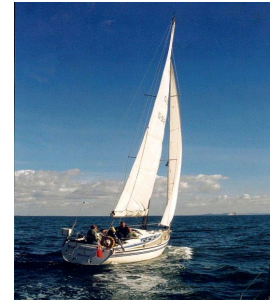




TOGLINE



The Quarterly Journal of the Trent Offshore Group

SPRING NEWSLETTER 2009

PROPELLER: High speed underwater winch, designed to hoist any lines or painters left over the stern.



The sun shines, the wind blows, the Easter Sailex 'as bin an' gorn, the days lengthen and a fellers (or gels) fancies lightly turns to thoughts of....What? Balmy seas? Long-legged lovelies relaxing on a sunny

foredeck? Tropical beaches, sand, calypsoes snorkelling in crystal-clear waters? Or the realities of an English summer with the ever-present threat of squalls, knock-downs, thunderstorms, hail pestilence, a plague of locusts or the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse? It has often been said, that there is nothing wrong with our climate – just the weather! Even now the prophets of doom are forecasting a Mediterranean climate in “n” years – and what will we look forward to then?

One of the pleasures - and curses – of sailing, is the uncertainty of the following day's weather. The weather forecast from the BBC can be a godsend to mariners, but can be the kiss of death to the “coarse sailor” – into which category many of us in TOG fall headlong! Whilst both Easter and October last year were constrained by Fairview and the weather, at least Easter 2009 seems to have gone well. Presently, apart from the wind from the N.E., the sun has been shining beautifully and the horizon looking across the valleys as we travel are so clear! That high pressure over Scotland seems to be losing the battle with the Low advancing from France. The gardener in us knows we need the rain, but the other half knows we need the wind and the sun to enjoy our hobby. No wonder the English state of mind can be in such turmoil! Still, life is full of such conflicts and somehow we seem to cope.

Now for some really good news for us TOG members. Mark Davis, Deputy Training Officer who is familiar to many of us, is now qualified by dint of recent hard work, to teach and examine on the use of VHF Radio. This is in addition to his Day Skipper and Coastal Yachtmaster teaching. I, along with seven others – some TOG members, others past students - have just finished an enjoyable day's course with Mark at Bottesford School Community Centre. I thought it was time I acquired the legal right to use the radios on the yachts by myself! The course certainly opens one's eyes to the tremendous advantages and the scope given to us by the new Digital Selective Calling – or more familiarly, DSC VHF. For starters, you can program in the MMSI numbers of a flotilla of boats, then very simply contact them individually or as a Group.. Mark has purchased four modern training sets which enables hands-on practice – such an advantage. There is no substitute for “gefingerpoken”! All of us on the day agreed that it was so well done and worthwhile to boot. Thank you, Mark. The next VHF course is scheduled for **Saturday 27th June.**

Well, once again, thank you all for the submissions made to this TOGLINE. Without them, it would be a struggle and it is always uplifting to have news from someone fresh! Please, keep them coming and until 31st July deadline, please., keep smiling and Happy Sailing.

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YACHTMASTER COASTAL – Part2

The story of maritime afterguard qualifications is typically British in that it started a long time ago, muddled through a few centuries, serving its purpose admirably, until it became “rationalised” in the

twentieth century. So it was that training and certification were very much on the “back burner” in the early days of the YRA (Yacht Racing Association) which changed its name, after some eighty years of existence, only in February 1952 to The Yachting Association (becoming Royal by command of the new Queen that November). However by 1961 a Training Committee had been set up and the first “Approved Schools” registered, a title hastily dropped when it was pointed out that there were already institutions of that name which had less esoteric pretensions. “Minute by Minute,” the Royal Yachting Association’s own history, states “for a few years RYA certification remained nothing more than a certificate of attendance at some course run by a RYA Recognised Establishment.”

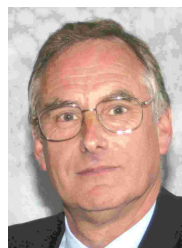
However, many large organisations such as the three armed forces associations (RNSA, ASA and RAFSA), the Civil Service SA, and some commercial institutions (The John Lewis Partnership’s Sailing Club had the longest SC title in the UK) had produced sophisticated systems of training and certification in conjunction with the Board of Trade, which itself awarded specific Sailing Masters’ tickets many of them for professionals in larger square riggers via the age long system of a viva voce by a Board of Competence. By agreement over the years the titles granted by all the examining authorities were Offshore Skipper, Coastal Skipper, and Day Skipper but it was possible to upgrade to Ocean and /or Racing Skipper via further boards or written examinations. Why Skipper? Well, technically, a person in command of a seagoing vessel was a Master (short for Master Mariner) and if armed then a Master and Commander or Captain but the title of Skipper had been colloquially used for those in command of small fishing boats to battleships for generations and seemed to fit the bill in this admirably.

Gradually the RYA syllabuses and awards became acceptable to old as well as new training establishments and by the mid 70’s pressure was gradually put upon Service afterguard to “convert” our tickets to RYA ones. A Defence Council Instruction (DCI) of 1974 made it clear that “all holders of Service sailing certificates are encouraged to apply to the relevant authorities for the equivalent RYA certificate which is recognised nationally and internationally.” Included in this DCI was a full list of requirements for Yacht Hands, Day Skippers, Coastal Skippers, Offshore Skippers and Ocean Yacht Skippers including provision for a Racing Endorsement for the two senior grades.

Eventually the “powers that be” lost patience over our slowness to join the new system and late in 1981 another DCI was issued which dragooned us all into exchanging our qualifications or losing them by default on 5 April 1982 (the cut off line at the beginning of the new financial year). Under revised RYA rules the titles up to and including Coastal Skipper would stay but Offshore and Ocean Skipper would be renamed Yachtmaster Offshore and Yachtmaster Ocean. It would appear that in the two months at the end

of 1981 (normally a slack time for the issue of new certificates) the RYA Certification Department was busier than the previous July and August! I must confess that everyone I spoke to was impressed. We had replaced, at no charge, a piece of cardboard for, in the case of newly styled Yachtmasters Offshore and Yachtmasters Ocean, a magnificent navy blue and gold passport style folder with a certificate that was four times the size of the old one and full of “to” and “whereas” and signed in ink twice: once on behalf of the RYA and once by the Department of Trade (the Board’s successor). Furthermore we were told that we could paste our old Service association certificates on the inside back cover where it read “space reserved – do not write or affix items without permission” which at least showed our proper seniority and not one dating from early 1982. However there was a downside. Despite the sterling work that so many had done our Coastal Skippers were not going to be called Coastal Yachtmasters and their small maroon soft back certificate covers reflected this. Because of the exigencies of the Service many of our Coastal Skippers stayed in that grade for years: they had been somewhat shabbily treated but that was the decision made by the RYA and the Department of Trade. It has taken a long time for this situation to be resolved.

PUSHPIT PRATTLE by Keith Stedman



Keith sends his apologies for this gap, but he has had one or two serious problems on his mind....

Hopefully the Summer Edition will carry his usual brand of sideways humour....

REPORTS



THE e-BORDERS SCHEME by Norman Allen

Mark well the above title because it could signal the beginning of much trouble for the average law-abiding yacht skipper from around 2014. Well what is it all about? I can but quote

from a UK government statement on the matter. “The scheme is necessary due to the increased threat of illegal immigration, terrorism and serious crime, together with the predicted increase in travellers to the UK and the need for closer integration of border agencies.” The scheme will be operated by Trusted Borders, a consortium of companies consisting of some old friends, Raytheon and QinetiQ, who were heavily involved in the production of the new style RADAR reflectors as well as some new ones using, as usual, a computer – speak version of Double Dutch as their company titles imply: Accenture, Detica, Cap Gemini, Serco and Steria. Well I bet that has whetted your appetite and will encourage you to read further, if only out of curiosity, as to what this government is going to do next for the sailing community, following its blinding success with regard to Red Diesel.

Briefly, yacht skippers will be required to notify Messrs Trusted Borders, as the e-Borders agent, of every voyage

out of and into UK territorial waters by filling in and depositing a TDI (Travel Document Information) and a SI (Service Information), why not SID or SIF adding the word Document or Form to the title....at least it would sound humanly inspired. The Borders Agency (another lot of do-gooders) had suggested that these informative documents could be completed via a website using an onboard computer but the RYA has told them that the percentage of sailing vessels that have one on board is relatively small, maybe the story of our Deputy Training Master's laptop and the trainee's bucket of water has percolated down to the RYA HQ at the Hamble. It looks, then, as though we shall be filling in a more complex version of the old C1328 yellow Customs form and stuffing it in a quayside box before departure. However that's not all, and this is when the word 'bizarre' becomes useful. It is being proposed that before you leave the UK you will be required to lodge a re-entry TDI and a re-entry SI with Trusted Borders and you will be expected to keep to that schedule. What happens if you informed Trusted Borders that you would be returning to Gosport from Cherbourg on the 21 July but you find that there is a steady F8 blowing from NxE on 20 July so you decide to leave early and head for Weymouth where sea area Portland has forecast a F7 decreasing to F6 with the wind slowly veering. You will be fined because Weymouth has no notification of your proposed arrival and furthermore you will have arrived a day too early in UK territorial waters. That's worth a £100 fine at least! "So you arrived at Weymouth illegally and in UK territorial waters 24 hours too soon. That's an automatic £50 fine on each charge totalling £100 – cash, cheque or credit card will do."

"How does filling in a form by UK based yachtsmen stop illegal immigration?" you may well ask. Well funnily enough I got there first and frankly it would seem a waste of time and money. What on earth is wrong with funding a few more Customs/Immigration launches that stop vessels and ask questions via a loud hailer? Most of us at some time have been hailed by a Customs and Preventative launch and provided that one's answers satisfied them you were told to proceed with a friendly wave, but if anything struck them as suspicious then they would board you... The cost of a few more Preventative Officers and launches would be a lot less and far more effective than this proposed caper. Anyway it is early days yet and there is much more consultation and argument to consider. One sincerely hopes that commonsense will prevail and the entire scheme be abandoned.

However don't even dream of looking at a possible bright side where common sense will prevail because the e-Borders scheme will be a private contract and as with the bulk of today's Traffic Warden activities the private consortium will be out to make money – by fining you. Forget the times when you sent the top copy of your C1328 by post from your first port of call (usually Alderney or Cherbourg) because you forgot to bung it in the Custom's Box at the Hornet before departure, and found it lurking under the chart table half way across the Channel, for you won't be dealing with uniformed civil servants any more. "So you forgot your exit date TDI and SI. That's an automatic £50 fine. Cash, cheque or credit card will do. Thank you."

Moreover 2014 is still some way off and a lot can happen in that time but don't be complacent. I will try and keep you up to date and I shall make a point of finding out as much as I can from many sources. If you want more mind-bending detail as to how the proposition is progressing at present,

then please read the last three editions of the RYA quarterly magazine. Remember it is not law yet and may it ever remain so

Caribbean Charter from Antigua *Undaunted* -11 to 24 February 2009

by Neil MacFarlane



We (Megan and Neil) had sailed in the Caribbean a few years ago on my brother's yacht *Wildcard*, a beautiful, blue-hulled Moody 46ft, first in the British Virgin Islands and then from the French/Dutch Island St Maarten. This time we

were to charter *Undaunted*, a Beneteau 46 three cabin/ three



heads yacht which suited three couples, ourselves, my brother and his wife, and two friends.

Having flown to St John's and spent a night in a yacht club we picked up the yacht from the charter company at Jolly Harbour. After an argument with my big brother as to who would be skipper (I won, so he was) I took the formal handover. Well-used to UK charter companies and coded boats the more laid back Antiguan approach proved a bit of an eye opener. Titanic-style life jackets; very basic harnesses and safety lines; one dinghy oar; a rudimentary first aid kit; only three fenders and two warps ("you'll be at anchor mostly so that's plenty"); a dodgy windlass, and so on – both parties were wondering what they had let themselves in for. The local staff were great and my final request for a motoring cone (a very dusty one bought new from the chandlery) and bolt-cutters raised both eyebrows and much hilarity. However a couple of generous rum punches allayed our concerns, and the yacht was victualled by the ladies such that we could have completed an Atlantic passage dining in style throughout.

Our previous Caribbean trips had provided weather and sailing straight from the holiday brochures. These two weeks proved a little more erratic and rigorous. The skies were sometimes overcast with light rain and frequent heavy squalls passed through. The north-easterly trade wind was variable and often quite powerful necessitating reefing. A heavy Atlantic swell and head winds made some of our longer passages quite tough going. Added to this was the standard condition placed on all charter yachts of no night sailing, with boats to be on a mooring or anchored by 1700 – so that approaches would not be made in a low sun or dusk making the coral heads almost impossible to spot. This sounds fairly depressing but in fact we managed some excellent sailing and the weather and seas improved greatly as the fortnight passed.

On our first full day on board we left Jolly Harbour on the east of Antigua and sailed down to Falmouth in the south avoiding the extensive reefs marked by broken water.



Charts, mostly based on British surveys from the eighteenth century, tended to be fairly small scale and the supply was limited. A

compass variation of some 15 degrees W led to some interesting exchanges between the navigator and helm as to *precisely* what course was required, true or magnetic. Buoyage is on the American system with green port-hand marks (unless of course you are entering French waters) and rather sparse – I think I spotted just two small cardinal marks. The yacht was fitted with a good chart plotter, but the paper charts and pilots had depths marked in feet - or fathoms, or metres. The echo sounder was set to feet (I think) – and since the waters were fairly shallow this mattered. We only went aground once in the two weeks; hailed a passing motor yacht with two enormous outboards and blasting out reggae to get hauled off by the much amused Antiguan skipper. Falmouth is next to English Harbour which includes the splendidly restored Nelson's Dockyard – and the base for the formative years of Britain's greatest sailor in maintaining the ascendancy of the British Fleet in the Caribbean. The restored dockyard now includes a museum, restaurants, bars etc. As a popular first landfall for yachts crossing the Atlantic it also has full boatyard facilities, customs and immigration for the island. We dined at the Antigua Yacht Club, but I could not spot the TOG pennant among those displayed.

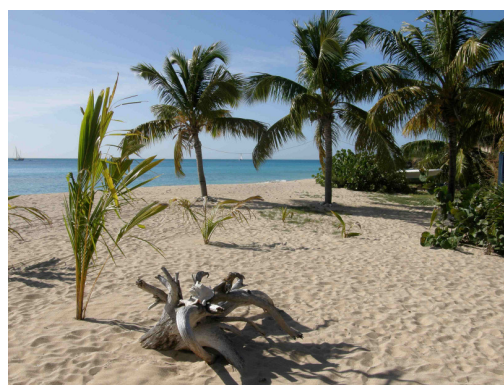
We had tickets for the first day of the W Indies v England Second Test on Friday (13th) so turned up at the Sir Viv Richards Stadium for a fun day along with crowds of local cricket fans and the barmy army in a great atmosphere. We saw the entire day's play – all eleven balls before play was abandoned due the poor state of the outfield. England were seven for no wicket when play was suspended; I texted my brother-in-law back in the W Midlands to find out what was going on before those on the spot were eventually told. The England team came out to mingle with the spectators and console them. My sister-in-law got a cuddle from Flintoff, but we would have preferred a good day's play in the sunshine. By the time the match was replayed a few days later at another ground we had sailed away.

On Saturday we left Jolly Harbour and sailed to Dickenson Bay on the north east tip of the island. We anchored and watched couples getting wed on the beach at Sandals Resort in the rain. As it got dark around 6pm we found the anchor light was not working. After dark we started the engine to charge the batteries – the yachts had a splendid fridge/freezer which maintained our large stock of ice for G&Ts and rum punches for the fortnight. Curiously the other anchored boats seemed to get much closer - particularly one American. It turned out that the transmission had jammed in drive so we were unlit and making towards the Yank at a fair speed dragging our anchor. Collision was just avoided by shutting down the engine. Yet another call was made to the splendid Eugene, the charterer's Mr Fixit, who turned up on shore next

morning unperturbed to educate us in the idiosyncrasies of the throttle/gear selection, as he had done previously for the windlass. Thereafter we tended to accept the yacht and its gear for what it was and just get on with it in *Undaunted* fashion. Mostly that worked fine – except once later in trip when the transmission jammed again and we rammed a customs jetty, luckily wooden.

On Sunday we left Antigua and sailed to Barbuda, a low coral island (in contrast to the volcanic Antigua, some 25NM to the north. This was a splendid sail in the north-east trade wind F3/4, with the yacht under one reef making 6-7kts. Barbuda's highest point is some 15ft and so only comes in sight about 8NM off. We anchored off a white coral sand beach, fringed by a few palms, which shielded an enormous colony of frigate birds. The potential but elusive "green flash" as the sun set to the west over the sea was obscured by the intrusion of a Hallberg Rassy 34 coming into anchor as we sipped our rum punches before lighting the barbeque.

Our itinerary subsequently took us west from Barbuda to St Barthelemy (French) in a long day sail (60NM, mostly under engine to get in before sunset), thence south to the east coast of St Kitts (35NM) and Nevis (Ind), and finally east back to Antigua (over 60NM into strong winds laid over a heavy Atlantic swell), with a clear view of the active volcano on Montserrat to the south. Back in Antigua the last few days were spent exploring harbours and anchorages



on the east and south coasts with some excellent days under sun, with steady trade wind on a smooth azure sea (just as the

brochure promised). In total we logged over 250NM. At sea our zoological tally included pelicans, boobies, the splendid frigate birds, laughing gulls, turtles (one of 8ft or so), dolphins, and a whale (passing close by and blowing but difficult to identify).

Island hopping meant either independent or colonial administrations and therefore Customs and Immigration which differed markedly in their approach. The most officious (trained by the British) involved presenting all the yacht's papers, crews lists and passports, shuffling between three queues for Customs, Immigration and Passport Control. Woe betide you to show impatience. If you had not "cleared" properly with signed and stamped documents from one island then it was unlikely you would gain entry to the next. As anticipated the French administration on St Bart's showed a much more casual attitude to such things.

I could prattle on at length - about great beach restaurants, chicken wings, BBQed lobster, grilled tuna and Carib beer, visits to old sugar plantations, rain forest, interesting towns, and the supreme friendliness of the Caribbeans on the various islands. However I shall not for the intention is to give only a taste of Caribbean sailing, not a five course dinner

TOG SOLENT EASTER SAILEX

Thurs 9 April to Wed 16 April

Pourquoi Pas of Hamble

Mark Davis (Comm/Skipper). Neil Macfarlane (Skipper)
John Bryant Phil Greetham
Debbie Gee Emma Greetham
Fiona Cook Mark Bennett
Greg Hilliard Andrew Steele
Rowland Charge Kevin Webster

Femme Fatale

Mange Tout

Stewart Cook (Skipper)
Michael Brooke
Joe Sutherland
Paul Coulson
Adrian Johnson
Diane Johnson

Thursday 9 April

Crews assembled at Port Hamble Marina around midday to take over three brand new Beneteau Oceanis 37s from Fairview Sailing. The yachts had only recently been added to the charter company's fleet so as well as some snagging to be done on the yachts' first charter, the TOG crews shouldered the responsibility of returning the boats in as near pristine condition as possible – gel coat and all accessories included. Crews were the usual mix of old salts, experienced sailors, and some students from Mark's land-based RYA courses, who often had much dinghy experience but generally less offshore expertise on larger vessels. After formal handover, victualling and safety briefings, the yachts left Port Hamble under a gloomy sky at around 1600 in a southerly F3/4 bound for Cowes. After some intimidatory activity to *Femme Fatale* by an IoW ferry outside the main shipping channel, the yachts took the westward route around Bramble Bank, each taking the opportunity to check the gear, hoist sails and get in some tacking experience in a brisk breeze. The yachts proved easy to handle, with the halliards, sails and sheets working smoothly, and a powerful engine - albeit with a marked kick to port in reverse. *Femme Fatale* conducted a MOB exercise earlier than expected to recover a wayward fender. Shortly after 1800 the three boats were alongside the pontoons in the Cowes Yacht Haven. Ashore, the crews discussed plans for the week over a pint or two and dined. One crew member was thwarted in his desire to investigate the powers of what were reputed to be human pheromones, but provoked much merriment among the clients of the Anchor. Later, some crew went to the Island Sailing Club for a drink; with some unlucky ones being turned out at 9pm when the bar closed.

Friday 10 April

After a leisurely breakfast, the yachts left Cowes around 1100, planning to meet up at Yarmouth later in the day. Under a rather overcast sky with light showers and a southerly F3/4, the flood spring tide took the yachts up towards Ryde and the Solent forts. This provided the opportunity to get to know the both the capabilities and idiosyncrasies of the boats' handling under relatively benign conditions and to practise a few manoeuvres. As the tide turned eastwards so did the yachts, making good progress down the West Solent under sail, often exceeding 8kts over the ground. By 1530, all were rafted up together on piles in Yarmouth Harbour. The town was quite quiet despite the bank holiday weekend, so crews dispersed to find food and refreshment. Those who had gone thirsty in Cowes, found

success at the Royal Solent Yacht Club. Having decided to head for Weymouth the next day, the crews turned in early in the anticipation of a 0400 awakening to catch the last of the ebb tide through the narrows at Hurst Castle and down the Needles Channel.

Saturday 11 April

At 0430 *Femme Fatale* cast off from the raft and unfortunately

as she left the mooring a port stanchion kissed the prominent anchor on the fifty footer on the outer raft on the next set



of piles. This minor, but surprisingly noisy prang, roused the boat's occupants who then bustled about on deck to see off the other boats and protect their assets. (*if that was a kiss, I hope the crew of *Femme Fatale* never experience a collision!* Commodore) Undaunted, the three yachts headed out into the darkness of the Solent and turned west towards Hurst Castle, soon picking up the sector light of Needles lighthouse and providing both experienced and novice sailors with some useful night navigation practice. With *Pourquoi Pas* having taken up the pathfinder role, followed by *Femme Fatale*, and then *Mange Tout*, the yachts headed south west down the Needles Channel. Between SW Shingles and the Fairway Buoy they turned westwards and around 0545 the two leading yachts hoisted sail as the dawn



broke. *Mange Tout* following a few minutes behind, also hoisted sail once the Fairway Buoy was reached. A largely blue sky and a F2/3 south westerly heralded an

excellent day's sailing, with few other boats in sight. As the morning passed, the breeze picked up to F3/4 and *Femme Fatale* began to overhaul *Pourquoi Pas*. On overtaking, urgent activity and hectic sail trimming could be observed on the deck of the latter, but she soon faded into the haze, demonstrating either superior seamanship or the slowing effect of the extra weight of space heating in otherwise evenly matched yachts. *Femme Fatale* passed Anvil Point and the overfalls off St Alban's Head to make directly for Weymouth Bay, while *Pourquoi Pas* and *Mange Tout* dropped in briefly for lunch at Lulworth Cove en route.

Off St Alban's Head the wind lessened and our westward



progress was overcome by the tide so the engine was used until the wind picked up. At 1350, *Femme Fatale* arrived in Weymouth and rafted up alongside other yachts on town quay. *Pourquoi Pas* arrived about an hour later, and *Mange Tout* a further 20 min. later, after taking the opportunity for a close inspection of Durdle Door. *Pourquoi Pas* went a little further up river to raft up alongside the large catamaran *Foggy* and *Mange Tout* rafted up just downstream of *Femme Fatale*. Unfortunately whilst Mark supervised the positioning of the mooring lines on *Pourquoi Pas*, he stepped backwards into the cockpit onto one of the floor toe rails. The result was a severely strained, bruised and painful ankle, not to mention strained tonsils. Debbie, having recently completed her RYA first aid course, sprang into action with her first aid kit, consisting of two cans of lager, placing one each side of the afore mentioned ankle, and one can of cider to sooth the strained throat. Later that evening, crew members from *Femme Fatale* & The Vegetable (AKA *Mange Tout*) paid their respects to their injured Commodore, bearing gifts of crepe bandages, plaster & sympathy (yeah right!!!) On passage, the three yachts had followed the radio traffic between a small fishing boat and the coastguard. The former had lost power some 20 miles south in the Channel near the shipping lanes and was at risk. The Weymouth lifeboat was observed in the distance, speeding to the vessel's aid. The lifeboat returned to Weymouth with the fishing vessel alongside at 1500 (see photo). The RNLI then offered public expert advice to the crew of the fishing vessel on the level and quality of her safety equipment.

In the evening the crews either dined on board or dispersed into a busy Weymouth in search of food and some craich. One member suffered some mild gender confusion on the premises of the Royal Dorset Yacht Club but no harm was done.

Sunday 12 April

The big cat *Foggy* made an early start, so *Pourquoi Pas* similarly left Weymouth bound for Poole, but not before a short excursion into Portland Harbour to eye up the new Marina, and the sailing Academy where all our young



hopefuls will be training for the 2012 Olympics. The other two yachts made a more leisurely departure in late morning. *Femme Fatale* also made a quick

tour of Portland Harbour, the prison hulks of a previous government having long departed. Meanwhile, *Pourquoi Pas* and *Mange Tout* continued on their way and sailed on towards Poole, with *Pourquois Pas* again taking a look at Lulworth Cove before being affected by the dropping wind. Both yachts had the delight as close witnesses, to the air-sea rescue helicopter carrying out an exercise off Swannage. As forecast, the wind had by now veered to a NW F2/3. A late start, the Portland excursion, a stemming tide and a light wind, meant mainly motoring for *Femme Fatale* with Old Harry Rocks of Studland Bay being cleared around 1730. Thence the Swash Channel, a relatively uncluttered entrance to Poole Harbour (often full of fishermen), and arrival at

Poole Boat Haven by 1910. *Femme Fatale* had booked ahead for the marina (where *Foggy* was already ensconced), whereas *Pourquoi Pas* and *Mange Tout* were rafted up on a near deserted town quay (and paying much less than in the marina).

Monday 13 April

Under blue sky, a bright sun, light winds (F1/2 N/NW) and smooth sea state, the yachts left Poole about 0800, cleared the harbour entrance and set off across Poole Bay mainly under power, with the delights of a full English breakfast wafting across Bournemouth Bay. The Solent was entered via the North Channel, and the three yachts checked their positions by VHF to rendezvous on the trots off Yarmouth in late morning. *Mange Tout*, took the opportunity to practice picking up a mooring buoy under engine. After half-an-hour or so moored on buoys under the beady eye of the harbour master, *Pourquoi Pas* and *Mange Tout* cast off. *Femme Fatale* paid up and stayed another hour or two, then let go, so that each crew member could hone their skills at picking up a mooring buoy. This achieved, *Femme Fatale* moved up the Solent against the ebbing tide and practised MOB manoeuvres under sail in ideal light winds. Everyone having successfully saved the fender and bucket, a course was set for Lymington to join the other yachts in the marina in late afternoon. As the wind picked up on leaving Yarmouth, *Mange Tout* spent the afternoon sailing back and forth across the Solent heading in the general direction of Cowes, before turning and sailing back, dropping the sails off Jack in the Basket at the Lymington entrance. The delights of the village were sampled that evening, and the crews met up in the Kings Arms.

Tuesday 14 April

In late morning the yachts left Lymington to sail up the Solent. Under blue skies and light winds, *Femme Fatale* mainly motored up the Solent entering Portsmouth Harbour via the Swashway (lining up the War Memorial and flats) in mid-afternoon. Having taken a very quick look around and admired the spinnaker tower, having left earlier and making best use of the wind, *Mange Tout* again tacked back and forth across the Solent before starting the engine off Ryde to enter Portsmouth Harbour. Both yachts returned to Cowes by rounding Spit Sand Fort and then making fast progress on an ebbing tide down the Solent to Cowes Yacht Haven to



meet up with the other yacht in late afternoon. Also in the Haven on the outer pontoon, were two RN cadet training vessels and a sail training tall ship. These

provided both services and entertainment to the TOG crews: not least in the form of borrowed Allen keys to undertake remedial work on a stanchion, but also the remarkable transformation of the cadets from uniform to shore kit for a night out. That evening the entire complement of the trip turned out in best mess kit to dine together at the Island Sailing Club. Lively debate ensued on the relative seamanship skills of the three crews in their matched yachts and the week's "events", including an attempt by *Pourquoi*

Pas to cook a fender. (Commodores note we didn't try to cook it we succeeded, but it smelt awful.)

Wednesday 15 April

On the final morning, the yachts were cleaned before departure from Cowes in mid-morning. Leaving harbour in a south-easterly F3/4, the skies and the sun emerged as the yachts headed out to Prince Consort cardinal mark and then turned west to skirt both the shipping channel and Bramble Bank. This final fling turned out to be a splendid sail with the yachts entering the Hamble in early afternoon. The Port Hamble fuelling pontoon turned out to be diesel-free so *Femme Fatale* turned down-river to another source and warned the other two yachts to refuel there. By 1500 all three yachts were moored up at Port Hamble Marina for handover to Fairview. Crews packed up while the skippers and mates reported to Fairview on their opinion of the new yachts and snags noted. Then everyone dispersed homewards agreeing that the weather had been kind and that it had been a good week's sailing (well most of it).

Distance 230NM. Night hours 2h.

EASTER SAILEX 2009

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED.....!

by Phil & Emma Greetham



Whatever the weather, it had to be better than Easter 2008! Having dropped the kids off in Devon for whole week with Grandma, "best of luck Grandma, we're off!" we made our

way to the Fairview office on the Thursday morning for a scheduled rendezvous, a little after midday, with other TOG members and old & current students of Mark's courses. All eighteen of us arrived safely and on schedule, to take responsibility for three pristine and matched Beneteau yachts. However, later we found to our surprise -and to a certain crew's satisfaction - that they weren't exactly matched in sailing performance at all! I prefer to think it was the superior crew and leadership of Professor Mac Farlane which really made the difference! More on this later!

All three yachts had all been given French names and fortunately our yacht *Femme Fatale*, was probably the pick of the bunch in terms of ease of pronunciation. Stuart's yacht *Mange Tout*, received a few vegetable taunts and Mark's yacht *Pourquoi Pas* of Hamble -selected by Mark before the other skippers arrived for the additional Eberspächer heater installation! Proved to be a tricky name for English folk to say over the radio; a rename of 'PP' was later to be agreed that evening.

Thurs 9th April, Hamble departure 1610, log 102.7

Having transferred personal gear and supplies, we completed the inventory check and slipped the warps for the short hop over to the Isle of Wight. Once out of the Hamble river, sails were raised and with a combination of sail and motor we made our way over to Cowes Yacht Haven. Approaching Prince Consort Cardinal we lost a fender, necessitating an earlier than planned MOB exercise in order to retrieve it. Loose fenders are not easy to collect onboard with nothing more than a free line to aim for with

the boat hook. Fortunately, a single pass was sufficient to wind a line around the hook and with a team effort we had it back onboard. So who was responsible for securing this particular fender? It turned out to be the Mate who couldn't tie a knot properly, namely yours truly! Fortunately, thwarting this particular escape saved a good forty quid and from now on round turns and half hitches turn into several turns and full hitches.

Cowes arrival 1810, log 114.3

Having berthed in south basin of Cowes Yacht Haven, starboard to, on the inner side of the outer pontoon, we were soon heading off to freshen up and make our way to the Anchor public house. No sooner had we our first drinks when we started engaging in nautical conversation with a group of local yachtsmen who were competing the next morning in 'Half -Tonners'.. We were later to regret asking why the class was referred to as 'Half -Ton' when the displacement was obviously greater. The explanation took several minutes, during which there was much nodding of heads as if we understood what was being said. Alas, in the end, we were none the wiser so decided it was a good time to move on for food. Apparently several decades of development and rule changes have resulted in the half-ton class being what it is today.

There are three Indian Restaurants along the main street in Cowes and having sampled them all during previous trips, Em and I headed straight for the Saffron where the food is excellent. I guess it's all about personal tastes, but every time we've been into this particular restaurant the food has been great, although the tiled floor can be a little greasy and hazardous when going to the loos.

A source of great amusement that evening, was the news that a cash machine on the main street in Cowes had been issuing twenty pound notes instead of tens. Judging by the lengthy queues, there really were a lot of people who thought they could get something for nothing, and in hindsight, probably did!

Friday 10th April, Cowes departure 1100.

The next morning, Fri 10th April, after a good lay-in & breakfast, we slipped the lines at 1100. Our destination being Yarmouth for that night, but not before enjoying a little sailing to the East, down and around Ryde Middle. The sailing was excellent, although a little chilly and wet, resulting in many cold fingers wrapped in soaked sailing gloves. The crew took turns at the helm and we called Yarmouth for a berth within the harbour. Arriving at 1500 we rafted-up up on the outside of the other two TOG yachts which had arrived a little earlier. The plan, a bite to eat in town and an early night ready for a 4 am start the next morning without hangovers!

Yarmouth Arrival 1500, log 135.2

Having hustled our way onto what was arguably the best table at the King's Head, adjacent to a very large and welcoming open fire, we relaxed in the heat and ate well. With the need to spend a penny after a few pints, I was intrigued to see an unusual - to me at least - product being offered in the gents. A tissue style wipe containing pheromones which apparently improves a chap's chances with the ladies - a licence to print money I would think! What young lad wouldn't give it a go - not that anyone would admit to it! Upon my return to the table I mentioned the product to the rest of our crew and on my next trip to the gents curiosity got the better of me and I invested two quid. Unfortunately, the product must have been in great demand in that particular area and the machine ate the cash without delivering the goods. There can't be many chaps brave

enough to tell the barman or in this case barlady, that the Johnny machine had just robbed them, and I'm certainly not one of them! The Skipper however, concerned at my financial loss, proceeded in a not so delicate fashion, to alert the barlady and the entire bar of my misfortune. *(That's our Neill! – Ed)* I'm grateful to the Skipper for the return of my two quid, I really am!

Saturday 11th April Yarmouth departure 0445

An early start in order to make the planned passage out of the Solent through the Needles channel and on to Weymouth. The weather forecast was good and we were all eager and keen for a rare night sail. Our text book departure didn't go exactly to plan and we made light contact with a neighbouring 50' yacht, promptly giving the owner an early



morning wake-up call. Although the contact generated more noise than was welcomed at 0445 in the morning,

we were confident that the other yacht had escaped with little more than a cleaning of their anchor. We were soon away under the cover of darkness, leaving any further enquiries from the owner to our sister yachts who had still to depart from the inner raft positions. Not a good start to the day. Our crew were unusually quiet for the first hour until daylight broke and we had opportunity to assess the situation. We then became rather grateful that no one had attempted to place a hand or foot between the yachts and that we sustained only light damage to a stanchion and port horse-shoe lifebuoy. What stood out for me, post this event, and I'm sure everyone else noticed, was just how positive our Skipper remained for the benefit of his crew. I knew under the surface, he must have felt pretty low. Thanks to his strong character, this little mishap was soon behind us and once again we were concentrating on the adventure ahead. An excellent wind was taking us to Weymouth, visible in the distance and basking in glorious sunshine.

That was definitely the place to be. Mark and his crew had passed our yacht under engine when approaching the Needles Channel but, as soon as we hit open water, we caught and passed 'Pourquoi Pas' under sail alone with little effort. Although bucking the tide, we were making good progress until the overfalls, when it appeared that the yacht behind 'Mange Tout' was definitely catching us. It took a while for us to figure out that, although we had reasonable speed over the ground, we were actually tracking backwards. Mange Tout was not catching us at all, we were catching it, in reverse! With help from the engine, we broke the grasp of the overfalls tide and then continued on sail alone.

Weymouth arrival 1350, log 195.0

When safely rafted up on Weymouth town Quay, the damaged stanchion was removed and straightened with the aid of a little brute force and the firm grip of a vice located in the loft of a fine old mariner's workshop. Not the prettiest of repairs, but once fitted, it looked as good as new, *from most angles and as long as you didn't stare at it too much!* The Genoa furling guide neatly concealed the stretch in the stainless tubing. Rafting on Weymouth town quay on a

busy, warm sunny evening is always a wonderful occasion and once a year is simply not often enough. The quayside and harbour was abuzz with day trippers and Gin Palaces, all making for an enjoyable spectacle. A little earlier, on our approach to Weymouth, we overheard a distress call on channel 16 being issued from a fishing boat which had lost power and was drifting into the TSS some 25 miles south of our position. The Portland coastguard quickly launched the Weymouth lifeboat and we watched as an orange dot sped along the horizon to its aid. Later that evening, the Lifeboat returned with the stricken vessel being towed alongside. They dropped it off safely on a pontoon under the lifting road bridge, where two formal looking coastguard members with clipboards proceeded to debrief the four occupants.

By this time, news had also reached us of another injured party – in the form of Mark – the Commodore. Our crew decided we should pay him a visit and climbed across 'FOGGY' to see how the patient was coping. It wasn't long before we were joined by the third crew and enjoying Pourquoi Pas's hospitality, where discussions took place as to the possibility of continuing the next day to Dartmouth. The weather forecast indicated the possibility of a front approaching within the next 36 hours or so and the decision was taken to play safe and head back towards the Solent the next day. The weather remained fine for the next three days!

Sunday 12th April, Weymouth departure 1230

Activity on the town Quay started early the next morning after we were required to shuffle berths a number of times due to the requirements of the inner yachts on the raft, which included a couple of lovely instructional Tradewind 35's. We finally departed ourselves a little after midday, having a relaxed full English brunch (*keep forgetting the black pudding!*). We took a brief look around the inside of the vast Portland Harbour, before departing Portland Bill for Poole. Fighting the tide and with little assisting wind, we motor-sailed the whole journey, before arranging a berth within Poole Quay boat haven for the night. Our Starboard-to arrival was very poor (*I'm allowed to say this as it was I on the Helm at the time!*) The wind took the stern away from the pontoon, resulting in an uncoordinated, vocal arrival of the sort that's only comfortable when no-one else is looking on. In hindsight, and as the berth next to our allocated position was also vacant, it may have been prudent to have arrived Port-to and calmly repositioned the yacht under warps. Unless of course you happen to be as proficient as one of the cool Fairview lads, who could have reversed in without effort and in a manner so calm, he could probably make a pot of tea at the same time. And yes, I'm sure we would also be just as good if we had made certain different career choices!

Poole Arrival, 1910, log 246.5.



Em & I took a brief evening walk along the quay to glance over at the Sunseeker factory and marvel at all the exuberance. On the way back, we

spotted an abandoned looking Pourquoi Pas with ensign flying in the dark! The evening arrival had resulted in the discovery that the regular Poole food haunt had just finished serving food for that evening and the Oriel restaurant, a little

further down the road was recommended by the waitress. The food in the Oriel was very good. Our Skipper found his main course of mussels was of a similar, if not slightly smaller portion, than the mussel starter which had previously been brought to the table and enjoyed by Andy. Our table waitress was duly summoned, followed by a visit from the manager and a price adjustment for the deficient main course.

Monday 13th April, Poole Departure 0835

A clear spring morning departure across the bay and back into the Solent via the North Channel. We came across the other TOG yachts on the Yarmouth trots and joined them for lunch just before noon. At 1228, Pourquoi Pas made a hasty departure, relaying to all that it was agreed we could stay free until 1230! True to his word, the harbour master was quick to seize a revenue opportunity and we felt £7 for up to 4 hours was a fair price to pay and stay a while longer. We took the opportunity to stock up on more essentials, (gin, stilton & oatcakes!) before practicing picking up mooring buoys and MOB exercises under sail. The Skipper took the helm for the first MOB exercise, in order to demonstrate to us what not to do as he turned into wind and couldn't quite reach the victim before losing all headway! This was followed very quickly by a text book example to impress the crew. Having all successfully retrieved the bucket and fender combination and with a frustratingly variable breeze, we elected to motor-sail over to Lymington for the evening. Arrival onto this berth was considerably smoother, with Andy on the Helm and lack of an audience.

Lymington Arrival 1725, log 286.7

It had become customary in the evening to sit out under the ambiance of the cockpit light for an aperitif, before venturing out for something to eat. This night, we tucked into Stilton from the Yarmouth Deli washed down with quality Rioja, probably breaking marina rules by feeding the Terns before setting off to the King's Head on Quay Hill for a multi TOG crew supper.

Tuesday 14th April, Lymington Departure 1230

Another leisurely departure after another leisurely breakfast and a visit from the air ambulance which swooped overhead before landing in the car park to the aid of some poor soul. The weather over the last couple of days had been great – could have done with a little more wind for the sails if we're being picky- and the low pressure that had been forecast had held off. So it was once again motor-sailing our way up the Solent, along to Gosport and Portsmouth. Watching the hovercraft & sea-cats that just loom up from no-where, we entered the harbour via the small craft transit with the memorial and block of flats, had a quick look in and came straight back out again. We toured around Spitsand fort before setting off back along the Solent to Cowes under motor and sail for the last evening.

Cowes arrival 1815, log 321.8

A table had been booked for all three TOG crews at the Island Sailing Club for the final evening's dinner. Each Skipper addressed the group in turn and crew member's experiences and laughs were shared over a few glasses of wine. Although the food could be improved, the view from the table couldn't be beaten and a table for eighteen is not easy to find in Cowes on a Tuesday evening.

Wednesday 15th April Cowes Departure 1150

And so to the final morning, it was all hands on deck to get the yachts shipshape and looking as new before handing them back to Fairview. Having cleaned and hosed down the decks before leaving our evening berths in Cowes, it was only natural that, after re-fuelling in the Hamble, we would

introduce black oil marks all over the freshly cleaned deck and have to repeat the cleaning process once more!

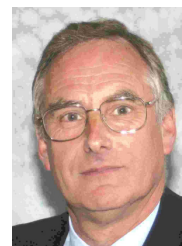
Hamble Arrival 1430, log 332.2 (total log 229.5)

Having called the Fairview office, one of the lads came out to the fuelling pontoon and took the yacht to the desired berth, reversing in with effortless skill and precision, showing how it can be done with practice – lots and lots of practice!

Many thanks to all the TOG crew-members, particularly the crew of Femme Fatale and our Skipper Neil, for putting up with us and providing a memorable week on the sea.

PRESIDING MASTER

KEITH STEDMAN



DEPUTY PRESIDING MASTER

ARTHUR WOOD



CHARTER BOATS or Learning the hard way...!

On my first TOG sailex, as we took over the yacht, the skipper asked me to check the inflatable dinghy. This I did

and put it over the side. It floated, so we assumed it was O.K. After our first sail, we anchored and used it to go ashore. By the time we landed, two inches of water was sloshing around in the bottom. When we returned, it had lost a lot of air pressure – and the pump was aboard the yacht.....!

On another trip, we arrived with a perfectly good inflatable – but no pump!

Taking over a 6-week old Moody at Conway, I was very pleased with the condition of everything – including the dinghy which was perfect when test-rowed with two heavy adults. Rushing to catch the tide, we neglected to check the brand-new outboard. Guess what... Even when both engine and dinghy are faultless, make sure the two are connectable – the mounting bracket was missing!

Our first chrter in the Greek islands, we took over a yacht with the dinghy already inflated and in plain view on the quayside. Make sure you return it in the same way! The real problem was the navigation system. Although the yacht was several years old, it was fitted with many electronic gizmos. I was happy to leave it with the two whizz-kid techies in my crew to sort things out. After struggling unsuccessfully for two days, they discovered the instruction manuals related to the old instruments which had been replaced!

On a recent Easter sailex, the yacht appeared to be in first-class condition following a winter re-fit. In the brilliant sunshine, I was unable to determine if the masthead light was working. We sailed across to Cowes and as darkness fell, we checked the light. I worked, but was fitted back to front!

Another new yacht was taking water into the forward sail locker. The owners were unable to trace the source of the leak. After sailing to Ireland and back, we were able to inform them that the drain holes for the anchor locker were below the floor of that compartment. When ploughing into large waves, they were letting water into the sail locker instead of out of the anchor locker!

PAUL RATCLIFFE – MEMBERSHIP (01778 341475)



JO WOOD –SOCIAL EVENTS



See back page for latest news.

-NAVIGATION

CLIVE CRANKSHAW (01664 454403)



-ADMINISTRATION – COUNCIL MATTERS



NEIL MACFARLANE
(01159 663028)

TOG Council Report

TOG Council Report

Council met on Friday 6 February at the King's Hotel, Grantham with eight members present and Keith Stedman in the chair.

The main business was to check the level of interest in the 2009 sailing programme shown by those who had attended the annual dinner and to plan the Easter Sailex. For the latter two yachts had already been booked from Fairview, and with Mark Davis expecting some of his shore-based students to attend it was agreed to book a third boat. Likely skippers and after guards were also discussed. The Roy Castle event on the IoW had attracted little interest. The Tall Ships' trip was set for the 14 June with a fair level of interest. The July Channel/South Coast trip had enough

interest to be viable but deposits were awaited. Other events later in the year were more speculative. It was agreed that the final version of the programme should appear in TOGline and on the website.

Under social events, it was agreed that the dinner had been successful, with feedback from members and guests very positive. Possible conflict with Burns Suppers was noted to avoid next year. Jo Woods was thanked for her excellent organisation.

Richard Oakes reported on the group's healthy financial position. 2007 accounts were with the auditor and those for 2008 imminent.

On training it was intended to support some members to gain their Coastal Skipper certificates. Also there were plans for another first aid course and in due course VHF courses. Council agreed that TOG members should be encouraged to gain further sailing qualifications.

-TREASURER

RICHARD OAKES (01636 640414)



TRAINING



COLIN BROCKETT
(01205 722886) / (01949 860815)



MARK DAVIS

TRAINING

Diesel Engine
Radio (Short Range Certificate – GMDSS etc.)
First Aid
Radar
Sea Survival

Next VHF COURSE Saturday 26th JUNE 2009

BOTTESFORD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

- WEBSITE

PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE!

www.trent-offshore-group.co.uk

There is a wealth of information on it!

It has been upgraded considerably and now has a “buy and sell” section to help you dispose of those unwanted bits and bobs!

You will also find all the Application Forms as required by the Group

Booking /Trip Number	Trip Title/Description/Skippers	Dates	Indicative Cost
03/09	MILFORD HAVEN: <i>Starting at Milford Haven dependant upon the weather this trip could include a visit to either the South Coast of Ireland or The Isles of Scilly.</i> Likely Skipper Richard Vincent.	A week in May T.B.A.	£250.00
04/09	SOUTH COAST/CROSS CHANNEL <i>The proposal is to sail across the channel (weather permitting) and is an ideal chance for those looking to complete qualifying passages for Coastal Skipper and Yacht Master Qualifications. Likely Skippers – Neil Macfarlane.</i>	Fri. July 3rd - Fri. July 10th	£300.00
05/09	TRADITIONAL BAWLEY SAILING. <i>Have a go at sailing a traditional wooden working boat along the challenging East Coast. A maximum number on any one day of eight participants but if we want to have a go at oyster dredging under sail then because of room constraints the number of crew is reduced to six. If more than the permitted number is interested then we can always run two trips.</i>	T.B.A. to suit all participants	£53 or £70 depending on 8 or 6 going
06/09	TALL SHIPS EXPERIENCE <i>A chance to experience the thrill of Tall Ship Sailing and to follow in the footsteps of Horatio Hornblower, without the commitment to three years before the mast or even a whole week. A days “taster” and if you want more we may be able to arrange something next season. You will have a chance to climb the rigging, take the helm and pull on some ropes. Option to go down to Poole Saturday evening and stay overnight at the RNLI Lifeboat College in Poole. Cost for B & B £62.50 single or £69.50 double. Organiser : Jo Wood.</i>	Sunday 14 th June	£92.00
07/09	END OF SEASON SAILEX <i>The October “End of Season” trip. We cannot control the weather but we will guarantee that you get wet both inside and out!! Likely Skippers Mark Davis, Neil Macfarlane and Keith Stedman.</i>	Weds. 30 th Sept - Sun 4 th . Oct.	£212.00
08/09	SAILING LONG WEEKEND <i>A relaxed, informal weekend sailing from Plymouth on a 41’ Dufour. Weather permitting and fair winds the programme could include Salcombe/Dartmouth/Torquay. Berths available for this trip, either two couples or three single persons. A chance to do a bit of sailing if you cannot commit to a whole week. Likely skipper – Clive Crankshaw.</i>	Thurs. 30 th July - Sun. 2 nd August	£170.00

* Please note that the berth costs are shown as a guide only, as the eventual cost will depend on the charter price of the boat and the number of berths taken.

- Please note that a temporary Membership fee of £20.00 will be charged in addition to the costs shown above to all non-TOG members.



TALL SHIPS DAY SAIL

14 June 2009 from Portsmouth

We have several spare places on this trip. This is a rare opportunity to spend a day aboard the wonderful **Stavros S Niarchos**. You will have a chance to climb the rigging, check out the navigation room and even take the helm!

Limited availability so please complete a booking form or email jo.wood@buckles-law.co.uk to book your place!

As the day sail starts at 8.00am, there is an option to travel down to Poole on Saturday 13th June and stay overnight at the R.N.L.I. Lifeboat College. Cost for single room B&B - £62.50 or £69.50 for double.

Weekend Sailing Opportunity 30th July to 2nd August 2009



Depart Plymouth 30th July 20 Returning 2nd August 2009

Intended Itinerary, weather permitting
Salcombe, Dartmouth, Torquay.

Sailing on a Dufour 41' – spaces limited to three individuals not wishing to share berths or, two couples sharing berths.

Cost: per berth **£170.00** plus moorings, fuel, food etc.

**Contact: Clive Crankshaw to discuss on 01664 454403 or
email Ccrankshaw@aol.com**

If interested don't delay, ring or email now! Strictly limited places

AND FINALLY..... The long arm of the Trent Offshore Group.....
Spotted at Gulf Harbour New Zealand with thanks to Alan Radley

