



MAKING WAVES: The crew aboard the yacht during the 2006 race.

Performance Textiles Association members **Chichester Canvas** had a race against the clock when staff received an 11th hour call from a yacht racing team who were set to embark on one of the most gruelling sporting challenges in the world.

The Volvo Round the World Yacht Race is widely regarded as one of the most physically challenging events on the sporting calendar.

Held every four years, the race (formerly known as the Whitbred Round the World Race), sees teams cover thousands of miles between a number of ports and encountering some of the fiercest conditions known to man, including 100 ft waves.

It was less than three weeks before the last race that Chichester Canvas was approached to design, build and fit two workshop tents for the Pirates of the Caribbean yacht, itself a late entrant to the race.

Each structure was fitted between two large shipping containers, which followed the sleek racing yacht around the world to provide servicing facilities.

The tents were made on time, fitted in Southampton docks, and the firm's personnel flew out to Vigo in Spain to assist the crew at their first port of call.

The two large canopy structures were primarily for the maintenance crew of the yacht and to provide a maintenance and hospitality area.

The shipping containers and structure were airlifted ahead of the yacht's arrival into the ports of call around the world.

Fittings were also designed by skilled staff at Chichester Canvas to attach the roof structure to the container roof.

These were welded in place whilst an aluminium frame structure was manufactured to the exact measurements required - and of a strength to withstand strong wind conditions.

Adjustment fittings also had to be developed to allow for tolerances in the placement of the shipping containers.

Both structures measured 15 metres by 12 metres and were test fitted in Southampton docks within the 3 week timescale, just ahead of the race start.

After a slow start the yacht and its crew eventually finished in second place, to the delight of the six Chichester Canvas staff who worked on the project.

Mike Bottrill, group managing director, said: "This unusual, exciting project was a good example of the versatility of our manufacturing department in producing diverse structures at short notice.

"We were pleased to be able to contribute to the Pirates' success in the race and we all thoroughly enjoyed being part of such an exciting challenge.

"I'm sure we would do it again if we were asked, even at such short notice. The timescale actually made it more of a rewarding project, knowing that we had really quite a limited period to turn things around.

"We have got a few large projects in the pipeline for 2007 and we hope that they are as successful as this one."