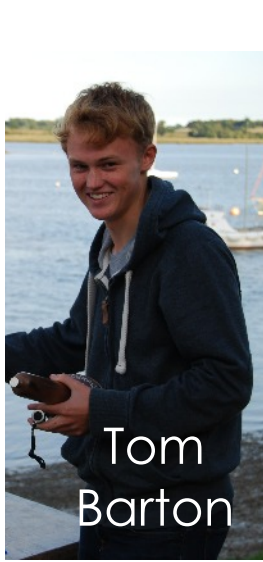




Neil Collingridge



Tom Barton



# 2013 BOTTLE boat Championsh

## The Caro Trip

Did you see the request from Margaret a few weeks ago, asking if anyone was interested in a delivery trip from Germany to the Med - Well I enquired about it. . . .and went

The trip started from the inland end of the Kiel Canal in Germany, this is where the boat was built by the very reputable firm Knierim Yachtbau boatyard. About 12:00 on Friday the 13th we cast off and headed for the North Sea locks in Brunsbuttel. We arrived there at 8:00 in the evening, there we were boarded by two hefty armed officials and fined for jumping a set of 3 red lights and not answering the radio!! £50... As an aside, these were the locks that Carruthers and Davies went through on the Dolcibella.....

Sails up, the 4 hourly watch system established and off we go, but as time went on more things seemed to be going wrong, so after about 18 hours out we pulled in to Den Helder for running repairs. As we moored up in the marina for the night we heard a gale was due in that night - so it was a good place to be. The next day, Monday the 16th, we moved the boat through the river system to a yard with large lifting strops - mainly to look at the bow thruster and its door. This ended up as a 2 day - 2 night stay. Still - managed to fix the charging problem on the main engine, the roller reefing on the jib, disconnect the gas solenoid and get the generator for the hydraulic systems to work..

Now Wednesday 8:30 and we are off again by 10:00 we are out in the open sea and on our way with Jib, orange trysail and an orange tipped cut down storm main (more like a wind surfing main)... We followed the English Channel on the outside edge of the shipping lanes - English side. 30 hours later off the Isle of Wight, 35 knot winds and doing 15 knots of boat speed with lots of slamming on the bow, we decided to duck round the inside of the IoW to miss most of the in-coming storm. After motoring round the IoW (a rum I hand) which took about 3 hours and coming out by the Needles we were confronted by a completely different day - flat sea and very little wind - so motor sailed all the way to France and turned left at the end into the Bay of Biscay.... It was while we were on the way to France in the direction of Brest that there was a mild panic as to why all the floor boards were making a funny noise and the bilges were full of water. Well after every pump was deployed in all the bulkheads and half an hour of bilge pumping by hand the cause of the problem became apparent. In the storm off the Isle of Wight one of the front deck hatches had come unlocked - panic over and tea all round. For every action there is a reaction and in this case the fresh water pump burned out as it ended up under water, so no fresh pumped water, good job we had lots of bottled water, but the loo worked on fresh water,, Dow... This could be a 3 day drop off !!

5:00 on the Friday evening, we did get the tide wrong at this point of Ushant - Breast, as it took 2 hours at 10 knots of boat speed to pass the two lighthouses, perhaps we shouldn't have gone in so close...

I have never done the four hours on four hours off for long before, but when you do it for 3 or 4 days, all the nights seem to be the same - a constant round of tea, and all the mornings seem to be dawn even if it was 10:00 .....we always had a hot meal in the evening at that point when everyone is up.

The trip over the bay took 2 nights, the first half we motor sailed, and then the wind filled in and as the breeze got up and we were on a good reach, up went the Code1, a large reaching genoa just smaller than a Code0 that one goes to the mast head!!

And now the boys began to play, this was a Class 1 race boat after all, a carbon fibre 65' Wayfarer @ 15.5 tonnes, a 30M mast with 5.5M lifting keel with 4.5 tonnes of lead on the end of that. I always thought 9 and 10 Knots was fast in my boat with the right conditions, but this was doing 16-17s as normal with several bigger waves giving 20 then 22 now that's going....

We arrived on the other side just of A'Coruna about 9:00 on the Sunday morning, in calm waters. Mark, the skipper, decided he should do some more sub aqua and check the state of the bow thruster, and yes after the two day fix in Holland, it was back to square one - a total mess.. so we motored into Coruna and filled up with diesel and filled the water bottles, Mark removed all the loose parts of the bow thruster and we headed off into town. This was the last night for one of the crew members, which meant he had an early start in the morning....

Monday was surprisingly bright after the night before, so after a quick breakfast we headed off for Cascais - Lisbon. It meant a stop half way for more fuel probably San Chento - we arrived there very early the next morning - moored up and went to bed... the following day fuelled up and off again.

All surprisingly quiet on the nature front. We did see porpoises swimming alongside and dolphins always trying to go faster, and cross the front of the boat and then looking up as if to say "done it" ...

The weather on this coast was foggy and wet, at night it was like you could cut out a slab of air with a knife, other than that it was a 300 mile motor against very little wind but you still needed all your waterproofs on and a good lookout for lobster pots.

We arrived in Cascais at lunch time on the Wednesday giving us time to clean up the boat and for Mark to purchase the replacement water pump, making it a working super yacht again. This was the end of my and the other member of the crews trip, as it had already overrun by 4 days. Paul Bartlett WSC and another friend plus a Australian professional were the replacement crew for the hard bit - continuing to Gibraltar and in to the Med - in the sun....

It was a great trip (1550 miles) and my thanks to Mark for giving me the chance - good luck to Caro on its 18 month campaign...

