

Round The World Record **Cheyenne's done it!**

58 Days 9 Hours 32 minutes 45 seconds

Average Speed: 15.52 knots

58 days 9 hours 32 minutes 45 secs after taking the start on February 7th, American skipper Steve Fossett and his international crew of 12 aboard the 125-foot maxi-catamaran *Cheyenne* crossed the official WSSRC start-finish line at Le Stiff lighthouse on the French island of Ouessant (Ushant). They have just demolished the two year old Round The World Sailing record - by almost 6 days (an improvement of 5d 23h 4m 39s). Their time topples the May, 2002 mark of Bruno Peyron and *Orange I* - and fulfils Fossett's decade-old ambition to achieve 'the most important record in sailing'

Speaking from *Cheyenne* via satellite phone at the finish line, Steve Fossett said: "The past 24 hours were slow at first, but improving winds became very strong by the time we crossed the line with two reefs and staysail - it was very dramatic - we had our hands full - around this island the tides were whirling. Everyone is just so happy - we are all emotionally drained. It's quite a celebration. Everybody on this crew is absolutely delighted; this is a satisfying moment for all of us."

When asked if he ever thought he would not make it Steve said "when we started out I thought the chance was 50/50 that we would get around. Then I wondered that the boat might not be fast enough".

The official WSSRC (World Speed Sailing Records Committee) course calls for an eastbound passage from Ouessant, leaving the 3 great capes - Cape of Good Hope (S. Africa), Cape Leeuwin (SW Australia) and Cape Horn (Argentina) - to Port, returning up the Atlantic to Ouessant. The past eight weeks have seen Fossett and *Cheyenne* cover over 25, 000 miles along this course at a blistering pace, through every sort of weather, accompanied by a fistful of new round the world segment records - averting numerous potential technical disasters - including a separated forestay, shorted out instrumentation, broken mast track and a disintegrating forward beam connection at the starboard hull - all resolved in a series of astonishing 'running repairs' by *Cheyenne*'s brilliant crew. ⚓



Having smashed the round the world speed record by over 5 days its no wonder the crew of Cheyenne are full of smiles!
pic by Henri Thibault/DDPI

Aboard *Cheyenne*

by Nick Leggatt

In the last issue Nick Leggatt, the only South African aboard Steve Fossett's *Cheyenne*, gave us a personal account of their record attempt to the halfway point. Here Nick takes us through the second part of their round the world dash.

Just one month ago we were charging through the Southern Ocean near Australia aboard Steve Fossett's 125' maxi-catamaran, *Cheyenne*, and now we find ourselves about 1500nm from the finish line of our round the world speed record attempt. From here we can almost smell the croissants being baked on the French island of Ushant!

It was south of Australia and New Zealand that *Cheyenne* really showed her form, posting seven consecutive day's runs of over 500nm, with our 'best day' being 622nm. This dramatic display of speed sailing blasted us across the International Date Line and into the most remote reaches of the Pacific Ocean 2222nm ahead of the record pace. Remarkably we were able to sustain such high speeds by virtue of the fact that we were sailing in flat water ahead of a cold front so that at times we were sailing fully powered up under full mainsail. Of course concentration at the helm while doing over 30 knots in the dark is all important so at times we would throttle back and depower to the storm spinnaker.

Of course such weather conditions couldn't last forever and by 10 March we were being hammered by huge waves after the passage of the cold front. Speeds were down, but still green water was coming over the deck and putting enormous loads on the entire boat.

Eventually the spinnaker halyard broke and the sail dropped into the water, reducing our speed to a crawl as we battled to recover it. After getting underway again the waves still would not give us a break, one huge one washing the length of the boat and throwing the helmsman, Guillermo Altadill, from the wheel. Guillermo was saved from being swept overboard by his safety harness, but he still received a severe winding and bruising to his ribs which left him unable to steer for a while. Sometime later, after the change of watch, I was on deck, trimming the mainsail, when another giant wave slammed into the boat and sent me reeling headfirst into the compass pedestal. I managed to knock out the compass light and split open my face from nose to ear. Dave Scully quickly took charge of tending

"Hasta Bananas" Sailing and Romance in the South Seas

Retired after thirty years as an airline pilot for Swissair, Otto Schmid from Switzerland did it! Around the world, Trinidad to Trinidad (Caribbean) in more than eight years. He set sail with little experience on the open seas to cross the Atlantic Ocean to the Panama Canal, Galapagos, Polynesia, New Zealand and Australia. Some passages were done as a single-hander, but often with different crew members.

He found a life without monthly schedules. Captivated by the South Seas, time came to a standstill. It was not just nature - coral islands, palm trees swaying in the tradewind, underwater life - that drew him back. He was fascinated by the culture and the people who populate these remote islands. There unbelievable hospitality, happiness and readiness to help everywhere and all the time. His dreams became reality.

His book «Hasta Bananas», full of quality illustrations, describes a life of freedom that most people can only dream about. It is full of nautical adventures and life enriching experiences in the South Seas. For news visit his website www.hastabananas.ch.

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(«Hasta Bananas» ist auch in Deutsch erhältlich)

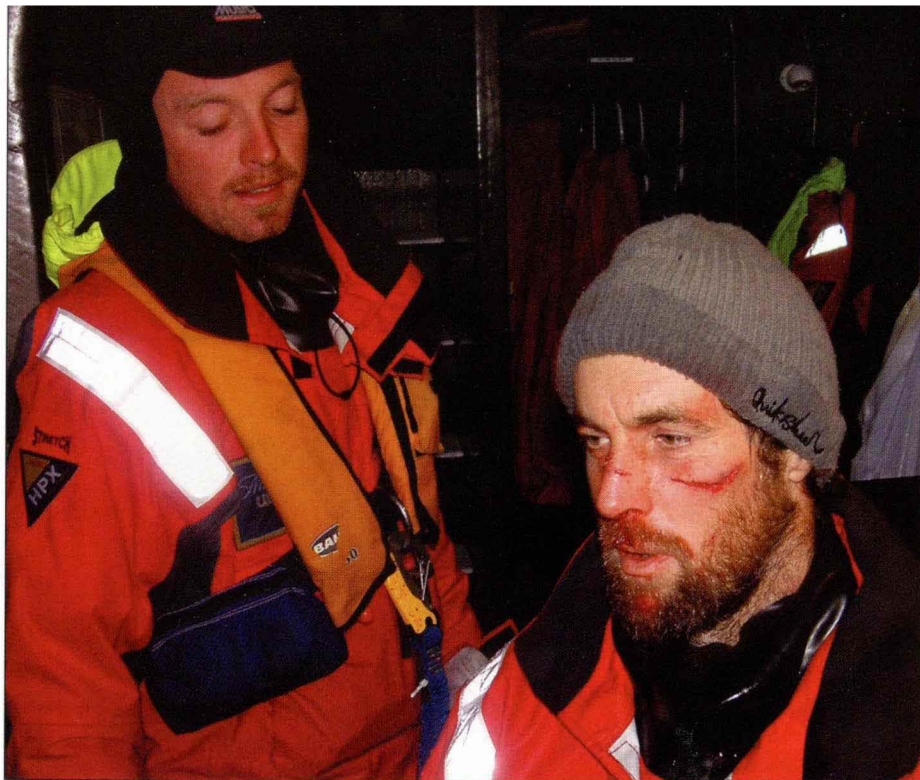


to my injury while the rest of the crew battled to slow the boat down even more, before anyone else could be injured. I was confined to duties below decks for over 24 hours to give the wound a chance to dry out and reduce the possibilities of infection but within 36 hours I was back on deck to assist with the helming while the main was dropped to effect a repair on a broken batten.

Soon after repairing the batten we were surprised to see a ship on the horizon, the first ship we had seen since we had passed Cape Town. We attempted to communicate with the bulk-carrier but got a rather curt response from the officer of the watch.

Sailing a yacht that moves as fast as the weather systems has its pros and cons. When the weather is good, it tends to remain good for a while, but equally, when the weather is bad it remains that way for some time. So it was that four days after the cold front passed us we were still being shaken up by violent seas. The constant pitching and rolling and slamming into waves eventually caused the halyard lock to sheer off the mast at the first reef point. This turned out to be quite a major problem as we first lost time by having to lower the sail to the second reef and, secondly, as soon as we were able, (ie the next day) we had to alter course towards calmer waters so that a team could go up and jury rig a new halyard lock.

Justin Slattery and Mike Beasley,



South African Nick Leggatt received some nasty wounds when swept into the compass binnacle by a huge wave. Looking on is Jim Slattery.

Pic by Fossett Ocean Challenges/DPPI

backed up by Dave Scully and Damian Foxall, managed to carry out a remarkable repair 100-foot above deck level after several hours of work. Unfortunately this delay meant that we missed the ideal weather pattern for rounding Cape Horn and now ended up sailing into an area of light winds and lumpy seas. Meanwhile, south of Africa, our rivals, the French trimaran, *Geronimo*, had reached the longitude of Cape Town 30 minutes ahead of our time, and they were still in a good weather pattern. Still one day short of Cape Horn we found ourselves almost becalmed, doing three knots under full main and Code Zero.

A day short of Cape Horn and we were rolling around with light winds and a big sea. Once again the constant banging and slatting of the main sheered off another halyard lock, this time from the full hoist position. The motion of the boat in the seaway made it too dangerous to send a man aloft to carry out repairs so for the moment we reduced to crawling along under a reefed main in light winds.

Overnight the wind gradually began to fill in from the west and dawn on our 39th day at sea found us reaching and then running under a grey and rainy sky towards Tierra del Fuego. A gybe to the south got us into clear skies as the island of Diego Ramirez came into view dead ahead. This was the first land we had seen since leaving Ushant.

We put in another gybe about 10 miles north of Diego Ramirez and soon the dramatic cliffs of Cape Horn appeared before us. A small aircraft circled us, taking footage for television and video. All hands turned out on deck as we passed the most famous cape and sailed into lighter winds two nautical miles to leeward of the land. Our time of about 39 and three-quarters of a day from the Channel to Cape Horn

established another new record for *Cheyenne*.

A beautiful, red sunset over Tierra del Fuego heralded an increasing wind overnight and a very rough passage throughout the notorious Straits of Le Maire, which separate Staten Island from mainland South America. Strong winds over a fast tide set up violent seas in these Straits and for a time we reduced to a reefed main and no headsail at all.

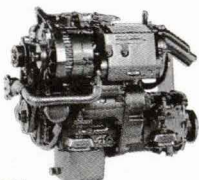
Once clear of Staten Island we were able to bear away again and reach off to pass east of the Falkland Islands. Less than 24 hours after rounding the Horn we were becalmed out of sight, but to leeward of the Falklands. Fishing boats motored back and forth in the distance while a repair crew went aloft again to fix the full hoist halyard lock. Having almost completed the Southern Ocean sleighride we were now faced with perhaps our most important tactical decision - how best to make it back up the Atlantic Ocean with its prevailing headwinds, the same winds that had been so good for us on the way south.

Many boats faced with the same decision in the past have continued in a more easterly direction to try and skirt the South Atlantic high to the east and then pick up the favourable SE Trades as early as possible. Following advice from Commanders Weather Service we decided to gamble on a different approach. Scanning the worldwide meteorological services Commanders had noticed a small low pressure system developing off the coast of Brazil. If we could put up with some beating for a few days and then accept some light winds to get in a position to the west and north of this low pressure we would eventually find that the prevailing headwinds would be temporarily reversed and we would be able to save ourselves literally hundreds of miles in our quest to reach the Trades.

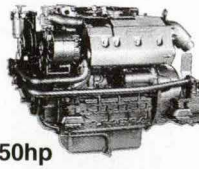


no smoke - no smell

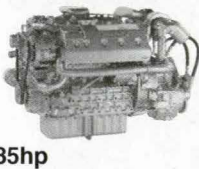
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WORLD-WIDE REPUTATION

sure system and then, leaving the tropics, the wind would gradually free for the final turn to the north east and the run to the finish. However when we arrived at the Equator we noticed that another unusual weather pattern was developing in the North Atlantic and instead of the typical high-pressure system a small temporary low had formed near the Azores. If we could beat fast enough towards the islands we would be able to pass to the east of this system and shorten our distance to the finish by about 1000 miles!

Deciding to take our chances with the weather we sheeted in the sails and hardened up into the wind. Charging upwind at 18 knots I literally flew over the wave tops. The noise and motion are difficult to describe which made it all the more remarkable when Jacques Vincent picked out an unusual noise while sitting down below and identified it as a problem with the front beam.

Going on deck to investigate we found that the starboard front beam bearing had broken in half and was within two inches of falling out entirely!

The front beam bearing connects the front beam to the starboard hull and without it the boat would literally break in half! Of course we immediately altered course to reduce pressure on the beam and then Mike Beasley, our boat builder, started to try and work the bearing back into the beam. Because of the enormous loads he was only moderately successful in moving the bearing but soon he was satisfied that it would be able to take the load. Getting out a drill he made a few holes in the hull and ran a couple of threaded rods through the carbon to captivate the bearing in its housing. Now we were able to come back on course and press on, though we were under reduced sail and sailing very conservatively over the waves. While we sailed the boat Mike laboured to beef up the bearing even more so that we would be able to sail fully powered up again.

To strengthen the bearing Mike took a spare batten we had onboard and cut it into six equal lengths, each the length of the front beam bearing. The battens were then held together by slotting them into large powdered milk tins that had been opened top and bottom to form tubes. The tube of battens was then filled and coated with epoxy before finally being wrapped in a layer of carbon to form a huge shear pin. After a full day of work Mike was ready to slot the shear pin into the bearing and then gave us the go ahead to start sailing properly again.

Just three days after crossing the Equator the wind was already becoming more easterly as we moved towards the influence of the new low-pressure system. The morning of 31 March found us fetching at high speed in flat water when we suddenly spotted another sail on the horizon. Travelling at a speed of 25 to 30 knots we soon caught the other yacht and saw that we would pass close ahead of her. Not having seen another sailing vessel

for well over a month we decided to try and call on the radio but got no response. As we got closer we realised that the other yacht was a cruising boat on autopilot with all the crew below decks! We hardened up a little more and blasted past the other boat at full speed, giving a loud yell when we were as close to them as we dared come. The two crewmen who appeared on deck looked very surprised to see us!

Just 24 hours later we were out of the tropics and already feeling the cooler air of the north. Our little low pressure over the Azores was behaving just as she was forecast to do, and now we could easily steer east of north on a significantly short-

er route to the finish line. Where other boats would have had to beat we were reaching under blast reacher and full main, or gennicker and main.

By now all the crew were avidly looking at the GPS as the distance to the finish diminished: 1000 miles, 750 miles, 500 miles. We began to take bets as to when we would finish, but of course the weather was to have one final trick up its sleeve.

Just when we thought we were invincible, reaching along at high speed in flat water ahead of a cold front we suddenly sailed into the back of a ridge of high pressure that was stretched diagonally across the Bay of Biscay. There was no

Cheyenne speeding towards the finish - and a new world record in 58 days.

Pic by Henri Thibault/DPPI

Taking on the challenge of reaching this low pressure system before it moved away was quite nerve wracking as we saw our lead on the record time whittled down from over 2000nm to just 755nm as we beat slowly northwards. But as we moved out of the Southern Ocean and back into the South Atlantic the wind began to turn

in our favour, as predicted, and over the next couple of days we did start to make up lost ground.

South East of Rio Cheyenne came to a stop. Our strategy of beating northwards through the South Atlantic had worked in our favour to get us quickly into downwind conditions to the west of a low pressure system forming off Brazil. Now we were faced with another dilemma: The low had split in half with a trough of light, variable winds between the two centres. The game plan had always been to take the shortest possible route through this trough to regain the SE Trades on the other side, but the possibility of continuing northwards to the west of the second low was tempting. Ultimately we stuck to our original plan as we received reports of violent squalls with winds to 90 knots developing along the coast!

Aboard the boat it was frustrating to know that we were no longer gaining on the record pace as we crept forwards, sometimes at a mere two knots. Bit by bit, as we clawed our way through the light airs, the wind began to fill in again, this time from the North East. This new breeze was in fact the gradient wind created by the South Atlantic high pressure, the same system that generates the SE Trades, so now we knew we were in the clear and would have a fast passage to the Equator. Back in the breeze again we began a long beat through squally conditions. For a while we were accompanied by a pod of whales. Although the upwind sailing reduced our speed we were now making progress on the record as Orange had to sail a significantly longer route at this point to skirt the high pressure system to the east.

The South Atlantic to the finish...

The final part of our voyage, from the tropical South Atlantic to the finish line, was made in very fast time, but was certainly not without incident.

Having successfully used the winds of a low-pressure system on the coast of Brazil to shorten our course northwards we then had a short, but fast reach through the tradewinds to the Equator. By now Cheyenne was beginning to show signs of strain from the thousands of miles she had raced. One morning we noticed a glint of sunlight through the centre of the main-sail. As a precaution we lowered the sail to the next reefing point and our sail maker, Paul 'Whirley' van Dyke, climbed onto the boom to investigate. Sure enough one of the seams had split and it took the combined efforts of several crewmembers, and a lot of time, to repair it. Once the job was done we rehoisted the sail and continued on our course towards the north.

Approaching the Equator for the second time the efforts of the skipper, Steve Fossett, navigator, Adrienne Cahalan, and the weather routing team at Commanders Weather, combined to find us a way through the Doldrums that caused us minimal delay. We had a few hours of slow sailing under full main and code zero but soon the wind shifted into the northeast and began to fill in at typical tradewind strength.

Having crossed the Equator we now had to consider the tactics for the final part of the voyage to the finish line. Traditionally one would start beating on a course somewhat west of north. On this route the boat would make its way around the western side of the Azores high pres-

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Cheyenne - 125-foot of pure power and speed.

pic by Henri Thibault/DPPI

way to pass north or south of this light air gate and so all we could do was sail straight at it and hope for the best. As the wind died away we went through numerous sail changes to try and make use of every little zephyr to keep us moving. Our bowman, Justin Slattery, went up the mast for one final rig check and came down with the disturbing news that some of the bolts had torn from the lower shroud mast terminals. As we battled on through the light winds he went back up the mast with Dave Scully to carry out repairs that would see us the final few miles to the finish line.

By dawn on 5 April the wind had begun to fill in again and we were making good speed across the northern part of Biscay. The sea had become choppier, as it does close to land, and we were beginning to see a lot of shipping. We were fetching again, under main and solent jib, when one of the blocks on the daggerboard uphaul system suddenly exploded. Luckily this was an easy block to replace and the repair cost us no time, but it was a sharp reminder that although we were only 60 miles from the finish there was still a lot that could go wrong.

A short time later there was another bang and the solent crashed to the deck – the halyard had broken! This caused a little delay as we attached the gennicker halyard and rehoisted the sail but soon after that the island of Ushant came into view and then we knew that we were almost finished. As we approached the land a helicopter with film crew flew overhead and then a jet circled us for a while. On

the cliff tops people waved and shouted.

Our finish line was to be on a line north of the Le Stiff lighthouse, which meant that we had to bear away, and run three miles down the coast after rounding the westernmost tip of Ushant. As we bore away the boat accelerated to over 30 knots and then started to crash through the notorious tidal overfalls that are found to the north of the island. By now we had a reefed main and storm jib but even that proved to be too much as the boat smashed through the waves. We dropped the storm jib and put another reef in the

main just as another seam split open below the second reef point!

With the noise of the helicopter, the wind and the flapping sails we almost didn't hear the words from the official WSSRC time-keeper as he called us by radio from the lighthouse to welcome us back and let us know that our time was 58 days, 9 hours and 32 minutes. We had broken the previous world record by nearly 6 days! ⚓

Cheyenne's Crew

Steve Fossett	skipper	USA
Adrienne Cahalan	navigator	AUS
David Scully	watch captain	USA
Brian Thompson	watch captain	GB
Jacques Vincent	watch captain	FRA
Guillermo Altadill		ESP
Mike Beasley		NZL
Fraser Brown		NZL
Mark Featherstone		GB
Damian Foxall		IRE
Nick Leggatt	South Africa	
Justin Slattery		IRE
Paul Van Dyke		USA

Cheyenne set the following Round the World segment records:

Ushant - Leeuwin
25 Days 14 Hours 8 minutes

Ushant - Cape Horn
39 Days 16 Hours 15 minutes

Ushant - 2nd Equator
50 Days 3 Hours 2 minutes

Indian Ocean crossing
9 Days 20 Hours 29 minutes

Cape Horn - Equator
10 Days 6 Hours 47 minutes

Equator - Ushant
8 Days 6 Hours 30 minutes



With new representation in this country, Harken sent their 'top guns' to the country to introduce Ankie Roux who will represent them in South Africa, and to open their new showroom in Cape Town. Harken's Vice President Olaf Harken spoke positively about their involvement and commitment to South Africa. He was accompanied by Tripp Estabrook who is Harken's OEM Sales Manager.

Seen at the Durban launch were: (L-R) Kim and Eric Schoeman (Charter Cats); Tripp Estabrook (Harken's OEM Sales Manager); Olaf Harken (Vice President) and Ankie Roux (Harken South Africa).