SUTTON HARBOUR MARINA
To cater for the increased number of entrants this year, Sutton Harbour Marina in Plymouth has made the complete berthing area adjacent to West Pier and the city's historic Barbican area available to the Rolex Fastnet Fleet. The Marina is owned by the Sutton Harbour Group, which is the official berth provider for the race and is an Official Supporter: http://www.sutton-harbour.co.uk/

Mark Brimacombe, Sutton Harbour Marina Manager said: “We’re delighted that The Royal Ocean Racing Club has selected Sutton Harbour Marina to host the finish of the 2009 Rolex Fastnet Race and we’re looking forward to offering competitors a very warm welcome with our first class facilities and excellent access to local restaurants, bars and shops to help them relax and unwind after the event.

“Events like the 2009 Rolex Fastnet Race will no doubt play an important role in attracting visitors to Plymouth and provide a valuable boost to local businesses during these tough economic times.”

RUNNERS AND RIDERS
The largest fleet the Rolex Fastnet Race has ever seen will set off from the 2011 start. The record-breaking entry of 350 yachts ranges from state-of-the-art multihulls to family cruisers, with a huge variety of modern and traditional designs.

The largest yachts in the fleet will be competing for line honours. Going head-to-head to be first past the post are two 100ft Maxi yachts, Rambler 100 and ICAP Leopard. Mike Slade’s ICAP Leopard currently holds the course record at just one day, 20 hours and 18 minutes, but George David and his Rambler 100 crew are back with a new boat and will be fighting hard to take the trophy having done just that in the RORC Caribbean 600 race in February this year.

Also in the race are some of the world’s most advanced offshore multihulls, and this year British skipper Brian Thompson will be on board the massive trimaran Maxi Banque Populaire V, competing against two brand new 21m-long MOD 70s, Veolia Environnement and Race for Water. There are more famous faces in the Volvo 70 fleet, including British Olympian and ocean racer Ian Walker with the Abu Dhabi team, and Alex Thomson on his distinctive IMOCA 60 Hugo Boss. An incredible fleet of over 30 Class 40 ocean racing yachts will also compete this year.

FASTNET CHALLENGE CUP
The most prestigious prize of the race, the Fastnet Challenge Cup, goes to the winner on IRC handicap, with 300 boats eligible. Because this is dependent on the time it takes to complete the race, it can be awarded to a yacht from any part of the fleet that sails an exceptional race. So every one of the international fleet representing 19 nations will be sailing as hard as they can to be in with a chance of winning their class, and the overall prize of a treasured Rolex timepiece.
RETURN DEFENDER: 2009 WINNER BACK
Niklas Zennström's JV72, Rán is back to defend the title of overall winner of the 2009 Rolex Fastnet Race. The tactician on board for that race, and who will be returning this year, is Jeremy Robinson, one of only a handful of yachtsmen to have been part of winning teams for both the Rolex Fastnet Race and the Rolex Sydney Hobart: "In 2009, Catherine and Niklas Zennström's first goal was to complete the race after retiring in a previous boat in 2007. So to win the race was a real joy. In ocean racing, the Fastnet Trophy is undoubtedly a major prize and probably one of the hardest to win."

"First of all it only takes place every other year and the size of the fleet and the variety of boats means that on handicap it is a tough race to come out on top of. You have to try and win your class and then hope that the conditions are going to suit your type of boat."

Rán has some hot competition in Class Zero as Jeremy explains: "Beau Geste and Alegre both have their different strengths, Beau Geste is a bigger boat than Rán and is very strong downwind, whereas Alegre is smaller than us, but historically we have struggled against her in the light. Both of them have great sailors, such as Gavin Brady who will be on Beau Geste, who we know very well as he is tactician on TP52 Rán. We all know each other and respect each others' abilities. However, the class may not be decided just between us, for example, the two TP52s Lucky and Pace will fair well in a downwind race. Sometimes you have to hedge your bets to cover a competitor but we will sail our own race and see how it goes from there."

The mostly British crew of the Judel/Vrolijk design have proved her ability on both long and short courses, wrapping up the inaugural Mini Maxi Rolex World Championship in 2010. The Rolex Fastnet, though, is a race that allows powerful legs to be stretched. "We've now done quite a lot of offshore races," remarks Zennstrom, "the Rolex Fastnet is probably the top race together with Rolex Sydney Hobart. As one of the world's oldest offshore races it has such a pedigree."

"Winning two races in a row is extremely unlikely. However when we planned this year's races [the Rolex Fastnet] was an obvious choice. We love the challenge and we know the boat is still very competitive in the right conditions. But will we get the right conditions? Last time it was a big boat race, this time it may not and you may end up with a 40-foot cruising boat winning. That's the nature of the offshore handicap races."

As the founder of Skype, Zennstrom is one of a myriad of famous names to have taken on the Rolex Fastnet. Not all have been successful in their efforts, but like Zennstrom, many have returned time and again relishing all that the race entails.

BATTLE OF THE 100FT CHAMPIONS - ICAP Leopard vs Rambler 100
The battle for monohull line honours is the most anticipated clash and is expected to be the privilege of the two 100-ft challengers: Mike Slade's ICAP Leopard (GBR), first elapsed-time finisher in the past two editions, and arch-rival George David with his new Rambler, Rambler 100 (USA). The two crews know each other extremely well, given their series of tussles in recent months. A head-to-head battle in the Transatlantic Race, which saw Rambler 100 ease to line honours after ICAP Leopard lost her bowsprit, the freshest encounter. This year the odds may not favour Slade so much as they did four years ago when he set the benchmark monohull time of 44 hours 18 minutes. Rambler 100, the former Speedboat is generally regarded as the Maxi of her generation, although she has yet to be tested properly against the elite of Europe or the Southern Hemisphere. There are no guarantees in yacht racing, but if the winds are favourable, expect a dramatic dogfight all the way to the finish in Plymouth.

"Having won the Rolex Fastnet Race twice, the big play is to win three in a row, which would be quite exceptional," explains Slade, whose yacht also holds the course record of 1 day, 20 hours and 18 minutes set in 2007. "During the RORC Caribbean 600, Rambler 100 proved to be the faster boat in her ideal conditions. However, Rambler 100 may also need to protect herself in bad weather, more than ICAP Leopard. We feel we have a good chance in light and heavy airs, it is the bit in between that we might have a problem! I am really looking forward to the Fastnet, it should be a very exciting race but above all else, I don't want to lose our record to Rambler"
ROLEX FASTNET RACE 2011

100, that would be heartbreaking and we will vigorously defend it.”

Rambler 100 is as keen to renew hostilities. “We’re anticipating sailing in Cowes Week from 9-11 August and hope ICAP Leopard and others will be competing as well,” explains George David “we’ve had three races together already, the Caribbean 600, the Annapolis to Newport and now the Transatlantic Race. Rambler 100 took line honours and corrected ahead of ICAP Leopard in all three.”

TIGHT CONTEST AT THE TOP FOR LINE HONOURS

Although the two ocean greyhounds ICAP Leopard and Rambler 100 are clear monohull line honours favourites, they may not have it all their own way. There is the significant presence of six Volvo 70s, including two of the latest breed: Abu Dhabi (UAE) and Groupama 4 (FRA). Then there is the Mini Maxi class including defending Rolex Fastnet handicap winner, the 72-ft Rán (GBR), owned by Niklas Zennström, in addition to Andres Soriano’s Mills 68 Alegre (GBR), a fantastic campaigner in the Mediterranean in recent seasons. Throwing in the American challengers, the STP65 Vanquish, and the Reichel-Pugh 66 Zaraffa, who like ICAP Leopard and Rambler 100 competed in the Transatlantic Race, it promises to be a tight contest at the top of the fleet.

AN OCEAN GIANT – THE LARGEST YACHT IN THE FLEET – Maxi Banque Populaire V (FRA)

Assuming everything goes her way, the fastest boat on the water in the 2011 Rolex Fastnet Race will be the 140-foot trimaran, Maxi Banque Populaire V (FRA), which has just broken the British Isles record by almost a day and a half. Skippered by the legendary French offshore sailor Loïck Peyron, the 140-foot trimaran is hot favourite to take line honours and the course record in the multihull division.

Also adding the benefit of his experience and expertise will be crewmember Brian Thompson, who has notched up more multihull sailing miles than any other Briton and amassed 25 sailing records in the process. Brian applauds the fact that the Royal Ocean Racing Club has permitted these ocean giants to enter the race:

“I think it is really fantastic that RORC have opened up the event, it is a real celebration of sailing to see a Sigma 33 on the same racecourse as Maxi Banque Populaire V. I don’t think there has ever been a major ocean race like this one with such a diversity of boats. All credit to RORC for making it such an open event.

It is really valuable to get Maxi Banque Populaire V into race mode, there are two brand new MOD 70s, which will be really quick, we are twice their length but in light air they could be good. We are set up to go around the world non-stop with the prevailing winds but even upwind, we are very efficient as we have trim tabs, dagger boards, a canting mast, so we have all the right kit. When you see Maxi Banque Populaire V at the start, you will see how amazing she is, it is a pleasure for me every time we go out.”

“Personally I have been on board doing 45 knots and the top speed recorded is 47 knots. I hope that we will beat the record, the average speed we need to break the round the world record is 24.5 knots and the Fastnet course should be a lot faster because we should have more guaranteed weather but if it is a drifter there is no way we could get the record. The ideal conditions for the boat would be a wind angle of 110-125 true wind angle, we could then be sailing at 1.8 times the wind speed at times, say, 25 knots of boat speed in 15 knots of wind. We will probably have a crew of fifteen plus Digby Fox who will be filming on board, last time he did the race in the old gaff rigged Pilot Cutter, Morwenna, so we hope that we will be able to get him round a bit quicker this time!”

See Maxi Banque Populaire V in action:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-3QyOEnJHUM
TRIPLE TP52 CHALLENGE – A ‘RACE WITHIN THE RACE’

The three TP52s competing at the Rolex Fastnet Race will resume their engagement having been practically inseparable at the recent Giraglia Rolex Cup. On that occasion, Franck Noël’s Near Miss (SUI) finished the 243-nautical mile race less than two minutes ahead of Johnny Vincent’s Pace (GBR). Bryon Ehrhart’s Lucky (USA) was only a further hour behind. On corrected time, only seven places separated the three crews, with Pace coming out on top. Over a considerably longer distance, this ‘race within a race’ will be one to follow come August.

CLASS 40

The Class 40 fleet typifies the international appeal of the Rolex Fastnet Race. 28 yachts flying the flags of 11 different countries, will line up in Sutton Harbour this August. Among the Class 40 fleet. Tanguy de Lamotte’s Initiatives Saveurs - Novedia Group is the one to beat, but the talented young sailor from Normandy, expects a firm but fair fight around the Fastnet Rock.

Tanguy has enjoyed tremendous success since winning the Rolex Fastnet Race in 2009 when he defeated the highly experienced Italian skipper Giovanni Soldini, by just over an hour in an intense, boat-on-boat battle. The Class 40 Rolex Fastnet Race may yet again provide the closest finish of the event.

“The competition is always close in the Class 40s there are many other strong contenders, like Concise 2, who will be hard to beat. In my last race, The Normandy Channel Race, we won by just a few boat lengths after 700 miles of sailing.”

"To win you have to make just one less mistake than everyone else but the ambience in the fleet is fantastic - it is serious racing with a friendly atmosphere. On the dock we are all friends, everybody helps each other, and the class has a truly great spirit."

The Class 40 is a monohull offshore racing and cruising yacht with a maximum length of 40 feet. The original goal of the class was to make offshore races accessible to amateur sailors. The success of the class has moved it beyond these parameters, with more and more professional sailors attracted to it. Part of the attraction of this class is the simple and stringent box-rule, which keeps costs down. There are an ever-increasing number of boats being built in France and elsewhere.

For more information, visit: www.class40.com

FATHER & SON JOIN FORCES IN CLASS 40: ROUND THE WORLD VETERAN ROSS & SON CAMPBELL FIELD

For Kiwi serial circumnavigator and veteran of three consecutive Whitbread Round the World Races Ross Field and his son Campbell, Shore Manager for the Telefónica team in the 2008-9 Volvo Ocean Race, the Rolex Fastnet Race will be a major milestone on the road towards the start of their Global Ocean Race 2011-12 (GOR) campaign in September.

As you would expect with their invaluable bank of skills and knowledge, the Fields’ GOR campaign is immaculately planned and the duo’s joint Whitbread Round the World Race and Volvo Ocean Race experience is proving invaluable. “We’ve got most of the logistics sorted out and we’ve even organised the food already,” says Ross “We now need to get some sailing time in.”

The Fields are new to Class 40 and the prospect of this very different type of racing is obviously extremely exciting to them. “Class 40s are clearly very powerful boats and we’ll be out sailing every day to get as much time on the water as possible,” explains Campbell.

Following a five week voyage from Chile, the Field’s Tyker Class 40 Hupane arrived in Lymington in May and following a speedy refit, the 2008 Verdier designed yacht successfully completed the mandatory 180 degree inversion test at Berthon Boatyard in Lymington, making it the first Class 40 in the UK to do so

For Ross, this was his second inversion on a boat: “The first time wasn’t intentional,” he recalled. “I was on a 52-footer going through the Bass Strait during the 1995 Melbourne – Osaka Race and the keel started to fall-off,” Ross explained. “This inversion on Hupane (which means ‘step upwards’ in Maori) has been a lot less stressful!”
Racing again with his son is an exciting prospect for Ross: “I have raced with Campbell a lot and I believe that we complement each other very well,” he explains. “Campbell is an extremely talented navigator, sailor and manager – he is a great asset to the campaign.” However, Campbell is aware that converting to shorthanded sailing on an unfamiliar class of boat will be a challenge: “The Class 40 two-handed presents an early and steep learning curve for us both,” he admits. “We have a very good relationship, complementary skills and backgrounds and have raced together before, so I know we make a pretty strong team. I can’t wait to get underway and have fun racing in what is shaping up to be a great event.”

TRANSATLANTIC VISITORS
No less than 20 yachts that raced across the Atlantic in the recent Transatlantic Race 2011, will be taking part in this year’s Rolex Fastnet Race. Two of the yachts that raced nearly 3000 miles are sure provide one of the biggest battles on the racecourse. George David’s Rambler 100 (USA) and Mike Slade’s ICAP Leopard (GBR). However, all of the yachts that completed the Atlantic will have crew fully tuned up for offshore racing.

Lloyd Thornburg, skipper of Gunboat 66, Phaedo (USA) is looking forward to lining up against some astonishing multihulls. “It was hard enough getting passed the Maltese Falcon in the Transatlantic Race but we have no chance of holding off the 140’ trimaran Maxi Banque Populaire V, two MOD 70s and more there is a fantastic line-up.” Phaedo’s crew is bolstered by two America’s Cup sailors, Andy Beadsworth will be calling tactics and Ian Moore navigating for the race.

Karl Kwok’s Beau Geste (USA) raced across the Atlantic and will be looking to use every inch of their waterline length in IRC Class Zero, as the largest boat in their class, the Farr 80 will be happiest in big breeze and reaching conditions but they have serious competition, including 2009 overall winners Rán skippered by Niklas Zennstrom (GBR).

Rives Potts’ McCurdy Rhodes 48, Carina (USA) had a spectacular transatlantic and will be racing in the Rolex Fastnet Race in the biggest division of all. IRC Class Two has 73 yachts entered and Carina has the lowest handicap. The American yacht crewed by three families had an exciting Atlantic race battling against the Army Association’s A 40, British Soldier (GBR) and the duel is sure to continue during the Rolex Fastnet Race.

TWO COOKSON 50s: Lee Overlay Partners vs Jazz
ICAP Leopard may have smashed the course record in 2007, but the handicap prize that year went to Ger O’Rourke’s, Cookson 50, Chieftain. The canting keel flyer has since enjoyed tremendous success under the ownership of Adrian Lee, including an overall win for Lee Overlay Partners (IRL) at the inaugural RORC Caribbean 600. This year, Lee Overlay Partners has a very accomplished adversary in fellow Cookson 50, Jazz (AUS), owned by Chris Bull.

Adrian Lee is originally from Ireland but spent much of his adult life in America. For him, the Rolex Fastnet is more than just a race: “The boat won the race in 2007, it is what the yacht was built for and I see no reason why it will be any less competitive this year. For me the Rolex Fastnet Race is the definition of classic offshore yacht racing, just as Wimbledon is to tennis and the Grand National is to horse racing. When you approach the Fastnet Rock, you can literally taste Ireland and it is the spot where the Celtic Sea mixes with the Atlantic and all the history and romanticism that conjures up inside me is difficult to describe.”

Jazz navigator, Mike Broughton has been instrumental in putting together an extensive programme with Jazz: “Our first big race was the Rolex Sydney Hobart and it was a very windy affair. Jazz just loves big breeze and we came second overall, just losing out in fading breeze at the end. The Jazz team has been sailing together for some time and Chris has a very professional approach. Realistically, we want 35 knots plus to beat the Maxis. Jazz and the crew have proved very capable in heavy weather and in those conditions, we will see the big race boats needing to back off.”
TWO'S COMPANY: LARGE TWO-HANDED FLEET

Two-Handed racing has seen a rise in popularity in offshore racing and the 2011 Rolex Fastnet Race certainly reflects this with 34 entries this year.

Nick Martin, RORC Rear Commodore will compete in his 5th Fastnet with his J/105, Diablo-J (GBR), four of which have been Two-Handed. Diablo-J is currently at the top of the RORC Season's Points Championship leaderboard in this class: "We've all been inspired by the great solo sailors of our time and RORC's Two-Handed Class continues to support and provide the opportunity for many of us, typically corinthian sailors with full-time careers, to experience challenging and adventurous competitive racing. An extensive program allows us to pitch ourselves against IRC boats of all classes, both Two-Handed and fully crewed alike. It's highly rewarding, especially when you finish ahead of fully-crewed boats," explains Nick. "It is the dream of many sailors to qualify & compete in the Rolex Fastnet Race, so to achieve this in arguably the most challenging class, can be regarded as a pinnacle for many. It's fantastic that we have attracted a large fleet this year and in my opinion, this has become the most competitive of all fleets."

Peter Olden grew up in Southern Ireland where the famous Fastnet Rock stands. Ever since he can remember it has been his ambition to take part in the Fastnet Race. This year his dream will come true, competing in his A35, Solan Goose of Hamble (GBR). Commenting on the increase in popularity of two-handed racing in offshore races, Peter said: "The challenge of racing double-handed is probably the main factor, particularly in a long distance race where many hours will involve sailing the boat single-handed. The logistics, time and cost of getting a crew fully trained, qualified and equipped, particularly for the modern Fastnet Race are significant. I am certain this is a key driver. Technology has also played its part, for example, modern plotters, computers and AIS save a great deal of time and anxiety, also modern autopilots (properly calibrated) will do amazing work."

Matthias Kracht on the JPK 9.60, Ultime! (FRA) recently won the Myth of Malham Race in the Two-Handed Class. He says their first aim is: "To finish the race which is still a monument among the offshore races, a kind of Everest for French sailors. We will give our best, weather permitting. The Two-Handed division is certainly one of the classes that will develop over the next few years. It is almost the perfect match for all-round sailors, as part of the race, especially in long races like the Fastnet, is sailed almost single-handed but with the security of having a perfect partner on board. It is a long race, made to test endurance, vigilance and is as much about teamwork as with a full crew. It gives you perfect understanding of your partner, and obviously you need to have complete confidence in them. I am very lucky with Renaud Courbon, because all serious decisions are constantly discussed on board during the races. We would like to do some good clean sailing, and if we finish in a good time, in the Two-Handed Class as well as in IRC 4, we would be more than happy; obviously the Rolex Fastnet is the major race in the RORC Championship."

IMOCA 60 CLASS

One of the most successful ocean racing classes, 7 IMOCA 60s will be competing in the 2011 Rolex Fastnet Race, providing their usual spectacle including:

Banque Populaire, Sebastien Duclos (FRA)
Chemines Poujoulat, Bernard Stamm (SUI)
DCNS 1000, Marc Thiercelin (FRA)
Hugo Boss, Alex Thomson (GBR)
PRB, Pierre-Louis Pillot (FRA)
Safran, Marc Guillemot/ Patricia Brault (FRA)
Virbac Paprec 3, Jean-Pierre Dick (FRA)

http://www.imoca.org
VOLVO 70
Three of the latest Volvo 70 yachts who will be on the startline of the Volvo Ocean Race in Alicante later this year will be taking part in the Rolex Fastnet Race: Abu Dhabi (UAE) - Ian Walker, Team Sanya (CHN) - Mike Sanderson and Groupama 4 (FRA) - Franck Cammas. They will be joined by older generation Volvo 70s: Chieftain (NED), Kosatka (RUS) and E1 (AUT).

For the latest news on the 2011-2012 Volvo Ocean Race got to: http://volvooceanrace.com/

YOUNG SAILORS
British Keelboat Academy (BKA): Yeoman of Wight
18 year old Robin Elsey is currently in the 6th form at Truro School (Cornwall, UK) and he will be racing as part of the British Keelboat Academy's (BKA) squad in his first Fastnet Race. He is the youngest member on board the J/109, Yeoman of Wight, generously on loan from David Aisher:

“I might be one of the youngest crew members, but I bring great enthusiasm to the boat as I am new to offshore racing and every aspect is a wonderful experience. I am experienced in helming which is one of my biggest strengths and also in international RYA Laser Standard Youth campaigns to European and the World Championships. This has given me many insights into a sailing campaign which make me a useful crew member,” comments Elsey.

“It will be a fantastic experience to be able to compete in the Rolex Fastnet Race as it is one of the most important ocean races in the world as well as one of the most difficult. My dream is to compete in the Volvo Ocean Race and I see this as a key stepping stone to complete that ambition. I am looking forward to rounding the Fastnet Rock as this is one of the most famous sites in yacht racing and to competing in the race which has been a long held ambition of mine. I am also looking forward to returning successfully to Plymouth!”

“Being part of the BKA is a great experience as we are all driven individuals working towards the same goal of being successful in whichever campaign we have decided to do that year. As I have moved from the RYA Volvo National Laser Standard Youth Squad where the emphasis is on self-reliance, the BKA has allowed me to get used to sailing as part of a team. Being part of the BKA has developed me as an individual outside of sailing, especially when helping to find sponsorship for the Rolex Fastnet by approaching firms and individuals. This has made me far more professional in my life and my sailing career.”

Yeoman of Wight will be skippered for the BKA by Luke McCarthy: “We are hugely appreciative of David Aisher lending us his boat for the 2011 Rolex Fastnet campaign. This allows the sailors from the British Keelboat Academy to get valuable offshore experience in a competitive boat, which complements our other campaigns which are inshore on the J/80 and Farr 45. It can seem daunting for young sailors to get into offshore sailing - everything from getting used to sailing the boat 24 hours a day and sleeping at strange times, to actually getting in touch with suitable boats.”

“As well as the sailing, the BKA sailors are involved with all aspects of the campaign including planning which events to compete in, organising crew, safety equipment and food. This gives them invaluable experience which they can take forward for their future sailing, whether this is at professional level or amateur level. It is great to see former squad members such as Jamie Holmes (‘Jika Jika’), Ed Hill (Swan 62) and Nick Cherry (Double Handed on a Figaro as part of the Artemis Academy), all putting the skills they learned to good use on top campaigns.”
INSPIRATION TO FASTNET SAILORS

27th Fastnet for Ken Newman – a competitor since 1957!

Not many competitors taking part in the 44th edition of the Rolex Fastnet Race this year will have as much experience as Ken Newman who will be competing in his 27th Fastnet Race!

“Looking back over the years and having competed in innumerable long distance ocean races, for me the Fastnet is the best event in the racing calendar. It’s like four or five races put together, each one requiring difficult tactical decisions to be made. The crucial components are a well-found boat, a competent crew, safety and sea-room. The ability to get along with others is key to a successful race. I mostly sleep at the nav. station and remember being woken up at change of watch by the laughter going on between the crew, great guffaws of laughter and I thought well, this is what it’s all about, that’s the sort of camaraderie that I’ve been privileged to know. I’m a very, very lucky man…If you want to learn about someone, take them sailing,” explains Newman.

Ken, from Cowes on the Isle of Wight, has taken part every year since 1957 and has competed in every Fastnet, bar one. In 2009 as an octogenarian, was presented for the third time with the Denis Doyle Memorial Salver by the RORC Commodore Andrew McIrvine, for the skipper who has taken part in the greatest number of Fastnets.

He is also very proud to have his name on another of the special awards - the Ken Newman Endurance Salver which is awarded to the yacht with the longest elapsed time, in commemoration of Ken’s first, and in his view, toughest Fastnet, in even rougher seas than the infamous 1979 Fastnet.

Over the years, he has sailed in 19 different boats, navigated in two Admiral Cup’s teams, Japan, Flirt of Paget (1983), USA, Blue Yankee, (1987) and crewed twice for Britain in Prospect of Whitby (1971) and Qualio III (1973). In a rather gentle 1975 Fastnet, he was part of the crew on Edward Heath’s Morning Cloud.

Ken is great inspiration to all landlubbers as he only began sailing at the age of 27. A specialist consultant in cement and concrete, as a young man he was mad keen on rugby, playing full back from Rosslyn Park.

In the 2011 Rolex Fastnet Race, Ken will compete with his yacht Marinero, a Swan 46 racing in IRC 3.

FORCES SIGN UP
RED ARROW VS BRITISH SOLDIER

RAF’S RED ARROW
The RAF’s Red Arrow takes leadership and team spirit to the water and the J/109 will be flying the flag of the Royal Air Force Sailing Association in this year’s Rolex Fastnet Race. Skipper Flight Lieutenant Ryan Harris is a Royal Air Force helicopter pilot and search and rescue instructor based at RAF Valley, Anglesey, North Wales and Red Arrow is crewed by serving and ex-serving members of the RAF, from a mixture of ranks, trades and different air bases.

Flight Lieutenant Ryan Harris says: “Sailing is positively encouraged in the RAF. It is seen as a vehicle to take Service Personnel out of their normal environment and stretch them. Teamwork, communication, leadership and physical fitness are all elements that can be brought out in sailing. The RAF team wants to test itself against top sailors. This year we have gained experience to complete the mileage required to enter the Fastnet Race. Project management as well as sailing ability have all been improved from taking part in this campaign.”

ARMY SAILING ASSOCIATION’S BRITISH SOLDIER
Lt Col Nick Bate, will be skippering the Army Sailing Association's 'British Soldier’, an Archambault 40. He has recently skippered the boat in the Transatlantic Race 2011. She is sailed by a squad of around 100 serving soldiers on return from operational tours, offering them
ROLEX FASTNET RACE 2011

a chance to race offshore when on leave or between jobs. A number of injured soldiers also sail British Soldier as part of their rehabilitation under initiatives such as Toe in the Water, Battleback and Out on a Limb.

This year British Soldier is racing in the Atlantic Ocean Racing Series, which started with the Caribbean 600 Race (BS was 1st in Class and 11th overall against many big-budget, professional yachts). After completing the Annapolis-Newport Race in June and the Transatlantic Race from Newport to The Lizard, BS will compete in the Rolex Fastnet Race and Biscay Race. Apart from the skipper and one other, there will be a different crew for each race in the Atlantic Ocean Series.

Nick explains why the British Army involves itself with sailing: "Ocean racing is firmly part of our ethos – the requirement for an adventurous spirit combined with the need for individuals to work as a team, in difficult and potentially dangerous conditions, when cold, wet and tired, far from the easy option of outside assistance."

NAUTICAL NURSE TAKES ANOTHER CHALLENGE

Record holding ocean rower, Elin Haf Davies is turning her hand to offshore sailing in Rolex Fastnet Race this year.

For the seasoned sailor, this race is an opportunity to take on one of the biggest, offshore classics in the world of yacht racing. For an ocean-rower without any sailing experience like Elin Haf Davies from North Wales, it will be a challenge of huge proportions!

Luckily, Elin is in good hands as under the command of RORC Commodore Andrew McIrvine, she will join forces with his experienced crew in a Beneteau First 40, La Réponse. Elin is no stranger to the ocean and adventure however. More people have been to space than have rowed an ocean - let alone two oceans!

In 2007, she rowed across the Atlantic Ocean completing 2552 miles in a 24 foot boat in an all female pair. Dubbed the 'Nautical Nurses', the journey took 77 days 7 hours and 37 minutes. The girls conquered 40ft waves, scorching heat and narrow misses with cargo ships. Elin landed in Antigua to become the first Welsh woman to ever row across the Atlantic Ocean.

Fourteen months later, Elin joined team 'Ocean Angels' to set a world record by becoming the first all female crew to row 3139 miles across the Indian Ocean - taking 78 days, 15 hours and 54 minutes. The girls were battered by the elements, faced heavy storms that broke vital equipment and injured one of the crew, but continued on their quest blessed with an amazing team spirit.

"My first sailing experience was Easter of this year, when RORC Commodore Andrew McIrvine kindly took me under his sailing wings! Although sailing was completely new to me, life at sea wasn’t rowed across the Atlantic Ocean and the Indian Ocean. In trying to persuade Andrew of the merits of having a complete sailing novice in his crew, I hoped that my expertise in making tea in rough seas was a skill that would appeal to even the most demanding of skippers.” comments Elin.

"The Rolex Fastnet Race is my first opportunity to take to the seas using sails rather than oars! I want to see how it compares. I am hoping be persuaded that sailing is an easier way to go. To have the opportunity to join the RORC Commodore and his experienced crew to compete in the 2011 Rolex Fastnet Race is beyond anything that this Welsh nurse could have ever wished for!"

When Elin is not out at sea, she's a PhD educated children's nurse working for the European Medicine Agency in London. Her website is www.nurseelin.co.uk
WELL-KNOWN NAMES ASSOCIATED WITH THE RACE INCLUDE:
The list of well-known names from the world of business and commerce who have competed over the 86 year history of the race includes:

Niklas Zennström of Skype fame will race his 72-foot Judel/Vrolijk-designed, Rán (GBR); Charles Dunstone (founder of Carphone Warehouse), media mogul Ted Turner, marketer Ludde Ingvall, Noel Lister (founder of MFI), Sir Maurice Laing (former CEO of Laings), libel lawyer Peter Carter Ruck, Ron Amey (former CEO of Amey) and newspaper magnate Sir Max Aitken. The race has been touched by politics with former Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Edward Heath and in popular culture by Simon Le Bon of Duran Duran.

NON-SAILING:
Hasso Plattner (SAP); Charles Dunstone (Carphone Warehouse), Ted Turner, Ludde Ingvall (Nicorette), Simon Le Bon (Duran Duran), George David (United Technologies); Mike Slade; Niklas Zennstrom (Skype), Rt. Hon. Edward Heath (UK Prime Minister), Noel Lister (MFI), Sir Maurice Laing (Laings), Sir Max Aitken, First Baron Beaverbrook (Business tycoon, newspaper empire, politician, writer), Peter Carter Ruck (Libel Lawyer), Ron Amey (Amey)

SAILING:
Dame Ellen MacArthur (solo Round the World sailor), Shirley Robertson (olympic gold medallist/presenter CNN Mainsail); Ken Read (skipper Puma/VOR); John Kostecki (Olympic medallist/AC & VOR Winner); Francis Joyon (solo round world record holder, Ian Walker/Rodney Pattison/Ian Percy/Phil Newlands (Olympic medallists), Bernard Stamm (Solo), Catherine Chabaud (solo), Olin Stephens (designer), Loïck Peyron (multihull record), Mike Golding (Solo), Seb Josse (Solo/VOR), Jules Salter (VOR winner), Bouwe Bekking (VOR), Giovanni Soldini (Solo), Brad Jackson (VOR winner), Torben Grael (Olympic medallist, VOR winner, World sailor), Dee Caffari (solo), Mike Sanderson (VOR winner), Sam Davies (solo), Francesco de Angelis (AC), Gavin Brady (AC), Pierre Fehlmann, Cornelius van Rietschoten, Robin Knox Johnston (first person to sail single handed and non-stop around the world between 14th June 1968 and 22nd April 1969/Chairman Clipper Ventures), Chay Blyth (First person to sail non-stop westwards around the world (1971), on a 59-foot boat called British Steel), Eric Tabarly (Won the Singlehanded Transatlantic Race from Plymouth to Newport, Rhode Island in 1964 in Pen Duick II)