RACING

4 Peaks Race 1991

The 4 Peaks Race has a history of windless legs and this year was no exception. Throughout the two-day race, held over the weekend 9th and 10th of February, the wind was of primary concern to all crews.

There was a light airs start, a light airs trip into Port Shelter, a soft stretch overnight (until about 1100 on Sunday) and a light airs finish . . . for those that were still in the race. There were about five hours of good wind, and that was all.

At Shek O Rock on Saturday morning, 21 starters could be seen bobbing about like rocking horses, purposefully looking for the starting line. The few that got away under sail were soon overtaken when the Division 2 motorists turned on their engines 30 minutes after the start, and headed on into Port Shelter. In fact, by the time the leading sailors dropped off their runners to tackle Ma On Shan, there were a number of motoring boats already leaving the Sai Kung area.

The wind did not improve during the night either. For the sailors in Division 1 the trip down below the Ninepins, south of Waglan and Po Toi, and on to Lantau, was long and very, very slow. Many of the motoring boats made excellent time overnight, and several of the sailors turned on their engines and put themselves into Division 2. In fact, of the 11 boats that started in Division 1, six retired and seven transferred to Division 2.

At Cheung Sha Beach, Lantau, there were four boats still in the race: *Bugis, East Wind, Fast Exit* and *Bucephalus*. *Fast Exit* was delayed somewhat when she touched the beach and spent 20 minutes extricating herself from the sand (without, contrary to reports in the press, outside assistance), and *Bugis* and *East Wind* were long gone.

But then the afternoon wind died again and as *East Wind* crawled across to Lamma the *Bugis* crew were actually rowing their boat around the point below Mt Stenhouse while their runner "went over the top". *Bugis* crossed the finishing line at almost 2212 by which time *Fast Exit* had resorted to the iron headsail and *East Wind* and *Bucephalus* had retired, leaving her as sole survivor of the race in Division 1.

As Vic Locke said later: "I have always maintained that this is a sailing race and not a running event and we won it on the water, not on land."

FH feels that there are one or two things that could be done to improve this excellent event: the ABC has always publicised the 4 Peaks Race as a "fun" event but in ever-competitive Hong Kong this is just not true. Any crew that sets out to sail some 83 nautical miles, run about 27 kilometres and climb an aggregate 2,520 metres is not doing it for "fun", especially when there are 15 trophies at stake! We hear that next year entrants will be required to submit their dates of birth and not simply their ages, such is the competition for the Crock Pot (the prize for the finishing crew with the oldest average age).

Preparations in Sai Kung (middle) and *Skerryvore* waiting for runners off Lamma Island

The ABC attempted to even out the variances between the power of the engines in different boats in Division 2 by building a speed-under-engine factor into the corrected time calculation. The two divisions, however, were sent on different courses so that boats changing to Division 2 late in the race had already travelled a substantially greater distance than those who had elected to motor from the beginning. This, too, needs a rethink. And could CHS (or another rating system) be considered? It seems odd that *Bugis*, a Holland 41, should cross the starting line with the same rating as *Fast Exit*, a 32-foot X-99!

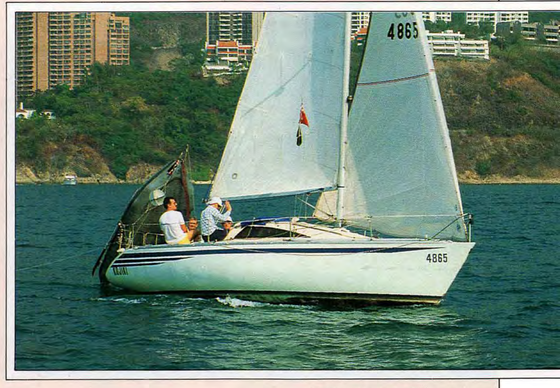
Lastly, the handicapping, regulations for use of engines, etc, are seen by some to be a bit of a lottery. Well, that's a matter of opinion. We still think it's a great event and without letting out too many secrets, FH hopes next year to be campaigning with a team of Gurkhas as runners, Dennis Conner as skipper and *Steinlager* as boat! And to hell with ratings, we want line honours. Seriously, though, it's a great race and we would like to see a lot more entries in 1992.

Delphian's **runners begin their ascent of Mt Stenhouse (left) and** ***Mach 1*** **near Lamma (below)**

Atal/ABC 4 Peaks Race 1991

Division 1 (corrected time)

Pos.	Boat	Skipper/club	Time
1	Bugis	Locke, RHKYC	40:19:37
	Gale Force	Baer, RHKYC	dnf
	East Wind	Leese, RHKYC	dnf
	Lok Sun	Tavernier, RHKYC	dnf
	Rooibok	Blair, HHYC	dnf
	Bucephalus	Glancy, ABC	dnf
	Tatoosh	Bodiley, RHKYC	dnf



Kojiki **– 12th in Division 2**

Division 2 (corrected time)

Pos.	Boat	Skipper/club	Time
1	Windseeker	Robinson, RHKYC	39:00:04
2	Delphian	Renwick, ABC	39:07:01
3	Skerryvore	Reid, RHKYC	39:36:23
4	Makaira	Hughes, ABC	41:14:06
5	Quinella	Liddiard, ABC	43:29:51
6	Fast Exit	Morgan, RHKYC	46:01:11
7	Jodeanni	Matthews, ABC	47:40:08
8	Shikari	Churchman, RHKYC	48:14:49
9	Kotuku	Soundy, ABC	50:26:50
10	Tropic Bird	Yorke, ABC	53:38:31
11	Mach 1	Brocklebank, RHKYC	63:44:44
12	Kojiki	Thomas, HHYC	73:58:41