Have a Knife handy

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FRAGRANT HARBOUR

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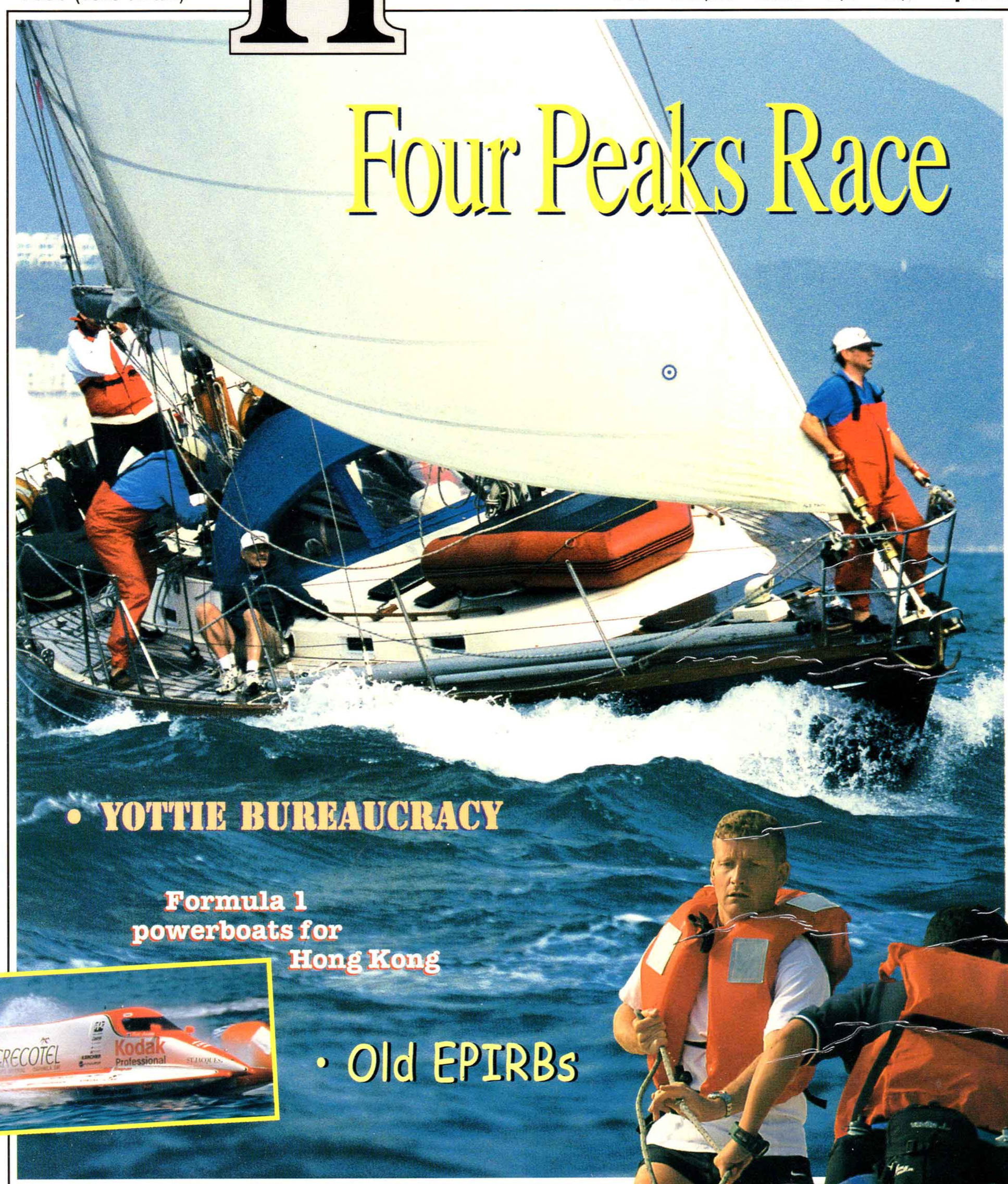

Four Peaks Race

CHINA'S MARITIME STRATEGY

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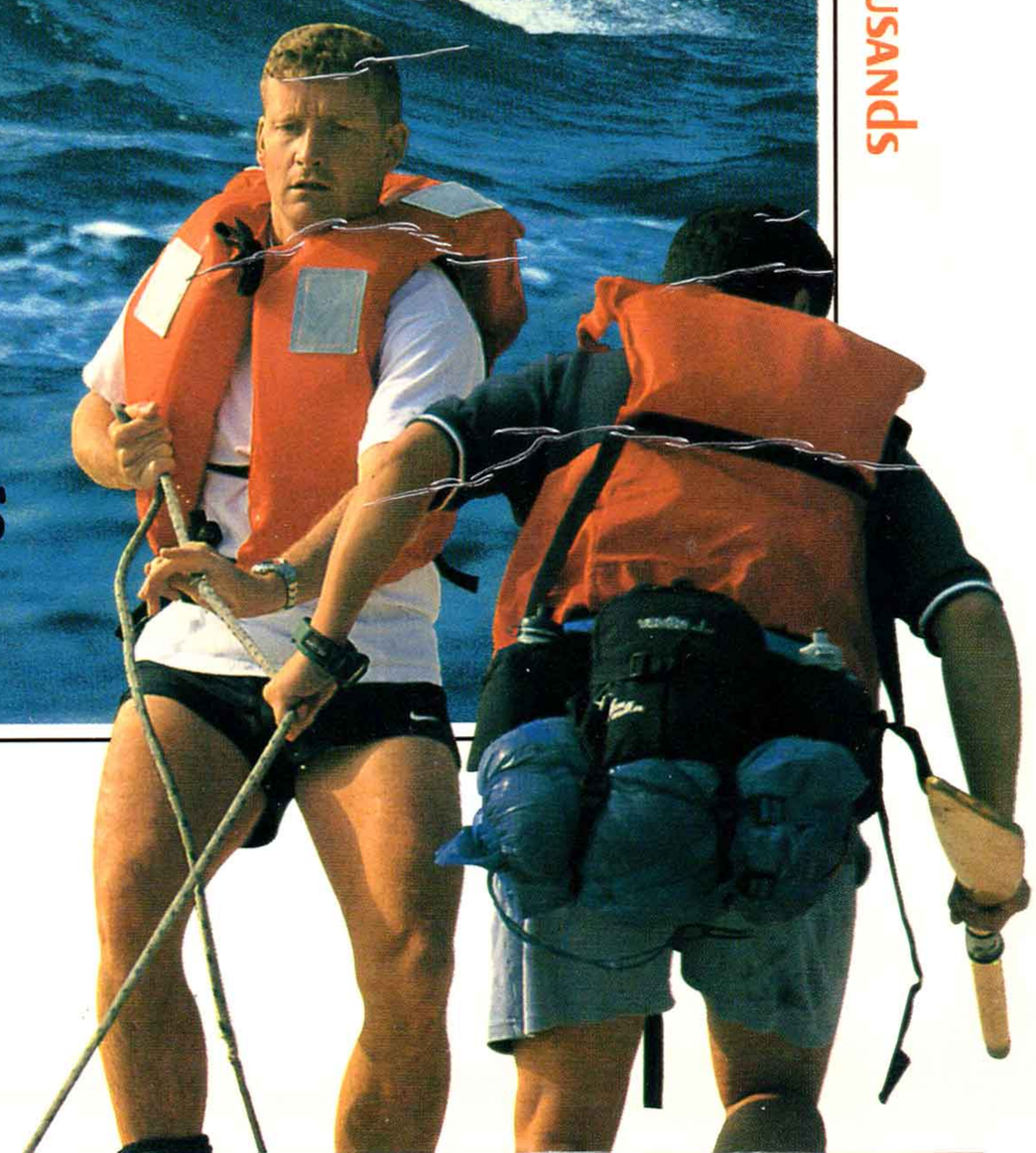


Making decks less slippery

Land Rover

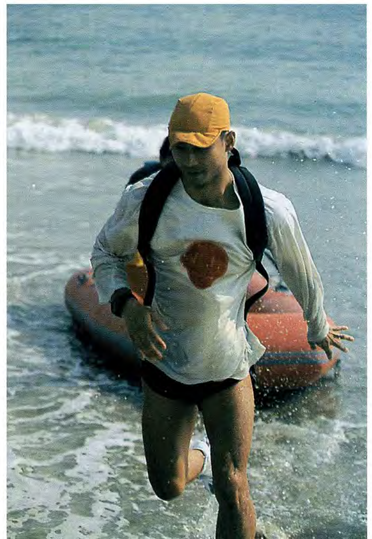
Four Peaks Race

Fast but frustrating

In fresh 18 to 20-knot easterlies, 21 boats crossed a line off Tai Tam Bay on the 30th of January to mark the start of the 15th Four Peaks Race. Sponsored again this year by Land Rover, the event appears to have gained a second wind with an increase in numbers and media interest — last year, despite 13 official entries, only 11 made the start and in the end only eight finished.

Race officer Arnold Lunty decided on one start for all three divisions (A, B and C) and, in slight seas and generally mild conditions, the fleet rounded a windward mark and headed for the channel between Waglan and Sung Kong Islands. That said, the start was not without incident. Twenty three boats had entered but minutes before the gun, *Tru Blu* crewman Phil Harvey was injured during a gybe and had to be rushed ashore by the club Cheoy Lee to spend the rest of his weekend in hospital. And race regular, *Ariki III*, had rig and engine problems and, although skipper Graeme Large crossed the line, he decided to retire in the better interests of both boat and crew.

Having rounded Sung Kong and hoisted their kites, the Division A boats slipped between Beaufort and Po Toi Islands while the Division B entries landed on Po Toi and completed their first peak. From there on, all divisions did the same peaks (Stenhouse, Ma On Shan and Violet). Best time up Po Toi was by the Outward Bound School team — 31 minutes.



With Leon Chan's *Tipsy Free* in the lead, the main fleet sailed under Lamma Island and west-northwest to Cheung Sha Beach. There the fun began. First in at 1436 were *Tipsy's* runners, er, into the water that is. They were not long ashore, dripping wet, before the *Wizard* team stormed the beach in their kayak, disappearing through the trees in hot pursuit, Park'n Shop bags tied round their feet!

Storming ashore (top), *Koala* (left), *Yat Fung* (above) and *Tipsy Free's* runner dashes up Cheung Sha Beach (bottom)

From about 1500 onwards, the other boats gradually appeared on the horizon, disembarked their runners and dropped anchor a hundred yards or so offshore.

Land Rover Four Peaks Race 1999

Start time Division A, B, C 11:15:00 (30.Jan.99)

Class	Pos.	Yacht	PN	CHS	Div.	Finish	Elapsed	Shore Section	Corrected CHS	Corrected PYS
I	1	Wizard	760	1.065	A	31:07:45:54	20:30:00	6:30:00	21:25:34	24:56:27
I	2	X-Stream	854	0.993	A	31:11:18:35	24:03:35	6:30:00	23:56:12	27:03:42
I	3	Tipsy Free	794	1.065	A	31:14:15:22	27:00:22	6:30:00	28:44:57	32:19:35
I	4	Rampage	786	1.110	A	31:13:51:08	26:36:08	6:30:00	28:48:48	32:04:31
I	5	Intrigue Plus*	725	1.095	A	31:18:15:24	31:00:24	6:30:00	*33:25:05	*40:23:08
		* includes penalty for start line infringement								
II	1	Windseeker	913		A	31:12:20:28	25:06:28	6:30:00		26:51:46
II	2	Boss Hogg	941		A	31:14:27:46	27:12:46	6:30:00		28:30:41
II	2	Shikari	963		A	31:16:21:47	29:06:47	6:30:00		29:58:55
II	4	Disco Dancer	906		A	31:14:48:06	27:33:06	6:30:00		30:14:01
II	5	Shearwater V	930		A	31:16:12:26	28:57:26	6:30:00		30:38:51
II		Quicksilver	882		A	rtd				
III	1	Tamarisk	983		A	31:14:13:17	26:58:17	6:30:00		27:19:32
III	2	Elysium	980		A	31:17:30:38	30:15:38	6:30:00		30:44:44
III		Brown Sugar	1000		A	rtd				
III		Montrachet	1058		A	rtd				
III		Press Gang	1079		A	rtd				
III		Sawadee	1079		A	rtd				
III		Tru Blu	1039		A	dns				

Division B results

Pos.	Yacht	PN	Div.	Finish	Elapsed	Shore Section	Motoring	K-factor	Corrected
1	Koala	1171	B	31:11:26:49	24:11:49	4:15:00	1:30:00	2.5	23:45:1
2	Yat Fung*	1300	B	31:13:08:10	25:53:10	4:15:00	2:44:00	2.5	25:37:26
	Ariki III	1631	B	rtd					

* PN number for Yat Fung adjusted to acknowledge boat centreboard problem noted at briefing

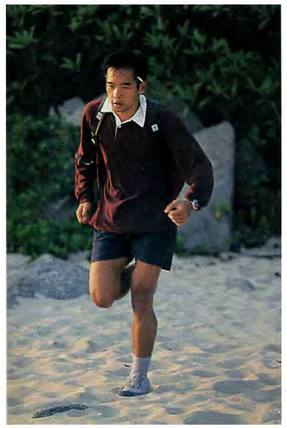
Division C results

Pos.	Yacht	PN	Div.	Finish	Elapsed	Shore Section	Motoring	K-factor	Corrected
1	Polecat	1050	C	31:10:02:19	22:47:19	6:30:00	3:53:00	2.5	28:01:22
	Excalibur	920	C	dns					

As the pictures on the following page indicate, even the smallest of waves can play havoc with a flexible rubber dinghy. Especially if it's full of runners and rowers. *Wizard's* runners returned by 1603, in time to paddle past the last boat in, *Press Gang* at 1607. The *Wizard* team had made good a time of one hour, 24 minutes and 45 seconds, beating *X-Stream's* runners by almost four minutes and the *Tipsy* two by 18 minutes.

***Press Gang* beats to Waglan**

From Lantau, the fleet headed back for Lamma Island, and Mt Stenhouse, said to be tactically the most difficult of all. Added to this is the difficulty of landing, running and boarding in the dark. However, it was here that the awesome fitness of *Koala's* runners, Helena and Adrian, both Scotish national long distance champions, became apparent. Their time of 33:44 sent shivers of fear through the fleet listening open-mouthed on VHF. The next fastest time was *X-Stream* at just two seconds under one hour. The slowest was *Rampage* — three hours and 37 minutes. Oh dear.



After leaving Lamma, the boats sailed east past Cape D'Aguilar and north for Sai Kung. Luckily, leading boat *Wizard* got its runners ashore just after midnight because at about 0100, the wind died. Totally.

"We tried to go into the public pier, only because the boat was moving. With hindsight, we should have done what *Wizard* did and drop its runners on the headland," said Mike Barker of *X-Stream*. "Up until then we were having a good race. Something else we will remember next time will be to provide the runners with portable phones so that we can tell them where to meet us. It would have been much better for the boat to have inched its way out of Sai Kung and at least collected them off the headland."

Returning from Lantau Peak (middle) and Division C entry *Polecat* (above)

Other boats, like *Windseeker*, used oars to keep moving (allowed in the rules). *Boss Hogg's* Peter Bradley told of a 12-hour slog coming into Port Shelter, doing Ma On Shan, and finally getting out past the Ninepins to pick up a bit of breeze. "Mind you, we were doing very well coming

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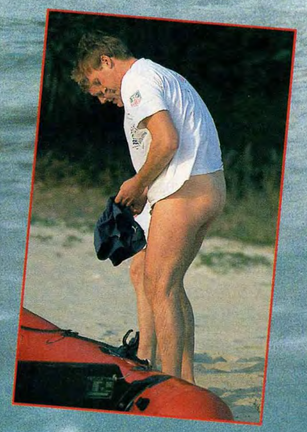

Undignified landings at Cheung Sha Beach (top, main and above). Quick change into something dry (below right)

Continued from page 17

around past Stanley and into Repulse Bay. The trials and tribulations of the night were soon forgotten." Port Shelter was, it seems, the real killer, splitting the fleet and claiming more than one retiree.

The runners, on the other hand, clocked some excellent times with the *Koala* stars completing the ascent and descent in a record one hour, 34 minutes and 50 seconds. A surprise time for this peak was the *Tamarisk* team's two hours and 13 minutes — the 3rd fastest after *X-Stream* at one hour and 44 minutes.

With the wind freshening a little, the boats began to move a little quicker coming down and around Shek O, past Stanley and into Repulse Bay. First ashore were the *Wizard* runners to clock a very respectable 44 minutes and 33 seconds for Violet Hill. Times for Violet were generally good, with the slowest only being one hour and 44.

After Violet Hill, the boats made for a finish near Middle Island. *Wizard* was first across the line at 7:45:54, a clear three and a half hours ahead of X-Stream (11:18:35). This is the second deserved Division A, Class I victory for the disciplined *Wizard* and crew. Chris Pooley, helming *Shearwater V*, thought he could slip past the wrong side of the committee boat but, when the race officer would not oblige, even after 30 hours, 38 minutes and 51 seconds, he turned back, passed the committee boat on the right side and got a gun.

Team *X-Stream* prepares to paddle back

Tamarisk (above) and *Wizard's* runners ashore (middle)

The Four Peaks Race involves more than just sailors and runners. A support team has to man the control room, keep radio contact, take times on peaks, drive safety boats and much more. In all, more than 50 people swing into action in support of 21 competing boats and crews. Interestingly, this year there were three all-Chinese boats (*Tipsy Free, Rampage, Intrigue Plus*) which goes to show that yachting is not just an expat-dominated sport.

The Four Peaks Race is such a unique event it fills its own category in the Aberdeen Boat Club's calender. Indeed, it has a special place in Hong Kong's sporting calendar and is slowly but surely gaining the recognition it deserves.