

Popular Bertie sails in

Own Correspondent

Veteran Bertie Reed sailed into Granger Bay just after midnight, taking eighth position in the BOC single-handed round-the-world yacht race.

He was met by a flotilla of yachts and a large crowd of supporters who braved the chilly, wet weather to welcome the popular yachtsman.

He was full of praise for his yacht Grinaker: "I was able to do 350 miles in the last 36 hours, which means that Grinaker can go fast. She can move."

"I lost a lot of time stuck without wind for four days in the high-pressure system, but it's me who made the wrong decisions. I took the gamble and it didn't pay off," he said.

Reed said he took a gamble by going west immediately after the start of the race at Newport. A week after the start he realised his error but when he tried to move east, the wind was wrong.

"Finally, when I got east, everybody was on the western track where I wanted to be in the first place," he said.

"The youngster, Alain Gautier was really good, he had a perfect race and showed he could make a boat go very fast. He dominated from the start and was not going to go into any tacking duels with anybody."

He also complimented Frenchwoman Isabelle Autissier who beat him by more than a day.

"The young lady also sailed a perfect race, although I hoped that she would break down so that I could go and help her," he said to laughter.