

There was a good weather window du moment this TR opened Friday a week ago. A lot of guys got in quick early runs. I didn't, shrugged my shoulders and said to myself there will be others. But then, as last week progressed, news started to filter through to bonk's brain that strong winds were on their way from points West. And this storm, for the first time had a name: Abigail, or Abbey Gale, if you like. So... notable on two 'fronts': 1/ that it had a name at all; 2/ that its name reflected where it was coming from – a gale from (the abbey on) the Island of Saints and Scholars. Bonk's brain is a strange thing.

Anyway, I decided I'd better have a look whether Abigail was going to have an impact on conditions in the Bay of Quiberon. And yes, it was. Not a lot, but 18kn out of the West was nevertheless going to be a game changer, and in my limited experience, was abnormally strong wind for said bay. You see, the original bonknhoot, a 470 dinghy, had raced on these very waters 35 years ago. It was a unique experience, since to get a series of races in, the OOD (nowadays known as a PRO) decided to have the fleet leave the harbour before daybreak, fire the preparatory at the first glow of orange in the East, and set courses that would see the leaders finish after 1:30 hours or so. Old bonko was not a leader, so only finished every now and then. Then home for breakfast and another day of mooching about. So be warned, if SOL ever set a TR here in the summer months with HIRE winds, nightsailing will be the only thing for it.

Well, what about the TR, I hear you ask? Well, on Friday morning, there seemed to be a broadish timeframe for a start; anywhere between 09:00 and 11:00 or so. Anybody's guess really and to myself I had said 10:15. But WINSTON4 went well before that; kenza, rafa too. StIngF1, Franci, Smo; all gone before I had had a chance to sneeze. Nothing like peer pressure, so at 09:58 bonkert was off and away. And as so often in TRs, T_{start} was 9/10th of the winning of it. Unusually for bonk, the actual passage went rather well as well. Well, well, well.

There were precisely three points on the course where something more than sailing straight lines coupled with sharp cornering was required. All three went well. Well, well, well.

1/ The leg from Quiberon to Poulains was a beat, but sailing 2° above close-hauled you were going to fetch it. Boatspeeds were double digit, so tacking was going to cost you 5% to 6% PL: twice. I hadn't thought of pinching the whole 40 odd minutes, but as I rounded Quiberon the boats that had started earlier made me change my mind. rafa, who didn't, proved mine was the correct decision.

2/ The leg from offshore Goulphar to Beg-er-Skeul was a run. Timing the gybe from starboard onto port was going to be important. bonk got it pretty spot on, again with a little help from his friends that bit further down the course, making judgment easier.

3/ The gybe itself was going to be at 18kn BS. Crash it and you get a 9% PL penalty. I will be and indeed am the first to agree that SOL's Performance Loss model has faults, but its worst repercussions are easily avoided, and in a relatively 'seamanlike' way. Don't crash it (and lose control of the rudder IRL), but gybe onto a deep angle that gives you slightly more than 14kn BS for a 7% PL and then correct onto the hotter optimum downwind VMG course. Well, I did (and generally do, if I'm not flustered) that, using DCs to minimize time on the deep angle to 10 secs.

And that was it. Two firsts for bonknhoot; her first first in 2015 and her first ever TR first.

Whoopee. I love this game.

Thank you all for all the fun we have.

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