



VETERAN “THUNDERSTREAK” PREPARES FOR THE NEW-STYLE 2024 COWES POWERBOAT FESTIVAL: PROBABLY HER FINAL RACE.

Team:Royal Yacht Squadron, Class 3E National UK powerboat champions in 2022 and 2023, have again entered their veteran race-boat “*Thunderstreak*” for both Cowes Powerboat Festival events over the August Bank Holiday race weekend. Sadly, however, this might be their last race as they retire the boat this season.

As the oldest race-boat in the fleet, this 1963 Bertram currently leads the UK national championship after three races with 1200 points - some 300 ahead of their nearest competitor, fellow Islander Peter Hall’s 1980s Hunton 28, “*Mango Crazy*” and many younger, faster entries.

This Cowes-based prize-winning team [see right: clockwise from top centre] comprises **Hugo Peel**/owner-driver; **Richard Jessel** [navigator/strategy]; **Adrian de Ferranti** [throttles/trim]; and **John Simmonds** [laughing Team:RYS skipper]. All four have been preparing for the revitalised **Cowes Powerboat Festival**, organised by Laura and Martin Levi of the British Powerboat Racing Club in a new partnership with international PowerboatP1. New sponsors are **Experience Kissimee**, of Florida, USA.

The race weekend which includes the celebrated 200-mile+ Cowes-Torquay-Cowes [CTC] for the bigger Class 1 and marathon race-boats for this Saturday. However, “*Thunderstreak*”, as a veteran entry, will compete with over 20 other Class 2 and 3 challengers in the 80-mile Cowes-Poole-Cowes race [CPC].

Again, on Sunday Team:RYS will enter the 60-mile Round-the-Island Race [RTI] hoping to repeat their performance from the identical race in May this year where “*Thunderstreak*” romped home in Class 3E first place - and set a record rounding time for a veteran Bertram 31’ of 66mph.

Owner/driver **Hugo Peel** observed: “She fairly flew round the Island earlier this May with her new race-propellers. This re-fitted veteran race-boat achieved an average speed well beyond her original designed velocity of 30mph.”

He added: “Sadly, however, Team:RYS will call it a day at the end of this season, so this is our last CPC and RTI. “*Thunderstreak*” has enjoyed an amazing second life and given us huge success - but this is our last hurrah!”

ENDS



EDITOR'S BRIEFING NOTES :

HISTORY:

Originally penned in the late 1950's to achieve 30mph by American designer Ray Hunt - known as "... *the U.S.A. father of the deep-vee hull shape*" - today *Thunderstreak* comfortably reached double those speeds in the right conditions over the 2022 and 2023 race seasons. Their winter refit has been watched from the USA by Hunt Design's President, Winn Willard. "It is beyond a joy," he said this month, "to see this iconic race-boat still bringing home awards and championships after six decades. The quest for a few more mph has been very well-considered and, for sure, Team:RYS is right to emphasise that it is *reliability* that wins races."

FINAL SEASON? YES!

This is to be *Thunderstreak's* final race-season under **Team:RYS** colours. **Hugh Rayner**, of the Lymington-based yacht brokers Berthon was appointed this week to find a buyer. "It's a competitive, proven championship class-winner because *she's a race-finisher*," said **Hugo Peel**. "Perhaps it is time for new young team to continue her success?"

TEAM:ROYAL YACHT SQUADRON: note - all are Squadron Members

Owner-driver: **Hugo Peel** is a retired management, branding, and PR consultant whose family have been part of Bembridge and Island life since the 1920s. He acquired "*Thunderstreak*" in 2018 and completely restored her to new Class specifications. She was undefeated in 2020 In Class 4 [Historic]; runner-up in Class 3E in 2021; and the UK National Class 3E champion in 2022 and 2023.

Throttles + trim: **Adrian de Ferranti** farms in Hampshire and joined Team:RYS in 2022. He is a qualified pilot, and divides his time between Hampshire and Scotland - and Cowes were he sails a Daring.

Navigator: **Richard Jessel**, retired but formerly with Lloyds of London and now a Trustee of the Blenheim Estate, has Island and Bembridge connections going back several generations. He sails a Redwing and runs a RIB.

TEAM SKIPPER: John Simmonds is a well-known East Wight character and is in his third year as team Skipper. Formerly in the Royal Navy, John has been an RNLI lifeboatman, a Coastguard, a fisherman and boat-builder. He is Secretary to the Nelson Boatowners Club and currently looks after Team:RYS - who unanimously say that, without him, *they'd merely be spectators!*

MARKETING IN THE USA

Hugo Peel announced the appointment of **Marilyn DeMartini**, a well-known marine PR professional, marketing consultant, print and video journalist to handle the transatlantic publicity on *Thunderstreak's* sale - communicating the story to the marine industry and U.S. historic boating fans.

"I've known Marilyn for several years since she and her partner, Dave Batzer, came to the Cowes-Torquay-Cowes 60th Anniversary Race and who included *Thunderstreak* in a "Cult Classic" documentary on the Bertram 31," said Peel.

DeMartini added, "This iconic American race-boat has an unique history. Built in Miami and restored under the devoted direction of Hugo Peel, I look forward to sharing her story, the news of her availability--and perhaps help this classic to return home to an enthusiastic and worthy collector in the U.S.A."