



We last caught up with young British sailor Jack Trigger ahead of last year's Route du Rhum in which he finished eighth in the highly competitive Class40 division. Here Jack tells us how he got started in sailing and what his big plans are for the future.

WINNING WAYS

I started out sailing Toppers aged eight and then progressed through the RYA pathways, racing in 29ers before joining the British Keelboat Academy at 18. It is hard to get on a keelboat and to do the right thing when you have not been on one before. All the basics are quite daunting, but the BKA was awesome as it gave me a transition into keelboating.

When you are in that world it feels accessible because there are always people with boats looking for crew, but when you are not in that world it can feel quite closed.

We were racing quite a high level in the Solent and that really set me up to get the opportunity on bigger boats and not look like an idiot. If you can get through that first impression, that is when your sailing skills come to the fore.

I had already discovered my love of sailing when I was diagnosed as a Type 1 diabetic at 21. Because it happened so late, I was already set on what I was going to do, and it was a little hurdle in the way and was never going to stop me. Maybe if I was 15 or 16 and people had told me I could not do it then maybe that would have got to me.

Hopefully, though, it shows people that you can do it regardless of the issues and that it should not hold you back from doing what you want to do.

HIGHS AND LOWS

I decided to drop out of Oxford University after one year to pursue sailing full-time. I had planned on solo racing, but then I joined Team Concise in order to improve my skills and learn as much as I could.

Overall last year was a great success; I was very pleased and I achieved everything I wanted to. I finished the Route du Rhum eighth out of 53 in the



Image: Alexis Courcoux



Class40s. To be the first type 1 diabetic to do a solo transatlantic race and to be signed off by the race organisers and race doctors was a great opportunity but also a big responsibility.

I was surprised at how well I handled it and it really did not hold me back at all in the race. It gives me the confidence to do more, to make the goals a little bigger.

I was really quite confident on the start line because I had been through the processes to prove I could do it and that is what is important, but there is still that little bit of you that does not know until you are out there and that is the pressure of the whole thing.

I also finished fourth overall in the 2018 Class40 Championship and won the RORC Championship with three wins and two seconds in the five race series. Then in January we raced around Barbados, and we broke the 40ft record and double-handed record.

However, you move on to the next thing fast, and you do not really have time to stand still.

INJURY SETBACK

Unfortunately I injured myself on the way back from the Caribbean earlier this year, so I have been recovering from that. It was an accident with a cooking device on board in which I suffered second degree burns to most of the front of my right leg. I flew back to the UK and had it treated back here, but with the risk of infection and then letting it heal I was not really able to use it at all.

It was frustrating and I got a bit of cabin fever, although it was actually not a bad thing. It forces you to sit down, take time and get in the office and start thinking about the next project and talking to sponsors, which you cannot do when you are on a boat.

I am back on the water now, which is good, and a relief.

UPCOMING PROJECTS

I have set my sights on doing the Transat next May from Brest to Charleston, South Carolina. So the next big project is to be on the start line for that and try to be competitive.

There is a lot happening between now and then including the RORC series, the Fastnet and looking at options to be co-skipper for the Transat Jacques Vabre in October.

Longer term, the Vendée Globe is a massive challenge for me. 2020 is out of the question, as there are issues with qualifying and limited spaces. It was always an ambitious target. The real goal is to try and be on the start line with a competitive project in 2024.

I am not worried about doing the Vendée Globe as soon as I can. I just want to do it, and when I do it I want to be competitive and eventually I would like to win it. There is no time pressure on that. I was the youngest skipper to finish the Route du Rhum, so I have still got time on my side.

WHICH SAILORS INSPIRE YOU?

Alex Thomson is at the top of his game. It is hard to get the experience, the advice and the expertise, so to have Alex there to take me under his wing and give me the fast-track tips is invaluable. It has been awesome. His whole team has supported me, looking after sponsors, finding sponsors and so on. You take on a project like this and it is a solo project, so there is a lot to do.