

**UPBEAT VERDICT**

# Gold medal sailors open boat show

The 40th Southampton Boat Show was opened by Britain's Olympic gold medal sailors, who arrived at the show aboard Mike Golding's Open 60, *Ecover 3*.

Led by triple gold medal winner Ben Ainslie, the Olympic sailors joined other celebrity yachtsmen to mark the show's 40th anniversary at a special presentation on the new main stage.

With 121,389 visitors flocking through the gates to the 10-day show, the verdict from organisers and exhibitors was upbeat.

Richard Hewett, director of

Clipper Marine, the UK main dealer of Bavaria Yachts, said sales were up 5% on last year's show. Robin Campbell, sales director of Oyster Marine, said: 'We were amazed. Interest in all our range was up 50% on last year's show. The main interest was in the new Oyster 54 and 56.'

Nick Griffith, a spokesman for Bénéteau dealer Ancasta, said: 'Sales levels met our expectations while enquiries from existing and new customers greatly exceeded expectations. We are delighted.'

\*See page 90 for our full report on the boat show.



Photo: Onedition

**Aboard Mike Golding's *Ecover 3*: Olympic sailors Ben Ainslie, Paul Goodison, Iain Percy, Andrew Simpson, Sarah Ayton, Sarah Webb and Pippa Wilson**

**SQUALL TRAGEDY**

## Yachtsman drowns while reefing



Photos: Courtesy of Peter Everiss

**ABOVE: This Sadler 29 went to assist another yacht INSET: George Grove**

A 62-year-old yachtsman drowned after falling overboard while trying to reef a 29ft yacht.

George Grove, from Slough, Berkshire, was crewing aboard *Snowbound*, a Sadler 29, when she was hit by a squall while going to the assistance of another yacht in difficulties off Maplin Sands, Essex.

While *Snowbound's* skipper Peter Everiss, 56, motored into the wind, Mr Grove went on deck to reef the mainsail and is thought to have lost

his balance when hit by the flogging sail or boom.

Mr Everiss tried to throw him a line and buoyancy aid, but it's believed that the sleeve of Mr Grove's jacket was caught in the propeller and he was dragged under the hull. Burnham-on-Crouch Inshore lifeboat cut Mr Grove free and he was airlifted to Colchester General Hospital where he was pronounced dead.

An inquest is to be held.

**GOOD FUEL NEWS**

## Red diesel tax will be split

Despite ever-rising fuel prices, yachtsmen got some good news with an announcement that from 1 November the new tax on red diesel will be split 60/40 in recognition that a percentage of fuel is for 'domestic use' - such as heating, running a generator, charging batteries and powering electronics.

For every 50 litres of diesel purchased from next month, 20 litres will be subject to the current rate of duty (5% VAT) and 30 litres will be subject to the full duty at 17.5% VAT. The news comes after months of intense lobbying by the British Marine Federation (BMF) and the RYA.

**NEW RECORD**

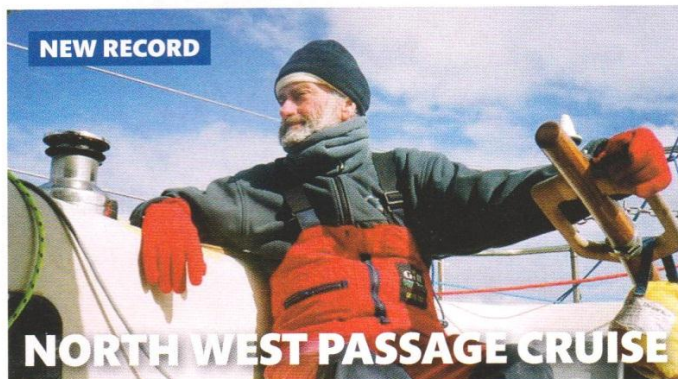


Photo: Courtesy of Alex Whitworth

**ABOVE: Aussie skipper Alex Whitworth**

Three yachtsmen have become the first sailors to take a boat eastabout through the North West Passage in one season without assistance from an ice-breaker.

Alex Whitworth, a 66-year-old Australian, sailed the challenging passage in *Berrimilla*, his Brolga 33, with two women crew, both circumnavigators: Corrie McQueen, 29, and Kimbra Lindus, 33, who joined *Berrimilla* in Alaska. They

arrived at Falmouth in September. During the 11,000-mile voyage from Sydney they encountered 'spectacular seas', whales, icebergs and polar bears.

In 2005 Whitworth sailed from Sydney to Cowes via Cape Horn, to compete in the Fastnet Race, before sailing back to Australia via the Cape of Good Hope to take part in the Sydney to Hobart Race - arriving just five days before the start.