



# TOGLINE

The Quarterly Journal of the Trent Offshore Group  
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## SPRING NEWSLETTER 2021

**Channel: Narrow stretch of deep water bordered by buoys that separates two or more grounded boats..**



**Greetings once again** to you all on this most auspicious of months (we hope)... Can there really be a chink at the end of the tunnel, or is it a train coming the other way? By the time you read this, we should be able to be out socialising to a limited degree.

Fingers crossed!

**What a year** of one sort or another! I sincerely hope that everyone has managed to stay sane and safe thus far. Sailing and indeed any form of relaxation has been so severely curtailed this last year. No-one has anything to report, so I have had to revert to the subterfuge of recycling earlier expeditions as reminders of what used to be. The same problem has arisen here, so I have chosen two episodes, with adventure and slightly out of the ordinary, as a theme. Phil Greetham's interesting transat from Florida to the U.K. and one that has not been in before about a trip to Hungary with supplies for refugees in camps there. It was prepared for the Rotary Club of Bourne on behalf of Geoff Halliday-Pegg, late of TOG, who sadly died 9 years ago. I do hope you enjoy both of them and they may set you to thinking. Don't forget the back page with the latest news of our trips through the good auspices and bargaining skills of our own John Bryant. Thank you, John.

**Well, after all the hope** and glory that attended the "Auld Mug" competition in New Zealand, we were severely trounced. *Britannia* promised so much at the start that I really thought we were in with a chance. Alas – as we now know it was not to be. Not for want of trying, I have to say, but Ben *et al* were outfoxed by the Italians the majority of the time. We can but hope that the next one in 2025 may bring improvements and more success. We have a good sponsor in INEOS and it would appear the money and more importantly, the support, is still there. I still cannot work out how they can travel at four times the speed of the wind..... Any good mathematicians out there?

**Still on the sailing**, I am delighted to hear that Pip Hare, the Vendee Globe newcomer, who did quite well

in the race considering she had a fairly old boat, has achieved sponsorship for the next one. This time she is buying a foiling boat, so look out for fireworks I reckon. In the prevailing social conditions, it is good to see Pip being supported so well. Of course, she is from our part of the country – Cambridge to be precise, and cut her teeth on the River Deben initially. A late starter (35) but has several long-distance races under her belt before entering the Vendee Globe. Good luck to her in the future....

**One thing that really struck me** over the last year, whilst looking back through earlier editions and reading the early reports, was the variety of trips and the various range of crews we have assembled. The Caribbean, the Med, the Atlantic, the Canaries, the old stalwart South Coast, the Scillies and France to name but a few. The only way I for one could take part in Offshore sailing is via Trent Offshore Group. No way could I afford a boat of my own and I'm sure the majority of us are in the same boat (pardon the pun). Once again I can say how deeply grateful we are to the skippers who willingly ensure we have the opportunity to enjoy ourselves so much. And all for no personal reward. The founders must be very pleased that it has developed to such an extent and long may it continue. **Finally**, having rambled on somewhat, may I thank all the contributors who, over the years, have provided us with such enjoyable reading. As individuals, we all express our pleasures in different ways and this comes across so well in reports that we receive. Thank you all once again and please, keep them coming!

**Until we meet again** on the seas and in our teams, crewing together, looking out for each other and leaving at the end with a feeling of satisfaction for a job well done. **Summer edition – end of July.** Happy Sailing – at last!

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## Presiding Master's Musings

### POSITION CURRENTLY VACANT....



**Crossing 16<sup>th</sup> April - 30<sup>th</sup> May 2018 : via the Bahamas, Bermuda and the Azores.**  
By Phil Greetham

**Yacht; 'Hummingbird' Colvic Craft 60'**  
Operated by 'Rubicon 3' Sailing Adventures (Originally named 'Blackadder' and built for the 1996 Clipper Round-the-world race)

**Ocean passages are often a distant dream** for many leisure sailors and in most cases we are often very contented with not having to experience passages that last for several days or even weeks. There is definitely something favourable about a safe haven and a good pub being within a few hours sailing, especially so if cold and wet conditions persist.

**The TOG members who know me** will also know that I've had to drift away slightly from the annual TOG planning to make the most of opportunities to sail with my two sons. Each are in those 'in-between' years. These years are, of course, very important and one has to take advantage of them. I'm pleased to say that I've managed to get both boys on-board for the last three seasons. Both have strong stomachs, can tie a good bowline and have a liking for tinkering about on the water. Jobs and Girlfriends are now entering the equation and I rather think that getting both on-board in the future will now be more difficult to achieve. I was actually at a bit of a loss as what to do for the 2018 season then, straight out of the blue, a colleague casually mentioned that he had signed up for an Atlantic crossing. The company was called Rubicon 3 and a quick look at their website hooked me on the prospect of joining



him on this adventure. The Yacht would be a Colvic Craft ex Clipper, built for the 1996 race and originally named 'Blackadder'. It was later changed to the current name of 'Hummingbird'. She is a 60' yacht that had been around the world three times and was built for Ocean passage. She was just the type of yacht that I would prefer to be on-board for such a passage and within a week, I had secured the time off work and had booked the trip of a lifetime.

**Seven weeks off work**.... What's not to like about that? But - seven weeks away from my family - that's harder to deal with. Worse even, I'll miss a very important birthday for which I'll have to make up at a later date...

**Soon my colleague (Martin) and I** were driving to Heathrow. We'd gone cheap and booked TAP Cattle-Class routing LHR-LIS-MIA. The LIS connection was pretty tight and with a weather delay out of LHR of 1 hour, we

were already pretty anxious from the off. In LIS, we jogged (not a pretty sight) to the next gate, all sweaty and anxious with minutes to spare. We thought that it would take an absolute miracle for our luggage to have also made the connection. The 8.5 hours to Miami were spent expecting bad luggage news but, to our absolute amazement, there it was waiting for us. We were extremely grateful to the good folk at LIS airport for achieving what we thought would be an impossible task.

#### **Mon 16<sup>th</sup> April.**

**We were to join Hummingbird** at Miami Marina at noon. Checking with the Marina office, we found that they were en-route, having found a slightly less expensive mooring a few miles along the coast. \$300 dollars a night in Miami marina was a tad on the rich side, a rate created by supply and demand after recent Hurricane devastation. Obviously a bar overlooking the marina was needed... The ideal yacht arrival viewing spot had been located. The next few hours were spent searching for our crew whom we had great fun trying to identify. In the end, they generally found us as we were a little bit obvious being the palest people in town sitting next to very large cases. At 1430 we spotted *Hummingbird's* mast and made our way down to 'E' pontoon to meet her. A stern-to berth proved a little tricky for the Skipper and the Port Davit made contact with a pile. This caused a fair bit of damage to the contour of the davit and the deck fitting. This was now pushed about 3cm through the deck and would have to be fixed before we put to sea. We felt for the Skipper but, at the same time, felt a little relieved that these things also happen to the best of them.

**We spent that afternoon** conducting personal introductions and taking a good look over the yacht and her equipment. *Hummingbird* was built for Ocean sailing and everything was bigger and stronger than anything we had ever sailed on before. The sheets were seriously thick and there were no less than twelve winches in the cockpit. We had three sails; the main sail with a staysail and a Yankee up at the bow. No furling for the foresails, each had to be flaked and bagged up before a new one of different size could be hanked on. The idea being that when you set this yacht up, she stays on the same tack for days - if you're lucky!

**The next day we departed Miami for Bimini**, a small island in the Bahamas group just 40 miles due east of Miami. A small craft warning had been issued and the northerly wind against the Gulf Stream made for a bit of chop. Man overboard exercises were carried out en-route and we arrived into an anchorage in the dark. That morning, we awoke to find ourselves floating in paradise and the water colour had to be seen to be believed. A quick breakfast and we were soon heading into the harbour to find a berth at Browns Marina. The Skipper didn't want to arrive in the dark, as the approach buoyage had a reputation for being regularly off station. This was indeed a smart call, as the entrance was very shallow and we certainly needed a lookout up front to guide the way through the sand bars.

**We then had 24 hours to explore** and within minutes we had found paradise and a stunning white sand beach, tended to by a local gentleman who produced ice-cold Pina Colada's right there on the spot. After a swim and a couple of drinks, we weren't going anywhere. In true English fashion, we very quickly cooked ourselves into a stunning shade of Lobster red and endured the usual self-inflicted suffering during the night.



**Wed 18<sup>th</sup> April.**

After fuelling-up, we departed for a second island 'Eleuthera', about 120 miles further to the East. This would be a good departure point for the eight/nine day 950 mile trip north to Bermuda. We stayed at anchor in Eleuthera and used the folding rib to venture ashore and explore. We had a 20hp outboard for the rib which was a bit of overkill really, requiring very careful handling and the aid of a halyard to drop onto and off the tender. The next day, we set off for Bermuda and headed out of the lagoon. We must have gone at least 60 miles in nothing more than 10 metres of clear water where you could see the coral and fish beneath. A hand-line and lure produced a good sized Barracuda which we unhooked over the side and released to avoid tangling with those nasty-looking teeth.

**By the evening we had left the calm lagoon** and headed out into the Atlantic straight into a thunderstorm. The rain and moderate to rough seas persisted for the next three days and was a bit of a shock to the crew to say the least. My trusty waterproofs (ex Fairview rentals) seemed no longer to function as designed and we were all very wet but fortunately still warm. Few of the crew had succumbed to seasickness and a very nice chap from Canada was in his top bunk in the forward cabin (more than a bit bumpy up there!). He was thrown out and hit his head on the portable fridge below. Fortunately, two of the American crew members were doctors and looked after him as he was concussed. He made a good recovery within a couple of



days. Seasickness seemed to affect at least half of the crew and lasted for about three days from leaving port. This was to become the norm for new crew members as three days was about the same length of time the next new starters took to gain their sea legs on the final sector to the UK. Personally, I was OK but had taken tablets every time I felt a bit queasy. I think it was about ten days at sea before I really gained my sea legs properly and had totally forgotten about the sea state. There was something quite satisfying about reaching this particular point.....

**The crew of twelve would work to the following system** for the next six weeks. The Skipper and Mate would share a bunk and cover six hour shifts, changing at 06; 00, 12.00, 18.00 and midnight. The crew of 10 were then split into two teams to cover a watch-system of: 0700 to 1300, 1300 to 1900, 1900 to 2300, 2300 to 0300, 0300 to 0700. Each day, two people would drop out of the watch routine and become 'Mother' to the rest of the crew. Mother duties consisted of providing breakfast, lunch and dinner for twelve people, as well as cleaning the yacht, disinfecting the heads and all hand-hold points. Mother duties were hard work and rewarded with time off the next day before rejoining the watch system. The real challenge during the Mother duties, was to locate the correct ingredients for each



meal. Supplies were stored in every available spare space on a yacht that was constantly at 30 degrees or so of heel and was a bit like an Easter egg hunt at every meal time.

**The final days of the approach to Bermuda** could not have been any more of a contrast to those first few days. After enduring three emotionally difficult days of falling to sleep in wet clothes. Helming for periods as short as 15 minutes through the night, due to your arms feeling ready to fall off. We were now in calm seas and telling tales of days passed. The first few days of this passage did take their toll on one of the crew who decided enough was enough. The young lady concerned was a tough young thing but had a port-side bunk. As we were on a starboard tack for most of the way, a combination of condensation from the crew and a leaky hatch had soaked her bedding. Her lockers were swimming with water, as was to be the theme for much of the next six weeks until we got to the UK. This, naturally, made living conditions pretty difficult to normalise.

**We arrived in Bermuda** and tied up at the customs building in St Georges harbour. After the formalities, we relocated to a berth a few yards away to what was effectively the town quay and right next to the White Horse public house! We had two days in Bermuda and plenty of time to shower, eat and explore. Bermuda is a lovely place with paradise beaches but a tad on the expensive side. That first night, we sank a few pints, ate well and at about 4 in the morning my stomach wasn't feeling too good. A quick dash to the heads provided a very unwelcome surprise as the toilet bowl had been taped over. I was now in emergency mode and the public convenience didn't open until 0800. The mate was asleep in the saloon so I awoke her to explain my predicament and with bleary eyes she directed me to a bucket in the cockpit!!! Although we explored the island, most of our stay in Bermuda was spent in the Laundry. We had to clean and wash our clothes for the next leg to the Azores which would take around 13 days.

**Bermuda-Ponta Delgada (Azores), distance 1950 miles.**  
A thirteen-day, completely uneventful passage. Nice downwind sailing with plenty of sunshine and time to dry out. The one thing that really stood out on this trip was the shooting stars during the night watches. Some appeared like flares, falling vertically to earth. Some were bright green. Many broke up into two parts and some had tails that stretched across the sky. Emma (my wonderful other half) had flown out to Ponta Delgada and was waiting to take our lines ashore. Then 4 days of blissful RandR before setting off for the final leg to the UK.

**Azores-UK, distance 1400 miles.**

Five of the crew who had joined back in Miami had now disembarked and we were joined by six new crew members, including a new mate. The wind direction could not have been worse for this leg and the forecast was also not so good. We would be sailing upwind for the entire trip and the bumpy conditions made all the new crew poorly. Down below, there were bodies that had taken to their bunks with seasickness for days. The new Mate was also in a poor way and could be seen frequently hanging over the side for much of the time during the first three days. The original destination was to be Oban in Scotland, but it was soon apparent that we were running behind schedule. Many of the crew's post-trip plans could no longer be achieved. Fights would now be missed and work commitments in jeopardy unless we made alternative arrangements for landfall. After considering Kinsale and Milford Haven, we were eventually presented with nil wind for the final 300 miles. Now on the motor, we had a very low fuel state, meaning Falmouth would be chosen as or first UK port of call. Falmouth was a welcome destination and all but 4 crew disembarked. A few pints together and a pasty and we were all soon heading home for a well-deserved shower and some clean clothes.

**Interesting info;**

The yacht had a diesel generator which was used to run a water-maker and to keep the batteries charged. The main drain on the batteries being the fridge and freezer. All organic waste went over the side once twelve miles offshore (including the paper bag containing used toilet paper not allowed through the toilet system). We had 3 fuel tanks of 150, 200 and 250 litres and the engine would burn 1 litre per 1 nautical mile in calm seas. (We had another 200 litres of emergency fuel in drums strapped down in the cockpit). Running backstays were interesting and added a new dimension to tacking and Jibing  
The Skipper and Mate Navigated with I-pad's and I-phones loaded with Navionics.  
Fladden Suits are a useful addition to your dry clothing store for emergencies.  
Weather and route-planning was conducted with support from back in the UK via Sat comms. The area wind forecasts were not at all accurate for the final leg to the UK.

**To summarise;**

**Was it enjoyable?**

Yes - but also very emotional. Normalising damp/wet clothes and bedding and not washing yourself properly for days/weeks can be difficult.

**Would I do it again?**

Probably not. However, if the opportunity should arise to crew a dry yacht with an auto helm then I'd definitely reconsider.

**Did I learn anything?**

Yes! Absolutely! From poling-out sails and using the spinnaker, to Ocean route-planning and long passage watch systems. All great learning.

**The best bit?**

The waters around the Bahamas and Bermuda make for special sailing, but seven weeks off work gave me a brief glimpse of what retirement could look like .....□.

**I'm now back at work** and once again a member of the crazy rat race – until the next adventure...



**ONE WEEK IN NOVEMBER 1999.....**

*by Ian Calderwood*

**The Rotary. Club of Bourne** have, for the last seven years, previous to 1999, organised an expedition to transport essential

supplies to refugees in Hungary. The Croatia problem created large numbers of the homeless who migrated to Hungary to avoid the conflict. They were homed in camps, the remnants of those provided for the armed forces. The accommodation is reasonable, but basic resources are in desperately short supply. Geoff Halliday-Pegg (late of TOG) and Ted Pass felt that something ought to be done. They sold the concept to the club, of funding a truck by covering the hire, fuel and hotel arrangements in transit. Meals and personal costs were to be met by those taking part. Geoff undertook the organisational and logistical problems involved with each venture. He liaised with the Hungarian Embassy in London for Bills of Lading, clearances etc. An administrative nightmare. But Geoff coped and they succeeded.

**Geoff and I** were close friends for years, although I am not in Rotary. In October 1999, Geoff asked me if I would like to be relief driver for an unexpected second truck that was going to Hungary that year. I will be co-driving with John Atkinson from the Rotary Club of Spalding. Geoff will be sharing the driving with John Sismey from Bourne. All three are veteran campaigners.

**John picks me up.** At Essendine, Geoff, with the assistance of Bourne Rotarians has almost finished loading. Each item has been weighed and a volunteer totalled the load. John has already picked up a ton of oranges and we complete our load with toiletries, dates, flour, clothing and little shoe boxes of presents, donated by school children.. We go for weighing (old Newage Lyons) and meet Geoff coming back. They are 8.3 tonnes. Got to lighten it. We laugh, but we are 8.1 tonnes. Damn! So we have to lighten ship too! Back to Essendine. We take off what we estimate to be the correct weight and go again. A member follows in his car in case we have under-estimated. Just over in each case, but we accept, tongue-in-cheek, that could be the fuel load!! All aboard, make ourselves comfortable, check the two-way radios and off we go. Arrive at Dover 7:00 p.m.

**Geoff has documentation** for all three trucks. The third truck is from Kidderminster. They will meet us at the docks. Shipping documents are cleared and we go to Customs. Disaster! The routine has changed! Personal details and attendance are required by David and Keith, the other two. We do not have their phone number. Fortunately, David rings asking us where are we? Relief all round! They join us and we join the Admin queue. Documents are not right, so, back to the transit office. Adjustments made, we rejoin the stack. Eventually, all cleared and we make for the docks. Drive straight onto the ferry and have a good meal in

the Truckers' Restaurant on board. Discover the Hotel Ibis in Calais at last and crash out. 1:30 a.m. A long day. **184 miles**

**Sunday 21st November Cold. Clear sky.**

**On the road 8:10.** I take the first stint. Frost gradually appears by the roadsides. Through Belgium and into Germany. We seem to have the most powerful truck, so we are tail-end Charlie. Providing "cover" for overtaking



manoeuvres. The radios are invaluable. For lunch, I am introduced to "David's fry-up". Thick slices of bread with Bacon, Eggs and

Sausages in between!! He has a two-burner gas stove in the back of the truck! On again, past Frankfurt, Cologne, Nurnberg and finally Regensburg. 9:30 p.m. We find a hotel, park the trucks. Out for a meal then relax! Bed is wonderful! Over 13 hours. **608 miles.**

**Monday 22nd November Clear. -5.5C**

**Wind up 08:45.** On into Austria and up through the mountains to Graz. Snow all around and quite deep. Overcast, unfortunately, but the mountains look magnificent. Through many tunnels. Two of them tolls, but wonderfully engineered. Arrive at Furstenfeld, S.E. Austria 7:00 p.m. The lads have stayed at the Hotel Fasch before and had booked in advance. The proprietress knows them well! Dinner and a long unwinding session with plans for tomorrow. About half an hour to the Hungarian border. **311 miles.**

**Tuesday. 23rd November. Snow still lying.**

**Temperature. -1 degree C, Clear sky.**

**Dig Dave from snowdrift** outside hotel. On the road, with everywhere looking like a Christmas card! Hungarian border - Rabafuzes - at 9:15. Two hours to clear paperwork. One window to transcribe shipping docs to Hungarian. Another for clearance with the vet. (Why??) A third for clearance with the customs. Problem. They require trucks to be sealed! We have no option but to pile personal stuff in the cabs. Hope we don't get a puncture!

**Vese camp. - .**

**We are expected.** A warm greeting from John, the leader of the camp who speaks no English and Noemi, his sixteen-year old daughter. Her English is superb and she is our interpreter. As a twelve-year old, four years ago, with English learnt from television, she was the only liaison between the Rotarians and the refugees at the camp. A fresh face this time. Hillary, an American Christian Aid worker who is here for the next year to try and help the refugees. A single-storey building now to our right, separate from the main building. Reminds one of a service cookhouse. It is. A kitchen, food storage area and large dining-room, the latter empty of furniture. The kitchen seems well-equipped, modern, with stainless-steel boilers and clean. Food has been prepared for us. It would be insulting to refuse and we are hungry. We are shown to a small room beside the kitchen. Fold-away chairs, two trestle tables covered with a linoleum cloth, but spotless. Coca-Cola and lemonade to drink. A goulash soup with spicy meat-balls. Schnitzel, saute potatoes and cabbage. Sweet bread rolls for dessert. Very tasty, but still a guilty feeling. Has anyone gone short? We are assured that all have eaten, but have they? Hillary tells us there are nearly 200 refugees here, representing 18

nations. Even 8 from the Congo. From Russia, Serbia, Kosovo, Turkey. Are they all refugees or are some just escaping from life? Difficult to know and hard to absorb, but grateful for any help. We did not know so many were here. Last year, there were no more than 30. The trucks were sealed. We cannot open them until cleared at Pecs, our first (official) port of call. We decide to call here again, on the journey home, with at least half of our supplies. We walk through bare, although warm, assembly rooms, with refugees standing around or gathered round the television with only chairs for furnishings. They greet us apathetically



although we do get the occasional smile and handshake. One young man speaks good English and offers to show us his room. We walk through long, draughty corridors with rooms opening off on either side. The connecting walkways between the blocks have patio doors. Many panes are broken. The cold wind whistles through.

**He is from Kosovo.** His upbringing is Seventh Day Adventist. He has no desire to kill his fellow-men. To avoid being conscripted, he upped sticks and walked. He shares a simple room with only a bed and one cupboard for all his possessions. His roommate is a well-educated Russian, hoping to make a new life. He speaks good English also. His is a harrowing tale of being born in a Gulag, his parents dying and he educating himself as a teacher. He sees no future in Russia and is trying to live elsewhere. His possessions are all contained in a knapsack and a hold-all. He produces a thick ream of papers, failed attempts to obtain citizenship from Austria and Germany. He was jailed briefly in Austria for illegal entry and this makes it difficult. He will keep trying and his most treasured possession is a grubby passport. What hope for him?

**We are shown the washrooms,** communal shower cubicles, a row of them, with chipped tiles, bare pipes, broken windows. The washbasins are in a separate room. A young man is doing his washing; a battered spin-dryer running from the sink. A cold, tiled floor and the occasional cracked mirror. A solitary



radiator.. He smiles and indicates the conditions with a sweep of his arms. Then he shrugs. Need one say more?

Hillary takes us to the "classroom", a room upstairs. Here are simple desks pushed to the side of the room. As in schools anywhere, there is a "play" area and a notice board with attractive drawings produced by the children. It is



reassuring that here are no references to wars or destruction as the others have found before. Another young man, speaking no English is a helper. The young man from Kososvo is a natural leader. About 20 children of all nations- aged between five and ten at a guess? Still



smiling, laughing, following his example with some PT and a song. My eye is caught by a youngster beside me. He plays in his own world on a table with a few toys, ignoring his surroundings. He can be no more than six or seven. What experiences are driving his thoughts and actions? We can only hope that the resilience of youth, shown by his peers, will gradually come through to him.

One cannot help being

touched.....

**It is about 4:30 p.m.** and we still have to get to Pecs. We make arrangements to call on Thursday with supplies. Noemi thanks us and John gravely shakes our hands. They will be waiting, we know this. A small contingent watches us go. A final wave and we turn onto the road. There is silence in the trucks, no banter now. Each of us has his own thoughts. Eventually, the radio crackles and Dave's voice comes over the air. "We thought things had changed after last year, but they're worse than ever". Geoff and John Sismey agree. John and I look at each other. We weren't there, but an unspoken awareness passes between us. We know we will help where we can.

The three trucks trundle on through the gathering darkness. Gradually, we mentally pull ourselves together, recover our equilibrium..... but the memories are never far away.

**186 miles**

**Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> November -1 degree C**

**To customs with Zoltan-** Fr. Janusz, secretary who speaks no English and Indika - the hotel receptionist - who speaks very good English. She volunteered her help on previous convoys as the liaison between the Rotarians and the various contacts in Hungary. After an hour of waiting and checking, form-filling and inaction, the trucks are at last unsealed. We follow Indika to the Caritas Mission in the centre of Pecs. The Mission is on a side-street, deep in



snow. Just another frontage in a line of buildings. An archway, with a sign alongside - Caritas Mission. Indika disappears inside as

some young men come out of the Mission and help us. Then we meet Father Janusz - the head of the Mission. A man of 78, stooped in consequence of his years and his burden. Kindly eyes, a gentle manner, soft of speech. Here is a man you feel you can trust instinctively. He is responsible for seven sub-districts in and around Pecs. Nearly 3.500 people look to him for support. Originally helping the poor and needy, he became aware of the refugee problem and has assisted with that as well. He greets us all warmly and invites us to his study. Sweet cakes, coffee, wine and liqueur if we wish. He speaks no English. I stumble with my French, Geoff with his German. A three-cornered conversation that somehow works. We start to unload. Clothes, bags of flour, oranges, toiletries. Bare essentials. Half the load of each truck. After two hours it is done. Father Janusz takes us to a restaurant for lunch. We demur. He insists. He will take no payment or brook no argument. Local knowledge enables us to eat comfortably, but plainly. The ubiquitous schnitzel. We return to the Mission, and with his blessing and grateful thanks we depart into the grey, damp evening. We arrange to meet Indika for a "thank you" dinner later. A very pleasant and filling meal in a cellar restaurant near the hotel. Heartfelt thanks from us to her, a fond farewell and Indika disappears into the night - faithful dog at her heels - until the next time?

**Thursday 25th November**

**Final visit to the Mission** to collect clearances from Father Janusz. A little problem with tenses! Zoltan has typed "will deliver" goods, not "has delivered" goods. Fractured French and German sorts it out (the three-cornered conversation again!) and each truck receives their copy. Final thanks and fond farewells. Will we see Fr. Janusz again? Who knows? I will always remember him.

**Vese camp again.** Much joy as we arrive, but this time we go straight into the unloading of the remainder of the



supplies. Many willing hands offer to carry the goods, with Noemi valiantly classifying it. I cannot help but notice- The children are happy, clean. Some in sandals only, in spite of the snow. Playing snowballs or wanting to help. Adults,



some pitching in, others standing. Just watching. A little boy carries the billycan with the family lunch from the kitchen to the main block. A young mother stands and watches us, her child, wide-eyed with curiosity, nestling against her legs. The oranges appear and the children eye them hungrily. John dishes some out to them and they are delighted. Then the shoe-boxes appear and Hillary takes them for later. Finally the toys! The children go into ecstasies and many volunteer to carry them, but we insist! Hillary is nearly in tears. She is not alone. Finally, we



prepare to leave. A hug and kiss for Noemi, will we see her again? A solemn handshake and hug from John, the leader, a tearful thank you from Hillary. We climb slowly into the trucks. One little boy comes up to me and asks if we are going home. What can one say? The Mission was emotional, but somehow at one remove. This is here and now. Starkly transparent. I can only nod and turn away. The memory of that encounter lingers in my mind as we drive off, waving to the forlorn figures, standing against the snow. The trucks are quiet again. No one wants to break the spell. David again - "Well done, lads". Quietly. Reality and logic return more slowly this time, but gradually, once again, our spirits lift. We arrive back at the border- our hearts sink. A long queue of trucks is waiting to go through. After 2 hours we are in the compound. More paperwork, more waiting and then finally the clearance. No search! Another half -hour through the dark and finally the lights of Furstenfeld at 9:00. p.m. The hotel rustles up a simple dinner. Our thoughts go back over the three days. There is much to absorb and to rationalise. **185 miles.**

**Friday 26th September. Cold and clear.**

**On the road 8 a.m.** Retrace our route through Austria. The speedometer suddenly dies. At the fuel stop a further

problem appears. No life in the starter! We bump-start the truck and keep going. Speedometer is now operating. At lunch we leave engine running - just in case! Dave and Keith must press on. Their truck must be back by tomorrow afternoon or there will be another charge. We wish them luck. Warm handshakes all round then away they go, the truck dwindling into the distance.

On to Regensburg to find a truck garage.

After two hours, they fit us in. After 2 hours with little success, the mechanic finally compromises. He "hot-wires" from the ignition switch to the starter! We are "go" again. West through the darkness. Then we realise our lights are getting dimmer - and dimmer. No charge and on an autobahn! We pull into Nurnberg on a wing and a prayer - side lights only. Fall on a small hotel on the outskirts. The proprietor speaks excellent English and promises to help after we explain our problem. A good dinner a round of drinks and the tension eases. Tomorrow can take care of itself. Bed for now!

**389 miles.**

**Saturday 27th November Clear day. Still freezing.**

**Garages are closed** on Saturday in Germany - but - the proprietor knows of a small garage who can help. Help duly arrives with heavy-duty batteries. We follow him to his garage in a side-street and he gets to work. *Licht-machin ist kaput!* He says about two hours. We leave him to it and explore Nurnberg. On our return, the truck is ready. We don't ask where the alternator came from, except that it was legal! Off again, at 1:00 p.m. All well. On through Germany again. Frankfurt, Cologne, into Belgium. We decide to pull off at Charleroi, 8:30 p.m. Find the Hotel Ibis and relax. Dinner and then glorious bed...

**407 miles.**

**Sunday 28th November clear day. Warming up now.**

**Arrive at Calais midday.** Another good meal in Truckers' Restaurant then clear for the last lap. Ryhall 6 p.m. I switch off for the last time, look at John and we solemnly shake hands. We have made it! 2600 miles with never a cross word. On reflection, I, for one, can only be grateful for the stability and the constancy that this country of ours provides.

**IN CONCLUSION.**

**Some have argued** that the money raised to finance the expedition could be better utilised by donating it directly to the camps concerned. But this overlooks the simple value of human contact. Hillary summed it up, I think, when she exclaimed in disbelief- "You have come all the way from England with gifts for these people?" To me, that remark reflected an involuntary awareness of the contribution made by real people. Those who donated goods, the children who made up boxes for the refugee children, the sorters, the packers. All those who put their own input into something concrete.

**Human contact** is important and in some way, I hope we were able to show that people do care about others. The contact was brief, but it meant a lot to us who are more fortunate. We trust it meant as much and more to those refugees. We were lucky. We came back to loving homes. Perhaps they never can.

*Ian Calderwood*

*Ryhall*

*30th January, 2000.*



TOG 2021

2021 Sailing Programme  
Trent Offshore Group  
TOG Members and Friends



### Scotland Firth of Clyde

- June 26, 2021 4:00 PM Sat, Jul 3, 2021 9:00 AM
- [Google Calendar](#) [ICS](#) Sailex Reference SCO20 Lead Skipper Stewart Cook

For 2020/21 Council recommended that we return to the Clyde for the summer Scottish Sailex. We have now chartered two yachts from Flamingo Yacht Charters at Largs for this event. Both four cabin Beneteau Oceanis 45's Flamingo and Skylark. **FLAMINGO AND SKYLARK**

The Beneteau Oceanis 45's are described as a 10 berth yachts with 4 double cabins and a double berth in the saloon. Berth costs are based on 6 members per yacht. The yachts are complete with a dinghy and outboard.

Details of the sailing plan will be discussed at the sailex meeting

LATEST. Costs this year (2021) will be £645 per berth. **This Sailex is open for late booking.**

### Plymouth - Cornwall

- **Wed, Sep 15, 2021 4:30 PM Wed, Sep 22, 2021 10:00 AM**
- [Google Calendar](#) [ICS](#) Sailex Reference PLY21 Lead Skipper Neville Buckle

With increased demand we have chartered three yachts for this sailex, a Bavaria 44, a Delphia 40 and a Hanse 385. Costs for this charter have been calculated to include the following extras - an outboard for the dinghy, and gas for the yacht, will be £360 per berth based on 5 members per yacht. Parking is available at the marina... Demand for berths, as expected, has been very high and even though we have added a third yacht **this Sailex is fully booked.**

### Mono Hull to Cat Training

**Fri, Oct 1, 2021 5:30 PM Sun, Oct 3rd, 2021 3:30 PM**

[Google Calendar](#) [ICS](#). Sailex Reference SKP20.

**This SAILEX is released for TOG Skippers to prepare for the BVI Caribbean Sailex in 2022.**

We have chartered a Nautitech 40 for this training weekend, a four double cabin catamaran boarding on the Friday evening and leaving Sunday afternoon,.

We will show you how stern-to mooring works (used in the Med) using your anchor and lazy lines, we will show you how to anchor a cat best to avoid swinging and understand your swing radius, by the end of the weekend, you will be raring to go full of confidence. We are fully booked on this training weekend. **This Sailex is fully booked.**

### End of Season Sailex

**Monday 4<sup>th</sup> October 09:00 hours to Friday 8<sup>th</sup> October 11:00 hours**

Sailex Reference EOS21

We have chartered two Oceanis 37's for this end of (UK) season event. The lead skipper will once again be Dave Bond.

We have requested that we be allowed to board the yachts on the Sunday evening. **Only one berth available for this Sailex.**

### BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS - 2022

[Google Calendar](#) [ICS](#) Tue, Jan 25th, 2022 9:30 AM Fri Feb 11, 2022 10:30 AM.

Sailex Reference BVI21 Lead Skipper Adrian Johnson

Our early 2022 sailex will be to this idyllic destination and for the very first time we are planning to charter one catamaran, an ideal yacht for this destination. All yachts under consideration will have 4 double cabins with full air conditioning and en-suite heads plus two single cabins.

[https://client.sednasystem.com/boat/boatdisp.asp?lg=0andid\\_boat=38699andb\\_newfic=](https://client.sednasystem.com/boat/boatdisp.asp?lg=0andid_boat=38699andb_newfic=)

- The yacht, a 2020 Astrea 42, has been secured at a cost of £1,470 per person for the two-week sailex This cost includes the yacht, dinghy, outboard, starter packs by the charter company, end cleaning, bedding, National Parks and BVI Cruising Tax.
- We currently have interest in taking a second yacht and require a minimum of four members to express interest in joining this sailex to confirm bookings. Please contact John Bryant to register interest.
- Travel outbound will be to Antigua where we will spend two nights in a hotel before finally flying to Tortola BVI to board the yachts. The return flight will depart Tortola on Friday, transit via Antigua, and arrive London on the Saturday morning.

We have further interest in taking a second yacht. Interested members please contact John Bryant to discuss options.

### Turkey - Gocek

Sat, May 7, 2022 4:00 PM Sat, May 14, 2022 9:00 AM

[Google Calendar](#) [ICS](#) Sailex Reference **TUR20** Lead Skipper Paul Burghart.

This 2020 event was postponed due to the pandemic however we have rescheduled this Sailex to 2022 (see above). We have chartered two Bavaria 46 yachts for this Sailex and negotiated berth fees to include the "charter package" a mandatory extra paid at the base to include Transitlog, final cleaning and bedding etc. The yachts are all 4 cabin, 2 heads, and include autopilot, bow thruster, cockpit chart plotter, inverter, dinghy and outboard. Charter costs include a mandatory charter Package (Transitlog, final cleaning, bedding, towels, etc), and insurance will be £640.00 per member. **2 berths available.**