugh 65, **Vanquish** (USA). Skippered by Charles Enright, the crew have an average age of 23 and recently completed the TR2011 Transatlantic Race along with German entry, **Norddeutsche Vermögen Hamburg**. The latter's highly experienced young team are members of the Hamburgischer Verein Seefahrt e.V, an organisation founded in 1903 in Hamburg with the express goal of training young people to become skilled mariners.

From the UK, Tony Lawson's Class 40, **Team Concise** (GBR) will be skippered by the talented 23-year old, Ned Collier-Wakefield, who will go on to campaign the boat in the Class 40 World Championships and Transat Jacques Vabre. The team was set up by Lawson four years ago to encourage and develop young British offshore sailors.

The British Keelboat Academy will be sailing the J/109, **Yeoman of Wight** in the Rolex Fastnet Race. The British Keelboat Academy (BKA) is a partnership between the UKSA and RYA. The BKA has been designed to support young people aged between 18 and 24 in developing the skills needed to take their keelboat racing to a professional level. One such sailor is 18-year old Robin Elsey (picture), currently in the 6<sup>th</sup> form at Truro School in Cornwall. As a member of the BKA squad, he will compete in his first Fastnet and is the youngest member on board the J/109, **Yeoman of Wight**, generously on loan from David Aisher.

"It will be a fantastic experience to be able to compete in the Rolex Fastnet Race as it is one of the most important ocean races in the world, as well as one of the most difficult. My dream is to compete in the Volvo Ocean Race and I see this as a key stepping stone to complete that ambition," says Elsey.

**Yeoman of Wight** will be skippered for the BKA by Luke McCarthy: "We are hugely appreciative of David Aisher lending us his boat for the 2011 Rolex Fastnet campaign. This allows the sailors from the British Keelboat Academy to get valuable offshore experience in a competitive boat, which complements our other inshore campaigns on the J/80 and Farr 45. It can seem daunting for young sailors to get into offshore sailing - everything from getting used to sailing the boat, 24 hours a day and sleeping at strange times, to actually getting in touch with suitable boats."

"As well as the sailing, the BKA sailors are involved with all aspects of the campaign including planning which events to compete in, organising crew, safety equipment and food. This gives them invaluable experience which they can take forward for their future sailing, whether this is at a professional or amateur level. It is great to see former squad members such as Jamie Holmes (**Jika Jika**), Ed Hill (Swan 62) and Nick Cherry (Double Handed on a Figaro as part of the Artemis Academy), all putting the skills they learned to good use on top campaigns."