



BP Explorer

On 3 October 2004, 17 people abandoned everyday life to set out on an epic journey. Led by a professional skipper, they embarked on a life-changing journey that would test their strength of character.

It was a journey the 'wrong way' around the world, against the prevailing winds and currents. They were the crew of the BP Explorer yacht, and they travelled 32,000 nautical miles in search of victory in the world's toughest yacht race – the 2004-05 Global Challenge.



Naomi Cudmore put her career as a commissioning editor on hold to join the crew of BP Explorer in the 2004-05 Global Challenge. On board, she had joint responsibility for writing the yacht's daily logs and was media representative for the team. Here she tells their story of the adventure of a lifetime.



About the race

BP Explorer was one of 12 identical, 72 foot yachts that competed in the 2004-05 Global Challenge. Each one had a 17-strong crew of novice sailors, and a professional skipper.

The Global Challenge was created by Sir Chay Blyth, who achieved what seemed impossible and became the first solo yachtsman to sail around the world non-stop, from east to west. That was a quarter of a century ago, and since then, Sir Chay, and his company Challenge Business have given over 700 brave adventurers the chance to realise the same dream.



Foreword

It was with great pleasure that I accepted the opportunity to write a foreword for a commemorative book about BP Explorer's voyage in the 2004-05 Global Challenge.

To sail with 17 other people, work and create a winning attitude is complex enough when those people are seasoned sailors. For the BP Explorer crew, this complexity was magnified 1,000 times. The skippers appointed to the yachts taking part in the Global Challenge had no say in who his or her sponsor might be, which yacht they would be commanding, nor did they have any say in the selection of their crew. Likewise, crew members had no influence as to who they might sail with, who their skipper might be or which sponsor they would be allocated to. If either skipper or crew demanded a change, then the only route open to them was to get off the boat and abandon their voyage of a lifetime.

Against such a background of personal dynamics, the way was open for conflict, clashes of personalities and the age-old curse of vanity. Those on board BP Explorer shed these details and formed a close-knit, on-board community as well as a winning team.

This book tells the story of BP Explorer and its crew members in the 2004-05 Global Challenge round-the-world yacht race. It provides a fascinating record of their experiences in an extraordinary test of personality and human endeavour. It also provides an inspiring example of what can be achieved by teamwork.

BP is proud to have been involved in the Global Challenge and to have supported a successful ocean racing team. But the benefits of participating have extended far beyond the race itself.

For the twelve employees selected to take part, the race was a unique opportunity to develop qualities that are essential in all aspects of our business – a commitment to outstanding standards of safety, a focus on performance in difficult conditions, and working effectively in teams.

For thousands of other employees across BP, the race provided an opportunity to see such qualities at work, following the crew's progress online and sharing their experiences as they faced the extreme conditions of the world's oceans.

Our involvement also provided us with an opportunity to host activities for school children and local communities, including the launch of the BP Explorer Schools Challenge

Great credit is due to David Melville and all of the crew, as well as to the sponsors of BP Explorer who worked so hard to help the team and make it gel. It could not have been easy; they had their share of bad luck as well as experiencing and fighting through some of the world's most hostile seas. They developed a winning culture with safety at the top of their chosen values. They have become an inspiration to those that aspire to join that elite band of sailors who have taken part in the world's toughest yacht race; and, like the route, the crew's attitude was tough – and determined enough to take on this immense challenge.

Naomi and some of her crew mates have here captured the team of BP Explorer and on reading the book we can bask in the reflected glory of this remarkable team.



Sir Chay Blyth, CBE BEM
Founder and Executive Chairman of Challenge Business

which has helped students learn about sailing and topics such as climate, weather and resource use. We were able to meet our business partners in each of the ports of call and promote our brand to a global audience. We also sponsored the coveted BP Safety Award, which was presented in each port of call to the team that had demonstrated the highest standards of safety during the preceding leg.

So congratulations to skipper David Melville, the core crew and the participating BP employees for achieving what they set out to do – to sail a yacht round the world as fast as possible, yet also as safely as possible. Your reward of a podium finish was well-deserved.

One crew member described the experience as an example of "something that is truly greater than the sum of its parts". That's the magic of great teamwork – and that's why this book is well worth reading.



Mark Ware
BP Group Vice President
Communications & External Affairs





BP Ocean Racing Team

In October 2004, 12 identical yachts set out from Portsmouth to race around the world against the prevailing winds and currents. Strictly a one-design class, there was nothing that the sponsors could place on board that would make the boats go faster.

The only difference was the capability of the teams - their cohesiveness and effectiveness, professionalism and determination. For much of the race BP Explorer was first or second overall, but there is a twist in our tale and we finished third - read on to learn more!

To be given a 72 foot ocean racing yacht capable of crossing the Southern Ocean, to be supported by a sponsor as professional as BP, to lead a group of people who are trying to realise their life's dream - that's an incredible opportunity for any yacht skipper and a responsibility that I gladly took on in January 2004.

To assist me, I worked with sports psychologist Simon Timson, and June James, a fellow sailor who supported the team on shore. The team's objective was to gain a podium position and to have a professional safety culture.

In doing so, we needed to be performance-focused, motivated and happy.

Myself and 15 core crew were to circumnavigate the globe, and we were joined on each leg by two BP employees, bringing our total complement to 18. In total, 29 people sailed on board the yacht during the 9½ month race.

This story really belongs to the crew, some of whom had never sailed before signing up for the challenge. Having raced around the world with them, I am convinced that a team of people can do anything once they set their minds to it. Quite simply, they were marvellous. Time and time again, the crew reacted to triumph and disaster and were unwavering in their desire to be a professional sailing team. I felt so proud of all those on board and genuinely admired their bravery and determination. People gave their all in our attempt to win the race.

I say I changed the crew, and they say they changed me! We remained united to the end and taught each other the value of teamwork.

David Melville
Skipper of BP Explorer

Laura Alexander

Nationality: English
Profession: Senior Account Manager

Stephen Allberry

Nationality: English
Profession: Librarian

John Bass

Nationality: English
Profession: Internet Consultant

Holger Bindel

Nationality: German
Profession: General Practitioner

Oliver Browett (Ollly)

Nationality: English
Profession: Student

Jane Cook

Nationality: Scottish
Profession: Project Manager

Naomi Cudmore

Nationality: English
Profession: Commissioning Editor and Journalist

Giles Mackey

Nationality: Irish
Profession: Environmental Engineer

Major Malhi

Nationality: Indian
Profession: Semi-retired

Robin Phillips (Rob)

Nationality: English
Profession: Firefighter

David Pugh (Cop)

Nationality: English
Profession: Builder

Goldie Raley

Nationality: English
Profession: Geography Teacher

Andrew Smith

Nationality: English
Profession: Engineering Project Manager

John Stewart

Nationality: Irish
Profession: IT Project Manager

Christian Talpo

Nationality: Italian
Profession: Restaurant Manager

Richard Wardley

Nationality: English
Profession: Technical Software Engineer

Opposite page (left to right)

Pieter (BP crew), Rob, Stephen, Giles, Richard, John Bass, Major, Laura, David, Naomi, Jo (BP crew), Andrew, Ollly, Christian, John Stewart, Holger and Cop

BP crew

Two BP employees were part of the BP Ocean Racing Team in each leg of the race. Over 330 eager volunteers answered the call of 'the world's toughest yacht race', applying from over 40 BP sites around the world and representing 25 nationalities. The hopefuls went through a gruelling selection weekend in the UK where they were put through their paces on land and sea. This was their chance to prove that they had the stamina, courage and cooperation to challenge the fury of the world's great oceans. Twelve BP crew and six reserves made it through selection. They then went through an intensive training program to make sure they had a solid understanding of seamanship and safety, before they set off on the Global Challenge.



Sasha Zamorouev
Leg 1
Nationality: Russian
Profession: Geophysicist



Valeria Rosa
Leg 1
Nationality: Italian
Profession: Logistics Analyst



Colin Barber
Leg 2
Nationality: Scottish
Profession: Airfield Operator



Giles Mackey
Leg 2; core crew thereafter
Nationality: Irish
Profession: Environmental Engineer



Pieter Tol
Leg 3
Nationality: Dutch
Profession: Financial Controller



Joanna Henderson
Leg 3
Nationality: Scottish
Profession: Mechanical Engineer

Reserves

Juan Cobian
Nationality: Spanish
Profession: Offer
Deployment Manager

Sally Inkster
Nationality: New Zealander
Profession: Shop
Innovations Manager

Jim Kinney
Nationality: American
Profession: Area
Foreman

Ian Mackley
Nationality: English
Profession: Field
Development Manager

Bill Stafford
Nationality: American
Profession: Operations
Technician

Kirk Stubbs
Nationality: American
Profession: System
Engineer



Warren Millward
Leg 4
Nationality: South African
Profession: Offshore Operations Technician



Josef Chmielowski
Leg 4
Nationality: American
Profession: Geophysicist



Matthew Cannon
Leg 5
Nationality: English
Profession: Risk Management Analyst



Gabriela Froes
Leg 5
Nationality: Brazilian
Profession: Legal Manager

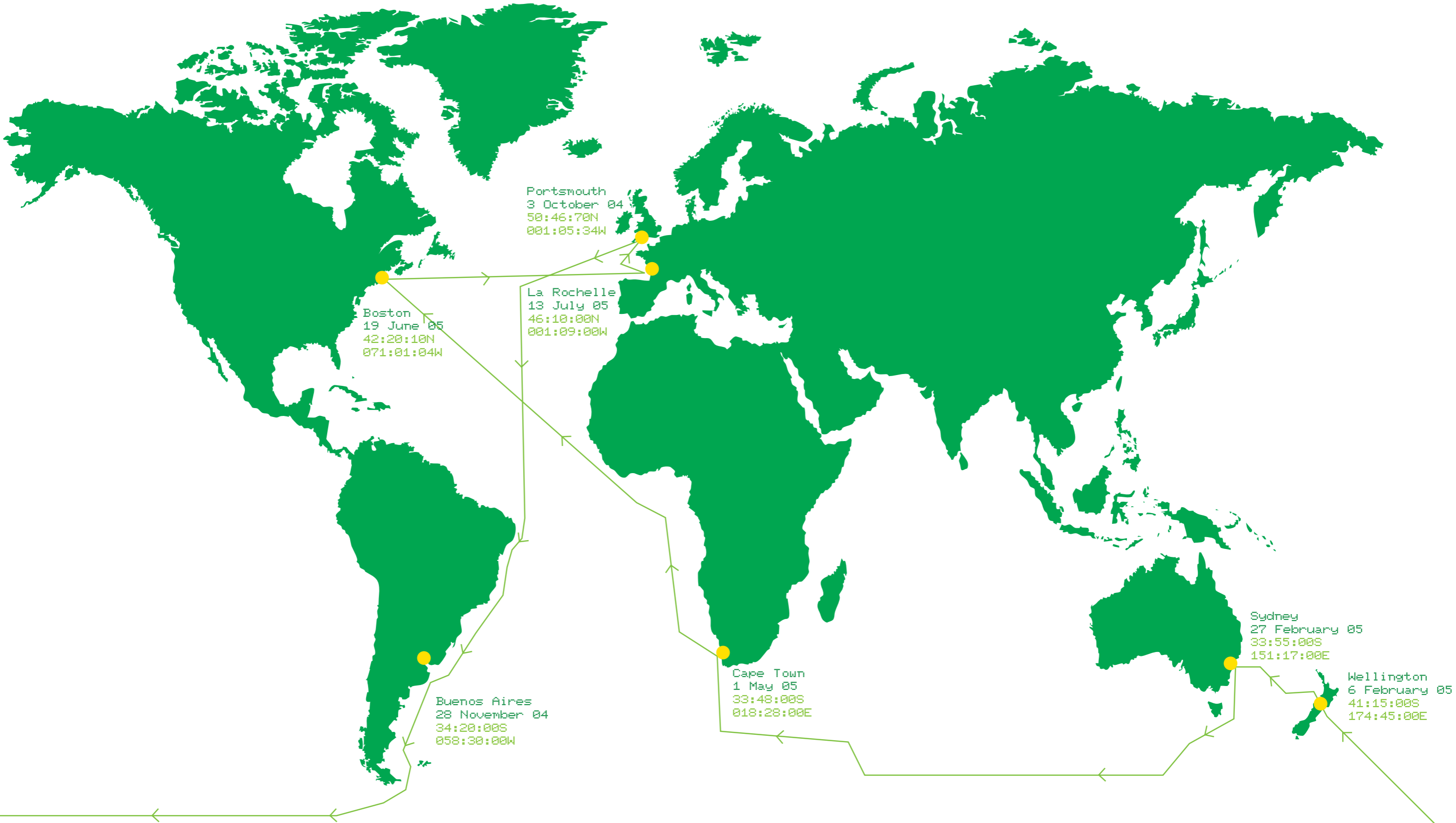


Andrea Morrell (Drew)
Legs 6 and 7
Nationality: American
Profession: Tank Planner



Dennis Boyd
Legs 6 and 7
Nationality: American
Profession: Fuel System Design Manager

The route



Preparing for the race

Saturday 17 January 2004 ExCel Exhibition Centre, London – The crew announcement

The air in the hot, packed room at the London Boat Show was electric. Many of the 200-plus would-be circumnavigators had been waiting years for this day – travelling from far and wide for sail training. They had been saving, fundraising, even selling up house and home to scrape together their £27,000 berth fees; re-organising their lives to pursue a dream. The skippers meanwhile, had faced a rigorous selection process which whittled down over 300 applicants to an elite dozen.

Our 15 core crew were named on the big screen under 'skipper: David Melville'. We squeezed through the crowd to where he stood. If we had not already trained with David, many of us had heard about him – his competitiveness, seamanship and direct approach were well known. BP's reputation as a fantastic sponsor also preceded them. Donning the first of many Helios-decorated t-shirts and posing for the camera, the smiles said it all!

Moments later, seated in a quiet room with David and Project Manager Claire Blakeway, introductions were made and we received our first pep talk on what was hopefully to become a hard-fought, professional campaign. The tone was quickly set; BP Ocean Racing Team had begun an incredible journey.

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Two weeks later, a team building event in Hayling Island set muscles aching and our brains working overtime. Pounding round an assault course, waist-deep in the English Channel at 6 am, snow still on the ground, we began to contemplate what 'cold' really meant. We were introduced to sports psychologist, Dr Simon Timson, who worked with us from then on until the end of the race. It was on that prophetically wet and wind-blown weekend that the seeds were sown for a dedicated, competitive mindset.

At Hayling Island we also agreed our values – a mission statement and eight codes of behaviour all under the banner of Safe – Happy – Faster. This built on the Safe – Happy – Fast slogan which had served BP Explorer so well in the 2000–01 BT Global Challenge.

In the months that followed, we began to live these values. Each of us had responsibilities and 'excellence in all we do' was soon in evidence in these areas, from the complex logistics of arranging clothing, stopover accommodation, technical gear and fundraising, to the mammoth and daunting project which was food. Meanwhile, in our everyday lives the words 'continuous improvement' echoed in our ears as we lifted weights, began to digest David's suggested nautical reading list and attended courses in sea survival and individual specialist classes in everything from sail trimming and repair, to engine maintenance and firefighting.

June James, our faithful shore support, was with us from the start, giving up her time freely and enthusing about the team at every stage. Other professionals joined our ranks, including renowned weather router Roger Badham and, on the safety side, BP's Coaching and Improvement Performance Director for Safety, Paul Everest.

In May, the Global Challenge fleet sailed under Tower Bridge in London on their way to St Katharine Docks, where BP Explorer was officially relaunched. Later in the month, the yacht competed in the Round Britain and Ireland Race and came first.

Two months later the Qualifying Sail saw us sparring against the entire fleet in an informal race around the notorious Fastnet Rock, during which we were consistently in the leading pack. Our hard work was paying off. Expectations of us were high. We were raring for the big one.

Opposite page

Sailing under Tower Bridge for the relaunch in St Katharine Docks



Portsmouth
50:46:70N 001:05:34W

Leg 1

Portsmouth to Buenos Aires

Distance: 6,472 nautical miles

Time: 32d:2h:48m:14s

Sunday 3 October 2004

Portsmouth, UK

The first leg was predicted to be a gentle introduction, a time to settle in and hone our skills in some downwind sailing. This is not how things turned out. Every week brought its own drama and new challenge. The 6,000-plus miles to Argentina were a baptism of fire.

Start day dawned damp and cloudy with a blustery, building, southerly wind. The atmosphere on board and also rippling through the crowds and the armada of supporters' boats was charged. A visit from HRH The Princess Royal, patron of the race charity, Save the Children, was followed by a Blessing of the Fleet. Then it was time for those painful farewells, time to focus and get racing.

Out on the water, we took a deep breath and synchronised watches. The warning guns began their countdown as we jostled for the line. Spectators were out in their thousands – carried in boats of every description and lining the shore. Helicopters whirred overhead with press filming our moves. What had seemed like a dream for so long came alive.

We started conservatively, keeping out of trouble, and ventured out to the English Channel in fourth place. The boats carrying our friends, families and supporters from BP had finally turned for home and looked back to see us disappear over the horizon where our first gale was already waiting for us. That night, seasickness affected around half the crew and there were less takers than expected for our first freeze-dried dinner. Having taken this early gale in our stride, we maintained second position for much of week one.

Our logs already presaged a drawn-out battle with BG SPIRIT and Spirit of Sark. At the end of the week, a small area of low pressure near Portugal intensified into a full storm directly in BP Explorer's path. On the night of 8 October we entered this system surrounded by thunder and lightning.

An extremely powerful cloudburst directly over the yacht knocked her over and held her pinned down by the weight of wind in the headsail. When the yacht righted, the mainsail was thrown violently across the boat, splitting a batten pocket and rendering it unusable. As the headsail came down in the furious wind, it too received several tears.

The storm intensified and by dawn BP Explorer was running downwind under storm sails followed by waves of up to 50 foot (15 metres). Soon, for safety's sake, there were just four crew on deck. "I have never seen anything like those waves on a Challenge boat before," David admitted later. "They were awesome."

Below deck, sails were rapidly being repaired by Goldie and Sasha. More was to come once the wind had dropped to 40 knots when they were called to repair the mainsail on deck. It was a storm none of us will forget – a 14-hour spectacle with winds of over 50 knots, gusting to 60. The high-point came at 11 am the next morning. As we tried to sleep, David's voice boomed down below "Hey guys?! You want to hear something? We're in the bloody lead!" The boat erupted. Nothing could have chased away the night terrors more effectively.



“Sailing is not always about the romance of the sea; sometimes it is just about sewing.”

In contrast, light, fickle winds set the tone for week two and BP Explorer inched along. Christian scanned the water for wind from up the mast, but by the time that it arrived, we had lost our lead and several more places to boot.

David contemplated our strategy. By 13 October, becalmed off Madeira, we faced a difficult choice; the normal tradewinds to the south-west were limited, yet strong winds were forecast for the African coast. Our rival, BG SPIRIT, was heading that way. We moved in the same direction and Spirit of Sark followed. All reinforcing each other's decision, we sailed for the gap between Gran Canaria and Tenerife while the rest of the fleet, less preoccupied with each others' movements, stayed west. We needed the wind to hold for this to work and regrettably it did not. "Well I suppose you would all like to know how you take a boat from first to the back in a few days," wrote David for the website readers back home. "The answer is to take a holiday in the Canaries!" Three boats in the fleet were stuck behind an island when they should have known better. We were left to fight our own private battle, while other yachts took the lead.

Unperturbed, we worked at solving the problem as a team. To inspire us, the ocean suddenly came to life as we headed for the Cape Verde Islands – dolphins and petrels putting on quite a performance. Less welcome were the thousands of African locusts which drifted down onto the

yacht for several days. And then there was the inescapable heat. "Below decks are like a Turkish sauna," wrote John Bass. "We are wearing precious little when we retire to our bunks – except maybe a silk liner to cover our warps and fenders."

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As we approached week three, we were presented with another challenge. Our 1.5 oz race kite collapsed, then uncurled with force. Checking it for damage, John Bass and Holger, both part of the foredeck team, spotted two holes. "Get it down," yelled John, but it was already too late. Seconds later the sail blew to pieces. We took a deep breath, threaded our needles and made a start on the great sewing relay in which we worked around the clock for five days in the searing heat. It was a fantastic display of teamwork. Reflecting on the leg, Sasha later noted, "Sailing is not always about the romance of the sea; sometimes it is just about sewing."

It became hotter and hotter. The navigators scrutinised the computer, trying to negotiate the best possible entry into the ITCZ (Inter Tropical Convergence Zone), often referred to as the doldrums. Having sailed south-west straight through the Cape Verdes, we aimed to get the distance to the leaders down to 30 nautical miles by the time we reached this area traditionally associated with little wind.



By the night of 21 October, VAIO and Barclays Adventurer were in sight. We had at last made up the miles on the leaders, but by then we had entered the doldrums with its fickle winds. Within an hour they disappeared over the horizon, separated from us by a large rain cloud. We caught VAIO for one last time the following day, but our luck did not last and they sped away as we drifted under a windless black cloud. In over six hours we covered just 12 miles.

Crossing the equator on Saturday 23 October was a good excuse for a party and it also seemed to speed things up! Over the weekend we gained on Samsung, VAIO and Barclays Adventurer, while pulling away from BG SPIRIT and the others behind.

But it was as if a piece of elastic held us to BG SPIRIT and Spirit of Sark. The very next day, skirting the Brazilian coast, we lost 12 and 8 miles to them respectively. As the night sky was lit up by a spectacular meteor, it seemed a timely moment to wish upon a star. It was going to be a close race all the way to the finish.

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We kept our speed up until the 28 October, when conditions began to change – a hasty spinnaker drop resulted in yet another rip – to the flanker this time – and more work for Goldie and her team.

Then came one of the biggest challenges of the leg. We heaved the flanker on deck and hoisted it inside its 22-metre launching tube. As the flanker broke out, the tube normally trailed harmlessly behind the yacht and was gathered in afterwards. This time it bagged up in the water, creating a large amount of drag and pulling Oly off his feet. "The wheel doesn't feel right," shouted the helmsman. The mass of strong, thick nylon tube was wrapped around the rudder and stuck fast. Imagine driving a car at night, at full speed, in the outside lane of the motorway. There are no brakes and no way of slowing down. Suddenly your steering lock starts to go on and off. This is exactly what it felt like to helm BP Explorer at the height of our crisis.

The problem took hours to rectify. In a downright dangerous situation, with no steerage as the boat ploughed on at full speed, we had to drop all sail and at one point it looked like David would have to go over the side to try to untangle the mess. Finally, after a huge team effort, we managed to cut the tube in two and winch it back on board in pieces – all without injury to the crew. When we finally gathered round for a celebratory cup of tea, there was much back-slapping and a sense of pride at staying calm under pressure.



Left to right:
David monitors progress closely as we sail through a Brazilian oil field
Light winds near the equator
Goldie checks for damage
Rob in the galley

Unfortunately, this delay meant that we dropped down to fifth place, with BG SPIRIT now nine miles in front. "The dye is not cast!" David declared that morning, as we wallowed with zero boat speed in a glassy sea. "You have to keep going!" He was right. With renewed wind came a new boat speed record and later that night we clawed back fourth position. On deck, Goldie and Laura loudly sang 'Surfing USA' as we sped through the starlit breakers.

As the smell of land wafted towards us, we began to think inwardly about a podium place. After our storming kite run, Samsung were just six miles in front, in third position. Although now, the wind had shifted to the south so we had less chance of making significant gains.

Our last night, 4 November, was another one for the memory books. Under cover of darkness at least, the muddy River Plate was a sparkling sight. To port, a multitude of vessels in the shipping channel all lit up with their navigation lights; to starboard, the golden glow of Montevideo; above, a canopy of stars; and all around us, the best show of phosphorescence of the journey – so bright that the rushing whitecaps of the brisk waves piled along luminously for as far as the eye could see.

It was a hair-raising night of top speeds, but, sadly, not only for us. Finish day dawned with bittersweet news. We could only catch Samsung if they made a major mistake, but having sailed a different route to the majority of the fleet, we had won our battle over BG SPIRIT and Spirit of Sark, giving us precious points that would prove crucial later. As we saw our loved ones bumping bravely towards us in a convoy of small boats we could only feel good. We had survived the first trial – SAFE – HAPPY – and FASTER than those who we rated most highly. We had finished in style.



"The dye is not cast!"
David declared, as we wallowed
with zero speed.
"You have to keep going!"

Above
Giles Mackey's photo that earned him
the VAIO Best Overall Photograph Award

Leg 1 awards for BP Explorer

The Unisys/EMC² Media Prize for the Best Daily Log
awarded to Naomi Cudmore

Finishing position	Points	Overall position
Barclays Adventurer	15	1
VAIO	14	2
Samsung	13	3
BP Explorer	11	=5
BG SPIRIT	11	=5
Spirit of Sark	9	=7
SAIC La Jolla	9	=7
Team Stelmar	7	=9
Imagine it. Done	7	=9
Me to You	6	10
Pindar	5	11
Team Save the Children	4	12

BP Explorer, Spirit of Sark and Team Stelmar were each issued with a one-point penalty for passing through the Traffic Separation Scheme at Finisterre.

Working with school children

The BP Explorer crew was involved with local schools throughout the 2004-05 Global Challenge, ranging from assembly presentations and open days in Portsmouth to crew members participating in a regatta with a local sailing school in Boston.

The school which we are most indebted to is Paulsgrove near Portsmouth. We will always be grateful to the staff and pupils there as they were most generous in allowing us the use of their hall for three days in September 2004, where we checked each and every stitch and panel of our sails and prepared them for the long voyage ahead.

Our arrival in Argentina was made particularly memorable thanks to around 60 enthusiastic pupils and staff from St Luke's School in Buenos Aires. After crossing the Atlantic Ocean, being welcomed by a sea of supporters wearing green T shirts was a sight for sore eyes. We were made to feel like celebrities and the school's interest did not end there. Once settled in Buenos Aires, a number of crew were treated to a wonderful day out with the children and they maintained email contact with us for the rest of the race.

In addition to the Challenge Business commitments, BP devised a programme – the BP Explorer Schools Challenge. This consisted of a teachers' resource prepared with the help of the Southampton Oceanography Centre, to help educate 11 to 16 year olds in oceanography and also a competition to echo the ethos of the Global Challenge – a team using their combined skills to work together and then consider ways to save energy or reduce waste.

In Cape Town, some crew members were involved with a number of school community projects. One visit was to Rocklands Primary School in Mitchell's Plain. Here we set to work alongside BP employees on a gardening project where vegetables such as beetroot, cabbage and onions were planted – all grown to supply the local hospital involved in the care of AIDS patients.

Through involvement with both BP and Challenge Business, the crew of BP Explorer has had the privilege of experiences which make the Global Challenge so much more than just a yacht race.

Goldie Raley

Goldie Raley, core crew



Left to right

David with children from Siyabulela Primary School near Cape Town

Preparing to plant vegetables at Rockland's Primary School near Cape Town

Winners of the BP Explorer Schools Challenge in the UK received digital cameras and a tour of Southampton Oceanography Centre and BP Explorer

Opposite

Arrival celebrations in Buenos Aires



Leg 2

Buenos Aires to Wellington

Distance: 6,512 nautical miles

Time: 36d:7h:31m:56s

Sunday 28 November 2004

Buenos Aires, Argentina

A tangible sense of affection hung in the air on the day of the start of the second leg of the race to Wellington in New Zealand. Local boat owners nodded and smiled as we headed out for the start box, perhaps in a gesture of respect for what we were about to embark upon; the sea of supporters faces grew smaller, then was gone.

We jostled in the muddy waters of the River Plate beneath a brilliant sky and positioned ourselves well at the start line. We were soon in the lead, and BP Explorer was quickly locked into a tacking duel all the way downriver with BG SPIRIT, Spirit of Sark and Samsung. By 1800 the next day, we could still see 10 of the 11 other yachts.

"Below 40 degrees there is no law, below 50 degrees there is no God," so the saying goes regarding the earth's latitudes south of the equator. Cape Horn, the deepest continental point on the planet, lies in the 'furious fifties' and just 500 miles from Antarctica. Here, where the Pacific and Atlantic meet to do battle in storms that occur on average for 200 days of the year, waves regularly top 65 foot (nearly 20 metres) and have been known to reach an unimaginable 120 foot (36 metres).

While the 'roaring forties' were still subdued by day five, the competition was fierce. Spanning a line 60 nautical miles wide were five frontrunners (BP Explorer, Spirit of Sark, BG SPIRIT, Samsung and Barclays Adventurer), although under ten miles divided first place from fifth.

The fleet took different courses down the coast of Argentina. As the yachts approached the Straits de la Maire, the wind faded and eventually six yachts tacked back and forth against the tide. Mountains rose around us, the dusk was a wonderful array of pinks and greys and the water's slick surface was peppered with seals playing as night fell across the cold, cold sea. It was a frustrating but beautiful sight – in many ways a welcome quiet before the storms which now approached.

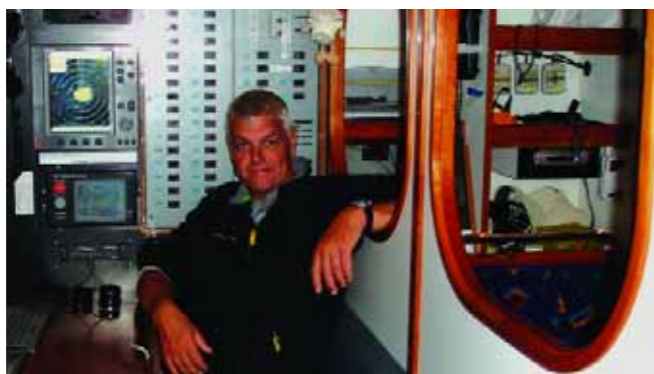
By early morning, more yachts had crowded in from behind. Dawn brought a magnificent sight – no less than nine Challenge yachts reaching under spinnakers for Cape Horn.

Left to right

Stephen at the navigation table

Jane at the helm

Waving goodbye to supporters in Buenos Aires





True to form, bad weather was forecast for our rounding of Cape Horn and it soon materialised. BP Explorer, now lying in third, was hard on the wind with the No.3 yankee, storm staysail and three reefs in the main. Wind speeds reached gale force and the sea state became aggressive. The cloud base was very low and driving rain lashed the watch on deck. As the rain cloud lifted, the Horn was finally sighted at 0230 GMT on 7 December. In a landscape of blacks and greys, cloud poured off its peak as if on fire. It was an intimidating sight and a day to remember, especially for Laura, who was called on the VHF radio by her boyfriend Graham, racing on Pindar. As Laura held the radio to her ear, Graham proposed. Apparently you should never make a decision at sea, but in this case, we thought that she was totally justified in accepting his proposal and the New Year's champagne got an early airing.

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Tactically, our only option was to sail south and this course continued for many days, eventually taking the yacht down to a latitude of 58 degrees south. Our breath condensed like sea fog below decks as we huddled in our bunks and fell into exhausted sleep. Getting dressed into five layers of clothing as the boat lurched beneath us at an angle of 25 degrees tended to be everyone's thrice-daily pet hate. Our wardrobe consisted of thin thermals, followed by thick thermals, and a fleece, then a mid-layer and finally our wet weather gear or 'foulies'. Add a few pairs of gloves, hats, several pairs of socks, boots and neck scarf and you were ready for action. And try going to the heads (toilets) in a hurry with all that Velcro to contend with! Emerging onto the deck to have our sleepy faces pelted with hail and 40-knot winds was like walking out of the house and getting blasted with a high-pressure hose of freezing water in mid-winter.

Existing, let alone working, in this environment involved focusing on a maximum of the next four hours. To think any further ahead – to the weeks to come – might have made it all seem impossible. The foredeck teams were the particular heroes of the day: "Heading up to the foredeck was like walking into a pitching, black abyss," commented John Stewart. "You always wanted to get there and back as soon as possible without anyone getting hurt. Staying upright as the boat lurched off the waves was like riding a surfboard. We'd wrestle to change the sail while fighting tonnes of freezing water cascading across the deck, and at the same time, keep a watch out for each other. On my own up there, I would be frightened, but reassuringly, we had each other. It was a totally exhilarating experience."

We also had to contend with a growing list of shortages – a total absence of warmth due to a broken heater, a limit on the gas (and therefore on hot drinks) and very little water thanks to a blocked water-maker. "If the fires of Hell went out, this is what it would be like," noted Rob bleakly.

"If the fires of Hell went out, this is what it would be like."



Opposite

Cop places a ring on Laura's finger as her boyfriend Graham proposes on the VHF radio

Left to right

Olly covered in ice as he steers through a snow-shower.

The waves in the Southern Ocean sometimes topped 65 foot (nearly 20 metres)





Between Cape Horn and Waypoint Alpha (an imaginary milestone included on the course to keep the fleet safely north of icebergs) we fell back from third as the more northerly boats benefited from favourable conditions. But as we neared the waypoint, the fleet converged. By 12 December we were in fifth place, but with less than 2 miles to third place and 6 miles to second. Less than 60 nautical miles separated the first 11 boats. Sir Chay Blyth emailed a note to all the skippers congratulating them on a nail-biting race.

As we battled on, our thoughts were with Team Stelmar, who had to stop racing and turn back to Ushuaia in Argentina after a bowman was hit by a massive wave during a sail change resulting in a broken arm. It looked like their ill-fated journey would now be two weeks longer – in these conditions an unthinkable scenario.

We finally passed Waypoint Alpha on 19 December. At this point we were as far from land as it is possible to be on the planet and yet we were still going strong, battling on; the crew of BP Explorer had turned out to be a resolute bunch!

...

Overhauling both VAIO and BG SPIRIT in time for Christmas, it was a day of mixed emotions – so far from home but having the experience of a lifetime. Cakes and pudding from loved ones, a round of presents and a traditional English Christmas lunch. All of this saw us through, but if we could have had anything for Christmas, no doubt it would have been to catch Spirit of Sark!

It was so close. On 23 December, just 45 miles had separated the first nine yachts – after over 4,000 miles of racing. "One mistake now and we could just as easily end in eighth position as on the podium," we noted in the log; nerve-wracking times indeed.

As Imagine it. Done sped towards the Chatham Islands to seek urgent medical assistance for a critically ill crew member we continued the fight with BG SPIRIT and Spirit of Sark.

The goals which we had set ourselves for Leg 2 were up on the wall. 'Top 3 out of the River Plate', 'Top 5 around Cape Horn' and 'Top 3 into Wellington'. It was two down and one to go!

We always believed that this was more than possible and this belief proved invaluable in the fight for the finish – a momentous day for all of us, one of the real high-points of the entire race.

With 24 hours to go BP Explorer looked set to secure a solid third. Some 22 miles in front, Spirit of Sark and BG SPIRIT were closing in on the coast of New Zealand with 40-knot winds forecast for the Cook Strait. Overnight we took an optimistic, looping, northerly course designed to blanket ourselves from the worst of the wind until the last moment. As dawn broke, a wild, excited cry from Christian electrified the deck: "Yellow sails port and starboard!" We had caught the two yachts and had slotted into second. With 20 nautical miles remaining, the three yachts were engaged in a high-wind battle in violent seas, followed by a helicopter camera crew whose spectacular footage was featured on the UK evening news. Covering BG SPIRIT tack for tack, BP Explorer crossed the finishing line in second place, just moments ahead of them and only 35 minutes behind the winners, Spirit of Sark. More good news was to follow; the overall points tally put BP Explorer into first place overall and our jubilant arrival celebrations made the front page of the New Zealand newspapers.

Left to right

A Christmas message
Arrival celebrations in Wellington

Below

Approaching Wellington in the Cook Strait

Next page

The Global Challenge fleet head for Sydney

Finishing position

Points

Overall position

Finishing position	Points	Overall position
Spirit of Sark	15	=4
BP Explorer	14	=1
BG SPIRIT	13	=4
Samsung	12	=1
VAIO	11	=1
Me to You	9	8
SAIC La Jolla	8	7
Team Save the Children	10	9
Barclays Adventurer	7	6
Pindar	6	11
Team Stelmar	5	10
Imagine it. Done	3	12



Leg 2 awards for BP Explorer

Second place in the leg



Leg 3

Wellington – Sydney

Distance: 1,449 nautical miles

Time: 7d:3h:8m:9s

Wellington
41:15:00S 174:45:00E

Tuesday 8 February 2005 Wellington, New Zealand

The start of the third leg began with perfect conditions – blue skies and an obliging breeze. But excitement was tempered with sadness as we said goodbye to core crew member Jane Cook. Plagued by chronic seasickness since the race start, Jane decided that it would not be sensible to continue. She remained an integral part of the team, managing the food and joining us in Sydney and Cape Town. Giles Mackey, a BP employee who had sailed with us on the second leg took Jane's place.

...

By day three, positioning was foremost in the minds of the navigators, David, Stephen and Andrew, as we began to think about the Sydney approach and the strong local currents. Being just a week long, the leg left little room to recover from any mistakes.

At this point almost the entire fleet was spread along a long line north to south, with only three other yachts – Barclays Adventurer, SAIC La Jolla and Pindar – further south than us. For now though, relative distances to the finish remained negligible, with positions changing by the hour.

Dolphins, sharks and phosphorescence populated our path in the Tasman Sea and the sun beat down. But as we moved into day five, the weather began to change, with calm seas, an electrical storm, heavy rain and gale-force winds all within 24 hours.

Our position temporarily became as mutable as the weather. Lying third as we enjoyed a spectacular sunrise, we were in ninth by 1800 the same evening. The racing was so close.

After parking in a wind hole on day six, the next day saw another reshuffling of fortunes along the north-south spread, with most of the northerly boats being caught in light airs and at one stage even being dragged backwards by the current. We were far enough south to hold our position, but not south enough to improve on this in the short term. We were hopeful of turning this around though as BG SPIRIT, SAIC La Jolla and Me To You remained in sight.

Left to right

The BP Explorer supporters' boat in Wellington Harbour

Perfect conditions for the start of Leg 3

Changing sails



At the end, tensions ran high. During the final night, despite a storming kite run, we were hampered by over three knots of current and lost valuable miles to the leaders, as well as to Pindar, who were hot on our heels. The fight was now on, not to chase second, but to protect fourth.

All morning we had been sailing on the edge of the flanker's wind range and were just a few hundred metres from Pindar as we approached the line with Sydney Opera House to port. The Harbour Bridge came into view and we unfortunately ran out of race track and were pipped to the post by minutes.



Faithful supporters Ruth, Anne, June and Claire cheer us into Sydney



On shore, Naomi and Laura check the kite for damage



BP's charity function in Sydney to raise funds for Save the Children

Finishing position	Points	Overall position
BG SPIRIT	15	1
SAIC La Jolla	14	5
Me to You	13	=7
Pindar	10	9
BP Explorer	11	2
Samsung	10	3
Spirit of Sark	9	4
Team Stelmar	8	10
Barclays Adventurer	7	6
VAIO	3	=7
Team Save the Children	5	11
Imagine it. Done	4	12



Safety was discussed each day at the midday meeting



All our life jackets were checked every seven days

Below

One of our on-board safety rules was to always wear a helmet when working at heights



Developing a safety culture

The Chambers English Dictionary defines safety in a number of ways. The most intriguing, is 'freedom from danger or risk of injury'. What has 'freedom from danger' got to do with an event that's often enticingly dubbed, 'the world's toughest yacht race?'. Surely danger is what it is all about?

Sailing the Global Challenge serves as a good allegory for operating in BP's world. We seek progress through managing hazardous fluids, while aspiring to freedom from unnecessary risk of injury to people.

What has freedom from risk of injury got to do with sailing a yacht or managing hazardous fluids? Doesn't 'hazardous' imply taking risk? All of us share this one aspect of being human. All of us have a different perspective of risk; all will take some risks that others would not. Only a 'special' few will pay for the privilege of sailing a small yacht through the world's most inhospitable waters. Yet daily all of us find the risk of driving our cars acceptable; most of us would not feel free were we not able to do so. Doing things with safety at heart creates that freedom.

Safety is about recognising risks, working hard to eliminate those risks that can be eliminated and managing what remains. By obeying the law, following rules and helping each other, the likelihood of harm is minimised. When driving, we follow the rules of the road, drive just as we were taught and forgive each other's errors.

Whether sailing a yacht, managing hazardous fluids or driving the family car, the main issue is the same – getting the best out of ourselves and our people as the precursor for success. If people do not feel free from harm, nothing will happen – the yacht will not sail, the oil will not flow, and the car will not leave the driveway.

Moreover, unless the risks are managed, people will not truly be free to concentrate on what's necessary for progress. Yet ordinary people make mistakes: they commit errors without meaning to – no sane person means to hurt themselves or anyone else. However, if they are injured they cannot perform; they cannot achieve what they desire. Creating mutual freedom from unnecessary danger is a key to success.

What did David and the crew of BP Explorer desire? They wanted to achieve something extraordinary and tell the people close to them about their journey. As part of that process they made freedom possible, they promised each other to follow the training, respond to leadership from the skipper, follow the rules they created for themselves, learn from their mistakes and, crucially, respond to leadership from each other. That is what made the difference. They did not just follow the rules: they took care of each other, looked out for each other even when making mistakes, through heat and hail, through tempests and tranquillity. They had all the freedom they needed for success! And where better to feel free than in the dangers of the Southern Ocean?

Paul Everest
BP Coaching and Improvement
Performance Director for Safety

Leg 3 awards for BP Explorer

BP Explorer were the winners of the BP Safety Award

In addition to its sponsorship of a yacht in the 2004-05 Global Challenge, BP is also the proud sponsor of the coveted Safety Award, which was judged by the Challenge Business Technical Team at the end of each leg. It was presented in each port of call to the team that demonstrated the highest standards of safety during the preceding leg.



Sydney
33:55:00S 151:17:00E

Leg 4

Sydney – Cape Town

Distance: 7,508 nautical miles

Time: 37d:10h:13m:20s

Sunday 27 February 2005 Sydney, Australia

With Sydney's spectacular waterfront framing the start of the fourth leg, BP Explorer took the lead around the first mark and watched 11 sets of yellow sails lit up behind in the evening sun as we headed for the Tasman Sea. The leg began with kind weather and tight racing and our immediate concern was being becalmed; this made it difficult to aim for that infamous right-hander at the bottom of Tasmania, which would launch us out into the great, grey wilderness of the Southern Ocean once again.

...

When we finally made that turn, calm weather and blue skies were replaced by piercing winds and cold, cold seas which would be our constant and unrelenting companion for the weeks to come.

In increasing winds on the night of day five, BP Explorer began to rear and plunge through the building seas. The spray from the waves looked – and felt – like iron filings, ghosting in smoky streaks before being blown up into the air where it mingled with a dashing circus of albatrosses, prions and petrels.

As the on-going watch tried to eat some food the following day, the bow was launched violently up, whereby a shout came from on deck – one we had hoped never to hear: "Man overboard!" A wave had punched up under BP Explorer's bow creating a trampoline effect on the foredeck and throwing John Stewart violently up in the air, over the guard wire and into the foaming sea.

David was at the helm at the time and commented, "One moment I had been looking at a row of heads and the next, as the bow was lifted up like a toy boat by the wave, one head had been replaced by a pair of boots as John was spun through 360 degrees and went feet-first over the side."

Still attached to the yacht by his lifeline, he was dragged along and pummelled by the icy water. Goldie, swiftly joined by Chris and Warren, manhandled John back on board. "I was pulling the No.3 up the deck for the sail change, the next thing I knew I was surfing along beside the boat, with hands held out towards me." David tacked, bringing the boat upright to help lift John out of the water.

Safely back on board, John valiantly continued to change the sail with the rest of the foredeck team as if nothing had happened. All rough weather safety measures had been in place and no one was injured; it was an impressive display of everyone keeping their cool!

And we were still doing well – hot on the heels of Barclays Adventurer and Imagine it. Done, and keeping a regular track of Spirit of Sark's movements behind. Meanwhile, the violent, confused seas had been causing problems elsewhere. Team Save the Children were sadly heading back to Australia after a crew member fractured his hip below deck.

...

Week two and the tacticians briefly contemplated how best to negotiate the lighter, variable winds ahead. Lying in second, we skated on thin ice as we sailed right on the edge of these light airs and tried to get a little further north. "Don't sign up for this job if you don't like the stress," replied Stephen when asked how it was going at the chart table.



John Stewart and Christian relaxing in their bunks



Goldie in the snakepit



Giles, Goldie and John Stewart in foul weather gear



When working in high winds we were kept safe by our lifelines

Heading south, it grew ever colder, but the mood was lightened by dancing, acrobatic swathes of green and blue in the night time as we were treated to the first of many performances of the southern lights. They were a beautiful diversion from thinking about cold fingers and toes. We had assumed that BP crew member 'Alaska' Joe, would be a hard nut when it came to the cold but even he found it harsh. "It's pretty damn freezing! That's for sure. It's the wet that makes the climate worse than anything back in Alaska because you can't dry stuff out. Everything here is wet and it's going to stay wet." The best comfort David could offer was the wry observation: "The thing is, you are allowed to hate this bit and, however long it seems to take, it will invariably end."

...

By the twelfth day, BP Explorer had moved into first place and we were mid-way to Waypoint Bravo. Closer to Antarctica than Australia, we rotated crew and spent only 30 minutes on deck at a time throughout the long nights. In contrast to the second leg, we did have the odd canopy of stars to sail by and longer periods of consistently strong winds meant less exhausting sail changes.

We reached the Bass Straits in first position and felt a huge sense of pride in our achievements as a team. Our renewed determination was just as well because with the very next gale we sustained significant damage to our staysail. The difficult repair was a real work of art executed over several watches by Goldie and David. Luckily, the winds were too strong for the staysail throughout this time so the damage did not result in any lost ground.

A combination of poor boat speed and positioning saw us slip to third at Waypoint Bravo. By a process of elimination, it even occurred to us that one of the huge banks of kelp which had drifted past might have stuck around the rudder. We stopped the boat ('hove to') and sailed backwards to dislodge anything that might be there.

The kelp below and the ever-bigger albatrosses gliding above were not our only companions. As we passed the Crozet Islands, two 40 foot (12 metre) sleek, grey Sei whales appeared right next to the boat and accompanied us effortlessly towards a misty sunset. They reappeared time and time again, rolling their bodies so as to look at us as they reared through the steel-grey waves.

"It's pretty damn freezing! The wet makes the climate worse than anything back in Alaska."



Opposite
Goldie winches Olly up the shrouds to untwist a lazy sheet



Richard winching



Preparing for a sail change



Goldie, head of the sails team, begins a serious repair to the staysail.



Battling waves on the foredeck



Life at an angle



A typical day in the Southern Ocean

By the time that we entered week five, our battle with Spirit of Sark (lying in second) and leaders Imagine it. Done had become a long-running campaign. We were consistently making gains on them and keeping our pursuers at bay. We knew that we might soon be caught in the notorious 'parking lot' under Table Mountain and that light, fluky airs near the finish might well work in our favour.

...

On 1 April, we officially left the Southern Ocean behind. For over a month we had been pounding almost daily through cold, rough seas and here we were, fighting fit, with everyone safe and well.

As we approached the final few days of the fourth leg, BP Explorer was in a solid third place. Light winds were forecast for the approach to the Cape of Good Hope and with it opportunity. We closed on Spirit of Sark, and the

lead of Imagine it. Done began to shrink. Dawn of the final day highlighted both the beautiful coastline and, on the far horizon, Imagine it. Done, becalmed. By midday, we had been joined by Team Stelmar and all four yachts were briefly halted in their tracks off the Cape.

As the breeze blew from the north, a close tacking duel developed up the Cape peninsula. The podium was set to receive a final reshuffle as conditions changed fitfully and fast. In the final 12 hours of racing, we experienced the extremes of total calm and 28 knots of wind. The wind changed through 180 degrees and died once more, and as we crossed Table Bay in darkness, fog enveloped the yacht and the spectator boats were unable to locate us.

Half a mile from the finish the breeze picked up and the fog lifted. BP Explorer crossed the line in second place, and with BG SPIRIT almost a day and seven points behind, we moved once again into the overall lead of the competition.

Leg 4 awards for BP Explorer

The Barclays Southern Ocean Trophy awarded to BP Explorer for the fastest time sailed between Cape Horn and the Cape of Good Hope.

Awarded second place in the leg

The Carte Blanche award for Best Mate presented to Major Malhi



The calm after the storm. Holger, Richard and Olly



Cop, Major and Goldie

Finishing position	Points	Overall position
Spirit of Sark	15	2
BP Explorer	14	1
Team Stelmar	13	8
Imagine it. Done	10	11
Pindar	11	=9
SAIC La Jolla	10	4
Barclays Adventurer	9	6
Me to You	8	7
BG SPIRIT	7	3
Samsung	3	5
Team Save the Children	5	12
VAIO	4	=9

Opposite

Celebrating our arrival in Cape Town

Next page

Powering through the waves





BP Explorer



39

www.bp.com



Leg 5

Cape Town to Boston

Distance: 7,164 nautical miles

Time: 36d:1h:5m:28s

Sunday 1 May 2005

Cape Town, South Africa

The fifth leg was always going to be tactically difficult. Beginning with Spirit of Sark two points behind us and BG SPIRIT four, we wanted to beat them both. David summarised the main challenge of the leg: " Ideally our two competitors will sail in the same area of ocean, we will seek to place ourselves in an advantageous position relative to the wind and hope to profit by it." As we knew all too well, these boats were often miles apart and the headache would soon be how to cover two yachts with 80 nautical miles between them!

After a tricky start in light winds below Table Mountain, the fleet passed inshore of Robben Island near Cape Town. BP Explorer headed offshore and we gained several places. The wind quickly built, providing us with an exciting first night of 30-plus knots of breeze and the flanker up, sailing on the edge of its range. Within 24 hours we were in third place. Everyone had their foot hard down – in some cases pushing things too far. One mystery yacht blew its flanker to pieces, the spectacle illuminated by their deck floodlight. Given the pattern for tropical weather, this was not surprising – steady winds during the day and difficult, squally conditions at night. Rapid increases in wind speeds threatened to blow spinnakers to pieces and with that, race chances.

Despite all the early damage, the competition could not have been closer. Travelling at 10 knots through a perfect starry third night, we were flanked by Team Stelmar and VAIO on our left, with Spirit of Sark over our shoulder and Barclays Adventurer dead astern. The ghostly shapes of lit-up spinnakers surrounded us on our high-speed runway heading straight towards Boston.

Places changed regularly during the light winds, but by the time we had reached the first of our 'top three' objectives, the Tropic of Capricorn, we were in first place. Meanwhile, routing decisions troubled the navigators. SAIC La Jolla

and Samsung out to the west had made considerable gains, while those of us who had come out east to avoid high pressure with its accompanying light winds had lost some miles. Would our decision eventually pay off?

On the seventh day we were unlucky with the weather as we hovered in a vulnerable position on the inside line of the high pressure, waiting for the winds to fill in. By the time that the clouds parted out to the east, the sun had already crept a few fingers above the horizon, shooting golden brushstrokes across an otherwise watery dawn and illuminating a newly-rolling sea. Thankfully, it also lit up Spirit of Sark's spinnaker on the beam – our primary adversary had failed to escape the same light-winds fate as us.

At this stage we were in the middle of the fleet, along with Spirit of Sark – who we saw almost every day for three weeks! Our best sailing to date, some fast downwind running under flanker, and skilful boat handling resulted in us moving way back up the pack. The heavy wind conditions were not easy and required excellent teamwork and seamanship.

By the time that we passed the little south Atlantic island of St Helena, our efforts were paying dividends. We had gained on those in front and kept Spirit of Sark behind. The following day, 11 May, we moved into second place behind VAIO.

Top right

The crew on deck before leaving Cape Town, South Africa

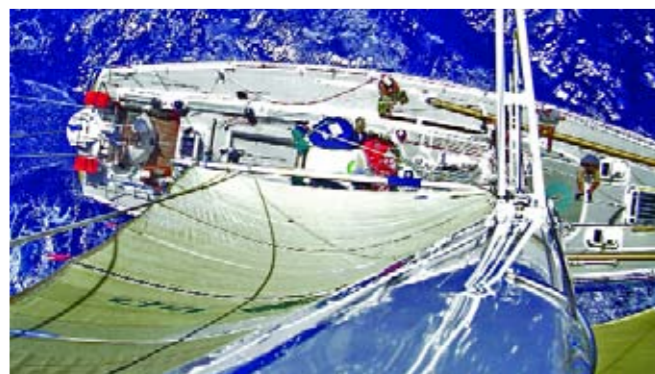
Bottom right

Waiting anxiously in Table Bay for the start of the fifth leg

Cape Town

33:48:00S 018:28:00E





The birds-eye view enjoyed by Olly during his weekly rig check



The Court of King Neptune. Equator 'virgins' are doused in slops

Top left
Another beautiful sunset

Top right
Andrew at the helm and Cop, one of the watch leaders

Approaching the start of week three, the fleet was spread out over a 100-mile line north-east to south-west, and the south-easterly trade winds were blowing more or less dead astern through this broad area with varying strength. We hoped that in the long run, the winds would even out their favours over the whole area, but for now it did seem that the north end of the line was doing slightly better.

Day 14 dawned after another edgy night of gybing the kites in high winds and the fleet began to jostle and line up for the equator, some 800 miles distant. At 0830 hours on 17 May, we crossed the equator – the first boat to do so for the second time in the race. We celebrated with some single malt donated by our BP safety guru, Paul Everest. The traditional Court of King Neptune ceremony saw us dousing the 'slimy pollywogs' (those who had never crossed before) – BP employees Giles, Gabi and Matt – with our dinner remains at midday. With a full complement of 'trustworthy shellbacks' now making up the crew we continued on our way.

The doldrums arrived with massive grey, cumulo nimbus clouds towering above, covering us with heavy rain and vanquishing our speed. The clouds often moved faster than BP Explorer and while there was wind in front of them, underneath all was calm. Shadowed by VAIO in the dead of night, we also met up with BG SPIRIT and there the three of us sat, getting wetter and wetter in the humid rain. Headsails and spinnakers went up and down as the crews worked up a sweat in shorts and T-shirts, drenched to the skin. The winds were not kind to us and by morning, BG SPIRIT, Spirit of Sark and SAIC La Jolla were all in front.

...

It was during this hectic night that David and the crew of BP Explorer passed a significant milestone. We crossed our outward track made from Portsmouth to Buenos Aires and thereby became circumnavigators. Many of us had come to the race with little experience of yachting – now we had sailed around the globe – a fantastic achievement! As if to highlight the fact, the very next night Polaris put

in an appearance in our skies for the first time in seven months. It may have been a tropical 37° C (99° F) below decks, but as we cast our eyes heavenwards, it was beginning to feel like we were heading home.

BG SPIRIT were in a mood to gamble and, as they struck out far to the east of the course, we wondered how profitable their move would be. We chose instead to cover Spirit of Sark and stay west, where the forecasts indicated we would be better placed in the last week of our run up to Boston.

We passed the Tropic of Cancer in second place, having pushed some 50 miles in front of VAIO and Barclays Adventurer and 20 miles in front of Spirit of Sark. Then we entered a new and frustrating phase of prolonged calm and other yachts appeared on the horizon behind us. All those hard-won miles began to run backwards. We had escaped the clutches of the doldrums relatively easily, but by 27 May were bobbing on a still pond, in sight of Spirit of Sark. BG SPIRIT, meanwhile, were 124 miles out to the north.

We encountered very confused winds. Our weather router Roger Badham later described conditions in the western half of the north Atlantic as very unusual, with extreme local variability. During a period of calm we were simultaneously passed by VAIO to our left and Barclays Adventurer to the right. Meanwhile, Spirit of Sark, Team Stelmar and Imagine it. Done were becalmed in the middle. Our only option was to try to increase our lead over Spirit of Sark and win the battle between these three yachts. Interestingly, it was Spirit of Sark, BP Explorer, Team Stelmar and Imagine it. Done who had taken the top four places on the previous leg – now they were fighting it out for fifth place.

And still the winds did not blow. The position reports changed so frequently in this light-winds lottery that Challenge Business were contacted by confused website readers wanting to know if there was some mistake. Finally the weather improved. By the early hours of Wednesday 1 June the stars had disappeared and

we had changed to our heavyweight kite, the flanker. All these miles sailed and our spinnakers had fared well, but on this particular occasion – as a gale quickly built – we did not manage to drop the flanker fast enough and it blew apart. Now so close to port, there was no time to make the lengthy repair and we packed its tattered threads into a bag, hoping that it would not be needed before Boston.

With gusts of 52 knots across the deck as we approached the middle of the low-pressure system, even the main had to come down to reduce sail, albeit briefly. For once we welcomed the rough weather; a gale was just what we needed to blow away the light-winds frustration.

The blow ended with a huge cadmium-red sunset melting into the still-choppy sea and mixed tidings in the position reports. Spirit of Sark were still behind us and we were holding on to fifth; catching Barclays Adventurer, SAIC La Jolla and VAIO was, however, looking unlikely. Just 424 miles remained to the Cape Cod waypoint. As if we needed any reminder to keep pushing, Imagine it. Done's masthead light could now be seen, around three miles astern, pointing straight up towards the crescent moon.

“ Now we had sailed around the globe - a fantastic achievement! ”

Feeding an ocean racing team

During the initial teambuilding at Hayling Island, the food team was established, which was headed by Jane Cook and supported by Dr Holger Bindel and John Stewart. Working from Glasgow, Norwich and San Francisco respectively, the team managed their project via weekly conference calls.

At this stage, they had little idea of the enormity of the task ahead. Planning, sourcing, packing and preparing three meals per day to feed the crew for 170 days at sea would be a challenge in itself.

The plan was based around a 10-day menu of good, tasty, nutritious food, light in weight and which would support both the hot conditions of the Atlantic legs (3,000 calories per day) and the freezing temperatures of the Southern Ocean (5,000 calories per day).

Working from race menus provided by teams in the previous Global Challenge, the 'foodies' selected various freeze dried food specialists. After a dietician had reviewed the menu and the crew sampled a selection of meals during the Qualifying Sail in July 2004, the lists were finalised and the orders placed. The crates and boxes soon came flooding in to a BP gathering station in Poole in the UK, where the teams undertook the food packing in late August.

Thanks to BP volunteers from the gathering station and the nearby Wytch Farm site, all of the food for legs 1, 2, 4 and 5 were packed into day packs and shipped to Plymouth for future delivery to the ports of call. Food for legs 3, 6 and 7, meanwhile, were sourced locally due to import restrictions.

On board the yacht, meals were prepared by pouring boiling water over the dried food in a large container. This was then stirred at intervals and left to rehydrate. It may sound civilised – 'Thai chicken curry', 'spaghetti bolognese', 'chilli con carne' – but in fact one meal looked and smelt the same as the next. Knives were not required and the consistency varied from that of a thin soup to a thick stew – hence the nickname, 'googah'. A big favourite with the crew was Major Malhi's dahl with rice, and each day there would be two treats per crew member, as well as baked snacks, such as muffins, scones or cakes, to eat mid-morning and at midnight. Needless to say, a healthy level of offshore trading soon developed once we were under way!

John Stewart
John Stewart, core crew

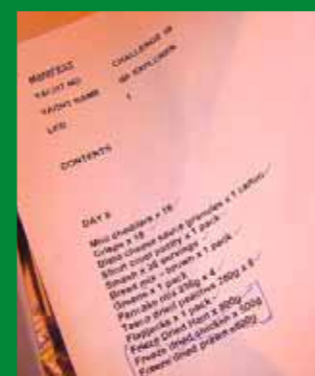
Below
 Major stirring his legendary dahl



Below
 Food packing



A typical menu



Cooking at an angle



Warren tucking into chocolate cake



By Sunday 5 June, Imagine it. Done and Spirit of Sark were just two and six miles behind respectively and closing in light winds. Yet again, we faced the prospect of a finish within sight of two other yachts. Holding them off, we remained locked in battle until the final day. The run into Boston was so foggy that we did not see land until a few miles offshore when we spotted a lighthouse on rocks known as The Graves. The fabulous call of "Laaand-Ho!" was heard in the gloom.

Imagine it. Done and Spirit of Sark traded places and, running into the harbour under spinnaker, they could be seen one mile astern. The shoreline of Boston came into view and we made a right turn around the small rock known as Deer Island.

Half way through the turn there was a disconcerting vibration underfoot, and to our horror BP Explorer ran aground. Contrary to the chart information, we had taken the mark too close. The crew piled their weight onto the port rail to encourage BP Explorer to float off. We could only watch with sinking hearts as Spirit of Sark and

Imagine it. Done quickly caught up. Then, as Spirit of Sark narrowed their distance to around 200 metres, Olly suggested we bring the spinnaker pole backwards in the hope that the kite might just fill and power us off the rocks. It worked, BP Explorer's hull was suddenly lifted and we were free!

The crew sprang into action and we raced under kite to the next mark with Spirit of Sark three boat-lengths behind. At the mark the kite drop went seamlessly. Yellow sails shot up and we clung to fifth by the skin of our teeth. The camera crews buzzing around us could not believe the nail-biting finish. As we crossed the line – still in first place overall – the boat erupted into cheers of relief and elation.

Leg 5 awards for BP Explorer

The Unisys/EMC² Award for Best On-Board Footage



Opposite
 Anxiety on board when BP Explorer ran aground near the finish line in Boston

Sighs of relief all round and time to celebrate a mammoth achievement

Next page
 A nailbiting finish in Boston

Finishing position	Points	Overall position
BG SPIRIT	15	1
Barclays Adventurer	14	5
VAIO	13	7
SAIC La Jolla	12	4
BP Explorer	8	=2
Spirit of Sark	10	=2
Imagine it. Done	9	=10
Team Stelmar	8	9
Me to You	7	8
Samsung	6	6
Team Save the Children	5	12
Pindar	4	=10

Protest hearing
 While being overtaken by Imagine it. Done at sunset on 6 June, BP Explorer defended its position. Although happy with our own conduct, Imagine it. Done felt otherwise and protested BP Explorer for an infringement of the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea. A dispute arose over distance apart and unfortunately, an International Jury ruled against BP Explorer. Three points were deducted from our Leg 5 total. It was painful timing as only two legs remained and BP Explorer dropped from first to second place overall, 3 points behind BG SPIRIT and now level with Spirit of Sark. The ruling had no effect on the overall position of Imagine it. Done.



Isle of Sark

www.spiritofsark.com

39

38

Isle of Sark

Boston
42:20:10N 071:01:04W

Leg 6

Boston to La Rochelle

Distance: 2,980 nautical miles

Time: 14d:17h:37m:53s

Sunday 19 June 2005

Boston, USA

"When we leave Boston, you'll be able to hear the wheels skidding on the gravel as we pull out of the car park!" Laura's predictions for the start encapsulated BP Explorer's eagerness to leave the disappointment of the result of the protest behind us and regain precious lost points. We hoisted our sails early, took a number of timed runs at the start line and hit the line with just seconds to spare before the gun. Team Stelmar were over early, making us the first across the line. "It was a great lift for us, meaningless in the long run, but still a magic little moment," reflected David.

The excitement over, the wind soon disappeared. What had long been envisaged as a fast, downwind leg now looked set to begin with a quiet rustle of sails rather than a whistling sleigh ride.

The pack remained close. Start day closed with the silhouettes of 11 other Challenge yachts spread across the horizon against the sunset. Four days later, things were much the same, with just a few miles separating first place from tenth.

The first five days had been tactically slow stuff. Had we continued at these low speeds, we calculated that we would not arrive in La Rochelle until 16 July – the finish day for the entire race! To the south was the Gulf Stream and the warm-water eddies which spin off it. Northwards lay the Labrador Current which ran counter to our route. According to the maps of the Gulf Stream, we should have had half a knot of current running with us from astern, but in fact we were encountering a knot fully against our bows. Although the fleet was reaching along in fairly constant winds, it was these small variations in current which led to minor adjustments in the positions.

The weather seemed to be moving in their favour. Having been going nowhere fast in light, fickle winds for a good 48 hours by day five, we watched them develop a healthy lead, thanks to a low-pressure system passing right over our heads. This should have built to the north of us, providing BP Explorer with wind to speed us towards Waypoint Charlie. This mark was included at 42 degrees north to keep the fleet south of the Grand Banks of Newfoundland and the ice brought down from the Arctic shelf by the Labrador Current.

Sailing right next to Spirit of Sark on the night of Friday 24 June, we counted eight yachts on the horizon, all under spinnaker, making for the waypoint.

When we passed Waypoint Charlie the following day, the wind suddenly changed direction, allowing Imagine it. Done to creep ahead. Even further beyond them were our real targets Spirit of Sark and BG SPIRIT, so we certainly had a mission for the run straight towards France.

The racing remained incredibly tight. On the afternoon of day eight, Spirit of Sark, BP Explorer, VAIO and Pindar drew together in a fierce duel with kites up in a stiff, 25-knot breeze. "Like Dreadnoughts lining up for the Battle of Jutland," wrote David, "we powered along at maximum hull speed, surging through the water at up to 16 knots. It was nervy, exciting and just a little close."

Throughout the afternoon watch and the drama of the skirmish, Cop's troops watched with interest as VAIO continued to fly their 1.5 oz race kite, while everyone else carried their heavier 2.2 oz flankers. There would be no sail makers at our disposal in La Rochelle and, with the added pressure of a one point penalty for any kites damaged 'beyond economical repair,' the kite damage from the fifth leg should perhaps have been recent enough to encourage some caution.



Opposite

Close-quarter racing in the penultimate leg of the race



Top

Major and John Stewart on boom watch

Left

Another trip to the end of the spinnaker pole

Right

Fast downwind sailing

Not so for VAIO. Chris bet Cop that the kite would not last until the end of the watch and had soon earned himself some beer money. Goldie had also noticed a small hole developing on the starboard side of the kite before it blew to bits. This was quite a sight, but so also was VAIO's impressive recovery. Up shot the No.1 yankee, VAIO climbed above us for speed. In all, our adversaries had lost no more than 10 boat-lengths.

We left this drama in good shape, having overtaken Spirit of Sark and hopeful of soon making some ground on those in front. But it would not be easy. Steady winds made it hard to gain significant advantage over other boats quickly and the position reports showed relatively little change. A period of variability was what was needed to allow us any great improvements.

Change came in the form of a miserable, wet Monday and yet another low pressure system dropping further south than forecast. It sat right above our heads and subjected us to another period of dead winds and patchy, rapidly-changing conditions.

In the space of an afternoon watch we were becalmed, creeping along with the lightweight kite up, hoisting headsails and then reducing sail with two reefs in the main. On the starboard beam, around six miles away,

Team Save the Children could be seen at this point reaching along under a fully-powered spinnaker. Though sailing the same course as us, they might as well have been in an entirely different patch of ocean – as SAIC La Jolla were. It was the same story everywhere and within a six-hour period distances covered varied greatly across the fleet.

The southerly-placed boats prospered from this weather, as did those ahead, and we came out from under the clouds in sixth place. A silver lining came in the shape of our main targets, Spirit of Sark and BG SPIRIT. We had increased our lead over the former to almost 10 miles and had overtaken BG SPIRIT who were now trailing by nearly three nautical miles.

First job was to maintain the status quo. Second, to catch Barclays Adventurer, Imagine it. Done, Me To You and Team Stelmar ahead. Strong winds, almost from dead astern, helped us on our way – sometimes too strong for a spinnaker. We alternated between edgy sailing under flanker and the poled-out No.1 yankee, knocking off around 11 miles to the finish every hour. Our wake boiled and churned behind us and soon we caught and overtook Barclays Adventurer. At one point, Olly at the helm topped a boat speed of over 21 knots!

As the winds began to decrease by dawn on Sunday 3 July, BG SPIRIT and BP Explorer were locked in a seesawing battle. The two boats swapped fourth and fifth places with almost every position report. SAIC La Jolla, however, were at a safe distance – 53 miles behind – after being caught out by lighter winds to the south.

A final front passed over us with 48 hours to go. BG SPIRIT, slightly further north than us, pulled just out of reach two days before the finish and BP Explorer was back, in the short term, to chasing fourth position. If we could overhaul Me To You, this would put two points between ourselves and Spirit of Sark and give us a good second place overall to begin the last leg.

The final night of the sixth leg proved to be one of the most dramatic of the race. We carried the flanker in strong winds for as long as possible before once more dropping and poling out the headsail. BP Explorer flew towards the French coastline and trembled as she skimmed off the backs of the waves, hurling herself forwards. Spinning down the white horses, we stretched our necks out to catch Me To You less than a mile ahead. Plumes of churning waves to port and starboard were lit up over the inky-black sea and lightning flashed over and over in brilliant streaks

Fundraising for the race charity, Save the Children

BP Ocean Racing Team was proud to support the official race charity, Save the Children, and dedicated considerable time, effort and creative thought to raise funds for the charity and help them improve children's lives around the world.

Before the race began, the core crew held a grand draw and a ball to raise money for the charity. Furthermore, each core crew member pledged to raise £500 in addition to their £27,000 berth fees. Each BP crew member pledged to raise £5,000 in return for their leg berth, although several of them more than doubled this. Dennis Boyd deserves a particular mention after raising over £75,000.

After generous matching by BP, the team raised over £150,000 (\$270,000) for Save the Children.

Right

Pieter Tol (second from right) with fellow BP employees before the 'dam to 'dam (Amsterdam to Zaandam) run

Jo Henderson and Warren Millward hosted two sand yachting events in St Andrews

Josef Chmielowski skydiving in Alaska

The Global Challenge Sports Day in Buenos Aires, organised by the crew of BP Explorer



across the coast of France. Our hull speed often topped 19 knots and the helmsmen fought to keep control of the boat. In the small hours the winds increased, touching gale force. Our wings of white water rose up through huge surf, lifting above the toerails and hitting us full in the face. Dawn broke with Me To You right next to us. For the final few miles to the finish we were able to hoist the flanker again, while Me To You were carrying their 1.5 oz race kite, having blown their flanker during the night. We were just minutes from the mark and we held off Me To You, covering their every move. At the mark, we were neck and neck, but as we dropped the kite, we pulled away, powering on towards the finish line, cheered by our supporters. With one leg to go we had pulled three points clear of Spirit of Sark into second place overall.

“We were neck and neck, but as we dropped the kite, we pulled away, powering on towards the finish line, cheered by our supporters.”



SAIC La Jolla only a few boat lengths away



John and Rich wave as we speed downwind.



A close finish. Me to You were only moments behind

Finishing position	Points	Overall position
Team Stelmar	15	6
BG SPIRIT	14	1
Imagine it. Done	13	10
BP Explorer	12	2
Me to You	11	7
Barclays Adventurer	10	4
Spirit of Sark	9	3
Pindar	8	11
Team Save the Children	7	12
VAIO	6	9
SAIC La Jolla	5	5
Samsung	4	8

Opposite

BP Explorer illuminated at night in the port of La Rochelle

Next page

The Global Challenge fleet start the final leg to Portsmouth





Leg 7

La Rochelle to Portsmouth

Distance: 565 nautical miles

Time: 4d:0h:14m:43s

Wednesday 13 July 2005

La Rochelle, France

The seventh leg was something that we had all dreamt of for so long. The last sprint. Finally sighting the English coastline and powering up alongside those famous rocks, The Needles, as we approached Portsmouth. A neck-and-neck race for the line, surrounded by an armada of supporters out on the water to watch the spectacle. We knew that this finish above any other would be a close-run thing. The thought of being reunited with loved ones at the quayside had kept many of us going through the tough times. It had taken a momentous effort to get here and Saturday 16 July was envisaged as being one of the best days of our lives. Joining us in our celebrations would be the nineteenth crew member, Ian Rushby – BP's group vice president.

But something rather cruel happened to BP Explorer in the final leg. While leaving La Rochelle we made a silly mistake, passing the wrong side of a mark on the course. We did not realise our mistake until we had sailed some 15 miles west. We had a choice – be disqualified from the leg or turn around and sail back to the mark.

David described the moment in his log. "Imagine the scene as this news was revealed to the on-watch. We were only hours into the final leg, powering west, the thrill of the chase to Portsmouth and the finish in our imaginations. We had to turn away from our competitors, hoist a kite and sail back, until eventually they vanished over the horizon. The disappointment was intense, there were tears from some, and many felt their dreams slipping away."

We were 30 miles behind the leaders by the time that we had returned to our original position. We now had to race hard to catch up. There were light winds forecast until Portsmouth and even some calms. It was not impossible that the fleet would park up and we would make up the distance. Such things had occurred before and there was nothing that we could do except hope for this and sail as hard as we could in anticipation of just such an opportunity.

In La Rochelle we had again been joined by sports psychologist Simon Timson for a final team building session. Many things came out of this. One of our leg objectives was to analyse our motives and mindset during each hour on watch. Were we in the right frame of mind to bring about a positive result? Were we focused on the task in hand? We always took the business of mental preparation seriously on BP Explorer and reviewed everything that we had learnt from Simon from the very beginning of our campaign. For us, it was never too late to devote time to our mental approach and this proved crucial on the final leg.

As we sailed alone at the back of the fleet trying to come to terms with what had happened, the team behaved fantastically, each one of us supporting one another and trying to remain positive. "Everybody is digging deep to be the best they can be," wrote David. "To be the kind of people that family, friends and supporters will feel proud of. People that can overcome setback and be resolute, acting with determination."

The weather for the leg was beautiful, but unhelpful to our objectives. Fabulous sunrises and sunsets followed one another in succession and by night the sparkles of shooting stars and a busy runway of passing ships provided the lightshow for this slow-paced chapter in the story of our final leg. Conditions had not presented us with any chance to make up lost ground but we did not give up. When asked how he was feeling, Stephen commented: "I have been very touched and moved by how everyone has helped each other in this difficult situation. That is something very special."

By the third day we were 41 nautical miles behind the leading yachts and 29 behind the eleventh placed yacht. As the weather continued to favour the rest of the fleet and leave us struggling to maintain a speed of just a few knots, the leaders increased their distance to almost 100 miles. We had left La Rochelle in a very solid second place with Spirit of Sark three points behind us in third and Barclays Adventurer eight points behind us in fourth.

La Rochelle
46:10:00N 001:09:00W

" We had to turn away from our competitors, hoist a kite and sail back, until eventually they vanished over the horizon... many felt their dreams slipping away."



Now we were lying fourth overall. We prayed for a re-shuffle in the main pack. With Barclays Adventurer battling it out for a top-three leg finish with BG SPIRIT, SAIC La Jolla and VAIO, they looked set to take a dramatic jump up the leaderboard and claim second place.

Meanwhile, however, Spirit of Sark were not enjoying a great leg and were lying in ninth place. If they finished in tenth, we would come third overall, despite finishing the leg at the back of the fleet. We could only watch and hope.

On the afternoon of Saturday 16 July, as BG SPIRIT, then Barclays Adventurer and third-placed VAIO cast their mooring lines ashore in Gunwharf Quays, Portsmouth, our luck changed. Spirit of Sark had slipped back to tenth.

It had long become apparent that the only way in which we were going to make it to Saturday's party would be to turn our engines on and retire from the leg, but this was never seriously considered. Now we had every reason to keep fighting. David came on deck with the good news: "Hey guys, if I told you that we just have to finish to make it to that podium, what would you do?!" It was unanimous. We were going to finish this thing, even if it took days – a quite conceivable possibility given the forecast. As night set in, there were mixed feelings on board. We resigned ourselves to the fact that we were

at that moment missing the great welcome in Portsmouth. All of our friends in the fleet were safely on dry land. Our families were left standing with no one to welcome and a long wait ahead. Many would have to travel home without seeing us. But meanwhile we were about to achieve exactly what we had set out to do when we first met together on Hayling Island back in January 2004:

" We will strive to be a constantly improving team, committed to performance and capable of gaining a podium position. This will take place in a safe and happy environment which values everyone."

This had been our mission statement and we had fulfilled it to the end. There was nobody on board who had not made a huge contribution to the team.

We had been safe during our 32,000 nautical mile voyage and there had not been more than the briefest of cross words throughout the entire trip. And a trophy was waiting...

Sunday 17 July dawned bright and cold, with a light wind set to die. It did not look promising for making it to Portsmouth in time for the prize giving ceremony scheduled for 1600. Saturday lost, this was our new aim. Everyone hoped that we would arrive just in time. Passing The Needles, we entered the Solent (the stretch of water between Hampshire and the Isle of Wight). The tide turned against us but it was too deep to anchor. Inch by inch we crawled along, trying to get past Hurst Castle to shallower water where we could anchor and wait for more wind or the tide to turn.

Finally, we slid around the corner and dropped anchor. The kettles went on and we began our vigil beneath a beating sun. There was a strange sense of contentment combined with tension above and below decks. Only 20 miles separated us from that longed-for welcome.

Across the water came a tiny wooden yacht with tan sails, being rowed in the light winds by a man and his wife. They had risen at five in the morning to come and find us and as they came alongside they enquired after Laura,

who appeared from below with a huge smile on her face. Her aunt and uncle were the very first welcoming party and they bobbed alongside us as we made them a cup of tea and chatted. It was a tranquil, very special moment and the calm before a far more raucous reception.

As the little boat rowed away, a Pindar RIB (rigid inflatable boat) came powering across the water, bearing friends, including Laura's husband Graham. "Don't worry there's bound to be more wind on the way and everyone is waiting. We'll hang on for you!"

...

Sure enough, the breeze gradually picked up and we were able to hoist the lightweight kite, lift our anchors and begin our slow progress towards the waiting crowds. As we inched along, the horizon began to fill with yet more RIBs. One after another they approached, with Helios flags flying and passengers clothed in a sea of green until there were more than 80 BP Explorer supporters flanking us and cheering us on.

The 19th crew member

"I was included as the 'new boy' on the seventh leg, and amazingly, my arrival brought to the fore yet another display of great team work. The leg may have presented less of a challenge for the team in terms of endurance and conditions, but there was a sting in the tail as we were forced to turn back towards France after going the wrong side of a mark on the course. Disappointment and frustration were shared by all as we fought to catch up and ran into light weather which made this impossible. But strength of character, humility and determination proved the depth of team spirit.

The reward of a podium place in Portsmouth – the team's original goal – was rightly deserved.

So to the skipper and crew of BP Explorer, thank you for including me; I salute you all as heroes!"



Ian Rushby
Group Vice President and General Auditor



Ian (right) pictured with Major



Portsmouth
50:46:70N 001:05:34W

There were still numerous waypoints to round. As we tacked back and forth changing direction to make each new mark, BP Explorer heeled over and the RIBs buzzed excitedly around us, circling and flying from one side of the yacht to the other, giving us high-speed Mexican waves which we returned from where we were all sitting in a long green-clad row on BP Explorer's rail. The rounds of 'three cheers' went back and forth in an excited volley between ourselves and them. They stuck close by over those final few hours until we craned our necks forwards to the line. Over, we erupted into roars of elation. Chocolates, champagne and treats flew through the air from those on the RIBs.

But the best was yet to come. Nothing could have prepared us for the crowds that lined the shores and pavements, windows and roofs of Gunwharf Quays in Portsmouth. It was a moment that far exceeded our wildest expectations. We rounded the final corner and there they stood – thousands of smiling-faced supporters relieved to see us in. The noise was staggering, the air thick with streamers and jubilant cheers. We formed ourselves into a line on the bow, each crew member wearing a large, white letter on their shirt. Lost for words, not a dry eye in the house, we let this message do the talking: SAFE HAPPY HOME! XXX

Leg 7 awards for BP Explorer

VAIO Best Overall Photograph Award presented to Giles Mackey

The Sark Award for the Continual Development of a 2004-05 Global Challenge Crew Member presented to Richard Wardley

The Unisys/EMC² Media Prize for the Best Daily Log awarded to John Bass

Below
Hugs and cheers as we crossed the finish line

Opposite (top to bottom)
Arrival in Gunwharf Quays, Portsmouth
Jumping in the water to celebrate
Champagne showered everywhere



A podium place for BP Explorer

Finishing Position	Overall position
BG SPIRIT	1
Barclays Adventurer	2
BP Explorer	3
Spirit of Sark	4
SAIC La Jolla	5
Team Stelmar	6
VAIO	=7
Me to You	=7
Samsung	9
Imagine it. Done	10
Pindar	11
Team Save the Children	12

Below

Nick MacAndrew, Chairman of Save the Children, presents David Melville and the crew with the trophy for achieving third place overall





Above
The crews of the 2004-05
Global Challenge

We did it!

After all that happened, 'enjoy' is not a big enough word to describe my experiences. Even at my very lowest point I felt we were part of something extraordinary, suffering for it at that precise moment but even then I couldn't think of something I'd rather be doing. During the highest points 'enjoy' was an emotion that was left behind as we raced on to being ecstatic.

It's been so much more than the sailing, the competing or even the building of the team. Out of all the energy and focus has been born a thing greater than the sum of its parts. I believe we found something special back when we first met on Hayling Island. I remember looking around the room and thinking this is a great bunch of people. We all had a common desire, the desire to get a podium place in a safe, happy environment, but we also enjoyed each other's company and were willing to give. We were prepared to adapt, change our ways of thinking and be open to new ideas; and in doing so realised we could discover something very valuable.

Over the last 18 months we have been helped by some wonderful people who were not just doing a job or following a set formula but growing and adapting with us; the learning has been a two-way process. The result is more than a high-performing team; we are a high-performing team of friends. From the harshest conditions through weeks of grey, unrelenting Southern Ocean to the high of the last day of each leg and the amazing finish celebrations, the experience has been made all the better by sharing.

So what of the future? Well one thing is for sure, at the start of the race we all wanted a story to tell and we have a great one. A story of sailing around the world, of rounding Cape Horn, of crossing the Atlantic three times and of countless sail changes, freeze-dried meals and in-port parties. It is a story that has a cast of 29, a supporting cast of hundreds and an audience of thousands. As individuals we have learnt things about ourselves that we may not even know are there, but when a situation arises that may have floored us before we'll be ready to pull from our experiences on the Global Challenge and triumph.

This experience has certainly reinforced one belief: if you want something in life go and get it, live now! If you look for reasons why you can't follow your dreams you will always find them. The Global Challenge is the best thing I have ever done. We are not remarkable people; we come from all walks of life, some of us with no responsibilities, others with children, spouses and mortgages. There is only one thing that makes us unique – we did it!

John Bass, core crew



BP Explorer



39



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Acknowledgements

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All of our patient and loving friends and family at home and Kate and Jasper for always being there. Without your endless help and support in so many ways, none of us would have had the chance to pursue this dream.

Sir Chay Blyth. If he had not created this extraordinary event none of us would have ever had the opportunity to sail around the planet in a world-class yacht race.

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Photography

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