



TOGLINE

SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2005

Sailing . n. The fine art of getting wet and becoming ill while going slowly nowhere at great expense.

Greetings once again to all our readers and welcome to this summer issue.

Talking of Summer, do you reckon it's starting to pick up at last? Let's hope that the weather gurus know what they are talking about for August to October! Was there something about a repeat of 1976 (those of us who can remember that far back)? Was it Charles II who said, "the English Summer consists of three fine days and a thunderstorm"? Five of us had a week's sailing from Dartmouth at the end of May. Peter and his crew were there at the same time, although not the same place. We had everything thrown at us. F6-7 winds, 3-4 metre waves and cold winds to cap it all. Weather like that at the end of May? Give me a break! That being said, I hope *someone* will come back and say – "so what"? With the amount of sailing that members of TOG have undertaken over the years, many of you must have reminiscences of the time the wind blew, the mainsail tore, the jib split, the motor stopped, the mast bent like a bow, becalmed in the troughs..... this is England we're talking about! C'mon, share the experiences with us, please! By the way, many thanks indeed to the contributors for this edition. We do hope you enjoy them.

At the Council Meeting in June, I was delighted to discover that TOGLINE is now available on our website as a PDF file. Many thanks Mark, for arranging that. We may widen the circle of our acquaintances even more. To any new members we say, "welcome". A big "thank you" is due to Richard Vincent for his TOGFLASH, to keep us more immediately informed of breaking news – which is difficult to do in TOGLINE.

I see the BBC did us proud again; 30 minutes of Trafalgar 2005 – and that's it. Why do the interviews all seem so snide, apologetic and critical? Can't they just enjoy the spectacle and bask in the historical significance of the event? We could all be speaking French now, if the fleet hadn't done so well! There was our Queen on the day, ignoring the shelter provided on *Endurance* and waving just like a teenager as she reviewed the Fleets; we are so fortunate to have such a monarch. The Solent **can** be inclement at times as many of us know! Did anybody see the re-enactment of Trafalgar or the fireworks, as a bonus? It would be interesting to have a spectator's view of the day.....?

I want to fix deadline dates for submissions to TOGLINE and hope they will provide a target for anyone wishing to contribute. I am aiming for **31st October** for Autumn Edition, **31st January** for the Winter, **30th April** for Spring and **31st July** for Summer. Any reports, letters, jokes, cartoons, beratings, complaints, asides, etc., etc., etc., we will do our best to publish. Tell me if I am doing it right! Remember, this is YOUR forum. Dare I ask for a photograph with your submissions? Should we meet at a social, it is easier to put a face to a name and – I think - much more friendly.

May your halyards never tangle and your gybes be merely jests!

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PUSHPIT PRATTLE – by Keith Stedman. –
Presiding Master



A LIFETIME'S ACHIEVEMENT RECOGNISED

At the Trent Offshore Group Council Meeting on the 15th April 2005, we decided that in recognition of our Past Presiding Master's contribution to sailing over the years, Norman's name be put forward for consideration for a Royal Yachting Association (RYA) Lifetime Achievements Award. I submitted Norman's name to the RYA Awards Committee for consideration, together with a resume of his significant contribution to offshore sailing.

It is with much pleasure that I can now report to the TOG membership that the RYA Honours and Awards Panel at their meeting on the 15th June, conferred a **RYA Community Award (Lifetime Commitment)** on Sqdn. Ldr. **Norman Allen**. Norman will be invited to a special luncheon and presentation ceremony in London on the 13th October.

Congratulations Norman, well deserved.

TAFFRAIL TATTLE – by Norman Allen
The Story of TOG



There was I indulging in a couple of beers and quiet banter in the elegant surroundings of the Royal Torbay YC with Ian Calderwood during the May SWAILEX when he suddenly changed the conversation and became all editorial. "How about writing a few lines about the earlier times of TOG" he ventured. As it was his round I couldn't refuse, could I! So I am therefore committed to writing a light-hearted tale about the Flotilla and TOG in its earlier years. Anyone with fond memories of those days is earnestly asked to contact me by 'phone on 0044-243263057 or by mail to La Grange, 5 Rue du Vieux Moulin, 53470 La Bazouge des Alleux, France. I hope that the first of these articles covering our first five years or so will appear in the next issue.

Tall Ships

Arthur's tales of Tall Ships in the Spring TOGLINE rang a bell and sent me flipping through the pages of old expedition reports. In May '77 two of my

crew were so badly delayed by BR, that "DAMBUSTER", our yacht for the week, was left idling alongside its Hornet pontoon all afternoon and early evening. By mid-afternoon, the Mate and I had become thoroughly bored but, across the harbour alongside the Old Railway Jetty of Portsmouth Dockyard, we could see two very large square-rigged ships. I asked at the JSSC office for information and was told that they were the USSR Naval Training Ship "KRUSENSTERN" and the Polish Naval Training Ship "GDANSK" making courtesy calls. The Mate suggested that we try our luck and see if we could get aboard them. Off we ambled to the Dockyard's Unicorn Gate via the harbour ferry and, having produced our RAF ID cards, were allowed in. Fortunately, as it turned out, the "GDANSK" was the dockside vessel. We approached the cadet sentry at the gangplank, produced our ID cards again and I slowly said "Officer-please". In very passable English, the cadet said he would 'call up the petty officer'! The PO in turn informed the Officer of the Watch, who proved to be a friendly young sub-lieutenant whose English was very good. He invited us aboard, introduced us to the Officer of the Day (and another English speaker) and with his permission showed us around the upper deck.

The Officer of the Day then took us below to look at the main deck and we ended up in the Wardroom mess for a drink. Emboldened, I asked "Any chance of seeing over the "KRUSENSTERN?" "Oh, no" the lieutenant replied, "- SHE is Russian". Maybe the chinks were already showing in the Iron Curtain!

Phil Riley

I am told that Phil has retired from his post as Public Relations Officer and from Council. I am sure that I speak for all of you when I wish him well and 'good sailing' in the future. Phil is a long time member, having been introduced into TOG through Mike Hall's R Y A classes at Southwell. In addition to PR, Phil has been our official contact with Nottinghamshire County Sailing Club, with which we are affiliated. In this role he has been invaluable, not least in the amount of time spent visiting the club to provide their members with an opportunity to sail with us at TOG rates. Unfortunately, as with most of our social events, the membership has not given him fair backing. We are privileged guests at the Annual Open Day, but NCSC require a list of our attendees 48 hours before; the worst fiasco was when 18 of our members turned up but only six had told Phil they were coming! During our time together on Council, Phil and I have had our 'ups and downs' - as one would expect when dealing with publicity - but, like me, he has never let a row develop into a feud. Good luck, Phil and I hope we sail together again soon.

THE MARITIME AUTOMATIC IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM (AIS) By Norman Allen

I had envisaged a break of at least six months before my promised update but so much has happened

that the timescale has been foreshortened.

(I apologise for all the references and associated names but this has to be done to conform to copyright. It is to our advantage to be able to quote and not vaguely surmise.)

The most important change concerns AIS capability in small craft (that's us). The original recommendation of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) was to produce two AIS classes A and B. Class A would provide all the facilities specified by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) for mandatory carriage on vessels over 300 gross tonnage and all passenger vessels subject to the Saving of Life at Sea (SOLAS) Convention. Class B would be reserved for small craft using a cost reduced version of Class A and would be non-mandatory.

Now follows chaos and confusion! The Class A system adopted is of Swedish design and subject to patent rights, which have not been resolved. This has resulted in the scrapping of the original Class B specification: "the patent fee burden effectively eliminated any possible cost savings for a Class B device" (Kim Fisher, Secretary ITU Committee 80, in the Royal Institute of Navigation (RIN) Small Craft Group (SCG) Newsletter Spring 2005). However, the ITU has agreed a proposal to specify a Class B system with a transmitter power of one watt (giving a range of around 3M) with a built in GPS, which will not be subject to patent rights. This proposal would provide small craft users with a limited but practical AIS. To overcome a crowded Solent situation with hundreds of yachts 'on air' there will be an inbuilt facility for 'competent authorities' to switch off Class B devices in a particular area.

There has been some tidying up of Class A. Alan Murray, Director of Nasa Marine Ltd, which produces the Class A AIS sets in the UK, has reported on this in another article in the RIN SCG 2005 Spring Newsletter. Firstly, all sets produced by Nasa Marine have been standardised to simulate a conventional radar display where a vessel's position is automatically plotted on the screen relative to the user (some of the alternatives were quite baffling it would seem). Secondly, a "target" vessel's name now appears instantly along with its identification number and the long delays, which marred the system, have been eliminated. (This makes calling up on Ch 13 an easy option for non-threatening situations).

NUMAST (the Merchant Navy Officers' Union) has had its suspicions confirmed as far as I can see. My previous article outlined the concerns of the maritime professionals, with a quote from NUMAST's General Secretary, "the system that is now being fixed is not one of choice: for the regulator monitoring from the shore - YES, - for the mariner, NO". A paper published in the 'Journal of Navigation' and delivered at the RIN's Nov '04 Conference entitled 'AIS and Long Range Identification and Tracking', reviewed the partial

implementation over the 12 months from November 2003. (AIS became fully mandatory for Class A users from December 2004). The contributor was William F Cairns of the Maritime Domain Awareness Staff, US Coast Guard. In his paper he states that the current system "was designed as a safety tool for collision avoidance..... it is now being investigated as a tool for maritime security". A fair extension you may say but countered by the NUMAST assertion that AIS information transmitted by ships in areas at risk from piracy or terrorism increase their vulnerability.

However, enough of this 'big ship' stuff. The yachtsman (either sail or power) is likely to find possible AIS capability very much reduced and subject to severe and arbitrary curtailment. I believe that the ability to call up a ship by name from information on your AIS screen is a long way off. Of course there is money in it for inventors and manufacturers, but all we have are proposals: in addition whilst the current specification curtails power to one watt and a concomitant maximum of 3M a satisfactory small craft Class B safety aid is still, unfortunately, some years off.

REPORTS

Sailing to Wells by Sarah Cardew.

We still have a boat despite the best efforts of myself and the owner of a very big and powerful trawler - with a spiky stern and made of very hard looking metal! It was trawling over Burnham Flats in the Wash at the same time as us en route from Wisbech to Wells-next-the-Sea. It is very big, the Wash, and on that afternoon at the beginning of April, it was really very empty. The sun shone but it had blown up a bit and with a SE wind of force 5 going against an ebbing neap tide, things were choppy over the Flats. The skipper had gone below to take a fix leaving the trainee on deck to keep watch. She was listening to Radio 4 broadcasting details of Pope John Paul's condition and pontificate. She did glance around - but we do have a blind spot, don't we? Next she knows, there are shouts from behind. She looks around and there is this trawler no more than 20 metres from us on our starboard side. Expletives followed, skipper emerged and trainee has the presence of mind to knock the engine into 'fast' and escape. 'A miss is as good as a mile' reflected the Skipper. The moral is to keep a good 360-degree look out at all times!

This was a start of season shake-down sail for our 26 foot wooden Van der Stadt 'Victorianna', and a training sail for myself. Sailing out of Wisbech is a commitment, as you have to book the swing bridge at Sutton Bridge, 24 hours in advance. It can open at HW +/- 3hrs. We booked it for 11 am on Saturday morning and again for 3 am on Monday. Wells or Kings Lynn? We radioed the Harbour Master at Lynn and he implied that really there might be better places to go for a