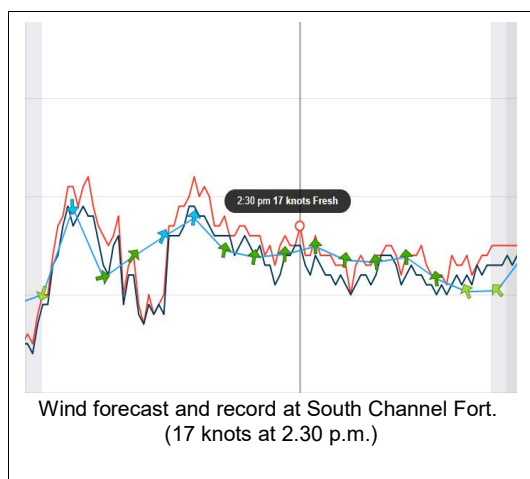


## Champagne Sternchaser 29<sup>th</sup> December 2018



A race, at last, with weather close to the forecast, and satisfactory for a decent run despite a strong tide (over 5 kn ebb in the morning, with change to flood at 3.08). It brought out a wonderful fleet of 9 vessels and an interesting trial of modifications to our procedures for a sternchaser.

At briefing, we signed on Rosie, Drizabone, Tintagel (retrieved from threatened retirement), Warrior, Tiercel, Valentine, Boomaroo, Sundance

and Imagine. OODs for the day were Jennifer Gilbert and Andy Doolan.

A longer than average briefing owing to the different style of race, and the explanation of using a finish line – set, as near as possible, to finish 2 hours after the first start. Handicaps, as usual for sternchasers, had been applied to starting times to the nearest half-minute. Placings to be determined by order over the finish line



Tintagel



Sundance.



Imagine



Tiercel



Valentine



Warrior



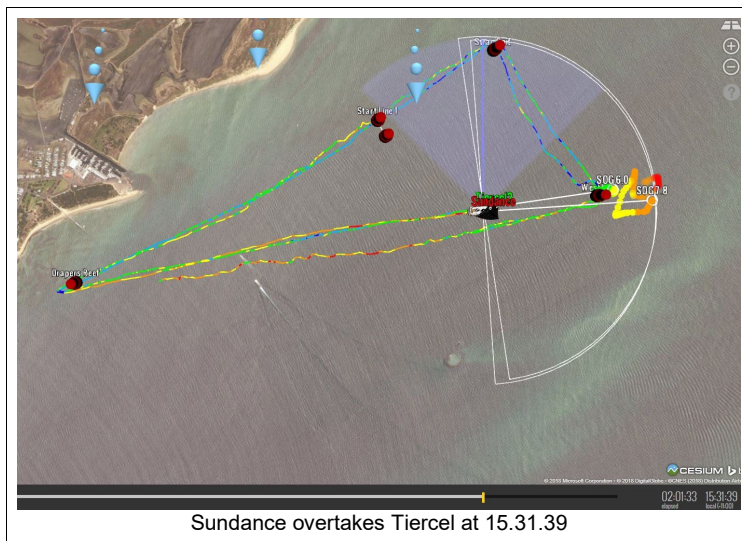
Boomaroo passes Tiercel

not by corrected times nor by order at precisely 2 hours. Also the important addition of a radioed start signal for those of us who had not reached the starting area by 13.30. (Thankfully not interfered with by radio chatter from elsewhere).

The fleet headed out to battle in overcast conditions with winds in the mid teens. The course had been set to allow for long legs early on and short ones later to allow for the 'shorten course flag' and finish being not far from Queenscliff and as close to 15.30 as possible. (The course also avoided crossings of the ferry's path at this stage). All vessels set off in the allocated order, with no major confusion or late starts. Rosie and Valentine got a rough deal from the ferry, who naturally could not slow down by 30 seconds to accommodate other traffic (despite being 5 minutes off schedule anyway).

With the wind as it was on the day (south) the course had the rare characteristic of no tacking upwind and barely allowing spinnakers. In fact it saw the unprecedented situation of a kite (asymmetric) on Tiercel but not on Imagine - on the reach from Drapers to No.3 West. Second time around Drapers Reef the





only drama was Valentine copping a sudden lull in the wind together with an eddy in the tide, resulting in the engine being needed at the cost of retirement. Other vessel-specific dramas included Tiercel attempting to jibe the asymmetric and getting a line under the boat and round the rudder – thankfully with rudder locked amidships not hard over which could



Winners are grinners Festive hats for Drizabone and OODs.



Merry colour co-ordination.



A brisk moment on Tiercel



And kite going awol (airborne without leave)

have been spectacular. Sundance also had a spinnaker issue. The order across the line (hence placings) were Drizabone, Tintagel (almost tied), Boomaroo, Warrior, Imagine, Sundance, Tiercel, Rosie, with Valentine retired. The handicapper was relieved to see Imagine catching up with Sundance close to the finish time, and indeed even closer was the convergence between Sundance and Tiercel. RaceQs showed that

Sundance overtook Tiercel after the 2-hour target time but before the finish line - an interesting philosophical point for the sailing committee, as is the fact that Tintagel and Drizabone were closer than the half-minute precision in setting start times. Drizabone's win was by 0.04 minutes rather less than the "rounding error" applied to Tintagel's start time of 0.2 minutes.

After the race, a most enjoyable "drinks and nibbles" session in the boatshed rounded off an excellent day on and around the water. Thanks to Club Captain Steve for organisation and to OODs Jennifer Gilbert and Andy Doolan, with congratulations to them for coping with the complexities of the sternchaser format - in particular for handling the complex starting arrangements so successfully. It's the first time the writer can remember a sternchaser without confusion at the start line. Thanks also to Andy Doolan for on-water photos.