

TOGLINE

## AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2005

**BOOM** : - laterally mounted pole to which a sail is fastened, used during inadvertent gybing to shift crew members to a fixed, horizontal position – possibly in the water.

Welcome to *'The season of mists and mellow fruitfulness'*

As dusk gets earlier each day, the sailing season draws to its close for many of us. Somehow, there is something very final in accepting that the waterproofs will be washed, dried and put away to the following year. Many of you no doubt, have your own boats and will keep on sailing for as long as possible, putting off the evil day. For those of us less fortunate, we have only our memories to savour and mull over 'til Phoebe spreads her warmth once again. I amuse myself looking back over my two trips this year, analysing them and trying to work out how I could have improved some particular manoeuvre or aspect of the trip. One of the nice things I have discovered about boating, is that one is learning the whole time. We lesser mortals are fortunate to have the depth of experience shown by those long-serving members who are yachtmasters, teachers and examiners. They never tire of encouraging us and gently correcting, if one overreaches one's ability. An open mind can absorb so many good lessons. Long may they continue with their good works.

There is always a touch of excitement when I receive a report from any of you – wondering, until I open it, exactly what I will find. I have not been disappointed so far. Your reports are excellent and I have a lot of pleasure editing and placing them in TOGLINE. Thank you all so very much.

I was a crewmember on the October sailex this year and have come to the conclusion that sailing can bring out the worst in us. There we were, a reef in the main, in the middle of the Solent, 20 knots over the deck, when "Wight Colt" slides across and parallels us. "Skywave" is a 33

footer, "Wight Colt" a 37 footer. In theory, no contest – but, "We're holding her, guys – Don't let her pass. We've gotta beat them...." and other similar words accompanied by the odd expletive!. Work on the mainsheet, twiddle the jibsheet, steer close, blast you, skipper dancing. We don't race, perish the thought, but there is that temptation to discover which boat is the faster! Sound familiar? Sailing with a brisk wind, a skipper who's with it and a crew in harmony ...I just want to beat them!! Know what I mean ?

Four boats and 22 people went on the October Sailex. I know several were first-timers with "big boats" and TOG. (Karl and Blair on "Skywave", Ashley on "Petasus" for instance). It would be interesting to read about their thoughts and opinions (however frank) on the Sailex. Did you enjoy it, suffer it, or wished you had stayed at home? Any feedback would be more than welcome and a help in formulating plans for future expeditions. How about it guys?

Until the Winter Issue in February 2006, (closing date 31<sup>st</sup> Jan, please), keep talking to me and may I wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, with all its promises for the future.



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**PUSHPIT PRATTLE** by Keith Stedman  
Presiding Master



***A Job Well Done***

Not quite 'by appointment', but I can now confirm that Trent Offshore Group has reached the ears of Royalty. In fact, to none other than the ears of Her Royal Highness, The Princess Royal, President of the Royal Yachting Association! How did this happen? Avid readers of TOGline will have read in the last edition, that our retiring Presiding Master was awarded an RYA "Lifetime Commitment" award in recognition of his services to sailing.

My wife Jenny, and I, were privileged to be invited to the Commodore's Reception, following the Awards Presentation and Luncheon, on the 13<sup>th</sup> October. After a 'just in time' arrival at Church House, Westminster, we soon found Norman and Ann (not HRH) together with Rod Little (Chairman of the East Midlands Regional RYA) and his partner Liz, from amongst the throng of other guests within the room. We were asked to keep together in our regional groups to ease the process of the Princess Royal circulating around those assembled. Princess Anne was soon with the East Midlands Group, asking about our boat charters and the number of members within the group, before moving onto speak with Paul Willcock the Commodore of Daneshill Sailing Club.

After the Princess Royal had departed the reception, it was my intention to attend the RYA Annual General Meeting but..... it is here that I have a confession to make to our membership. Rather than proceed as planned, Uncle Norman persuaded Jenny and I to join him and Ann at the Royal Air Force Club for a few social drinks. (*Fatal!! Ed.*) Having been granted 'leave of absence' by Rod, we found ourselves imbibing with Norman and Ann in very pleasant surroundings for the rest of the afternoon, before having to depart and catch our homeward train.

Altogether, a pleasant and enjoyable day, especially to see the years that Norman has put into TOG and sailing being duly recognised.

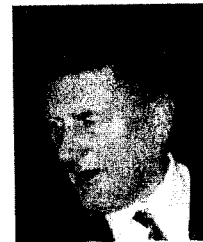
PS. Conversation overheard on the day. 'What is the collective noun for a gathering of commodores?'

Answer.....An Indecision of Commodores!!!



'Uncle' Norman receiving his award from The Princess Royal. Is he explaining the mysteries of tidal heights at secondary ports?

**TAFFRAIL TATTLE** – by Norman Allen



**Trafalgar 2005**

"The reason for this gigantic celebration (TRAFALGAR 2005 - The International fleet review), of course, was Nelson's famous victory over the French - though in these days of warped political correctness it was apparently bad form to mention it. That's why the re-enactment of the battle, which took place in the evening, was reduced to a cuddly sounding contest between the 'reds' and the 'blues'." Not my comments but those of "SAILING TODAY"! Sad isn't it. The



French produced a magnificent stamp to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Austerlitz this year. The battle caused the collapse of the 3rd Coalition against Napoleon and left 25,000 of our troops stranded in Prussia until evacuated by the Royal Navy. At the time the victory at Austerlitz on 2 December 1805 overshadowed Trafalgar but the effects of the latter were longer lasting. The French, however, have a continuing pride in their achievements and are not afraid to show it!

**The October Sailex**

For the first time since four of us started this late season cruise in 1996, I've had to miss out this year because of an 'especial' birthday of my eldest daughters. This four-day sailex has proved increasingly popular and since 2003 has grown to three yachts (*FOUR this year! – Ed.*) and around twenty members, making it TOG's premier multi-vessel Sailex. I think

that bringing the date forward and adding a day, some four years ago, helped to popularise it because we had secured nearly an extra hour of daylight and there was still a remnant of holiday activity in the various ports visited. The social side is well to the fore and the 'farewell to the yacht clubs' score is still a measure of the Sailex success. Despite it being well into Autumn we experience much pleasant weather and clock up some respectable mileages (we made Brighton last year from Cowes). I would emphasise, however, that the October Sailex is a bit of fun. We have informal races, swap afterguard for experience of another yacht (and skipper), we give 'rabbits' an opportunity to navigate in waters that are so well known to the skippers that a wrong position is quickly challenged and, for those new to the life, we visit many ports and harbours that are yachting legends. Last, but by no means least, because of the time of the year participation is cheap! Why don't YOU give it a try next year? I promise that you won't be disappointed.

### Portpatrick

Arthur Wood's article on delivering Peter Titmus's Trapper 500 mentioned their overnight stay in Portpatrick: so for the second time an article by Arthur in one TOGLINE has triggered a memory that has resulted in me producing a piece for the next issue - thanks Arthur! Arthur's description of the 'aids to navigation' to enter Portpatrick sent me scurrying once more to my books of expedition reports because I had had a similar problem there. The harbour of Portpatrick is positioned right in the middle of the 'hammer head' that is the Mull of Galloway, the nearest point on the Scottish coast to Ireland. In 1821 the government decided to build a new packet port for regular marine services to Belfast to augment the longer Troon and Glasgow routes. Enormous cubes of granite measuring around 12 feet along each face were laid two high as a breakwater and a channel was dredged. Unfortunately the new harbour lasted but six months because a violent winter storm shifted and upended the harbour wall which had not been properly secured, but merely positioned on a gravel bottom. Because of commercial rivalry it was never rebuilt and Portpatrick returned to its existence as a small, sleepy fishing haven.

I left Troon on 17th August 1994 in the RAFSA yacht 'Hawk of Cowley' intending to sojourn in Portpatrick and then cross to Belfast Lough the next day. On arrival off Portpatrick, I referred to the Admiralty Pilot which told me to align a yellow free standing pole with a yellow vertical stripe on the gable end of a large house. Unfortunately there were four gable ended houses abutting the harbour entrance and they were all painted 'Kensington Cream'. We got uncomfortably close to the harbour entrance before a yellow line could be spotted on the second house in. My RAFSA report nonchalantly reads "In the event 'Hawk' squeaked over the inner harbour entrance at 1951A (one and a half hours after HW Liverpool) and moored up alongside 'Empathy' on the harbour wall". It's a sobering thought to know that despite all the

electronic aids that 'yellow on Kensington Cream' and, 11 years later, in Arthur's case 'for Orange read Green' (but don't put it in the Pilot) can create havoc..... which reminds me of Eigg and another Scottish story for a future Tattle

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## REPORTS

### **A HISTORY OF TOG** by Norman Allen

#### **Part 1 - How it all began 1983-1984**

Having promised the editor, under duress you may recall, that I would write something about the early history of TOG, I sat down one Tuesday afternoon in September and started writing. How did it all begin -----and how was I roped in. I certainly didn't lack sailing opportunities: RAF Station Expeditions were always requesting skippers; the RAF College at Cranwell looked for skippers for cadet expeditions at least four times a year. In addition, since 1978, as a goodwill gesture to an old chum who was PEdO at Headquarters Air Cadets, I had mounted the annual ATC Offshore expedition and, just occasionally, there would be some social sailing with family and friends. I had a pact with Ann: four weeks out of 52 was OK! Do more and she would suffer a sense of humour failure.

For me it began with the Toothill School, Bingham, Activities Week Programme for 1983. It was in the days before we became obsessed with blame and the concomitant litigation and the school used the last week of the Summer Term to despatch its pupils all over the place to take part in a wide range of activities. Some went fell walking, large numbers went on sponsored visits to Bingham's West German twin town (where they white water rafted amongst other things!); there were French language weeks in France, practical courses in mountaineering, canoeing, dinghy sailing, angling and, for those who were happy to stay at home, courses in music, drama, literature, historic buildings, handicrafts and household maintenance. The programme was not embedded in stone and year by year some activities were wound up and replaced by others of new found popularity.

One of the Physical Education (PE) masters at that time was a former RAF Physical Training Instructor (PTI) and a keen dinghy sailor named Brian Hill. Brian owned a Laser and belonged to the Retford Argonauts SC where he sailed with his sons and their chums. He hankered, however, after bigger boat sailing, such as that which he experienced a couple of times with the Royal Air Force Sailing Association, (RAFSA), and he hoped that he might get some of the senior pupils involved as well. To this end he decided to charter some yachts on the Norfolk Broads (which he knew quite well from family holidays) for the Activities Week of July 1983 and he placed a note in the school's Easter Bulletin asking for assistance from parents with sailing ability. I was away sailing with