

# Gin and Tonic



**Challenge Transat 2002**

**Leg 2 Boston to Southampton**

**Race Diary**

*Gordon Mackenzie Crew Volunteer*

*Yacht BG Group*

# PROLOGUE

## Challenge Transat 2002 A Race to Remember

### A Race Recap

On August 25, 2002, six Challenge 75 steel racing yachts raced down the Solent, out the Channel and across the Atlantic. Aboard each were 15 Challenge crew volunteers, ordinary people, many with no previous sailing experience. They came from all walks of life to partake in something extraordinary. The following is a short recap of the highlights of each race.

#### **Race 1, Southampton to Boston**

The race began with a day of light breezes, conditions less than optimal for navigating the busy Solent. As the yachts jockeyed for position in the light winds, BP Explorer found herself on the wrong side of a breeze, in the wrong place at the wrong time. Less than hour into the race the team was hung up on The Shingles, a notorious Solent gravel bar. It was the first of three setbacks that would put the team at the backend of the fleet and keep them there for the entire race.

As the boats battled west it became clear that the battle for first place would be between three boats, Vail Williams, BG Group and Logica.

The only scare during Race 1 came early in the race when a false alarm was sounded when a TeamSpirit CV fell, setting off his personal EPIRB. The incident resulted in the Coast Guard dispatching a search plane from the UK and the diversion of BP Explorer to aid in the search.

At the front of the fleet BG Group and Logica were trading first place and second place as the boats raced neck and neck 12 days into the race. Vail Williams held tenaciously to third. BG Group reclaimed first place on 6 September, but held that prize by a slight one mile. It was the set up for a duel that would go on for another 1000 miles.

For BP Explorer, now fighting from far behind the fleet, disaster struck again. A burst of wind blew out the yacht's main sail. The giant sail was torn beyond repair. Just then hurricane Gustav bore down on the fleet. BP Explorer skipper radioed Race Headquarters with his decision to withdraw his team from the race citing the approaching hurricane and safety.

In the name of safety, Race Officials removed a southerly waypoint which would have forced the rest of the fleet to sail right into Gustav's projected path. The change shortened Race 1 by about 200 miles.

The rest of the fleet shortened sail and battled westward through the storm. The storm could not have hit them in a worse place. They were right over the shallow Grand Banks, the graveyard of boats and the scene of "The Perfect Storm" sinking. The shallow waters made for high, breaking seas - and frayed nerves.

When the winds and seas subsided BG Group and Logica were still at the front battling for first as they approached Boston. When BG Group crossed the finish line, only 8 minutes separated them from second place Logica.

Ten hours separated second placed Logica from third place Vail Williams. Spirit of Hong Kong finished fourth, TeamSpirit fifth and BP Explorer motor-sailed into Boston having retired.

A protest of BG Group by Logica that alleged the winning team had taken a short-cut past a required waypoint was dismissed by the International Sailing Jury.



BG Group arriving victorious in Boston

### Race 2: Boston to Southampton

After a week in Boston the Challenge Transat fleet, with some new CVs aboard each yacht, kicked off the second race of the series. As with the start of Race 1 in Southampton, start day was marked by sunny skies and light winds. BG Group was the odds on favourite as the boats queued up for the start.

But, for BG Group Race 2 would be one frustration after another. No sooner did the fleet hit Atlantic waters than BG skipper, John Burfitt, decided to break with the main body of the fleet, which was following the rhumline, and head north. He was gambling on a weather system he thought might give his team a slight advantage and put them in the lead. An early lead in a west-to-east Atlantic crossing can prove an unbeatable lead.

But, the better winds did not materialize and BG Group fell to the back of the fleet as it turned south. It was a mistake the team would spend the next two weeks trying to recover from.

BP Skipper, Alex Johnson also took his team on a flyer, but in the opposite direction, sailing far south of the rest of the fleet. His decision would prove even more disastrous for his team.

As it turned out it was Vail Williams that grabbed the lead after two days of racing, with Logica again playing the role of dogged pursuer. TeamSpirit was showing much better in Race 2 than it had in Race 1 and was holding in third when the team lost it's downwind "engine." While taking down their giant spinnaker a freak gust of wind tore the gossamer light sail to shreds. It would be the first of three torn sails the team would have to repair during this race.

By the end of the first week BG Group had fought its way from the back of the fleet into third. But skipper Burfitt was faced now with a tough choice. He could fall in line behind Logica but that would almost certainly sentence him to nothing better than third place. Or, he could risk it all again by taking a flyer north in hopes of cutting the leaders off from above. He headed north, again. And again, he lost the gamble. BG Group fell from third to fourth as Spirit of Hong Kong overtook them.

Matters got only worse for BG Group. Next a rogue wave slammed the yacht from astern pushing the helmsman into the wheel jamming the steering mechanism. The yacht sailed in a giant circle for a couple of hours until repairs got them underway again. Then, just as they approached the UK the boat had to round up to allow a helicopter to lift a crewman to shore for treatment of a serious hand infection.

BG Group, winner of Race 1, was now 122 miles off the lead and no longer a threat to the leaders. Also out of contention were TeamSpirit, whose sail problems left them 171 miles behind, and BP Explorer whose flyer south left them alone at the back of the fleet.

This left Logica and Vail Williams to fight over first place. At first it looked as though Vail Williams would finish with a large lead over Logica. Then Vail Williams was caught in a windless high just off the French coast. Logica closed and, after 3000 miles of racing, the two boats were again within sight of each other as they fought their way across the channel and into the Solent.

There was one more surprise in store for the teams before the sea was ready to release them. As the fleet neared the final hours of Race 2, what had been forecasted to be a normal low pressure system turned into one of the Channel's notorious surprise gales. The boats furthest back, BP and TeamSpirit, were hit hardest.

In the wet and stormy early hours of 13 October Vail Williams crossed the finish line to win Race 2. Less than 50 minutes later Logica crossed second. And, 9 hours later, Spirit of Hong Kong crossed to claim third. BG Group finished fourth, TeamSpirit fifth and BP Explorer finished sixth.

**The rankings overall for the two race series were:**

First Place: Logica.    Second Place: Vail Williams    Third Place: BG Group



***Race 2 Crew***



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1530A Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> September

Day 1



It is race day! After all the build up, training and preparation we are at last on our way home. As I sit here in the saloon of BG Group, we are leading the field of 6 identical yachts in race 2 of the first Challenge Transat. Our nearest rival Logica, who we beat by just 8 minutes in Race 1 is approximately 1.1nm behind. I have just come off watch and now have a few hours before I am up and at it again.

The crew of 13 volunteers are split into two 'watches' our skipper has named Gin and Tonic. Gin are currently sailing the boat whilst Tonic rests. During the day watches last 6 hours and at night 4 hours.

0800-1400 1<sup>st</sup> watch  
1400-2000 2<sup>nd</sup> watch  
2000-0000 3<sup>rd</sup> watch  
0000-0400 4<sup>th</sup> watch  
0400-0800 5<sup>th</sup> watch

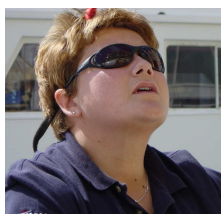
On **Tonic watch** there are:



**Nicky Richards** a business woman and mother of a four year old girl called Dawn. Her husband Jonathan was on Vail Williams on leg1 so understands exactly what to expect. Nicky is running the 'snake pit' which is where all the lines and sheets are controlled.



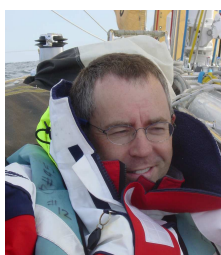
**Tom Wright** is our mast man and was crewing on race1. He is our powerhouse and at 6'7" the tallest in the race. He is taking time out from Cargill in Geneva where he works as an oil trader.



**Maxine Sutton** from Brighton works in market research for Unilever foods (Knorr soup, pot noodles etc). She is our smallest or should I say shortest crew member at 4'10".



On the foredeck with me is **Mike Del Brocco** our one American. Mike is the newest crew volunteer having replaced Michelle from Race 1 who was due to return with us but withdrew through illness. Mike is from Boston, worked until recently in IT and crewed with the skipper on the ARC previously. He is a good all round sailor and solid guy. He is starting to cope with the British sense of humour and the flak we give him for voting in George W!



Finally we have **Colin Stewart** the MD of Citigroup in Scotland. He lives in Herriot Row in Edinburgh with Jane and 3 children. They all came out for the start and saw us off. Jane nicknamed me 'Basil' (ala Basil Fawlty) for the way I treated Ulrich at the leaving bash at the Corinthian Yacht club at Marblehead.



Note for those reading this who do not know me, I am Gordon Mackenzie. I live in Kent and run a small but perfectly formed training and development consultancy I started 3 years ago with a good friend Nick Davies. This trip is my first real break from the business and I am here thanks to Nick and the team and my wife Lindy holding the fort whilst I indulge myself.



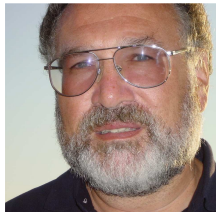
**Gin Watch** consists of:



**Ulrich Zapf** our bowman. Uli is 28, our youngest crew volunteer and is a consultant. He has just given up his job and will join his fathers company on return to Germany. A lovely guy with a great sense of humour.



He is joined at the bow by **Julie Irons**. Her boyfriend Chris is a mile away on Logica. She has just left Hewlett Packard where she was in marketing, to travel with Chris and to set up their own business in diving /sailing instruction. They go to Australia straight after this.



**John Chiswick** is the 1<sup>st</sup> of 3 Johns and our elder statesman at 53. He has retired from JP Morgan early and is doing both legs. He is our steady eddy numbers man and has a vast amount of experience having sailed since he was a kid.



**John Kirkby** is on the winches in the cockpit. He is an engineer by trade and has already proved his weight in gold. He has overhauled all the winches and the engine. 'Spanners' is deaf and therefore will have no problem with the snoring!



**Jonathan Inglesfield** is our 'doc', a GP based in Bristol. He is in the snake pit on Gin watch and has a girlfriend Anne on BP Explorer. He met her on a training sail and has been seeing her for 4 weeks.



Jon is joined in the snake pit by **Angela Colclough**, a forensic pathologist and clinical director for an NHS Trust. Angela is a complex and amusing character who keeps her cards close to her chest.



**Nigel Gildersleve** is our 2<sup>nd</sup> mast man. An ex Para and osteopath he is 6'6". He is using the Transat as a training event for rowing the Atlantic in 2004! Nigel runs a property business in Fontainebleau housing MBA's at Insead. His brother is on HK.

Last but by no means least we have the permanent crew. Our skipper JB or **John Burfitt** and his 1<sup>st</sup> mate Loz **Lawrence Marriott**. JB and Loz make a great team as we saw amply demonstrated at the start of today's race, which I will get to soon.



JB is an experienced skipper and passionate reader of RW Tilman, his hero (great Mountaineer and sailor of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century). He is married to Michelle a Canadian lass who did all the food prep for the journey. JB is a wild character who has backpacked the world, worked as an Outward Bound Instructor and sailed most of his life. I could never see him being in one



Loz is a career sailor from the Isle of Wight. Both he and Vicky his wife, work for Challenge Business. Loz definitely knows how to get a boat going fast and is very immediate / tactical.



My new watch's alarm woke me at 0715 this morning- Race day. As usual I struggled to wake up. This was partly due to the beers last night and if I am honest some anxious dreams about the race. We all assembled on deck and made our way to the South Street Diner, an old railway carriage on the corner of South St and Atlantic Road.

Logica had beaten us to it and were already tucking into an 'All American classic' of some shape or form. We crammed in 5 to a table and were asked

for our order by a buxom waitress with tattoos and a ring through her lip! On her recommendation we ordered a Vanilla frappe each. I then ordered an omelette supreme-4 eggs and 4 extras ham cheese tomato and onion. The juke box played Bob Seager. From a frieze above the bar Humphrey Bogart peered down at us or was it in-fact Marilyn Monroe's cleavage he was eyeing up whilst Lauren Bacall frowned disapprovingly. Caught in the act! More subtlety required Humph me thinks - been there!

Breakfast finished we headed back to the boat. Being a Sunday, Boston was deserted. We walked down the road. Doc ran ahead and took a photo of us walking through the steam rising out of a manhole. It felt like a scene from a gangster movie or was it reservoir dogs!

We stepped aboard at 0910. Time for a last visit to the Boston Harbour Hotel Health Suite for a shower and phase 2 of Operation 'Clean Getaway'! ( to acquire some liquid soap containers for our heads on board.) The brackets had already been surreptitiously removed and fitted some days before. (Enough said here I think 5<sup>th</sup> amendment invoked)

Back on board, a final brief from Loz, a few goodbyes to our sponsors, well-wishers, friends and family and we were away. Our last act ashore was to have our hair coloured BG blue and orange!

We cast off and then lined up along the starboard side as JB manoeuvred the boat. On Loz's command we all gave a hearty wave with our right hand and then moved back to our positions ready for action. From the shore our adopted tune was played. 'The ride of the Valkeries'. It was quite emotional, a proud and exciting moment. Great music to match a great moment.

One hour to go with the cameras rolling we hoisted the mainsail and then our Genoa- the biggest of the headsails. Finally up went the staysail. 10 minutes to go and all the boats are manoeuvring for position. Circling like boxers ready to strike the first punch.

At the 1 minute gun we are racing for the upwind marker, a battle with Logica to be the weather boat and have the tactical advantage (upwind boat has right of way!). 45secs to go and we are only 30 metres away from the line. Loz holds her on course and we tack across the line to the second forcing a tack from the downwind boats. Our battle with Logica continues – they match us tack for tack. Spirit of Hong Kong (HK) is third with Vail Williams (VW) in 4<sup>th</sup>. Agonisingly slowly we pull-out a lead. After forty minutes we have 200metres! This just shows how tightly matched these identical yachts are. The difference will be our ability to sail the boat better than anyone else. I go below and make some lunch. Max, Angela and I make up 30 large ham and cheese sandwiches and distribute them on deck.

As I write now, we are 1.5 miles ahead according to the radar and heading north of the fleet into high pressure and light winds. We are taking a risk but hope to pick up the low pressure normally moving east from Canada and tracking across the Atlantic.

Ulrich is mother and has made flapjacks. Overcooked but, nevertheless excellent. I love the smell of burnt flapjack in the oven ...smells like victory!  
 End 1730A P.S. Just seen two whales on the starboard side @1/2 mile, venting.

Positions: 2200Z

<b>YACHT</b>	<b>LATITUDE</b>	<b>LONGITUDE</b>	<b>DIST TO WAYPOINT</b>	<b>LEAD</b>
<b>BG Group</b>				+1
<b>Logica</b>				-1
<b>Vail Williams</b>				-3
<b>Spirit of HK</b>				-3
<b>Team Spirit</b>				-5
<b>BP Explorer</b>				-7

PPS. Team Spirit Skipper still being unprofessional around the hull cleaning incident. He raised it again on the SSB tonight. We discussed it as a watch and suggested to JB that comment from him would be unworthy at this stage as he was just playing psychological games badly.



1943 Z Monday 30<sup>th</sup> September

Day 2

Position 42 42N / 68 43 W. Time: 1543A (local time)

Distance travelled: 87 nm.



It is a beautiful sunny warm afternoon. How can it be autumn? The sea temperature is 14c; the wind is 21knots and we are surfing along at 10-11 knots.

I have just had an hour at the helm which is challenging with the flanker up. It is just like trying to control a skid in a car. First left (oops ) port then stbd then you over correct and the boat falls off the wave, the stern swings out and the flanker starts to fold as the wind spills out the side! Once into this pattern, over correction is as inevitable as ending up in the ditch on black ice! Ahh, exhilarating fun. I managed to top 14kts off a wave. (Loz has just got 16!)

Some consternation just now as a boat was sighted by Tom at 2 o'clock of the bow. A rush for the radar and bino's to establish it is a ship going the other way and not Logica. Phew!

I am at the chart table downloading weather faxes and filling in the log. We have just done our best hour run since the race started with 12 miles covered.

We are north of the fleet and have managed to catch the wind off the north side of the high pressure area that is blanketing the whole area. A high

pressure zone has winds going clockwise. We know we are on the northern edge as the wind is 260 degrees and 22 kts in the right direction. The downside of this tactic is that by being north we are as likely to hit the big lows building over Canada, and we won't get the advantage of a friendly Gulf stream current. This is what we think the other boats are seeking. (Gulf stream = 4kts in the right direction!)

Last night was long. We did two x 4 hour watches. (8-12 & 4-8) This meant only 2.5 hours sleep. It was great filming the sun going down and coming up again though!

JB has trusted me to get all the weather faxes and the position reports. ( I knew the military voice procedure would come in useful one day!) This is a bit of a double edged sword! It means I spend more time below than anyone else as each one takes about 20 mins to download and we collect about 8 a day. They come from Boston, Nova Scotia and Northwood. The advantage of spending time below is I get warm. The disadvantage – I feel guilty. It does relieve the boredom of being rail fodder between sail changes but does mean I end up getting up ½ way through time off watch.

Just as I came off watch yesterday Doc was pumping the grey tank when the pump broke. I was the last to play with it when I cleaned it in Boston. It was only fair therefore that I got up and fixed it properly this time! 30 minutes of shit and swearing, later I was disinfected and back in bed for 4 hours sleep. This is a relative term as the Gin watch changed the spinnaker for the flanker, which is one of the noisiest things in the world, except for being under the flight deck of Ark Royal as Lindy would remind me if she was here!

Food on board so far is excellent. Ulrich cooked stew on day one and some flapjacks. Today Jooles made Pasta with chicken and mushrooms.

Time to go to a Yankee 1 so I'll be busy for a while.....

From:	John Burfitt
Date:	BG 30-SEP-02 07:16 GMT
Position:	N 42° 37' 55" W 68° 59' 58"

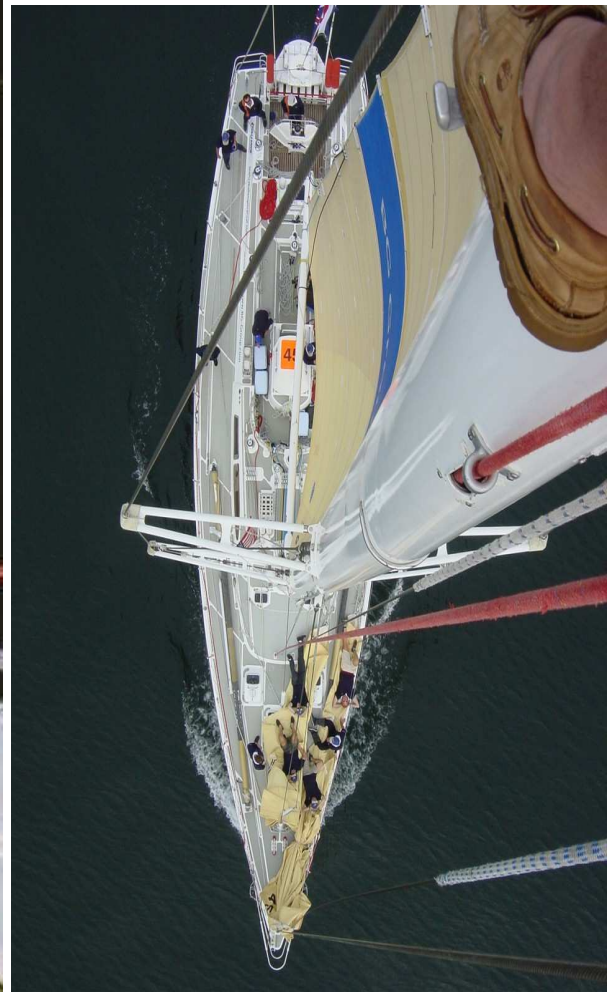
After recent attempts to put us off our game it was good to win the pre-start manoeuvring and cross the line at the front of the fleet.

This gave us the early advantage of clear wind while those behind struggled with the turbulent airflow of the leaders. The adverse tide and light winds made the beat out of Boston tricky, the large ship movements added another dimension which helped put a little distance between us and Logica who had been matching us til they went the other side of a US navy ship.

Once clear of the Harbour the fleet fanned out, with us taking a more northerly track than the others. Being the first to change to a spinnaker when the wind moved to the SW helped consolidate our position.

With over 3000m to go a mile lead doesn't count for much, but it's given the team some confidence, and it's the same distance we won race 1 by. However I'm expecting the wind to be rather fickle over the next 24 hrs and one boat has disappeared over my southern horizon, which will pay N or S?

JB



Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> October

Day 3

Time 0940 Z / 0540 A (ie the middle of the night)

Much has happened since last entry. We are screaming along at 11 kts and surfing some big waves. A new boat speed record was set this PM at 18.8kts. I am on mother watch which means cooking and cleaning for the day.

I have just done porridge and toast for the 0400 watch change and am now downloading the weather faxes as usual. At 1000z we will get the next position report on all the yachts. I am hoping for better news than the last one. We have gone too far north and had to turn south to avoid Nova Scotia!! We are currently in last place 14 miles behind the leader Vail Williams.

Despite this, morale is high. As we are north of everyone we should be getting the weather before everyone else (And didn't we!)

I have just gone on deck to see the first dolphins of the race. Very small, very fast and very cute!

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<b>YACHT</b>	<b>LATITUDE</b>	<b>LONGITUDE</b>	<b>DIST TO WAYPOINT A</b>	<b>LEAD</b>
<b>BG Group</b>	43 26N	64 01W	854	-21
<b>Logica</b>	43 29 N	63 39 W	835	-2
<b>Vail Williams</b>	43 24 N	63 35 W	833	*
<b>Spirit of HK</b>	43 26 N	63 49 W	844	-11
<b>Team Spirit</b>	43 16 N	63 39 W	837	-4
<b>BP Explorer</b>	42 49 N	63 50 W	851	-18

Distance travelled to waypoint: 243 miles.

This is not necessarily total distance travelled as we need to sail at the best wind angle.

It is coming up to lunchtime now and I have been up since before midnight and am absolutely shattered. We are surfing along at 12 kts – boom in the water and the beach boys playing on the minidisk. Unfortunately I am cooking pasta and cheese sauce. Most of it is on the floor of the galley. 45° to port followed by 45° to starboard is quite challenging! I will never slag off RN cooks again!

I had a great experience yesterday that I thoroughly enjoyed. It was having to climb up to the spinnaker pole and drop the spinnaker. This involved putting on a climbing harness and attaching yourself to the forestay. From there you shin up the line until you reach the pole, climb on, clip on then hang around until required to spike the halyard holding the spinnaker. This released the clew of the sail which is then pulled down onto the boat by the guys below.



You then unclip and slide back down to the deck. Easy! until you add 20 foot waves and 14.5 stone of bodyweight to get up and down. Well I got up ok and back down again, but that was more painful. As the boat tipped to port the angle became vertical and I came down somewhat rapidly. Thank you so much for the gloves Nigel. Good rope burns to calves and ankle sustained.

Once on deck I had to bring the spinnaker pole down. This can be quite dangerous and my job is to control the end from swinging about. On this occasion I used my whole body! It slammed across the deck at chest height lifting me over the side of the boat. Luckily I was strapped on and this stopped the swing. As the boat rolled back both boom and I hit the deck hard! Phew!

From:	John Burfitt
Date:	BG 1-OCT-02 04:40 GMT
Position:	North of the fleet
South paid off, so we're behind now, but it's a 3000 mile race. The weather didn't work out quite as I expected, so my move N when the wind went light was wasted distance. I never get all the calls right on an ocean passage, the worst thing is feeling like I've let the team down because they've been working hard to go fast and I've taken us the wrong way, such is the tactician's lot hero one day, villain the next. Look for lessons to learn from it, forget the rest and focus on the race ahead is my policy with these things.	
Since the wind picked up the sailing has been great as has the weather. Unusual wildlife sighting at sea today was a raptor, an osprey I think, circling the boat for 15 mins.	
John Burfitt	



Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> October

Day 4

<b>YACHT</b>	<b>LATITUDE</b>	<b>LONGITUDE</b>	<b>DIST TO WAY POINT</b>	<b>LEAD</b>	<b>24hr run to waypoint</b>
<b>BG Group</b>	43 10 N	58 11 W	564	-28	290
<b>Logica</b>	43 22 N	57 49 W	544	-20	291
<b>Vail Williams</b>	43 21 N	57 39 W	536	*	297
<b>Spirit of HK</b>	42 49 N	58 19 W	573	11	271
<b>Team Spirit</b>	43 01 N	57 57 W	552	-12	285
<b>BP Explorer</b>	42 57 N	58 44 W	593	29	258

I have just come off watch having done some filming of Gin watch doing a sail change on the Meridian Video camera. This caused much amusement as everyone is in their foulies and I was in my lime green swimming shorts and a T-shirt. JB grabbed the camera and insisted on filming me “ Those who live by the camera ...!”

Before coming off watch I took the 1000 Chat on the radio which was very interesting as shown above.

VW have been pushing hard as expected and broached. ( They put the mast and 3 crew in the water) They probably lost their spinnaker in the process. (we hope so.)

BP's luck continues to worsen. They have just broken a spinnaker pole (ouch!). Team Spirit have blown their flanker. All in all our steady approach is proving to be the right one. We have hardly used our flanker or genoa yet. This means we have something in reserve.

After mother watch yesterday (chief cook and bottle washer) I was absolutely knackered and tried to get a good sleep. But this proved impossible. The changing wind speed meant constant sail changes. That means lots of noise and crashing about on deck. The roll of the boat also makes it impossible to stay in one position. If you do drop off to sleep you wake up almost immediately as you ' fall off the pavement' for real, waking as you hit the safety strap or bulkhead.

I had the most bizarre thought whilst lying in bed last night. I was listening to the noise the boat makes. The squeaking and clicking of ropes under tension sounded just like dolphins. Maybe I thought that is why dolphins follow ships. Then more bizarrely I thought perhaps dolphins think that is how we speak and have developed a language to communicate with us. Food for thought! The truth is out there Agent Scully.

Something else I experience today is that when we do have dolphins alongside you can actually hear them through the hull. When this first

occurred I thought it was my imagination but almost immediately the call came that there were dolphins on the starboard side.

As you can tell, writing is somewhat difficult as the boat is rolling so much. We surf off each wave and sometimes the boom hit the water with an almighty thud that makes you think you have hit a mine or something.

JB set a new boat record with 20.2 kts yesterday as we surfed down a combination of big waves that seemed to have caught each other up to make a wall of water.

Time for bed I think (1500 Z)

From:	BG Group - Gordon MacKenzie
Date:	2 Oct 02 0654 GMT
Position:	Atlantic

to+editor@challengebusiness-box.com  
#45  
Gordon Mackenzie on BG  
A glorious 24 hrs of hard sailing or, should we say surfing to the beach boys along the coast of Nova Scotia. 10ft+ waves are racing up behind us and picking up the 43 tonnes of BG Group and flinging us toward home at a great rate of knots.

Every so often a big wave drives the boom into the surf making life for those on the off watch sleeping below somewhat disturbing as it sounds as if we have just collided with something immovable. We also received an escort of small dolphins for the first time this trip which further helped us feel good to be alive and excited by the challenge ahead.

Love to all those at home who have made this possible. Thanks to Michelle (JB'swife) for all the recipes. Some of us have no excuses about not being able to cook now. Bah humbug.

JB on waves  
Anyone who's sat watching the waves roll in to a beach has noticed that as the water gets shallow the waves get steeper and higher until they break and diminish. Watch for longer and you'll see that once in a while a couple of waves combine to make a much bigger one. At sea sometimes 3 or 4 get together and make something enormous compared to the waves around it, this is the "freak wave", they don't last long but can have quite an impact when they meet a yacht. I got lucky while sailing over a relatively shallow area off Nova Scotia. I was helming when the stern of BG went up & up, we accelerated down our temporary mountain, hitting a peak speed of just over 20knots, quite awesome on a boat of this tonnage.

Gordon MacKenzie

Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> October

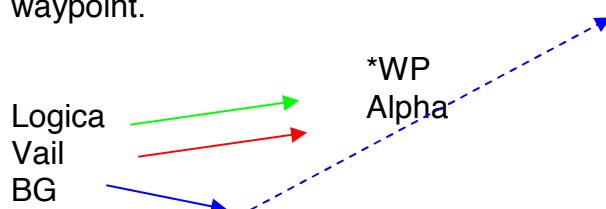
Day 5

<b>YACHT</b>	<b>LATITUDE</b>	<b>LONGITUDE</b>	<b>DIST TO WAYPOINT</b>	<b>LEAD</b>	<b>24hr dist to waypoint</b>
<b>BG Group</b>	42 24 N	52 47 W	303		261
<b>Logica</b>	43 09 N	52 21 W	271	-32	273
<b>Vail Williams</b>	42 56 N	52 10 W	263	-40	273
<b>Spirit of HK</b>	41 53 N	53 16 W	322	+19	241
<b>Team Spirit</b>	43 07 N	52 58 W	302	-1	250
<b>BP Explorer</b>	42 58 N	54 05 W	359	+56	234

Well an interesting 24 hrs since last log entry. We have dropped back further on VW and Logica, but have made solid progress against the others. Currently, even though in 3<sup>rd</sup> we are in equal 2<sup>nd</sup> overall. (6 pts for a win plus 4pts for 3<sup>rd</sup> position = 10 points) we must catch Logica to win overall, whereas VW can win this race but still lose unless they pullout over 60nm lead. All very exciting and tight, with waypoint Alpha being the turning point in the race - literally.

WP Alpha is a notional spot in the Atlantic we all have to turn around in order to keep us south of the grand banks –a very dangerous spot (Perfect Storm / White squall etc). This means tactics are limited.

We are currently running South East at 100 degrees, and will soon turn for the long straight run NE past WP Alpha to Bishops Rock Lighthouse, our next waypoint.



Without damage to any sails we are making good boat speed and feeling reasonably confident. Dave Melville on Vail Williams has a reputation for driving very hard early, breaking things and burning himself out. I hope so. Dougie, the skipper of Logica is, on the other hand, much more canny and will play it by the book. He is the one to watch. JB has not lost to him before and is not going to do so 'on my watch'!



Yesterday was a tough day for many of us on board. We are sleep deprived, as the constant rocking and rolling of the boat makes it almost impossible to stay asleep. Combine this with the constant crash of the boom hitting the water that makes you think you have crashed into a tanker, is something else.

Perhaps this, and the frustration that the leaders are extending their lead, despite our best efforts, led to some tension between Joules and Angela. It was over which way the wool should be used on packing the spinnaker – single or double! Pathetic? yes, tense? yes. Also however, a positive reflection of us moving forward in our development as a team.

My own watch – tonic is behind in our development having had very little to do. I felt irritated and angry with a number of the watch and mustn't let this show. Max is really nice but lazy, and Colin does nothing, not even make a coffee. He just sits in his nest (normally huddled down in the waiting sail). Tom and Mike are always hard at it and put the effort in.

I decided to raise my concern in a subtle way today when I asked the watch what we could be doing more of /less of to improve boat-speed and help JB and Loz. I said that I personally felt frustrated and couldn't help feeling we were letting the Legger 1 crew down. There followed a good discussion and as a result Max is doing much more. Colin is less responsive and remains a cause of irritation.

Yesterday was a bad day for me physically and probably led to my desire to share my frustration. We had to bring down the spinnaker which is a complex manoeuvre involving one person climbing up to the pole, spiking the shackle to release one corner of the sail whilst others pull down the sail under control. This is done by feeding the sail through a 'letterbox' between the boom and mainsail. My job was to pull the spinnaker through the letterbox whilst others behind me immediately fed the massive sail down the companionway to avoid it filling again. This time everything went wrong. The sail caught (the sheet hadn't been released). I was pulling hard and nothing was happening except

that the sail was going over the side and acting like a drogue in the water, pulling me with it. We eventually managed to get it back on board and down below. I immediately went forward and put up the yankee 1 on my own. By the time this was completed I was in total agony in both elbow joints. It felt like I had torn the muscle insertion hanging onto the spinnaker. The Doc (Jonathan) suggested that it was almost certainly bicep tendonitis requiring rest and recuperation. (some chance of that I don't think so!) This, combined with the rope burns on my legs, and the holes in my heels from the deck shoes makes me the team cripple at the moment.

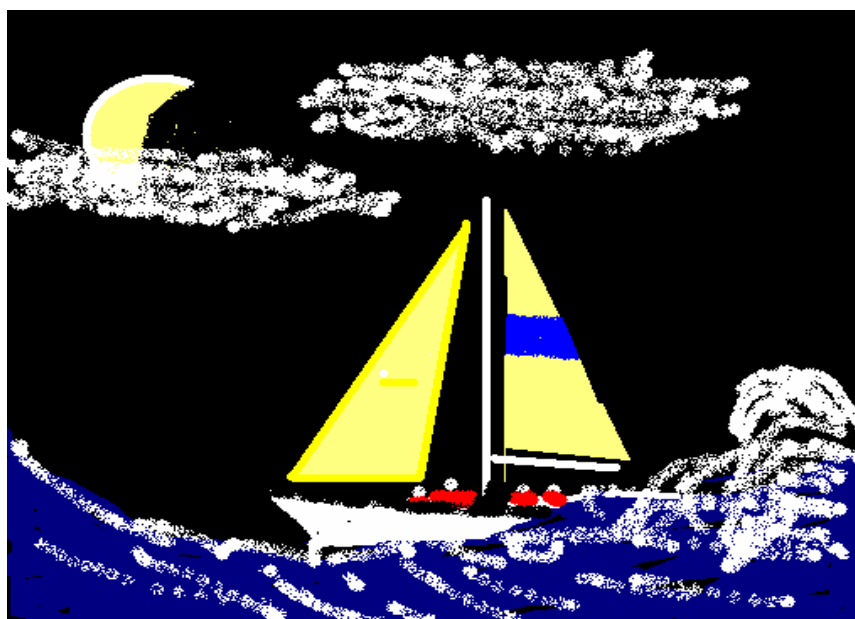
We have just changed time-zones and have gone forward 2 hours which meant only 5 hours watch, but 5hrs off for sleep etc.

I have just spoken to Lindy and Harriet. It is lovely to hear their voices and great to hear they were getting out and about with Kate, Sarah etc. it was difficult to talk with 14 people in close proximity and so I know I sounded a bit off. Actually I am. I am tired, grumpy, and in pain, so the best therapy I know is to listen to your voices. It worked. I am now lying on my bunk smiling having had a sort of shower, and reflected on life, the universe etc. Harriet sounded happy and relaxed. I hope she is being brave and not too many tears!

1836Z Sleep calls. Sweet dreams, I love you both.

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What an exciting night! Weather horrendous - gusting 40kts with constant 30 kts. We managed to successfully gybe through the wind without broaching; to put 2 reefs in the main and replace the Y1 with the Y3. Every other wave crashed over the boat drenching us on the foredeck. It was almost pleasant as the sea temperature is 20 degrees.C Gulf stream water. As you can tell from the writing it is incredibly rough and almost impossible to write. I'll stop and continue tomorrow.



Harriet's Picture of BG Group

Friday 4<sup>th</sup> October

Day 6



We have lost a few more miles to Vail and Logica. We are trailing by some 43 miles as at 1000Z today. Realistically there is nothing we can do more than we are already. We are going as fast as we can safely and maintaining good boat speed.

Loz is struggling having hurt his neck and ribs. Both he and JB are shattered having helmed or been on the foredeck most of the night.

It is a wild wet watch. I am writing this in the shelter of the canopy over the companionway as waves crash over the deck, me and everyone else. There are only 5 of us as Colin is on Mother Watch....or should be!



I have nicknamed Colin 'Cuckoo', due to his habit of nesting in your spot when you move and doing absolutely nothing in the way of help etc. Yesterday he made a cuppa! This I praised profusely. He has taken each meal in bed and funny old thing "isn't likely to be up to Mother watch". I think it might be time for a quiet word in his ear.

Sitting on deck in the freezing cold following a stint driving this beast, I wrote a poem!! I haven't written a poem since school and never thought in my wildest imagination I ever would again. I thought however that a poem or short story for Harriet each day might be nice.  
2040 hrs Local

Six hours of cold and strain, but wow what a great watch! I am exhausted but happy. We have found ourselves 3 kts of current, giving us a closing velocity on the next waypoint of 13.2 kts (my record). I felt for the first time the thrill of helming; of predicting the waves and the effect of the wind to keep on course. The result was 1.5 hours of Waypoint closing velocity (WCV) in excess of 12 kts. I feel I have definitely contributed today. A good feeling.

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From:	John Burfitt
Date:	BG 4-OCT-02 04:40 GMT
Position:	N 42° 58' 29" W 47° 40' 22"

Scary Gybe by JB  
With a fairly active cold front passing over us the sea was in one of it's more dramatic moods. No moon and no stars, heavy clouds unleashed torrential rain which would ease to a drizzle before coming back with renewed velocity. It was a very black night, I recalled a Kiwi dairy farmer I sailed with years ago who described a similar night as being "as black as the inside of a cow". BG Group charged into the darkness propelled by an imprudent amount of sail straining in 35 to 40 knot winds (a full gale), our wake and the breaking waves around us sparkling and glowing with bio-luminescence. FLASH, the world lit up as if a million photographers were trying to capture the moment, our eyes hurt, we were still trying to regain our vision a moment later when the thunder clap assaulted our ears.

This was the scene as the wind veered, demanding a gybe (turning the stern through the wind, all sails across, a 6 man manouever). I knew helming would become increasingly difficult as the mainsail was pulled in and one mistake could break gear, injure someone or do both. Turning the boat the other way, tacking around, was not an option, with the amount of sail set the boat would lay on her side before she got into the wind. Reducing sail first would make it safer but cost time, are we good enough to get away with the gybe I asked myself. A few minutes later everything was leaning the other way and a relieved skipper handed the wheel over to a crew member, while thanking his mate for some excellent deck work.

John Burfitt



## **A DANGEROUS GAME**

*Dark menacing clouds roll ominously across the white topped peaks.  
The wind howling and gusting 40 knots drives rain hard into every  
crack in our armour. We are wet, cold and miserable.  
If we are honest we are also frightened and missing home.*

*Dark mountains of silver and slate roll endlessly to the horizon.  
Their contours sharp and menacing one minute, then sleek, muscular  
and powerful the next.  
43 tonnes of steel and sail a toy in the hands of a petulant child.*

*One minute our friend pushing us toward home.  
A racing yacht in its element  
Elegant lines over at 45 degrees we move with grace and purpose  
Mountains and valleys, insignificant in the race for the line.*

*Bored now our child slams the boat down and turns the water to foam  
Wind from this side, waves from the other we struggle to stay afloat.  
Water pours over the deck. Squalls sting our faces. Our hands blocks  
of ice.  
We huddle behind what little protection a ledge or waiting sail may  
promote*

*The boom slams into the water.  
The boat judders, twists, rights and repeats the same.  
Torturous writhing through the water, the struggle of the non-swimmer  
fighting to stay alive, desperate to reach the side.*

*Gone now the finesse, the smooth strokes, the arrogance and  
confidence. Gone too the pre-race banter, the playful jibes.  
Gybes now the difference between life and death in this, the most  
dangerous playground on earth.*

## WAR AT SEA

*In the cold early evening light of Autumn, we stare out across the hostile battle ground. Constantly changing, always in motion. One minute your friend, the next a greater enemy than your foe.*

*Somewhere out there ahead of us in the immense grey mountains lies the foe. Not lying in wait, but running hard with the wind behind them. Intent on reaching safety before they can be caught.*

*Three adversaries, identical in every way. One, the young bull charging, pushing hard, a desperate need to win. The other determined, ruthless and tireless; an athlete used to long hard races. Of the two the more determined foe.*

*As for us, we are the hunter force, biding our time, closing quietly and with extreme prejudice. Our skipper; wise beyond his years, a strategist and helmsman extraordinaire. The Mate; Young, dynamic and driven. A great combination; energy and drive, control and empathy.*

*We, the crew; conscripts, a mix from every walk of life yet the same really. Excited, frightened, anxious and ready to serve and support these two warriors of the sea and their cause. Driven on by a desire to win the respect of the previous crew, we will not submit but will fight to the end.*

*Petrels patrol the skies in fighter pairs. Skimming low, flying between the waves then up, banking this way and that way – effortlessly.*

*“Torpedo starboard quarter” goes the shout. “and another.” Two trails of light and foam streak towards us out of the gloom. 30 metres. 10metres. Then at the last minute these dark shapes trailing phosphorescence in their wake turn; flash past us then draw alongside. A fin breaks the surface. A few clicks and squawks reach our ears, our dolphin escort is back.*

*We feel safe. Indescribable pleasure comes from watching these creatures of beauty and grace. They play and frolic in our wake for a while. Hopefully they gain as much pleasure from their rendezvous’ with us as we did them.*

*Just like us these hunter- killers of the deep have a greater purpose and their sleek beauty cloaks their fit for task. They peel off to the south in search of another encounter. Maybe with our foe, who knows? Perhaps they too deserve some moments of pleasure. To change their thoughts from those of complacency and /or dread when they look over their shoulder at the dark shape astern.*

*“Steer 090. Distance to target 43 miles and closing” “I love the smell of porridge in the morning ... smells like victory!”*

Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> October

Day 7

Race Position: 3<sup>rd</sup> As at 1000Z

287 miles in last 24 hrs

YACHT	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	DIST TO WAYPOINT	LEAD
BG Group	44 14 N	42 03 W	1708	
Logica	45 27 N	42 21 W	1687	-21
Vail Williams	45 39 N	42 20 W	1681	-27
Spirit of HK	43 26 N	42 21 W	1746	+38
Team Spirit	44 24 N	43 22 W	1762	+54
BP Explorer	43 55 N	44 45 W	1838	+130

It is now 1710 and it is a very tired and aching individual writing this journal. We have had a great 24hrs making up 16 miles on the leader which is down to our luck with the Gulf Stream, a hell of a lot of concentration and hard work.

My arms are painful beyond belief and after a sail change or heavy winching it takes a good hour for the pain to subside.

I am now going for a wash and will then share my first poems with you, dear diary! These were written yesterday afternoon before 'A dangerous game' and 'War at sea.'

From:	John Burfitt/Nicky Richards
Date:	BG 5-OCT-02 04:57 GMT
Position:	Round Waypoint Alpha
Squally weather by JB Difficult weather to race in at the moment, the wind speed has been varying greatly with the passage of squally clouds, every hour has seen wind changes from 14 to 30 knots and back again 3 times, together with 30 degree changes in direction. Too much sail and the boat will be uncontrollable in the gusts and things may get broken, too little sail and the boat is slow in the lulls, not good for racing. Even if I had a crew of super fit pro racers, changing sails for each wind change wouldn't work because of the speed loss during each change. So all one can do is pick a sail plan anywhere between daring and conservative and see what happens.	
Here's a contribution from Nicky Richards: We gybed last night. Somewhere in the depths of the night, with the wind gusting at around 30-35 knots. I have never seen a gybe so carefully prepared for and executed. Down to the last detail of checking all those sleeping down below were well strapped in their bunks before we started the manouvre. JB muttered something before hand about how everyone would be wandering around downstairs slightly confused afterwards. At the time I thought nothing of it but when I was next downstairs I understood exactly what he meant. We had been on the previous gybe for several days and all the little stuff that you learn about moving around the boat was suddenly no longer relevant. All the hand holds, the method of getting in and out of the heads etc etc all have to be done differently now. There are one or two corners around the cabin which I am still having trouble sussing out. We also had a night of sail changes and reefing as the wind increased and that was "fun" in a rather different sense of the word from what I am used to. Anyway we are around the waypoint now and the next waypoint is off the Scilly Isles, so it makes us feel closer to home. Today was my birthday and certainly one which I won't forget. Thanks to Jonathan for the pressies - very relevant to my current circumstances. John Burfitt/Nicky Richards	

## ***RULE BRITANNIA***

White peaks roll into the distance, mountains of silver and slate.  
Lightning exposes the scene - the contours frozen, caught at an instant in time. Moonlight returns a different canvas. What was, is now gone.

The bleakness and beauty combine to leave a lasting impression on anyone brave or foolish enough to visit and believe they can be master of this place.

The howling of the wind, the creaking of ropes under strain and the roar of the ocean remind the traveller as he gazes across these rolling mountains that neither Neptune nor man can control this enormous force.

It's muscular power with one hand holds us safe and with the other smites us. To deliver us safely home or to swat us like a fly should we dare to think we know its purpose. This is a place we shall never rule.



## ***TORPEDO!***

From the mountain top comes a streak of light. A trail of phosphorescence tracks towards us. Another follows, then another closing fast. Torpedoes, intent on their target. There can be no escape.

Yet as we watch, there is no bang, no flash, no screams from below as steel, fire and water become one. Instead we are confronted at close quarters with pure beauty and grace. An escort of dolphins.

We watch entranced. Captivated by the speed and confidence of their play in our wake, jumping, rolling, squeaking and clicking. Up to the bow, first port then starboard crissing and crossing. 90 degrees out then back, darting this way and that.

Frollicking, ghostly traces in the night. A stream of twinkling tumbling light. Shooting stars in the blackness of our wake. A borealis of the deep. No sooner here than gone. Three trails of applause disappear into the night.

Alone again we sit in silence. How can it be I ask myself, I feel humbled by these fish? Why do I feel that my every thought could be read? My loneliness a signal to arrive. My joy, the nod to go. Why are we so sure we know best, when it is clear to me that we may rule the land but dolphins rule the sea.

Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> October

Day 8

Position 3<sup>rd</sup> 2200Z

<b>YACHT</b>	<b>LATITUDE</b>	<b>LONGITUDE</b>	<b>DIST TO WAYPOINT</b>	<b>LEAD</b>
<b>BG Group</b>	48 10'N	37 03'W	1386	
<b>Logica</b>	47 39'N	34 36'W	1288	-98
<b>Vail Williams</b>	47 46'N	34 27'W	1279	-107
<b>Spirit of HK</b>	46 07'N	36 45'W	1419	+33
<b>Team Spirit</b>	46 96'N	36 55'W	1427	+41
<b>BP Explorer</b>	45 48'N	38 41'W	1514	+128

A hard, hard day! Without Loz who has a couple of broken ribs and damage to his neck, the pressure has really been on to get to grips with sailing this boat on our own.

Tonight, we had winds of 45kts and we were rocking to and fro 60 degrees to port and then the same to starboard. 24 hrs of this has been unbelievably tiring. No sleep is possible so I stayed up all night helping the On Watch with sail changes.

We have shredded our Yankee 2 headsail. It has seven serious tears in it. Sewing full time when off watch. Tired beyond belief!



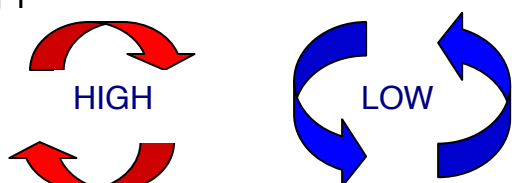
Monday 7<sup>th</sup> October

Day 9

I hardly know where to start with this log entry. For the last 96 hrs we have been heading North East at approximately 45 degrees. We are by far the furthest North of any of the fleet at 50 13N 29 00W. I tell you this in order to explain what happened.

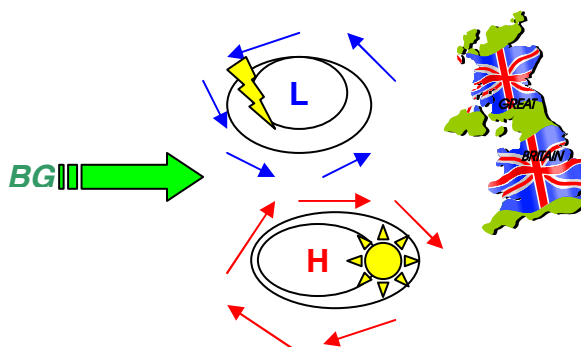
Our strategy was to attempt to outrun the high pressure belt and skirt the south side of a major low pressure area to the north. This is probably the only way to get more 'favourable' weather to allow us to catch VW and Logica who were by now 131nm and 117nm ahead.

Fig 1



*Around a High pressure area wind moves clockwise and around a low pressure area the wind moves counter- clockwise (in Northern Hemisphere)*

Fig 2



*By positioning between both high and low pressure areas you get both sets of winds pushing in the same direction as per diagram with a slingshot effect.*

Unfortunately the best laid plans of mice and men oft go awry. The low pressure area to the north built to a storm with 45-50kt winds and moved south. As a result, the wind direction changed to the north giving us no choice but to go further and further north with it.

As the barometer fell, the wind rose. The sea was bitterly cold as we had long since lost the Gulf stream. The seas grew to 15 to 20 feet swells making the boat pitch and roll wildly. Moving around below deck became very dangerous and sleep impossible.



As I write this I have had 4 hrs sleep in 48. A mixture of exhilaration, fear and trepidation gripped us when it was our turn on watch. Helming at night with no stars to act as reference points was incredibly difficult and many a time I and others nearly 'lost it' as a wave would pick us up and throw us down the front of a wave sideways. As the boom dug in to a wave the noise would be deafening. Below deck it was worse still, as wave after wave slammed into our port quarter. Inside a steel hull is like being inside a kettle drum during the finale of Aida!

The exhilaration was incredible and culminated in Mike getting 24 kts out of the boat surfing down waves that came at least ½ way up the mast! (A new 72' Challenge yacht speed record) I can only describe this as a cross between; overtaking a juggernaut on the motorway, in driving rain at 100mph at night, in an open top sports car ( as you go past you cannot see a thing and pray there is nothing the other side of the wall of water put up by the wheels) and going down the Cresta run in a bobsleigh whilst being sprayed with high pressure hoses!





**Tuesday 8th October**

**Day 10**

We were drenched and somewhat anxious as we came off watch at 0200Z on 8 October having experienced gusts of up to 52 kts of wind. *(NB: Later JB shared the fact that he had adjusted the wind speed indicator down before the race by a certain percentage to get wind speed over the deck for more accurate sail prediction. He therefore estimated wind speeds over 60 kts as a more accurate reflection of this and subsequent nights)*

I had just come below having picked up a number of new bruises to add to the collection, with a mixture of relief and anxiety. I was anxious due to the fact that with Loz out of action, and few of us capable of managing the boat in these seas at night plus the large number of walking wounded, we were very vulnerable. We were also experiencing for the first time waves hitting us from 2 directions, making correction from one the worst possible thing you could do for the other.

I was sitting at the chart table completing the ships log when all of a sudden we were hit by a huge wave. The boat appeared to stop dead in the water then sink down under the weight of water on top of it. A wall of water poured down the companionway that seemed to continue for an eternity. The roar of the wave was matched by the noise of everything not tied down ricocheting off the starboard bulkhead.

Screaming and shouting came from above. Maxine was hysterical, shouting "Oh Christ help me." It felt like minutes before we could establish whether anyone had been washed overboard. Then came the shout that we had lost the steering. Each successive wave slammed into the boat and threw it on its side.

JB was on deck in seconds followed by Loz. Max was brought below and stripped off to check her injuries. I summoned Colin to look after her whilst I tuned into the distress channel and wrote a radio fax. Mike, Nigel and I kitted up in minutes to go on deck but were rightly held in readiness with Mike relaying messages down to us. For an inexperienced group, there was an incredible level of calmness and control. Maxine was put in her bunk and comforted. She was totally traumatised by the experience, but Colin did a stirring job of looking after her. I think it was the best thing for him to do as it maybe focused him on someone else rather than the situation.

On deck JB fought to get control of the boat. The watch led by Tom brought the mainsail down as we brought up the emergency tiller. Not easily accessible it was not required by the time we got it on deck. The team had managed to free the wheel and had steering again. It appears that the water slammed Doc who was at the helm into the binnacle with such force that it bent and broke. The binnacle is a solid steel post on which the wheel is mounted.

All this time the yacht is being turned in circles and hit by huge waves from one side or another. Doc eventually came below looking horrible. He was

white as a sheet, waxy and red eyed. He was obviously in shock. He appeared to have only damaged his hand despite managing to redesign the helm position with his body. Unbelievable!

John Chiswick, our elder statesman was slammed against the helm position injuring his ribs, to add to the damage to his knee and fingers sustained earlier in the voyage.

Spanners and Ulrich were in the cockpit and were literally thrown into mid air before being brought to a painful stop at the end of their safety strops.

Maxine went from the space forward of the helm and was smashed on to the main sheet winch. She was then crushed by the force of water that sat on the boat and pushed it down the 1<sup>st</sup> wave front. The result, serious bruising and an imprint of the Harken star, from the top of the winch, on her leg.

### BG Group Log Entry

GMT	Sea Temp	Cse	Dist Run	Speed	LAT	LONG	WIND		MAX GUST	Comments	
							Dir	Speed			
0200	13C	090	10	11.6	50 03.5N	30 23.2W	307	40	52	Big swells Less gusting Tonic off watch	GM
0223	SERIOUS WAVE				50 03.9N	30 17.2W				LOST STEERING FREAK WAVE FM PORTSIDE Damaged steering column JB/ Loz on deck with Gin watch	GM
0400	13c	090	18	10.6	50 03.9N	30 05.8W	310	34.6	45	Tonic asleep Gin on watch	Loz

### *GM's Signal to Challenge Business via Capsat*

PRIORITY URGENT  
 0300Z 8OCT 2002  
 CHALLENGE YACHT#45 BG GROUP LOST STEERING IN DIFFICULTIES  
 HIT BY FREAK WAVE 45-50 KT WINDS  
 POSITION 50 03.5N 30 17.2W  
 15 PERSONS ON BOARD ALL ACCOUNTED FOR  
 SITUATION REPORT TO FOLLOW

Within 2 hours it was all over and we were back on track, bilges pumped, us in bed and the walking wounded back on deck.

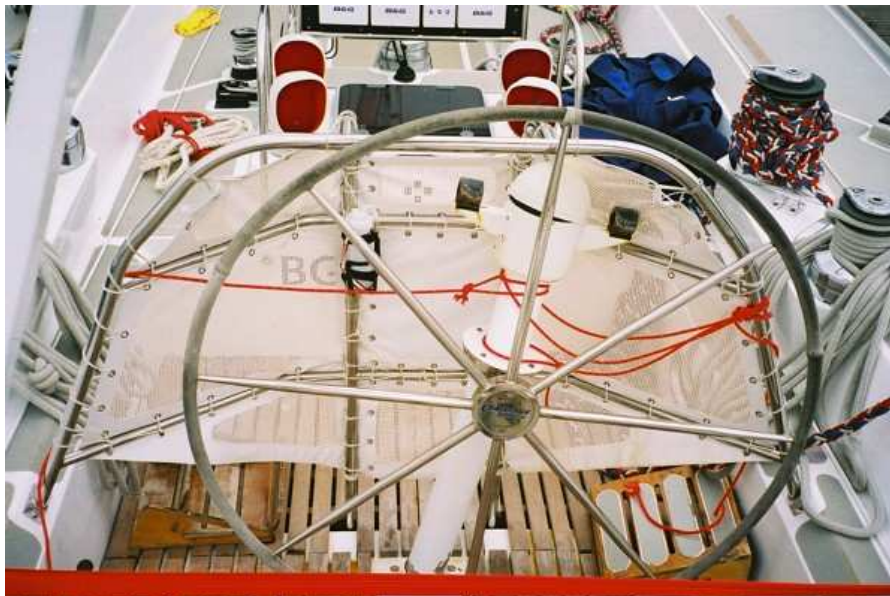
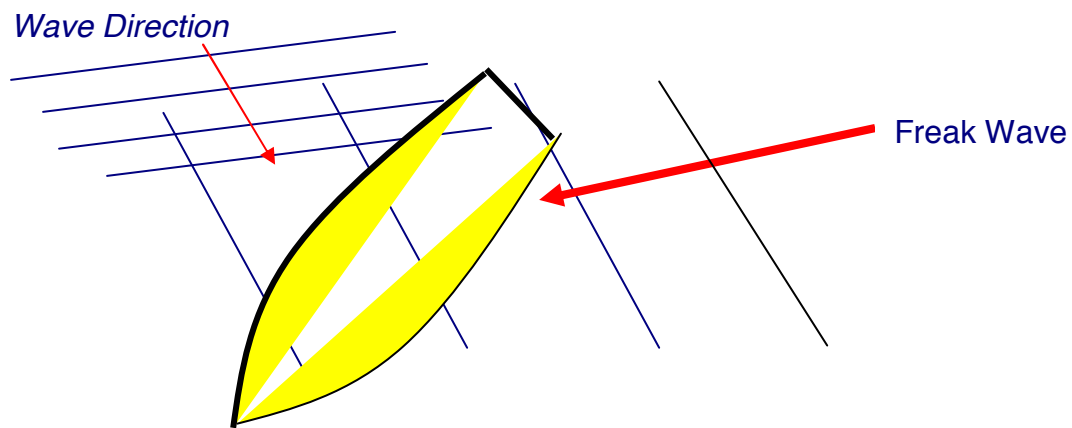
To be honest, as I write this, I realise more and more how lucky we are not to have lost someone overboard last night. Everyone has been deeply affected by it.

Only 3 of us from Tonic made it on deck at 0400 (Me, against my better judgement plus Mike and Nigel) Mike was an absolute hero doing almost 5 hrs at the helm in horrendous weather. I had been put off (banned) from helming after my erratic driving the previous night. Jooles eventually got the courage to come on deck. I think, more from the need for company than anything else. As always we find it cathartic to talk and share emotions.

Colin has not been out of his bunk since the incident and has retreated totally into his shell. A complex person who, I think is learning some tough lessons and battling with his own demons.

I am tired, emotional, battered and pleased to be alive. My rope burns are infected and have started to weep. Doc gave me some antibiotics today. All my joints have swollen. I couldn't take my wedding ring off even if I tried. The arms are still causing immense pain everytime I haul a sail or use a winch. Everything is wet, smells and is cold, and last night to add insult to injury I had a weevil / grub-thing land on my face and crawl up my nose. Ahhhhhhhhhh sanity is an interesting concept.

People remember September 11<sup>th</sup>. On this boat we will all remember October 8<sup>th</sup> 2002.



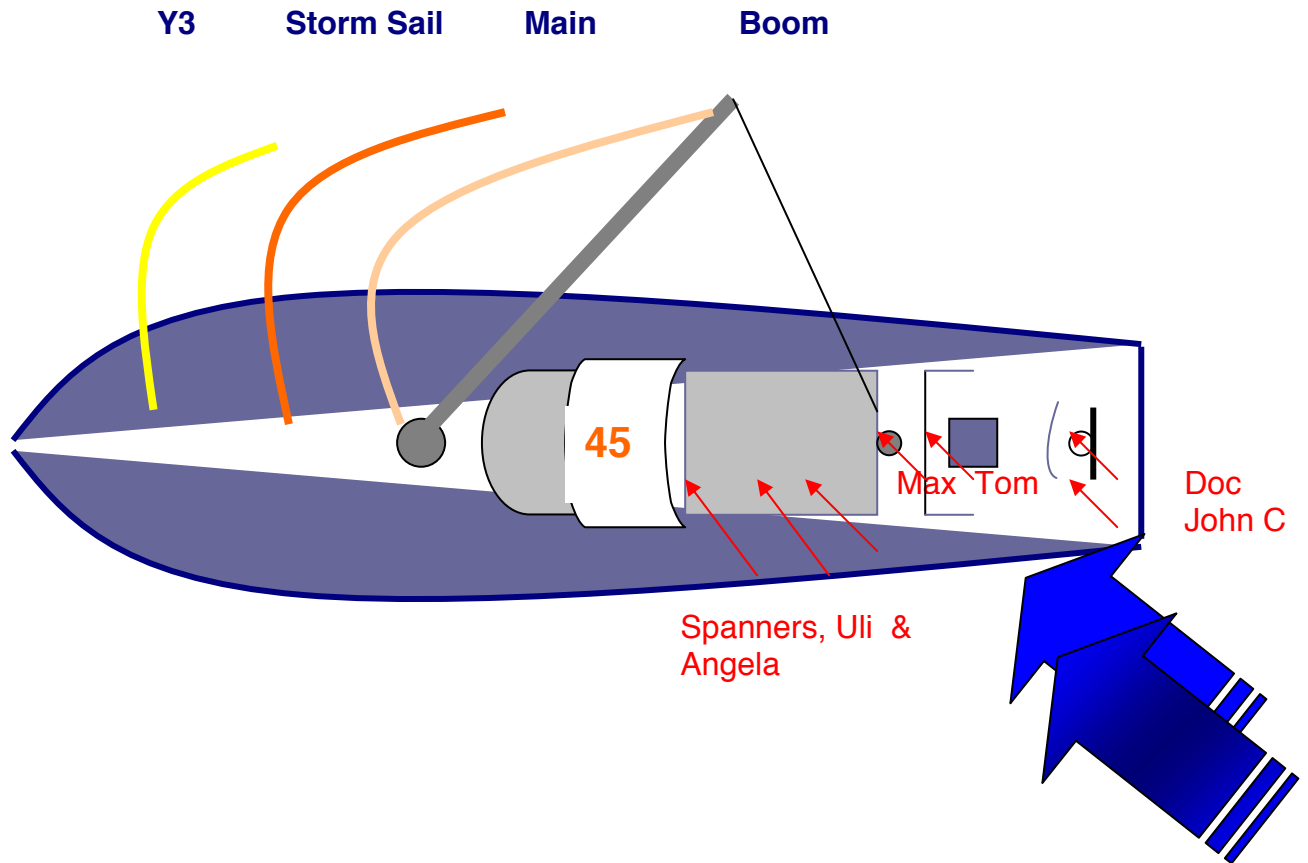


Fig 3 Positions on deck during incident

I managed to get some film footage of the minutes following the incident and interviewed a number of the watch. I then went up on deck and interviewed JB at the helm using the night-shot facility on the Granada TV video cam. JB had just said “the steering should hold following the repairs we’ve done as long as we don’t get another freak wave” Before the words had finished leaving his mouth a big goffer hit us taking us out..... £600 of camera TU!. (Totally Unworkable or Tits Up, whichever you prefer – Ed) Hopefully they will be able to extract the film and get the footage of it happening. Brilliant TV. ( It was! Ed)

(NB. Reflecting on this, I appear to dis-associate using the camera. Maybe this was my way of coping by distancing myself and seeing the event through the camera. Hmm food for thought)

From:	John Burfitt
Date:	BG 8-OCT-02 12:57 GMT
Position:	North of the fleet

Been a bit busy for journal writing. Loz has been confined below decks for 3 days now because of his broken ribs. However he refuses to take it easy and has been busy in the galley and on the rebuild of the #2 yankee which ripped in several places. It's now in it's bag ready to test, I don't think it will stand up to the wind strength it was designed for.

A shame because we've had the conditions that need it for 36hrs or more, so we're underpowered at present. We're not underpowered in some of the squalls though, biggest gust to date 51 knots.

Last night we got hit by a particularly nasty wave, it slammed the helmsman into the wheel with sufficient force to bend the steering pedestal into it's protective cage locking the steering.

Other crew were thrown about the boat too. Thankfully the only injuries were bruises and sprains. It took some time to get the boat under control and the steering fixed, we were heading back to the US for nearly an hour and did 4 consecutive circles! The steering pedestal is now at a jaunty angle with lots of pretty red lashings holding it in place and has been working fine for 10 hrs.

The fear factor is well up now, some of us have the wild eyes of a child enjoying a roller-coaster ride, while others have terror on their faces. Challenge is the name of the business and dealing with fear is a big challenge for some, telling them not to worry 'cause it's only wind and water doesn't always help.

I'm on a short-naps-in-foulies sleep system since Loz got injured nearly 3 days ago, it's time for another one.

JB



Wednesday 9th October

Day 11

At last it is calm. 11 knot winds and we are all on deck (inc Colin) for our 8-2 pm watch. Paco Bell's canon suite is playing and everyone is quiet, subdued but happy to be alive.

This mornings scheduled radio call which I am normally responsible for was interesting as no one was that bothered by the results. Vail -175nm  
Logica - 146nm ahead was not worth comment. Except VW leading meant we would all have the same points. For example BG -6 pts for a win 4 pts for 3<sup>rd</sup> = 10 pts. Logica 2x 5pt 2<sup>nd</sup> places total 10pts and VW 1st and 3<sup>rd</sup> = 10pts. The race would therefore depend on total time elapsed and would therefore come down to what happened over the next 6 days. We might end up 2<sup>nd</sup> overall because of the 12hr lead on VW in leg 1. Realistically we need to get their lead less than 100 miles.

Last night was hard. We were all shattered yet unable to sleep. Every big wave or howl of wind left us (me) awaiting the scream from above. Our nervousness was shared by JB. A number of times day and night he charged out of his cabin, up to the deck and check everyone was ok. Loz is suffering and confined to his bunk by Doc who is concerned about his neck. JB is therefore taking all the strain and appears to be beating himself up for the situation we are in.

Nicky was a bit of a hero yesterday. She went from not wanting to go on deck at all -instead staying below sowing; to last watch when she was back at the helm picking up the bits and rebuilding her confidence.

We had a good watch at last. (0000-0400) We kept only 3 of us on deck and rotated each other hourly to stay warm / refreshed. We managed at last to get Mike off the helm and to have a rest.



Mike has been helming for 4 -6 hours at a time over the last 48hrs as he is the only one of three people on the boat left able to control BG in these conditions. He has smashed his hand that is now swollen to twice its normal

size. This means that he is trying to helm one handed and has succeeded for the last 24 hrs. There are now a growing list of us on antibiotics / brufen etc. In fact only Nicky and Jooles from our watch and Angela and John Kirby from Gin are uninjured.

Colin is perking up. I had to sit down and gently tell him he was being pathetic and needed to get a grip as he was impacting the safety of us all by staying in his bunk. I explained the efforts everyone was making and whatever his reason for making this trip, he had to go back with his head held high, proud that he had not let himself or others down. I said that despite his illness/sickness he had to see this through and overcome the fear. I told him that he had just 7 days to go and had to make his decision continue to give in and live with the burden/demon for the rest of his life versus a horrible experience that he fought hard to get through and can be proud of.

Colin went to pieces. There were tears and snot and much hand-holding. I felt hugely responsible for what was for all intents and purposes a breakdown. I don't think I have ever experienced anything like this in my life. I can only imagine it as being similar to the fear and desperation faced by soldiers in WW1. I could see for the first time just how debilitating fear and illness combined could be. I felt exceptionally bad being the person having to talk to Colin but felt that I had no alternative as nobody else seemed prepared to do it and I could not continue to bubble with resentment personally. I had to let it out and knew I had to talk to Colin or about him behind his back. The 2<sup>nd</sup> option was easier but plain wrong.

Colin hasn't eaten properly for 10 days despite all the coaxing , tlc etc. it was time to be more brutal and I told him in no uncertain terms the impact of his not eating was having on him and the rest of us.



Today, 24 hrs on and Colin has been on watch fully for the 1<sup>st</sup> time. He has learned how to download the weather faxes and has cleaned the bilges. In fact I can honestly say he has done more in the last 24hrs than the previous



10 days all in. What was really great was he joined us all at breakfast this morning. Good for him he has made his decision.

I spoke with JB about my chat with Colin last night. Obviously Loz had overheard it all whilst flat on his back and fed it back to JB. I don't think he approved. He is very laissez faire on this despite his knowledge that failing to eat leads to no energy and no capability to look after yourself. He was keen that Colin deals with his own demons. I suppose it is the difference between the intellectual route versus the emotional route. "You need to eat because..." versus "You will fucking eat now!"

*(NB: In hindsight I feel my actions were selfish and more about my need than Colin's. At the time I felt JB should have dealt with this and I shouldn't have had to. Again on reflection I recognise JB was in an impossible position. On one hand we were a crew yet on the other paying customers. Challenge business would not have supported the action and if it had been JB. You could argue that it would have exposed him and the company to litigation. Reflection a wonderful thing I must learn to do more!)*

The injury list is pretty impressive.

Loz	Broken ribs /neck damage	Nigel	Broken finger /bang to head
Tom	Septic Chin	Mike	Helm hand! vomiting
John C	Knee / ribs and hand	Doc	Shock, vomiting bruising to leg /wrist
Max	Bruising to chin, chest and legs Possible broken ribs	Gordon	Septic leg wound / bicep tendonitis / swollen joints septic toe
Ulrich	Injury to knee and shoulder	Colin	Vomiting / malnutrition

Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> October

Day 12

Position as at 1000Z -3rd

<b>YACHT</b>	<b>LATITUDE</b>	<b>LONGITUDE</b>	<b>BISHOPS ROCK</b>	<b>LEAD</b>
<b>BG Group</b>	50 55N	16 59W	471	
<b>Logica</b>	47 31N	14 36W	366	-105
<b>Vail Williams</b>	49 44N	14 10W	354	-126
<b>Spirit of HK</b>	49 26N	16 58W	473	+2
<b>Team Spirit</b>	50 02N	18 17W	527	+56
<b>BP Explorer</b>	49 55N	19 27W	580	+109

Last night found us beating hard into wind. The sea is choppy and the wind is averaging 25 kts but now we beating we are over at 45 degrees to port. This makes moving around below deck extremely difficult particularly for the injured.

Jooles and Angela are additions to the injury list today. Jooles with a sprained wrist that led to a bout of sickness and we had to put her to bed. Angela is apparently sporting the worlds largest bruise on her back/ bum which she sustained on deck in the freak wave incident. It has taken a couple of days to blossom.

Progress during the night was good and we picked up 40 miles on VW and Logica. JB and Loz seem renewed and have the bit between their teeth. They are doing much more helming.

The one funny incident to report occurred last night and was down to me! I opened all the hatches and skylights when we were becalmed. I forgot to close them later in the forward cabins

I was just settled in my bunk and said to JB as he passed that it was 'so nice to be dry for once' when a wave broke over the deck and down my hatch way drenching him! He then realised the same was happening in his cabin as his bunk became a swimming pool.

"Which fucking tosser did this beep beep beeeeeeep" "Actually JB it was me. Sorry.. Il sort it out" " You absolute idiot , tosser fool expletive my bedding, expletive,my mid layer,.. expletive you cant sort it out ahhhh" He then stormed off on deck for a cigarette. Imagine if you will the funniest John Cleese sketch with JB as Basil Fawlty and me as Manuel and you wont be too far away from the scene.

Two minutes later he was back laughing at the "Isnt it nice to be dry for once" comment as I set to drying out his cabin.

Today I am Mother. I am cooking flapjacks. No gimble on the oven Interesting outcome see diagram. Chilli con Carne and butterscotch delight for dinner.



I made some soup at lunchtime and used the container to send Harriet a message in a bottle with some sweets. I threw it overboard at Way Point 76 about 400 nm off Lands End. The message was written as from Ariel to say she had delivered it to the seashore hopes it gets to her safely. We shall see. (NB: No sign as at 5 Jul 2003)



Dolphins are often with us and really help make life on deck more pleasant. They are beautiful creatures.

Despite the driving rain and bitter cold, morale is higher and we are all able to joke about 'the wave' and discuss it openly.



Maxine went on deck for the 1<sup>st</sup> time today and really found it hard (emotionally) she is a very insular person but I know she appreciated our concern for her.

Yesterday she really came out of her shell. She had Loz helping her in the Galley. He was christened by her as her 'Galley Bitch' It was hilarious and all very surreal. They would not have looked out of place in some dodgy den of iniquity in Brighton.

We are estimating a Monday arrival in Southampton all being well and I hope Lindy and Harriet can be there to see me. I must ring Lindy and ask her if it possible if Harriet can be off school. It would be great to show her the boat and what it has been like.



Friday 11<sup>th</sup> October

Day 13

Position: Off Fastnet Rock

<b>YACHT</b>	<b>LATITUDE</b>	<b>LONGITUDE</b>	<b>DIST TO WAYPOINT</b>	<b>LEAD</b>
<b>BG Group</b>				
<b>Logica</b>				-97
<b>Vail Williams</b>				-107
<b>Spirit of HK</b>				+55
<b>Team Spirit</b>				+18
<b>BP Explorer</b>				+Lots

Calmer weather, but very changeable today. This has led to a number of abortive sail changes and finally getting the flanker up. We are currently making 11 kts in the right direction after an hour of only 3kts earlier this morning.

The big news is Mike aka Harry Helm Hand. His hand is starting to go a very horrible shade and is still huge. He is going to have to be casevaced off the yacht. This is probably going to be from Culdrose as soon as we are in range. This should be eventful and exciting for everyone!



Yesterday I was 'Galley Bitch' and decided to raise morale by putting on boobs and a blond wig. It and the food seemed to go down well. Reflecting on Harriet's message and werthers originals in a bottle I wonder if it will get to her. I am missing home (Lindy and Harriet) more and more and cannot wait to be back. It looks like we will get in Monday and will be able to leave on Tuesday after cleaning and de-rigging BG. The beard is coming on and I look like King Edward or the Duke of Kent!



Just after coming off watch this afternoon we were entertained by two dolphins.

## Strange Visitors



It was a sunny morning way out at sea somewhere between Britain and the United States of America. Dolly and Flipper were eating breakfast . today it was live tuna with the rest of the School. Groups of Dolphins are called schools whereas groups of fish are shoals.

Dolly and Flipper were young dolphins and were learning some of their parents favourite tricks for catching tuna. “Now just follow me and do everything I do.” Said Mummy. Up ahead Dolly saw what they were looking for. “Daddy look Tuna” “well spotted Dolly come on”

Dolly and Flipper tailed their parents as they raced after the tuna. When they reached the shoal Mummy and daddy shot in front of the shoal and started to swim around and around in circles followed by the youngsters. Each circle got smaller and smaller. With each circuit of the shoal the tuna moved closer and closer together. Soon they were so tightly packed they could no longer see the dolphins. This was the time when each dolphin turned in and chose which fish to have for breakfast just as you or I might pick a packet of cereal from the cupboard.

Just then dolly saw a big grey shadow moving quickly through the water towards them. “Daddy, what is that? Is it a whale?” said Flipper. “Oh no son. Come on let go and look!” The dark grey shape was close now its big fin pointing straight down. “Mummy it looks like a whale its got a big fin and its as big as a whale.” Said Dolly. “Except, what’s that funny whirly thing at the back that shines like fish scales?” Added Flipper.

“Ahh, this is a boat and that’s a propeller. It is used to push the boat through the water just like we use our tails.” Said Mummy. “But its not moving” noted Dolly who had the best eyes of all. “That is because this is a sailing boat – a yacht. We know that because it has a keel.” What’s a keel?” Dolly enquired. “Well said Daddy “ it is that big fin on the hull and it is used to counter balance the weight of the mast. Do not swim near it is very heavy and dangerous. It

could cut you in half if you are not careful.” Dolly frowned this did not sound at all nice and she still wasn’t sure what it was all about.

“Daddy what is a boat – yacht thingy?” “Well it is something that carries humans” “Humans?” said Dolly and Flipper together. “Yes” said Mummy “Humans are mammals like us but they live on land. They can speak like us but cannot swim well so they make boats to help them swim. A yacht is one of these and they use the wind to make it swim fast. Dolly and Flipper looked even more confused.

“Come on kids we’ll show you” said dad. “Lets go and say hello!” The dolphins shot after the yacht and came up alongside. Diving through the waves they felt the air tickle their skin and looked around at this new and strange visitor. When Dolly first jumped out of the water she saw a beautiful blue side glistening in the sun. It also had an orange stripe and strange markings near its head. Dolly could not see an eye or a mouth. Gosh these humans are very big she thought. “They squeak and click just like us” said Flipper. “Oh no they don’t” said mummy. “ What you can see is the yacht. The sounds you hear that are like our talking are, the noise of the wind in the rigging and sails and the creaking of the boat as it flexes in the water. The big yellow triangles above the surface are the sails and they catch the wind and pull the boat along.”

“So where are the humans?” said Dolly “What do they look like?” “Well that is difficult” said Mr Bottlenose, “you see they all look different. Humans aren’t like us they are all different colours and textures” “But how do you know they are all humans “ “Well we don’t for certain but they all have some things the same. They have long thin fins with fingers at the end like seals and they stand up like weed but on two more fins or tentacles. They have round heads. Some have little eyes like us but some have really big black eyes. Most have weed growing out of their heads but it is normally dead” “How do you mean”. “Well the weed is brown or yellow. I’ve never seen a human with live green weed.”

By now Dolly and Flipper were very confused and swan to the surface again for another look. “There’s one said Flipper pointing at a red shiny thing on the foredeck. There’s a yellow one and there is another all blue and drab” said Dolly.

They jumped, watched and clicked with excitement as more and more humans appeared on deck. “Aren’t they odd they are pointing their tentacles at us” said Flipper. “They are also showing their teeth do you think they want us for breakfast Daddy ” said Dolly. “ Oh no its called a smile. Humans smile when they are happy. You two are making them happy with your jumping children.” With that Dolly and Flipper gave their best gymnastic display, jumping rolling and spinning in the wake.

“Daddy they are clapping like seals as well they must be related.” Well I’m not sure about that but you two are definitely making them happy now come on children it’s time to go and visit Ariel for tea.”



With that, they turned as one and headed off to Neptune's secret kingdom to meet Ariel. "Daddy now their mouths are tuned down. Why?" "They are sad we are leaving" "Ahhh can we visit the humans again?" "Of course me can dear." Said Mrs Bottlenose. "If you are good we might take you to a bay and you will see their homes they call houses."

"Mummy how come you know so much about humans when they don't live in our world?" "Well humans don't know this but we can understand them and we listen to them talking through the side of their boats. We also can hear their sonar and radio because we have more sophisticated hearing that picks up all their different radio frequencies. They are very arrogant they think they are the only animals who can talk and think deep thoughts." But Mummy don't they know about our great libraries and global information exchange?" "Of course not dear. Why would they? They seldom venture into our world. They are poor swimmers and stay very close to the land." "Bye bye humans see you again." Said Dolly.

**Saturday 12th October**

**Day 14**

Position : 4<sup>th</sup>



Land Ahoy! We have passed Bishops Rock lighthouse just off the Scillies at 0600 this morning. We are back in 4<sup>th</sup> position. HK are 4 hrs or approx 30 miles ahead. Why you might ask?

Last night we medivaced Mike! This was courtesy of a Royal Navy Seaking helicopter (Callsign Rescue 193) from RNAS Culdrose.

Mike's hand was getting rapidly worse so Doc spoke with Truro hospital and was clear that medivac was necessary. We then contacted the coastguard who in turn got Culdrose. (I was very worried they would be sober enough after Friday happy hour remembering my happy hour experiences with Lindy and JC!!)

At 2235 rescue 193 arrived on station and circled. Because of the swell a rescue from the deck was considered too dangerous. ( This was after we had dropped all sail and hove to. No mean task in itself and costing valuable miles)

We had to inflate the 1 man dinghy on deck and attach it to our spinnaker guy ready to launch. On command we launched the dinghy and brought Mike up on deck. We then rather unceremoniously dumped him over the side into the dinghy and trailed him behind us about 150 feet astern. The swell was very big and we were anxious the dinghy would not tip over.

Rescue 193 lowered its winch-man and then spent approximately 15 minutes attempting and finally succeeding to get Mike up and away.

The winch-man used green luminous batons or cylums to indicate to the crew what he required. He was clearly agitated by the amount of desperate waving he did in between swinging to and fro and long dips into the sea below the surface. Conditions were far from ideal for the rescue and it was a great relief when eventually the winch-man managed to get into the dinghy with Mike and within seconds get him into the cab!

We are all sad for Mike that having come so far that he will not be with us at the end of the race. Glad he is safely on his way to Hospital and hope he will make a full recovery. We hope he will be there to met us at the finish God willing.



From:	JB
Date:	BG 12-OCT-02 08:32 GMT
Position:	Off Cornwall

#### Helicopter Rescue on BG Group

Crew member Mike Del Brocco developed an infected hand in mid-atlantic. Despite lots of antibiotics it continued to worsen, last night our on board doctor decided that the swelling had become so acute that hospital treatment was necessary. After consultations with a hospital and the coastguard it was decided to airlift him off the boat.

It was midnight, the wind was blowing 25 knots, 6ft seas were running, the sails were down, the boat was rolling, the chopper had flashing lights, flood lights and thrashed gravity into submission with a deafening roar. Quite a daunting scene for a man with only one useable hand to time his entry into the dinghy with the roll of the boat. Mike is the sort of man who lives for a challenge, with the parting words of "there is no try, only do" he launched himself into the dinghy with typical flair and determination.

As we paid out the rope on the dinghy I was worrying, if one of the seas broke over the dinghy would he get washed out. We were directed to motor slowly into the wind towing the dinghy on it's 50m leash.

The winchman lowered from the helicopter was waving his light stick all over the place directing the pilot as the dinghy washed to and fro at the mercy of the waves, sometimes he looked like some crazy cartoon character trying to run in mid air or on the sea surface. On about the 4th attempt he dropped onto Mike and, securing him in the twinkling of an eye gave the signal to hoist, they were snatched from the dinghy in a trough and quickly plunged into the next wave before rising up into the roaring machine. It may sound like a terrible ordeal to you reading this, but those of us who know Mike, know he'll have loved the ride and wouldn't be surprised if he arrived in the helicopter begging for another go.

There's an emptiness on board now, what a strange feeling to have a crewman plucked from us so abruptly. Anyway we have some sailing to do.

JB

Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> October

Day 15

I am feeling very angry today.

For whatever reason the organisers have insisted on the long route which means a dog leg down to France and back across the Channel again adding an extra 200 miles to the race. This is in spite of requests from 3 of the boats including ours not to.

The result of this decision is we are smack bang in the middle of another bloody force 10! We are currently beating into a south-westerly gale of 50+ kts and with the tide against us we are making almost no progress against the waypoint. Our tack s are actually taking us away from it each time.

I was nearly knocked overboard tonight trying to get the Y3 down. It was flapping around so much we could not control it and had to gybe to drop it on the port side.

The foredeck was scary tonight and for the first time I really struggled to keep going. Our watch is now so depleted that it was Colin, Loz and I on the foredeck and in the snakepit. I volunteered to take Jooles and Nicky's watch for them as they were too traumatised to come on deck. (Nigel is mother today) My arms were next to useless and the pain of sail changes and winching was debilitating and left me shaking. Loz is mad! I cannot believe the way he performed even though he was so obviously in pain. It was clear that both he and JB were very anxious about the boats safety. Bizarre that a yacht designed for a round the world would find some of its biggest challenges in the channel. I remember joking that after mid Atlantic the channel would be a walk in the park. How I regret those words. Colin was awesome tonight. I cannot believe how far he has come. Being the only one on the foredeck un injured he did more than his fair share of the work. There was a real bond between us up there. I think we all knew that we had to work as a team and our lives depended on it. Bizarre that the person I felt most negatively about half way through I should end up feeling so close to.

I rang Lindy during watch tonight as I wanted her to know we would be arriving tomorrow at around 0700. We didn't manage to speak. I hope they come. I was so close to tears with tiredness, frustration and fear. She has probably set off for Southampton and is staying at John or Penny's

Once around the waypoint, we eventually managed to get both the Y3 and stay sail down, reefed the main to its 3<sup>rd</sup> reef and still we were screaming along at 15 kts in an uncontrollable way! The good thing is the faster we go the quicker we get home.

Monday 14th October

Day 16

It has been two very long days. The weather faxes said 30-35 kts , 6hrs and dissipating!! Try 48hrs of 50-60 kts not in any way, shape or form dissipating! Not at all funny.

JB and Loz have helmed without a break for over 18hrs. They are short in temper and incredibly tired but continue to keep us safe.

The noise of the wind is incredible as I write this. It is just like all those old black and white movies like the Cruel Sea. Taking tea /coffee to the helm is a pointless exercise. By the time it gets there the tea has long gone over the side and been replaced by freezing sea water. It's the thought that counts.

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We crossed the line at 0612 and 18 secs according to my watch.  
3792 nm travelled - Never again

As we passed the Royal Yacht Club at Cowes we put on Ride of the Valkeries. It was an emotional moment.

A launch full of family and friends came to meet us. Cheers, shouting, abuse, banter. I got my mobile out to ring Lindy. Is she there? Is Harriet with her?

Ansaphone again! I cannot see them.

Hugs, tears and some quiet reflection up on the bow with Doc, before bringing down the mainsail, for the last time. Then as we motor in, I go below, for a quick shower and into corporate gear. Fenders out, lines and springs set, a team in all senses of the word ready for Ocean village.

The reception is incredible, everyone is on the quayside cheering and shouting. The press plus well wishers are out in force. Champagne, beer and burgers arrive. Anxiously, I look for Lindy and Harriet. They are not there. They should be, they were supposed to have been on the launch but they are not.

I jump off the boat and walk along the jetty away from the crowd with my mobile in hand. Have they been in an accident? All the relief is gone. I ring home. "Hello who's speaking please" comes the voice of my gorgeous daughter. "Hello Harriet" "Daddy!" she squeals clearly delighted. Big tears of relief roll down my cheeks. Harri hands the phone to Lindy after a short chat. They are just setting off! The irritation and hurt I feel that they are not here or even close yet when Lindy knew what time we would be here and that there was a launch put on reminds me of the reality of coming home. Another 3 hrs before I can catch sight of Harriet. I put the phone away. At least they are safe.

Looking over at all the joy others are feeling and the celebrations going on around me, I am reminded of a previous homecoming 11 years earlier and the many times in childhood I experienced similar disappointment. Putting away these thoughts I go back and grab a burger and some champagne and put the party smile back on. At least this way I celebrate with the team and have a clean up and some real food. Then, I can have the family all to myself and, they likewise once all the hubbub has died down. Three hours still seems a long time – why didn't she stay over last night with John and Jo?



Champagne, beer and TV interviews done, we head for Los Bimbo's (Los Marineros) and order a pint of tea and a bacon and egg butty. "We only do cups of tea" "Is that a pint glass above your head?" "Yes well can you fill it

with tea for me?” “I’ll check we can do that I won’t be a minute” Los bimbo’s is aptly named but its warm, dry and safe and the scenery is excellent! The plastic palm tree in the corner has flashing white xmas tree lights covering it. I am reminded of the twinkling of phosphorescence in the cockpit as yet another wave filled it to the brim.

We sailed further than any other yacht by approximately 600 miles and finished only 16 hours behind the winner Vail Williams. One point and less than 15 hours separated 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> in the overall standings after over a month and 7000 nm of sailing. What a race.

Despite our exciting and interesting trip, I lost no weight! I did redistribute it though. Two inches off my waist .... an inch on my chest and on each bicep.  
**Current position:** Home in bed, safe and warm and happy to be alive.

END



## EPILOGUE

From:	BG Group Skipper
Date:	22 October 2002 Final Entry GMT
Position:	Home

### Ghost ship

BG Group is tied to the dock in Ocean Village now. The crew are all gone, their belongings too, save an abandoned pair of socks and a solitary left glove. Gone too are the things we posted to amuse, inform or motivate us.

Were it not for the corporate branding it could be any other Challenge yacht. Yet amidst the emptiness there's a presence. The boat is full of memories for me, memories of hardship and struggle, of jokes and laughter but mostly of friendship and support. When a group of strangers come together to race across an ocean they get far more than a sailing experience, for it is the human element that makes it so special. Each of us found ourselves at the limit at some stage, whether from fear, physical exhaustion or sleep deprivation. At these times the support and encouragement of a shipmate makes all the difference. It helps us to find a little more strength and at the same time a friendship is born.

But it was a race, surely it was all about winning? Sure winning is great. I'll never forget crossing the finish line in Boston, or the pride in my veins as I stepped up to receive the trophy. There are going to be many enduring memories for me, but one sums up the whole thing. It's not coming on deck on a wild night to cries of "JB the steering's gone", nor is it seeing a friend lying in the dinghy waiting for the helicopter winchman.

It's our novice sailor and recent grandfather a few days into race 1, after he'd shaken off the seasickness, he went onto the foredeck in a pair of speedos and yelled at the heavens "I'M ALIVE". After two and a half years working for Challenge it's beginning to sound like a cliché to me, but it really is about ordinary people doing extraordinary things.

John "JB" Burfitt

## CHALLENGE TRANSAT 2002 OVERALL RESULTS

Position	Yacht Name	Finish Details Total Elapsed Time	Points
1	Logica	32d 15h 15m 1s	12 (*)
2	Vail Williams	33d 1h 27m 12s	12
3	BG Group	33d 6h 58m 56s	11
4	Spirit of Hong Kong	33d 22h 22m 35s	9
5	Team SpirIT	35d 0h 24m 34s	6
6	BP Explorer	36d 22h 32m 18s	3

(\*)Logica wins on shorter elapsed time

### ADDITIONAL PRIZES

#### **Fastest 24hr Run sponsored by BG Group**

Race 1 Winner - BG Group 227 miles

Race 2 Winner - Vail Williams 266 miles

#### **Photography Prize sponsored by Marinepics**

Race 1 Winner - Robin Freeth Spirit of Hong Kong

Race 2 Winner - Diana Galpin BP Explorer

#### **Safety Prize**

Race 1 Winner - Team SpirIT

Race 2 Winner - BP Explorer

#### **Media Prize**

Winner - Janet Pilkington, BP Explorer

2nd - Colin Stewart, BG Group

3rd - Alan Goddard, BG Group

## RACE 1 RESULTS

Position	Yacht Name	Finish Details Date / GMT Time / Elapsed Time	Points
1	BG Group	13 Sep 02 06:46:38 18d 16h 46m 38s	7
2	Logica	13 Sep 02 06:54:21GMT 18d 16h 54m 21s	6
3	Vail Williams	13 Sep 02 17:56:57 19d 3h 56m 57s	5
4	Spirit of Hong Kong	14 Sep 02 05:06:54 19d 15h 6m 54s	4
5	Team SpirIT	14 Sep 02 21.44.29 20d 7h 44m 29s	3
Retired	BP Explorer	15 Sep 02 19.33.00 21d 5h 33m	1



## RACE 2 RESULTS

Position	Yacht Name	Finish Details Date / GMT Time / Elapsed Time	Points
1	Vail Williams	13 Oct 13:30:15 13d 21hr 30m 15s	7
2	Logica	13 Oct 14:20:40 13d 22h 20m 40s	6
3	Spirit of Hong Kong	13 Oct 23:15:41 14d 7h 15m 41s	5
4	BG Group	14 Oct 06:12:18 14d 14h 12m 18s	4
5	Team SpirIT	14 Oct 08:40:05 14d 16h 40m 5s	3
6	BP Explorer	15 Oct 08:59:18 15d 16h 59m 18s	1

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