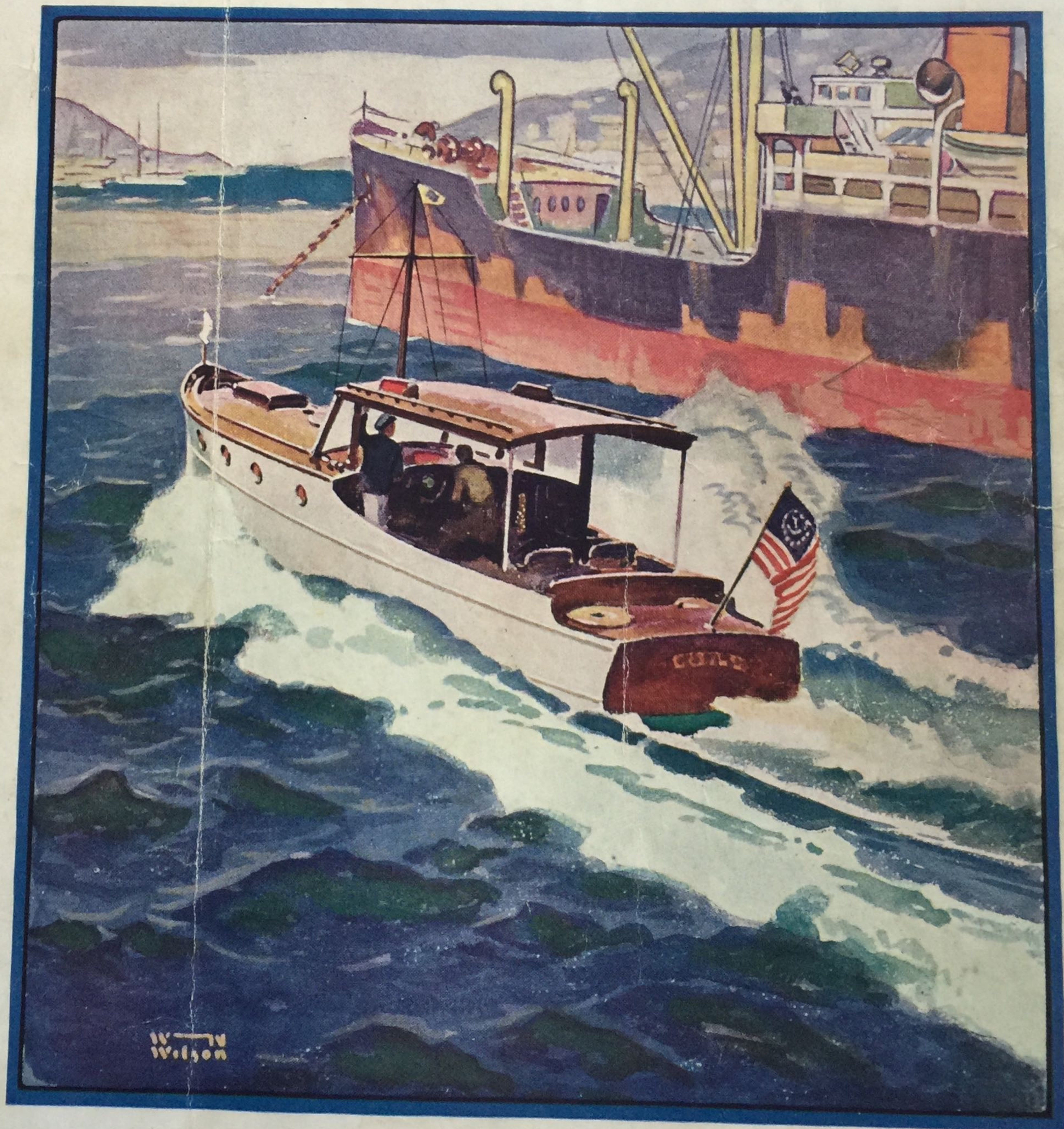


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Three British and three American boats came to the Squadron starting line, off Cowes, for the Fastnet Race. "Grenadier," in the foreground, was first across the line at the start of the 720-mile course

Fastnet Race Sailed in Light Weather

Three British and Three American Entries Race
Over Famous Course

By WESTON MARTYR



I AM here (Cowes, July 22nd) under orders from the Skipper to write for YACHTING a masterpiece on the Fastnet Race. And when I arrived yesterday and found only *three* British boats were going to start in the race I got off a whole lot of masterpieces. I should like to tell you of those inspired words I uttered about our young yachtsmen who have the boats and the time, but not the stomach to sail around the Fastnet. But I won't. After all it is a family matter, and YACHTING (bar Cap Stan's page) is a respectable magazine. So I will just hand on the rumor that the Royal Ocean Racing Club has decided to abandon the Fastnet Race and substitute a race for punts on the Upper Thames. Japanese paper lanterns of any color may be carried in lieu of navigation lights; and the punts must be equipped with at least one silk cushion for each member of the crew, together with a gramophone, an adequate supply of sucking-bottles and a certified wet-nurse.

After I heard that I went aboard *Brilliant* and let Walter Barnum and "Alf" Loomis tell me all about their 200-mile-a-day-passage across the Western Ocean. It was a fine story, and after what I had been saying about our young yachtsmen, it did me good to hear *Brilliant's* old gentlemen blow. Do not misunderstand

me. The *Brilliant's* have done something which entitles them to blow all they want; but when "Alf" tells me, "We weren't racing, mind you! We were just out for a nice, quiet cruise," then it's time somebody pulled a reef out of "Alf's" leg. But when I had looked over the schooner, I was prepared to believe anything about her. She is the finest and most honest piece of boat building and rigging I have ever seen, and I am by no means the only man over here who is saying it would be hard for *any* British yard to turn out such a perfect job.

My next visit was aboard *Dorade*, and I found the little boat looking as if she had just come out of a glass case instead of a "north about" cruise to Bergen. Her crew showed signs of cutting out the Fastnet altogether and going back to Norway, where they seem to have had a good time. I did my best to encourage this idea, too. How do you expect us to defend our Fastnet Cup against *Dorade*, anyhow? It isn't fair to send her over. But when you go and put a crew in her such as she has this year, it isn't only unfair, it's an outrage! I'm all for fair sport myself, and I admit it. So when I left *Dorade* I went ashore to see if I couldn't arrange with the Royal Yacht Squadron to shoot Sherman Hoyt with the starting gun.

The *Grenadier* struck me as a boat likely to give our yachts a better view of her stern than of her bow. Well, she's got a good looking stern, that's one comfort. She



The British cutter "*Lexia*," owned by Major Rose-Richards, placed fifth, with "*Brilliant*," sailed to England by Walter Barnum for the race, taking fourth place

has a crew, too, that I feel will need watching — if we can keep them in sight. They are all quite young, and the two Morss brothers were very modest about their chances. But I don't trust a crowd that compile their own daily weather charts on board from reports garnered from all the coast stations and steamers within range of *Grenadier's* wireless. What I mean to say is, I don't trust those guileless innocents when they tell me they consider their combined experience is insufficient to justify the hope that they may defeat their veteran competitors. No, Sir! I wouldn't trust those babies as far as I could throw them. In fact I'll risk it and say I think the *Grenadiers* are due to give all hands a fright, including Rod Stephens.

You all know *Lexia*, Major Rose-Richards' gaff-rigged cutter. She is our heavy weather "hope" in this race. She has a first class ocean-racing crew aboard, with Captains Waite and Tetley amongst them. So *Lexia* will have to go if she gets a breeze that lets them start her sheets. Under these conditions she and *Brilliant* might have a good fight. But I cannot fancy her chances. She has to give *Dorade* 97 seconds a mile. This is not a joke; those are the official figures! And yesterday I went to see the man in our Air Ministry who makes our weather. I found him tracing the isobars of a big, fat anti-cyclone with its centre to the southwestward of the Fastnet. The cognoscenti will understand, therefore, that *Lexia's* chance of a breeze and started sheets is a mighty slim one.

You all know *Ilex*. She has a new crew this year; but her men are still all Royal Engineers and can be trusted to carry on the *Ilex* tradition of, "Drive her, boys, drive her. And what she can't carry she can carry away." They have six spare topmasts stowed on deck, all handy. And, being Sappers, they can no doubt make a few more spars if they run out of stock enroute.

Flame you don't know. She is Charles Nicholson's cruising cutter, and Nicholson is sailing her, with Bobby Somerset to give him a hand. I don't know much about *Flame* myself, except that she looks fast and that Somerset says she is fast — to windward, if it does not blow hard. I was aboard *Dorade* when *Flame* came sailing in from Gosport. She was slipping along in the light air, and

I noticed Sherman Hoyt gazing at her and looking serious. Which leads me to hope *Flame* may give you fellows a bit of a fright.

The course this year is from the Squadron starting line, to westward past the Needles, 'round the Fastnet and then back, to southward of the Isle of Wight, 'round the Nab to the finish line between the forts in Spithead.

The start, at 11:00 A.M. this morning, was fun — for the spectators. There was a very light westerly air, hardly enough to give steerageway, and the ebb tide running to the westward threatened to carry the whole fleet over the line too soon. The five-minute gun found all the boats just stemming the tide with their tails turned to the line and kedges hanging over their bows all ready to let go. *Dorade* seemed best placed. She was farthest from the line and therefore in less danger of being swept over it. Three minutes to go — and we were wondering if *Lexia* and *Grenadier*, too near the line, would have to let go their kedges. Then, to our amazement, we saw *Grenadier* being backed around. She set a big fisherman and deliberately went for the line. She seemed bound to cross too early, and once over she might have to wait hours for enough wind to get back again. Mr. Henry Morss, Senior, was standing beside me. I heard him groan and saw him shut his eyes. I think he was praying for his two reckless sons. But when the gun went *Grenadier* had about six feet to spare. It was a plucky start, made with fine judgment, and it gave *Grenadier* a three-minute lead over *Dorade*, the second boat to cross, and twelve and one half minutes over the last boat, *Ilex*.

For the next hour *Grenadier* and *Dorade* seemed to be the only boats able to keep sailing. They ghosted away, half a mile ahead of the rest, who all had their troubles. *Lexia* and *Flame* drifted together, and remained locked for a while in close embrace. Then *Lexia* let go a kedge — and very nearly lost it. *Ilex* began to go through the fleet, with more wind and tide, very close inshore. Too close! She hit a boulder and hung there on the falling tide, until the Sappers managed somehow to bounce her off it. *Brilliant* could not get going, while *Flame*, if she were not interested in the race at all.

So they went, until off Lymington a nice little breeze set in, dead ahead, and at last they all settled down to their work, *Dorade* leading, then *Grenadier*, *Flame*, *Lexia*, *Brilliant* and *Ilex*. There was something like ten minutes between the lot.

I watched them go until the haze hid them and I thought of some things that have happened on other races over the long, hard Fastnet course. So I bade them all goodbye with the fisherman's prayer. I said, "Oh, God, be good to them. Thy sea is so wide and their boats are so small."



Cowes, July 28th. That prayer of mine was a mistake! They have all got back safely, but the weather provided was *too* fine. They have taken over six days to sail 720 miles, so it's a good job I didn't pray harder, or they might have starved to death. They met nothing but calms and light airs all the way to the Fastnet and what little wind they did get was ahead. On the homeward passage things were a trifle better, but not much. The two leading boats, *Flame* and *Dorade*, were close-hauled all the

way out and all the way home, until well past the Lizard, east-bound; but the head winds encountered were so light that *Dorade* found it paid her to carry her balloon jib about 80 percent of the time.

From Start Point to the finish they got a fair wind at last that had some heart in it. But there could not have been great power even in this breeze, because Somerset tells me that when he got one foot wet for the first time

after five days of ocean racing, he felt quite surprised and hurt about it. *Lexia* and the two schooners naturally did not stand a chance of showing off under these conditions. They enjoyed a nice spell of sun bathing, they tell me, until they reached the Lizard, homeward-bound. At this point the three of them were roughly twelve hours astern of *Dorade*. Then the fair wind got hold of them and *Grenadier*, *Brilliant* and *Lexia* began to move. And they must have moved fast, and had luck with their tides off the headlands, because, when *Dorade* crossed the finish line, the three big boats were *in plain sight* astern of her!

The *Brilliant*s say they were doing over ten and one half knots in spots during



"*Dorade*," in charge of Roderick Stephens, repeated her Fastnet Race victory of 1931, winning on corrected time by seven hours, and finishing second. Below, left, the 33-year-old cutter "*Flame*," which finished first and took third place. She was sailed by Charles Nicholson, her owner, and Robert Somerset. Right, "*Grenadier*," sailed by Henry and Sherman Morss, of Boston, took second place on corrected time



that last run in. And I believe them, because *Lexia* topped ten knots once and for ten hours she was doing well over nine. And *Lexia* can carry no balloon main topmast staysail. But it takes more than fast sailing to pick up ten hours on *Dorade* on a run of 180 miles. The apparent miracle was caused by our Channel tides. You will find it hard to believe this, but that is merely because you fellows don't know what real tides are. You haven't got any tides. We have. Especially off the English Channel headlands. I am afraid to tell you how fast the tide runs off Portland Bill, because you certainly would not believe me. But you may care to take a chance on believing the British Admiralty. If so, look at an Admiralty chart of the English Channel, and off St. Catherine's Point you will see this little legend: "5 kn. Sp." And after some experiences I have had off St. Catherine's I think this five knots at springs is a conservative estimate. Especially on the ebb.

But take the present case. *Dorade* was some 12 hours ahead of *Brilliant* at the Lizard. *Dorade* had the Lizard abeam for three hours. Off St. Catherine's she was only one hour 20 minutes astern of *Flame*. Her speedometer never registered less than seven knots from there to the Nab; but she met the spring ebb and finished six hours seven minutes behind *Flame* and only 49 minutes ahead of *Brilliant*! All this means that *Flame* rounded the Point — the critical point — before the ebb turned against her; that *Dorade* just didn't; and that *Brilliant* did not get up to the Point till the strength of the ebb had run. It looks as if something similar happened off Start Point, too. This means a lot of real hard luck for *Dorade* which could not be avoided. It also surely means that the present Fastnet course turns the race into a sheer lottery.

To get back to the beginning; I have already told you of the head wind that set in when the yachts were off Lymington. It woke *Flame* up and she soon worked past *Grenadier* and tackled *Dorade*. But the little yawl made a good fight of it. She camped on *Flame*'s weather bow and kept there, tack for tack, until off St. Albans, when *Flame* shook her off at last. The wind lasted till midnight, just long enough to let *Flame* squeeze round Portland Bill with the last dregs of the tide. Then it fell flat calm and *Flame* anchored while the new tide stirred up Portland Race and knocked *Dorade* for a full row of American tiled bathrooms. When she came to she was miles back up Channel.

At dawn there came a draft off the land, to fan *Flame* across Lyme Bay and push the rest of the fleet around the Bill. The wind came too late, however, to save *Lexia*. In the calm she almost drifted right on to the beach and she had to run her engine for two minutes. This lost her her chance of winning a prize; but she kept on with the job because her owner has won all the pots he needs, but never seems to have had enough ocean racing.

The 23rd was a hot day of calms and light variables between W.S.W. and N.W. Nothing much to write about, but the crews said a whole lot about it, I hear. One of those exasperating days when you work hard trimming sail and sweat blood experimenting with your kites, with very little in the end to show for it all.

Flame and *Dorade* oozed gently further ahead of the rest, whose progress may be judged by the fact that *Lexia*, somewhere in the middle of the bunch, had the Lizard abeam at nine o'clock on the 24th, and the Lizard still abeam at 10:00 A.M. After which they drifted out between Land's End and the Scillies (or through Plum Gut as Sherman Hoyt will call it), with light airs from the W. and N.W. until the evening of the 25th,

when the wind came fresher from the S.W. When this change of wind came, *Flame* was rounding the Fastnet, *Dorade* was close up to the Rock, while *Lexia*, *Grenadier* and *Brilliant*, in sight of each other, were about 30 miles astern of the two leaders. *Flame* and *Dorade*, bound home, therefore found themselves close hauled again, while *Lexia* and the schooners, still outward-bound, reached along nicely. At 11:00 P.M. on the 25th *Lexia* sighted *Flame* abeam, and twenty minutes afterwards *Dorade* also passed her. Which seems to show that *Flame* got the worst of the deal when the wind changed, as the official times at the Fastnet were as follow: *Flame*, 25th, 6:20 P.M.; *Dorade*, 25th, 8:45 P.M.; *Lexia*, 26th, 1:30 A.M.; *Grenadier*, 26th, 2:05 A.M.; *Brilliant*, 26th, 4 A.M.; *Ilex*, 26th, 3:50 P.M.

The southwest wind held all night, but with the dawn it became light and variable again and remained so all day. It was during this light weather that *Flame* and *Dorade* increased their lead on the rest so considerably.

At nightfall came another major change of the wind. This time it came fairly fresh out of the E.N.E. and lasted till dawn on the 27th, when *Lexia* and the schooners were off the Seven Stones Lightvessel, with *Dorade* already around the Lizard and *Flame* well on the way to Start Point.

On the morning of the 27th the last change of weather occurred, a westerly wind making up steadily and freshening, to last until the finish of the race.

The times at the Lizard, east-bound, were, approximately: *Flame*, 26th, 11:35 P.M.; *Dorade*, 27th, 2. A.M.; *Grenadier*, 27th, 1:18 P.M.; *Brilliant*, 27th, 1:20 P.M.; *Lexia*, 27th, 2. P.M.; *Ilex*, 27th, 8:55 P.M.

The last boats got the westerly first and benefited most as it freshened. *Lexia* picked up her heels at last and began to go. For the 14 hours from 5:00 P.M. on the 27th she logged 127 knots, an average of over nine knots. The schooners did even better. These two were having a real race between themselves and were actually in sight of each other from start to finish. They ran up Channel at ten knots, neck and neck, with everything up that would stay there and draw. *Grenadier* eventually opened up a slight lead, which she held to St. Catherine's, where she was robbed of it by some scientific tide-cheating perpetrated by Barnum, Loomis & Co. It was nip-and-tuck with them on the beat in from the Nab to the finish, where the schooners fought out the end of their 700-mile match like a couple of New York "Forties" on a Saturday afternoon race. They finished within 2 minutes 14 seconds of each other, *Brilliant* leading. *Lexia* was close on their heels.

Dorade won. She finished second, six hours behind *Flame*, and won on time by a month or so. But for bad luck with her tides, she would have finished within two hours of *Flame*, and she beat all the others boat for boat, anyhow. Well done, *Dorade*!

Grenadier finished fourth, only 51 minutes behind *Dorade* in actual time. She wins the second prize on time easily. She was well sailed, she made no mistakes that I can hear about, and, under the conditions, I do not see how she could have done much better.

Flame was third on time; she measures out badly under the R.O.R.C. Rule. But *Flame* beat the whole fleet home, which is not so bad for a boat that is 33 years old, and skippered and sailed by a man 33 years older still! Well done, *Flame*. And well done, Charley Nicholson.

There was really nothing in this race for a poor scribe to make a song about, let alone a masterpiece, Skipper! *Flame* carried away the clew of her mainsail at the Nab,

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Fastnet Race Sailed in Light Weather

(Continued from page 26)

and finished under trysail. *Dorade* logged eight and one fourth for the first four hours after rounding the Fastnet, while the others were doing round about six. I can't understand it. *Dorade* is a miracle, not a yacht. It isn't fair to send her over here. She ought to be stopped. A big liner did her best for us. She tried hard to sink *Dorade*, but unfortunately missed her by six feet three inches — measured by Sherman Hoyt with a boathook. And Ducky Endt, who was steering at the time, is still wondering what Sherman made such a fuss about. This collision risk is certainly the biggest risk in ocean racing. A steam trawler, walking in her sleep, nearly trampled all over *Lexia*.

When *Lexia* and *Grenadier* rounded the Fastnet, somebody seems to have been cutting corners. *Lexia* says it was *Grenadier*, and *vice versa*. Whoever it was, she must have been cutting that corner mighty close to make the light-keepers fire warning guns at her!

It was the slowest Fastnet race that ever was seen, and the *Ilex* was the—— Well, never mind that; but I guess she must have run clean out of topmasts. Or something. The average age of our boats is 23 years, while that of your boats is two years. And one of our skippers is 65 and another is 66. It looks as though it were time we did something about it.

Dorade also won Robert Somerset's Jolie Brise Cup, on an arbitrary handicap faked up by the six skippers in private conference. *Dorade* won on handicap by several months, so it looks as if there was another conference besides the World Economic Conference which is a busted flush.

Yacht	Rig	L.O.A.	L.W.L.	Finished	Corrected Time
<i>Dorade</i>	Bermuda Yawl	52.2	37.0	28th. 11:23:15 A.M.	27th. 3:59:15 P.M.
<i>Grenadier</i>	Bermuda Sch.	59.4	43.1	28th. 12:14:37 P.M.	27th. 11:14:37 P.M.
<i>Flame</i>	Bermuda Cutter	63.5	50.0	28th. 5:15:06 A.M.	28th. 2:51:06 A.M.
<i>Brilliant</i>	Schooner	61.6	49.0	28th. 12:12:23 P.M.	28th. 3:48:23 A.M.
<i>Lexia</i>	Cutter	64.0	49.7	28th. 1:31:56 P.M.	28th. 1:56:31 P.M.
<i>Ilex</i>	Cutter	50.0	40.0	29th. 12:44:00 A.M.	28th. 1:44:00 P.M.

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