

THE OBSERVER SINGLEHANDED TRANSATLANTIC RACE 1972



YACHTS • COMPETITORS • MAPS

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in
British Steel.**

Brian Cooke, who will be racing the famous yacht British Steel, is manager of our branch in Lower Parkstone, Dorset.

Everyone at National Westminster wishes him the very best of luck in this great adventure.

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The Observer Singlehanded sailing race across the Atlantic is the longest, loneliest and toughest solo voyage regularly contested — 3,000 miles from Plymouth to Newport, Rhode Island, through all the perils of the Western Ocean and against the prevailing winds and currents.

This year's race starts at noon on Saturday 17 June. It is the fourth in the series which has developed over the last 12 years from a small, almost private, contest to a huge international competition that draws solo sailors from every corner of the earth.

The first race was in 1960, when only five boats entered and Francis Chichester won in his Gipsy Moth III.



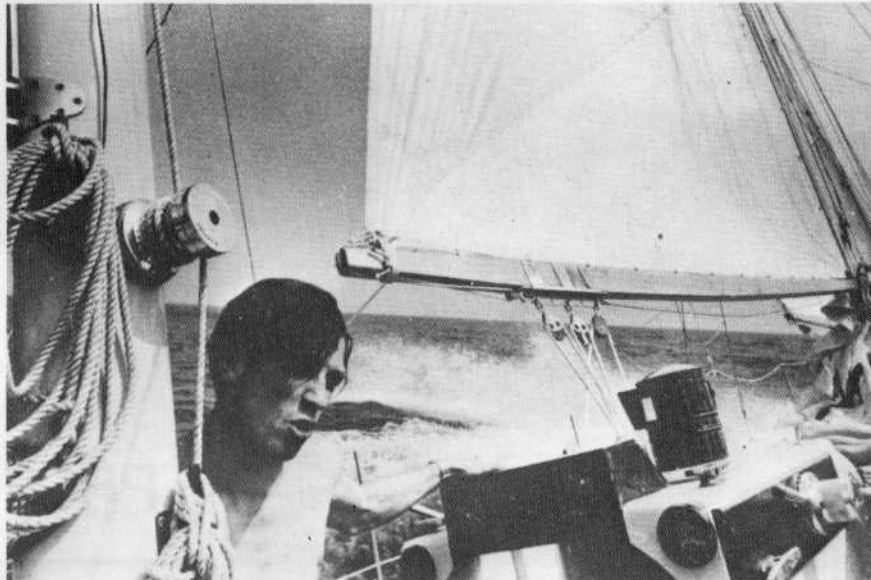
For that race the finish was in New York and Chichester arrived there 40 days after the start.

In 1964, 15 yachts started and 14 finished. Chichester sailed again in Gipsy Moth III but this time was beaten into second place by a French Naval Lieutenant named Eric Tabarly



in Pen Duick II. Tabarly's boat had been specially designed for the race and when he won easily in 27 days President de Gaulle immediately made him a Chevalier of the Legion of Honour.

For the 1968 race the starting fleet



had grown to 35 boats and for the first time there was a woman among the entrants. There were more single-handers from overseas countries than from Britain when the fleet sailed out of Plymouth Sound on 1 June, but the winner was a Cornishman, Geoffrey Williams in his 56-foot ketch, Sir Thomas Lipton; his time was just under 26 days. In this race most of the fleet met the full fury of the North Atlantic at its worst. Only 19 boats reached Newport and three sank in the attempt. But there was no loss of life.

The Observer Singlehanded was originally the brainchild of Lieutenant-Colonel H. G. 'Blondie' Hasler, who conceived it as a race that would help to develop new methods of boat handling and providing comfort for the lone sailor. Its organisers since 1960 have been the Royal Western Yacht Club of England at Plymouth.

This year's race sees a very strong challenge for all the trophies by the French contingent of 15 yachts. They are well fancied to take the overall trophy for the first boat to Newport, and will be trying hard for the handicap trophy as well. For this race there is an additional prize for the first yacht of 35-feet or less to finish, and here the French challenge is formidable.

One award the French cannot take is the Ida Lewis trophy — it goes to the first American boat home. This trophy is donated by the Ida Lewis Yacht Club, who organise the finish at Newport, and it will be contested by five singlehanders from the United States. An important point about the 1972 race is that for the first time both the yacht and its crew must have completed a 500-mile qualifying cruise two months before the start. The aim has been to ensure that no boat is improperly prepared for the voyage.

The Observer Singlehanded has become a great international adventure. The transatlantic crossing remains difficult and sometimes dangerous, and every solo sailor who faces that challenge deserves the respect of everyone who follows their progress across 3,000 miles of unpredictable ocean.

The Observer and the Royal Western Yacht Club of England gratefully acknowledge that this race would not have been possible without the considerable help of The Flag Officer, Plymouth and the Royal Navy, the Air Commander, Southern Maritime Air Region and the Royal Air Force, the Canadian Forces, the Lord Mayor and Corporation of the City of Plymouth, the International & Maritime Telecommunications Region, Wireless Telegraph Section of the Post Office, the Meteorological Office, the British Transport Docks Board (Millbay Docks, Plymouth), H.M. Coastguard, the United States Coast Guard, Lloyd's of London, the Ida Lewis Yacht Club and the Port O'Call Marina, Newport, Rhode Island and many other organisations and individuals.



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**Best Wishes to
Sir Francis Chichester and
all other competitors.**



WHITBREAD

PLAN OF START

Plymouth

