

# Quantum Network–Newsletter Autumn 2012

Welcome to autumn edition of the Quantum Network Newsletter:

- **Vendée Globe** - With just over a month to go to the start, we dedicate our Autumn Newsletter to this special race. With significant home interest, this could be a great way to round off a terrific year for British sport.
- **Dates for the diary** – Last chances to get out on Quantum Sailing Adventure Cruises this year. Don't miss out!

## Sailing adventure – The Vendée Globe

Starting in Les Sables d'Olonne, on the 10<sup>th</sup> November, the Vendée Globe is one of the toughest events on the sporting calendar. This will be the 7<sup>th</sup> running of this event, which began with the 1989-1990 race. It now takes place every 4 years, attracting star-studded fields.

### The Route:

The challenge is very straightforward, to be the first competitor to complete the course of some 26,000 miles, sailing solo, unassisted, non-stop, around-the-world. Unassisted means that competitors cannot receive any physical help en route and they cannot dock either in port or with another ship. They can stop or anchor to make repairs but they must do this entirely by themselves. They can get generally available weather forecast information but not personalised weather or routing advice.



The course is also very straightforward, starting and ending in Les Sables d'Olonne on the Vendée coast in France and rounding the 3 great Capes of the southern oceans. After sailing south through the Atlantic, the first mark is the Cape of Good Hope on the southern tip of Africa. Next the competitors must pass south of Cape Leeuwin, the southern most tip of Western Australia. Finally they round South America and the notorious Cape Horn before running back up the Atlantic to the finish.



This gruelling event is not like most sports where the athletes get massage, physio, a good meal and a comfortable bed at the end of a days competition. To win this race, you need to drive your boat day and night for the best part of 3 months. It takes immense physical, as well as mental, strength to continually drive the boat at race speeds, surviving on an average of less than 5 hours sleep a day, while the boat bounces over the waves at speeds of over 20 knots at times.

Crossing the Southern Oceans, competitors tackle some of the most ferocious seas in the world. This is an event that takes its toll on boats and equipment as well as skippers, with around half the boats failing to complete the course and, sadly, two skippers being lost at sea in previous races.

### Previous heroics:

As well as great competition, there is also huge camaraderie between the solo sailors. They are aware of the risks that they all face and this brings a special bond. There have been a number of great heroic stories from previous Vendée Globes and much British interest.

It was Ellen MacArthur's courageous attempt at the 2000-2001 race that first brought her to the attention of the British public. At 24 years old she was the youngest ever competitor and yet achieved a creditable 2<sup>nd</sup> place. She had been neck and neck with Michel Desjoeaux into the final stages of the race when she hit a semi-submerged object and lost time to complete the repairs. This is still the best finish by any British competitor to date.

Another great British story of heroism comes from the 1996-1997 race. Turning back to sail 200 miles into the might of a Southern Ocean storm, with force 12 winds, Pete Goss risked the destruction of his own boat in order to rescue a fellow competitor, Raphaël Dinelli. Showing immense skill as well as bravery, Goss located and rescued the Frenchman, whose own boat had been destroyed by the same storm. On arrival at Les Sables d'Olonne he was met by over 200,000 French supporters and was later awarded the French Legion d'Honneur for his efforts.



It was in the same race in 1996-1997 that Tony Bullimore was famously rescued having surviving for 4 days in the upturned hull of his boat 'Exide Challenger' after it capsized in the Southern Ocean

The event has been dominated by the French, who have won all of the races to date. The current holder, Michel Desjoyeaux, is the only person to have won the race twice. This year, the 20 strong entry will again be dominated by the French, with 13 competitors, but the British have the second largest contingent, with 3 representatives.

### The British contingent:

**Samantha Davies**, on *Saveol*, is entering the Vendée Globe for the second time. Born in Portsmouth but now based in Brittany at Concarneau (Finistère), she came to prominence with a creditable 4<sup>th</sup> place in the 2008-2009 Vendée Globe. The highest placed British competitor in that race, she was awarded the 'Yachtsman of the year' title in 2009. With her small stature but big, bubbly personality, she is a very popular competitor and is affectionately known as 'la petite anglaise' in the French media. She will be the only female entrant in this year's Vendée Globe race.



**Mike Golding**, on *Gamesa* (formerly *Ecover 3*), is a hugely experienced yachtsman and this will be his 4<sup>th</sup> Vendée Globe race. He came 7<sup>th</sup> in his first attempt in 2000-2001 and was leading the 2008-2009 race when he was dismasted and forced to retire. In the 2004-2005 race he showed amazing seamanship, finishing in 3<sup>rd</sup> place, despite his keel falling off whilst still a day out of Les Sables d'Olonne. With everyone expecting him to retire, Mike managed to keep his boat afloat and sailing, completing the race unassisted.



Golding has many records to his name. He is the first person to have raced round the World in both directions, including winning in 1996-1997 BT Global Challenge, a race for crewed yachts. In 2006, during the Velux 5 Oceans solo round the world race, he rescued a fellow British competitor Alex Thomson after the loss of his boat. In an eventful race, Golding, with Thomson onboard, was then dismasted and forced to sail under jury rig to South Africa.

Coincidentally, Thomson makes up the British contingent in this year's Vendée Globe race.

**Alex Thomson**, on *Hugo Boss*, is entering the Vendée Globe for the 3<sup>rd</sup> time, having been forced to retire in both of his previous attempts (2004-2005 and 2008-2009). Alex demonstrated his huge potential by winning the 1999 Clipper Round the World Race (for crewed yachts). In doing so, he became the youngest ever winner of a round the world sailing race. He also demonstrated his solo credentials in 2003 when he set the 24-hour distance record for a solo monohull, covering 468 nautical miles. In 2007 he broke his own record covering 501 nautical miles in a day. More recently, in July of this year, he smashed the west to east transatlantic record in his yacht *Hugo Boss*. Completing the Atlantic crossing in just under 9 days, Alex took more than 24 hours off the previous record. At Quantum Sailing we often see *Hugo Boss* around the Solent and at Haslar Marina, where Alex Thomson racing is based.



### The competition:

This year's race has attracted Swiss, Spanish and Polish entrants. There is only one previous winner in the field, Frenchman Vincent Riou (2004-2005). The oldest competitor, at 57 years of age, is the Swiss entrant Dominique Wavre, who is making his 4<sup>th</sup> appearance. Another interesting competitor is the French-Italian skipper Alessandro Di Benedetto, who in 2010 sailed around the world, non-stop, solo and without any assistance on a 6.5 meter boat!

Details of all of the skippers can be found on the Vendée Globe web site - <http://www.vendeeglobe.org/>

The competition will be tough and the French will not give up the Vendée easily but there is good reason to be optimistic about the British entry. If a Brit can win the Tour de France, then anything is possible. I have a sneaking feeling that this could be the race where Alex Thomson finally fulfils all of that early promise. Come on the Brits!

### Dates for the diary

In response to demand, we have added a further long weekend Adventure Cruise to our programme. Details of all our open cruises are on our web site <http://www.quantumsailing.co.uk/adventurecruise.html>

**26th-28th October 2012, Solent Weekend cruise** - We have just one place remaining on this cruise.

**2nd-5th November 2012, Long Weekend Adventure Cruise** - We have just one place remaining on this 3 day cruise on which, weather permitting, we aim to include a channel crossing.

**7th-9th December, Boat Handling Skills weekend** - This is being run specifically for Network members wishing to develop and practice their sailing skills, e.g. manoeuvring under power and under sail

If you are interested in any of the above please contact Glenn on 07919 017835 or [glenn@quantumsailing.co.uk](mailto:glenn@quantumsailing.co.uk).