

First lady of power flies flag for 2012

Powerboat racing is not an Olympic sport – yet!



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SHELLEY Jory is one of the UK's leading powerboat racers and the top female in her sport. Last year she became the face of Honda Powerboat Racing. Each month Shelley gives *All At Sea* readers an insight into her amazing life.

I ENJOYED a unique, historic and emotional sporting weekend last month.

I took part in my home city of Southampton's Olympic Flag handover celebrations and competed in the classic powerboat race in an amazing historic powerboat.

The Cowes Torquay Cowes powerboat race was a sort of will it or won't it affair for a good few weeks prior to it actually happening.

In the end the Round Britain organisers and the British Powerboat Racing Club ran it and a great time was had by all.

I think everyone will agree we have revitalised this infamous classic race. I had a ball at the CTC, ditching my current, modern, 120mph P1 boat and taking the helm of a classic, *GEE*,

to compete in the historic class.

I had six crew members on board - the owner Chris Clayton and his two brothers Mark and Paul. John Guille was my faithful co-driver. Simon Everett was the media guest and my VIP guest, was my long term sponsor, Fiona Pankhurst from Raymarine.

As you can imagine this was so totally different for me - six people all talking at the same time in the cockpit, putting the throttles flat down to maximum speed of 37 knots and then not touching them again.

I even put the auto pilot on at one point during the 186 nm trip and enjoyed a glass of cranberry juice!

Although we were the slowest boat in the 24-



Shelley flies the flag for London 2012

boat fleet that left Cowes, we certainly had the boat with the most history and the happiest crew.

A third place in the Historic class was all we could muster as we sprinted to the finish line with our main competitor 747 but I did pick up the first Lady Driver's trophy which I have waited for 12 years to win!

If that was not enough excitement for one weekend, the next day we crossed the Solent and I started Southampton's Olympic flag relay on the water to celebrate the handover from Beijing to London.

Why? I hear you ask, was a powerboat racer asked to be part of the Olympic handover when the sport is clearly not an Olympic sport.

Well 100 years ago it was, and there was a

powerboat race on the River Itchen in 1908.

So I proudly stood waving a giant 2012 flag from the bow of *GEE* and then handed it over to four teams of rowers from Coalporters Rowing Club and Southampton Rowing Club.

I then raced to the Civic Centre to join the Mayor of Southampton as he raised the flag, complete with a traditional Chinese Lion and Dragon dances.

It was one of the most hectic weekends in my racing career to date but one I will certainly not forget.

I felt quite emotional carrying the Olympic flag. Powerboat racing is not an Olympic sport – yet! - so it felt particularly special that I was asked to be part of the build up to London 2012.