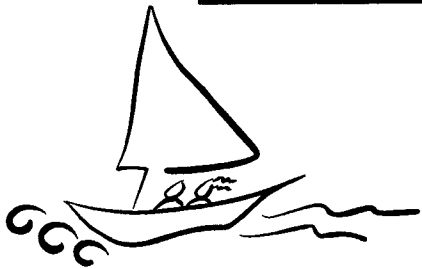


TRENT OFFSHORE GROUP



TOGLINE

SPRING NEWSLETTER 2005

Here we go into another year and – a very green, very new, Compiler/Editor. Peter decided that, having edited TOGLINE for the last four years, it was time a new broom swept into the chair. All of us in TOG, owe a debt of gratitude to Peter for his sterling efforts in producing our favourite Newsletter so assiduously – and making it so interesting. A very hard act to follow. Thank you so much, Peter, from us all. Enjoy your retirement!

May I introduce myself? My name is Ian Calderwood. Some of you may know me, but an awful lot do not! The sea and ships have always had a fascination for me. I was fortunate during my formative years, to be able to travel with my parents, to and from the Caribbean several times. Not, I hasten to add, in a sailing boat! This travelling triggered a love for the sea in all its moods that never really left me. The closest I came latterly, was for my cousin and myself to share a 14-foot dinghy on Rutland Water. TOG and coastal sailing, came fairly late in life. After retirement in 1998 and over the winter of 2000/2001, my wife encouraged me to attend the Casterton Night School course - “Shore-based Day Skipper”. It engendered so much enjoyment that, the following year, the “Shore-based Coastal Yachtmaster” course followed. Norman Allen, (the one and only) our instructor, kindly asked me to accompany him, with two of his friends, sailing for a week from St. Malo. That was it. I was completely and utterly hooked! But enough of me!

I have no need to explain the joys of coastal sailing. Anyone who has tried it knows exactly what I mean and I make no apologies for encouraging others, as often as one feels able. When the lift of the first wave after leaving harbour makes itself felt, a wonderful feeling of release comes over one, and day-to-day problems just seem to recede. David Brettle has a wonderful selection of trips arranged and **do** take advantage of them. Our Council, ably led by Keith Stedman (thanks, Keith) is staffed with enthusiastic, PRACTICAL Administrators, who are only too eager to serve us, the members. The articles the members have provided over the years give life and form to the Group, for which – many thanks to you all. I sincerely hope you can continue to nurture that life, by keeping your contributions coming. I trust we can find room in TOGLINE and I will do my best to ensure they are presented. Articles, compliments, brickbats, cartoons, – let ‘em all come! We all read Yachting magazines. Anything in them you feel strongly about or think may be of general interest for discussion? How about a letters page? Anybody fancy kicking it off?

Yours, in anticipation!

Ian Calderwood
19, St. John's Close
Ryhall
Stamford
Lincs. PE9 4HS

Tel: (01780) 763748. e-mail:Berician@AOL.com

TAFFRAIL TATTLE –

by Norman Allen

Bienvenue encore (well, had to show off)

The more ancient TOG members, or those who are aficionados of WW II history, will recall the comment of the noted newspaper columnist William Connor when he ceased activity as a war correspondent and returned to his Fleet Street desk. "As I was saying before I was so rudely interrupted". In some small way I feel like him: life has been turbulent, disorganised and very peripatetic of late! I must start this "catch up" TATTLE by wishing Keith and Jenny a most pleasing and successful future: it is fortunate for Keith that he has another "Ann" in the wings and we look forward to the emergence of Jenny as the TOG general factotum and cheerful consort. I am confident that Keith will do well, not least because he is a fellow Corkhead (or Vectensian in posher vernacular): not many mainland clubs can count themselves that lucky!

A "Thank You".

Ann and I are very grateful, and appreciative, for the wonderful gifts that you gave to us at the Annual Dinner to mark the end of our "era". My presents could not have been bettered, nor more apt (more about the Trafalgar book later) and Ann, as a keen proponent of the black art of horticulture, was overjoyed with the basket of houseplants that in fact was a portable mini garden. Thank you all for the presents that indeed will be treasured or tended.

The Annual Dinner.

I see that the PM is asking for thoughts and suggestions about the Dinner, as I did last year. I am afraid that Linda (Social Secretary) and I received not a single comment or suggestion in answer to our plea; but the steady reduction in numbers attending, from the top figure of 104 in 1995 at the Olde England Hotel, does show that many members (and wives and partners) are unhappy with the present format and are voting with their feet. In the early days of TOG (and the Flotilla before) we did have many younger members who could ill afford a more colourful yet formal occasion. This is not the case today. If members and consorts are going to travel long or even medium distances then it has to be a worthwhile occasion with some glitter and the possibility of well furnished, comfortable rooms aplenty for those who wish to stay overnight. We do have to make the evening worthwhile and interesting for the partners who do not sail (or who do so but only out of loyalty). "Old Ships" should still be able to reminisce at the bar, but we must ensure that they can be dragged off to dance and socialise by their long suffering consorts who really aren't interested in the navigational problems of Chichester Bar, the loss of GPS up Loch Long or the current position on the shifting sands at the mouth of the Deben and the Ore. Please, please let Linda or Keith know your views about the Dinner. We don't want to lose it by default.

Trafalgar 2005.

As our Editor reported in the last issue, 2005 is the bicentenary of the Battle of Trafalgar and our government is instigating SEA BRITAIN as a 'year long celebration of this country's maritime history'. This statement and the book (Roy Adkins' TRAFALGAR) which you so kindly gave me, brought to mind a delightful memory, unfortunately marred by modern reality. As a young RAF officer I was invited by a naval chum to a Guest Night at the Royal Naval College Greenwich, now alas, no more, having been subsumed into a triservice monolith at Camberley with the bulk of the College buildings being transferred to the new University of Greenwich. The Painted Hall, the College Dining Room, is still, luckily, within the public domain as part of the National Maritime Museum: it is a magnificent building reflecting in its paintings much of note in Britain's maritime past. At dinner the Royal Marines' Band played; the candle flames flickered on the silverware which had been accumulating since Pepys' stint as Secretary to the Admiralty: the National Anthem was played preceding the Loyal Toast and then followed the traditional rendering of 'Rule Britannia' with the 150 plus diners singing the three choruses. I shall never forget that colourful and moving scene made more poignant, in retrospect, because in that gathering were officers not only of the regular RN, but also some from the RNR and the RNVR. (the "commissioned yachties") who had helped make our maritime history in WW I and WW II. Peter Fletton wrote in the last Togline that we were in danger of losing that heritage: I would agree. We have a great maritime tradition, the finest in the World, so let us be careful that unwanted legislation and government interference does not achieve what our enemies have failed to do: kill it!

The Maritime Automatic Identification System (AIS)

by Norman Allen

What exactly is AIS? To put it simply it is an electronic means to identify vessels by name and registration at sea. As a system-AIS is dependent upon GPS because the ship's position is also "broadcast". There was a competitor called MIDAR (Marine Identity Data Automatic Response), which could have given the same information on a contact directly upon the receiving vessel's radar screen, as opposed to AIS, which has a separate receiver. The competitor was about 70% cheaper but despite attempts to block the introduction of AIS in favour of MIDAR in our Parliament the needs of the shore based vehicle trackers prevailed and AIS triumphed because of its greater range.

The RYA's position has gone from cautious scepticism to sceptical approval to outright support. In the beginning the 'threat' seemed clear: all UK.- Registered vessels would be required to be fitted with AIS transmitters and in order to enforce this all vessels would have to be registered with, presumably, the MCA, the declared position of the RYA on compulsory registration: it would have been a threat to our current unregulated

status and a step towards pleasure craft licensing and the concomitant payment of a licence fee (cf Radio and Television licence, Road Fund licence, domestic Radio and Television Receiving and Small Ships' Radio Telegraphy licences to name but a few.) Now the Marine and Coastguard Agency (MCA) has stated that there are no plans to make AIS mandatory for pleasure craft in order to monitor traffic, or for security reasons. It would seem then that we have achieved a fair compromise - for the moment. If you do a lot of sailing or motor boating across the seas around the UK then the addition of an AIS capability would be beneficial. In the event of an emergency you could identify the nearest vessel/vessels and call up on Ch 13 by name. Similarly vessels could identify you and call you up by name to report such things as imminent net shooting (those who sailed out of Kilrush in 1992 will recall the salmon poachers), you are in prohibited waters, there are unidentified/identified hazards ahead of you and so on. The nightmare prospect of 250 yachts in the Solent and Spithead during a race week/weekend on top of 'normal' summer cruising, all broadcasting mandatory AIS signals is (at least for the immediate future) a non-starter. If you have it installed you may use it as and when you may wish to. So breathe a sigh of relief if you are a vessel owner: you will not be forced into buying the system. What about the "big boys" and the smaller coastal commercial craft. With the latter if your country is a signatory to the IMO agreement then you fit it. If your country is not an IMO member then you needn't. However the "big boys" (the ocean going cargo and passenger vessels) are not overhappy with the way it has been implemented. Obviously all what are called "flag" states (that is those with a state registered mercantile marine wearing the nation's flag or mercantile ensign) have signed up to the agreement and their vessels will, by law, be required to use it at all times. However there is disquiet. Last year the Royal Institute of Navigation organised a conference on AIS and one of the presenters was Alan Graveson, the National Secretary of NUMAST (the Merchant Navy Officers' Union). Whilst he was complimentary about the system being technologically sound he was less sure about its implementation. Two sentences stand out. "Initially mariners were enthusiastic over the introduction of AIS; at least they could establish who that ship was on collision course. However, the system that is now being fitted is not the one of choice: for the regulator monitoring from the shore YES, for the mariner-NO." Earlier in his address he spoke about the fact that mandatory carriage of AIS became inevitable after the events of 11 September 2001. It was "not of concern" over seafarers being slaughtered: it was the ships that were identified as the potential threat. AIS is now seen as essential to maritime security." His disquiet over the introduction of AIS is that "the development of AIS has been driven by the need of regulatory authorities and not navigators." He also raises the question of the right to switch off being the prerogative of the ship's master. "The increased incidence of piracy and armed robbery fuelled this concern. The master's right to switch off AIS is considered fundamental by NUMAST,

especially where the vessel, crew, cargo and passengers are at potential risk from such attacks." He considers it would not be appropriate in Northern European waters but a decision to switch off in international waters adjacent to say Indonesia could be considered necessary. There is obviously much more to AIS than I have been able to produce in this short article and I'll keep you up to date in the future. There is a dichotomy of interest between seafarers and shorebased regulators and it is this that has to be resolved -quickly.

PUSHPIT PRATTLE – by Keith Stedman. – **Presiding Master**



REPORTS

The Easter Sailex by Keith Stedman.

"Appaloosa"

Mark Davis : Commodore
Colin Brockett : Mate
Michael Parker
Alan Radley
Simon Sjenitzer
Kevin Wall

"Jus' Peepin'"

Neil Mcfarlane : Skipper
Michael Brook : Mate
Keith Stedman
Craig Anderson
Stefan Robson

Thursday 24th March – Hamble to Cowes

The two yachts were Bavaria 36's: Appaloosa was assigned to the commodore as it benefited from central heating and a spray hood, whereas Jus' Peepin''s hardy crew opted for a more Spartan experience. Both skippers did a thorough handover and crew safety briefing. Jus' Peepin'' was away from her moorings at 16:05 hours and on exiting the Hamble was able to turn South towards the Isle of Wight and briefly sail; but to arrive at Cowes in good time for an evening meal, the engine was started and the journey completed under power. 'Appaloosa' followed approximately one hour behind Jus' Peepin. The boats moored in West Cowes Yacht Haven and the evening meal and refreshments partaken in the Union Flag public house.
Distance logged: 6 n. miles.

Friday (Good Friday) 25th March – Cowes to Weymouth

Both Appaloosa and Jus' Peepin'' left Cowes Yacht Haven at 07:10 hours GMT. The wind was light and variable so we motored to the Needles. Passing the Needles, large breakers were evident on the Shingles Bank. Bridge West Cardinal was left to starboard and both boats made directly for Anvil Point to take the inside passage of the overfalls at St Albans Head. These