



TOGLINE



The Quarterly Journal of the Trent Offshore Group
Formed and constituted, 26th September 1991

SPRING NEWSLETTER 2015

Flotsam:- An object afloat which does not reply when offered a cocktail...



Oh dear - It's that time again – how the months fly when you're enjoying yourself.....

I trust this Newsletter finds you all in good health and gearing up for the exciting sailing to come through the

rest of the season. (see back page as usual!).

Your TOGLINE is a little short of text this month – I received a report from Phil and Emma Greetham re the Easter sailex, for which I am very grateful. Thank you both! With the season to come, I have every confidence that the submissions will be coming thick and fast **I will** have more to report in the Summer Edition.... I hope the plethora of pictures make up for the dearth of text on this occasion. At least, they provide a lovely bit of colour contrast and at most, show how much real enjoyment we can share. Keep them coming, please.

Well, we now know that our Social Secretary, though still a member of UKIP (presumably), is not quite an M.P. Commiserations, Andy – better luck next time...? If the efforts you put into the hustings echo the effort of your social responsibilities for TOG, it wasn't for want of trying! Thanks for all you do.

What a mixed bag of weather we have had recently. From sunshine and wind to rain and wind, 9 degrees one day and 21 the next, water butts either overflowing or nearly empty. We have a theory that the weather tends to balance itself out over the year, so heaven knows what sort of summer is in store. I've a feeling we are about to find out soon. Better practice reefing and make sure the oilies are in good condition.....

The Solent claims another victim... Did you

read of the powerboat under test on the Solent, whilst travelling at an estimated 80 mph, hit a marker buoy during a tight turn? It flipped and very nearly drowned one of the crew who was trapped inside. It all sounded very dramatic, but at least no-one was killed. It is yet another reminder that we must never take anything for granted. I know there is a world of difference between 5 knots under sail and 60 knots under power, but the laws of physics rule in both cases. Overpowered? Too much sail for the conditions? Over you go! Fortunately, our skippers usually reef long before that situation arises. We are all so grateful for their expertise in ensuring our safety. Thank you, guys....

Once again, through your good offices, can I stress how important is your feedback to the success of TOGLINE and directly our ability to communicate with all our members. We try to keep everyone "in the loop" as it were and I hope we succeed. Please keep me informed if you feel we are doing a good job!

So, finally, for this edition, may I wish you all a very enjoyable summer whatever the weather throws at us, together with a good season of sailing. There is still quite a lot to go for and the sooner the better.....

Until the next edition – 31st July, please - good luck to everyone, fingers crossed for the summer and whatever sailing you have planned.

Stay dry.....

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PRESIDING MASTER'S MUSINGS

by Neil Macfarlane



Our new season has begun - we had one yacht chartered from Fairview Sailing of Port Hamble Marina under skipper Phil Greetham which sailed on

the south coast over Easter. I shall enjoy reading Emma's account of their exploits. Our other planned sailing expeditions to Pembrokeshire, the Scottish west coast, Croatia, the south coast, and the Caribbean are mostly fully booked but it's always worthwhile for members to register their interest in case a berth becomes available. Our social programme for this year is still somewhat embryonic but by the time this TOGline is published we will know whether our membership includes a brand new MP or a rejuvenated social secretary – or perhaps both!

I was lucky enough to get in some sailing and related maritime activities over the winter during a month long trip with Dilys to New Zealand from mid-February. In Auckland, the City of Sails, our day sail on a 36ft yacht in the harbour included close encounters with some of the Volvo Ocean Race seven contenders (formerly the Whitbread) which had arrived in Auckland in late February. The yachts were accompanied by the huge razzmatazz of the "race village" which provided opportunities to inspect a cutaway version of the 65ft one-design racing yachts including the Spartan crew accommodation and full racing gear and technology. I was pleased to see that the Volvo Penta engine and saildrive (not for race use) was really just a bigger version of that which powers *Lady Meg*, our Hallberg Rassy 31. The Volvo round the world race includes seven teams, each of six crew members and a media expert, and



one all woman team of eight – with five British crew including skipper and navigator.

Perhaps most remarkable among the images of the race thus far were those from the Danish wind turbine sponsored entry "*Team Vestas Wind*" which had struck a reef at night ten days out of Capetown on the



Abu Dhabi leg of the race. At night on 29 November the yacht ran on to a reef in the Cargados Carajos Shoals of the tiny St Brandon archipelago some 200nm north east of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean. The yacht lost her twin keels and much of the stern was ripped off but all the crew were safe. The official report on the grounding has lessons for all types of sailors from amateur cruisers to ocean racers. The navigator and skipper had relied on e-charts and were expecting to enter a region of sea mounts with a minimum depth of 40m – safe to sail through. However the actual N to S extent of the shoals is about 35nm and E to W 15nm and they have been well known to mariners since the seventeenth century and appear on all scales of paper charts. *Experts put the wrecking down to a basic failure in overall passage planning and an overreliance on electronic navigation.* Heed those warning with your plotters and nav apps to use them only as a back up to paper charts and proper passage planning! Remarkably the wreck was recovered from the reef in January and shipped to Italy on a container ship. A rebuild is



nearing completion with the aim of the yacht re-entering the final legs of the race from Lisbon in early June. (Fascinating videos of the night-time grounding, subsequent recovery, and rebuild of the yacht are available on the race website or simply by searching “*Team Vestas Wind*”.)

My other New Zealand sailing was in the Bay of Islands on board the *R. Tucker Thompson* an 85ft gaff-rigged schooner. This sail training ship is run by a trust which provides “life changing adventures” to 13 to 18 year olds, and private charters support this aim. I managed to get out on the bowsprit, up the ratlines to the yards, and also had a spell on the helm



– so had great fun. We dropped anchor for lunch at Motuarohia Island – a beautiful island with two glorious lagoons. In 1769 Captain Cook anchored *Endeavour* in the same bay and had minor skirmish with the local Maoris. I had forgotten to bring my swimming gear but with discretion managed a swim



from the beach without causing similar alarm. Cook’s renowned navigation skills were presumably not hampered by the local compass variation which currently is some 19 degrees east. We had other boat trips on our holiday including both Doubtful and Milford Sounds and were amazed by the scenery and wildlife throughout New Zealand – perhaps not as

spectacular zoologically as your editor’s experiences in the Galapagos Islands but a very memorable holiday.

REPORTS

Easter Sailex April 1st to 8th

*By Emma and Phil Greetham
Crew*



Phil & Emma
Greetham
Tom Greetham
Kevin & Anita
Hight
Chris China &
Denise Lord



For the first TOG Sailex of 2015, as there were no other confirmed bookings from TOG members for the Easter Sailex, we recruited some of our friends from the neighbouring village. They had expressed an interest in sailing - (loose pub talk.) We signed them up so that they could come and join as our crew. After giving them several opportunities to reconsider, they all wilfully paid their dues and committed. As a novice crew with lots of expectation and no experience, the plan was to stay in the safety of calm waters in and around the Solent. The crew who were new to the scene could get a feel for the yacht and practice general handling for themselves in light conditions. The week leading up to the sailex was horrendous to say the least, with one of the Solent tugs ‘Asterix’ even capsizing in Southampton water. We were definitely starting to think that the whole plan was going to be derailed once again by our wonderful English weather.

We arrived together at FairView on the Thursday lunchtime and as usual were once again greeted by their smart line-up of yachts which is always a great first impression for newcomers. Fleur De Lis would be our home for the next week. A quick look in my logbook showed that this was one of the two yachts chartered by TOG for Dave Bond’s Channel Islands adventure back in May 2013. Here, we enjoyed the waters around Alderney and Guernsey with Dave and Adrian Johnson as Skippers.

The weather for the next couple of days wasn’t promising, advising a little too much wind for a relatively inexperienced crew. However, it was considerably better than the previous week at home, when it was mostly heavy rain and gales and we

didn't think we would be going anywhere. Having completed the handover, the crew safety briefing and loaded up, we slipped the warps and out into Southampton waters. Young Tom was on the helm and on the lookout for any salvage vessels who may have been in the area to recover the Asterix, the tug which had sunk a couple of days earlier.

The passage from Hamble to Cowes was swift under sail and we enjoyed some general handling for a couple of hours before heading into Cowes Yacht Haven for the first evening. Here, young Tom



managed to catch a Sea Bass off the back of the yacht with a piece of bacon rind before we ventured into town for dinner & drinks. It's definitely a small world as who should we bump into wandering up the High Street in Cowes? Standing in the middle of the road on his phone, Mr Mark D no less. With three yachts, he was conducting practical day skipper training. From what we saw the next morning and after we moved out of their way, some of them may need a few more weeks of tuition. I don't think I've ever seen a yacht hit a mooring pile square on in a marina before and have to tie up again to inspect for damage; they were very lucky that the anchor & anchor pin took the hit. Definitely an entertaining breakfast.....

Good Friday and the plan was to remain in Cowes and let the anticipated weather front pass through. A little retail therapy for some, but young Tom was on the hunt for a pool table for a crew challenge. We also took advantage of a day in harbour to teach our crew more about the Almanac, tidal streams, chart work and plotting a course to steer. The idea being that the next day the girls would navigate and the boys would handle!

Saturday. After a leisurely breakfast and nursing a few hangovers, the girls navigated a westerly course to Yarmouth with the tide and slight wind. Abeam Yarmouth, we turned and attempted to sail against the tidal flow to demonstrate just how hard it is to make



any headway in these conditions. An hour later and we had barely moved a cable, after every training tack dropped us back to almost the point we had started. Once the point of the importance of tidal flow had been made, we started the engine until the tide was favourable once again to assist us to Portsmouth for drinks and dinner on the Mary Mouse. A great days sailing in F4/F5 conditions and the sun even came out more than once.



Sunday morning and young Tom & his Dad headed off to visit the Mary Rose museum before meeting up with the crew at the top of the Spinnaker Tower. Just after lunchtime we were ready to depart and catch the westerly tide, out past the forts to Yarmouth for the night. Once again, the sailing conditions were perfect and generally F4. We were greeted outside Yarmouth by the Harbour Master who wished us a Happy Easter and showed us to our berth for the evening amongst numerous Gin Palaces whose

latest trend is to have dogs aboard! A little more pool was played in the Wheatsheaf, although young Tom was not too impressed with the “strictly over 18’s” rule.

The next morning, Bank Holiday Monday & after



the sea mist had burnt off, the weather was incredible and the sky mostly blue. Leaving Yarmouth at midday to coincide with slack water in the Needles Channel an hour later, we hoisted the sails and made our way to Needles fairway marker buoy. We crossed Poole Bay, pretty much on a single tack of 280° all the way to the channel entrance into Poole. On arrival and given the fantastic weather, the quay was a hive of activity with bank holiday celebrations outside the pubs. Young Tom found another pub (not the one where the skipper agreed the crew would meet up!!!) where we could play pool so more matches ensued.

Taking advantage of the tides back into the Solent, we departed Poole at 0730 hrs the next morning. Once again, another single tack across the bay, this time the reciprocal 100° back to the fairway marker, to take the channel in. Of some concern was the ‘Bridge’ cardinal mark which appeared to be off station but probably wasn’t. The “clear to the west” indication would have taken us uncomfortably close to the Shingles bank which was leeward. Soooo, the marker was rounded on the opposite side. Not easy to explain to newcomers how small yachts can take advantage of going off-piste. We were at pains to point out that, so long as you know exactly where you are and the amount of water you have below your keel, you are reasonably safe. We made great progress and arrived back in the Solent before midday on slack water: it was flat calm around Hurst Point and very little wind, so the challenge was to sail gently back to Prince Consort. We spent a few, lovely hours tacking, zig-zagging towards Cowes, not seeming to make a huge amount of progress - but we

were making way. Perhaps, not exactly where we wanted to be as it was so calm. The sun was shining, the Prosecco had been popped so who cares?

All too soon it was the final evening and after motoring up the Medina for a fuel top-up, we spotted an unusual vessel before we berthed in East Cowes.



We headed back across the river on foot for a curry at the Saffron. The following morning, our purser treated us all to a hearty full English breakfast in the Lifeboat pub, (from funds left in the kitty) we had a final pool playoff then motored back to the Hamble .



Weatherwise, apart from the first couple of days, the sun shone and we even needed sun cream. The wind had been on our side (8-17kts mostly). In fact we decided that for much of the time most of the weather reports had been about as useful as a pool table on a boat which was the quote of the week after young Tom had asked if there was one aboard the Mary Mouse light ship!

The Final log showed we covered 103.8 nm, most under sail and had we each weighed ourselves, I would say that we were all a few pounds heavier after considerable consumption of beer and bacon.

COUNCIL MEMBERS

ARTHUR WOOD - DEPUTY PRESIDING MASTER



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JOHN BRYANT - EXPEDITIONS MASTER



DAVE BOND - TRAINING MASTER



A new member to TOG - Paul Furneaux - is looking for a crew member to help him bring his boat back from Shetland to Grimsby Can we put this into Togleline?

His email address is-

paul@health-guard.co.uk

He tells me that he joined towards the end of last year.

I have attached his email asking for help finding crew, he is only looking to share the food expenses.

(Received via Dave – Any interest? – Ed)

KEITH STEDMAN

PAST PRESIDING MASTER



ASIDES

You may recall the Photography Award presented to Rowland Charge at the Annual Dinner and Dance in February- (*Winter TOGLINE*). It was an evocative



display of the magnificent effects that climate and weather can present, given the proper conditions. Here are two more of the same sequence, sent by Rowland with his thanks for the award. Once again Loch na Drum Buie in the early morning before the



weather turned on the way to Tobermory.....

Just for the record.....

Our garden backs onto a meadow which runs down to the river Gwash. On the other side of the river lies a trout farm which breeds trout for Rutland Water.

One of our pleasures is watching Red Kites effortlessly riding the thermals over the meadow. One day last summer, Berice suddenly realised a Red Kite had suddenly seemed to have gone paler – and the tail shorter...

After a moment of disbelief, she realised it was an Osprey. We watched, fascinated, as it gracefully circled the area of the hatchery. It obviously decided

to cut out the middleman and swooped. Disappearing behind the willows, it rose – empty-taloned – but continued to circle. Three times it disappeared then – on roughly the fourth pass – bingo - a fish wriggled in its grip. A bit of a shuffle, a twist, line it up fore-and-aft to reduce wind resistance. A momentary pause mid-flight to shake some water from the wings, followed by a powerful and swift departure into the distance. Either a presumed return to the nest, or a favourable perch to feast royally. Talk about shooting fish in a barrel.....



It appeared several times more until the winter, when it disappeared – migration.. It has returned again this Spring and we see him (or her) most days. We feel so lucky to be able to witness so much grace and power first-hand. Dinner for us is sometimes delayed.....

AND FINALLY.....



The result of an excess of sun, sea – not sure about the other..... Baie de la Seine 2014



JUN 5 - JUN 12

[SAILEX OPEN FOR BOOKING](#)

PEM 15 Pembrokeshire

- Fri, Jun 5, 2015 14:00pm Fri, Jun 12, 2015 10:00am
- Blenheim Ct Neyland, SA73 1QR United Kingdom
- WHERE – Neyland, Pembrokeshire

ESTIMATED COST £290

Sail the Pembrokeshire coast, the Bristol Channel, visit Lundy, Skomer Island, or visit The Bitches off Ramsey. Options include a visit to Swansea or the north Devon / Cornish coast or cross to southern Ireland, weather permitting, on a night passage. The Pembrokeshire sailex offers some not so familiar seas, coastal scenery, and magnificent wild life.

JUN 27 - JUL 4

[SAILEX OPEN FOR BOOKING](#)

SCO 15 Scotland – the west coast

- Sat, Jun 27, 2015 14:00pm Sat, Jul 4, 2015 10:00am
- WHERE – Largs

COST £385

We will sail from Largs on the west coast with the option of visiting Northern Ireland, The Isle of Islay and Jura as well as the Firth of Clyde. Final plans will be presented at the Sailex meeting by your skippers. We are holding reservations on three large yachts, each with 4 cabins, planning for berthing 6 members to each yacht. Members who have yet to experience the fantastic sailing, dramatic scenery and excellent wildlife on the west coast of Scotland are encouraged to make an early booking. The number of berths available this year will be down on previous years, members keen to join this event in 2015 are advised that an early booking would seem to be appropriate.

SEP 12 - SEP 20

[SAILEX FULLY BOOKED](#)

CRO 15 Croatia - Split

- Sat, Sep 12, 2015 10:00pm Sun, Sep 20, 2015 12:00pm
- WHERE Croatia - Split

COST - £380

September is time to explore the Mediterranean. Four yachts have been reserved: Three 2015 [Hanse 415](#)'s and a [2015 Hanse 455](#), with 3 or 4 cabins and 2 heads. Cost includes all local "extras" such as end cleaning, transit log and outboard.

The Adriatic coastline with its clear seas, gentle summer climate, quaint villages and historic towns, is a magnificent sailing area, which reveals Croatia as one of Europe's leading bareboat charter destinations.

OCT 6 - OCT 11

[SAILEX OPEN FOR BOOKING](#)

EOS 15 The October – End of Season Sailex

- Tue, Oct 6, 2015 15:00pm Sun, Oct 11, 2015 14:00pm
- Port Hamble Marina WHERE - Port Hamble – the South Coast

ESTIMATED COST £265

A great way for us to finish the 2015 season. Weather may be unpredictable but the water temperature is good and the company great. This regular event attracts people to one of the most popular sailing areas in the UK with many options for passage planning and good restaurants

JAN 13 - JAN 31 2015

[SAILEX FULLY BOOKED](#)

Caribbean Sailex January 2016.

- Wed, Jan 13, 2016 11:00pm Sun, Jan 31, 2016 12:00pm

- Following a successful charter to the Windward Islands this January - see reports in TOGLINE (Winter Newsletter), we are pleased to offer a Sailex to the Leeward Islands in January 2016.

The area has a rich British, French and Dutch history. There are many islands to visit and 17 days will allow us to explore a small number of islands in this part of the Caribbean.

We have a reservation for two 4 cabin, 3 or 4 head yachts, planning 7 members per yacht. These are both 2013, one an Oceanis 484 and the other an Oceanis 485. Yachts are complete with dinghy, outboard, bed linens and towels, fridge, freezer, and 6Kw Aux power