



# TOGLINE

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



## SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2016

**Anchoring:- A process during which, the anchor is lowered and rancour heightened...**



**Halfway through the year** and already we have had several successful sailexes to record. The weather, seemingly, has been mixed, depending on whether you were North, South or West at the appropriate time. Scotland, I understand was very wet, judging

by the comments of our Keith Stedman at the last Council Meeting... The Channel Isles were brilliant – (occasional) good winds and plenty of sunshine. The Isle of Man? Well, Arthur Wood commented that they only tacked the once – talk about favourable winds! . **It has been very heartening** to read so much in the news recently about the two main aspects of sailing. From the Olympics and its dinghies, to those Formula 1 boys in the World Series, working to earn the right to challenge the yanks again. Oh, please – bring that cup, familiarly called the “Auld Mug”, to the U.K. – just the once! There is one point in it so far 366 v 367 between Land Rover Bar and Oracle USA. This seems absolutely amazing when you think of the action and the number of races having taken place recently off Portsmouth and Southsea. An estimated 130,000 spectators turned out to watch the racing over the four days. It must say something about the interest these machines are generating and can do nothing but good for our sport. Our chances in the Olympics are pretty good as well – even more publicity. I just hope the TV coverage of the sailing is better than that of the America’s Cup challengers. An hour on Sunday to summarise the whole of the four days.

**The aspect that intrigues me** about racing, is the different tactics and techniques used by the various teams. We’ll go this way, whilst they go that way – or maybe not... Which way round the mark? Paul Burghart, recently co-opted onto Council, crews in the Caribbean during Antigua Week. He even appeared (along with several others), on an action photo in the magazine “Yachts and Yachting”. Fame, indeed – pity he wasn’t wearing a TOG sweater!

**A recent program I have thoroughly enjoyed**, is the series “Saving Lives” on TV about the work of the RNLI, of which we wot quite well. The action recorded from the “Go-Pros” carried on the helmets of the crew members puts one right in the boat. The actions of some folk beggars belief in the sensibility (or lack thereof) of the human race. The thoughts and impressions of the crew members to camera are so sensitively presented. There is real commitment and enthusiasm there. The pager goes off and they drop whatever they are doing to answer the call for help. Sad times occasionally when it all goes wrong, yes, but so many successes to chalk up as well. I only hope that a lot of money is forthcoming from the series – the RNLI can always do with it. We never know when we may be unlucky enough to need them...

**The Pembroke trip** should be starting on the 5<sup>th</sup> and we wish them good sailing and fair winds. Hopefully, they manage either the Scillies or Southern Ireland (possibly both?). I’m sure we are all looking forward to the report from that one! Let us not forget Croatia either. That will be taking place next month and once again, we look forward to hearing all about it.

**Well, that’s enough from me** with my rabbiting on. Once again, I have to thank everyone who contributed to this Newsletter. Remember – it would not exist without the support that you so unstintingly give when asked – or even unsolicited! Any items on anything in general is more than welcome. I’m sure there must be a fund of stories out there... Share them with us and keep the camaraderie flowing. Show us what you have done – or even what you hope to do. Make us smile! Until the next time – October 31<sup>st</sup>, please.....

**.Happy Sailing** and fair winds to you all as well

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## PRESIDING MASTER'S MUSINGS

by Neil Macfarlane.

**Here we are in early August** and the TOG sailing season is in full flood – metaphorically if not literally, after our Guadeloupe experience in January!

**The Isle of Man**, Channel Islands and Isle of Skye sailexes have been completed successfully and as I write, Pembrokeshire trip is about to start under the trusty skipper Alan Mortimore. (We are indebted to all our skippers but Alan really has given sterling service over recent seasons.) I look forward to reading the accounts of these trips in this and subsequent TOGlines. The consequences of the sinking of Joule rumble on. The crew of Joule submitted claims for the losses of their personal property and the on-costs for accommodation and flights some months ago. We are all now more familiar with insurance law, loss adjusters, and issues of “contribution” where more than one policy might be involved than we were hitherto. At last it seems that at least the claims for the crew’s personal effects might be near settlement with the charter company’s insurers. However, there remains more to do on the other matters .....

**In the last TOGline** I speculated briefly, tongue-in-cheek on some possible consequences of *Brexit* for offshore sailing – not for one moment believing it might actually come to pass. Leaving aside the potentially disastrous effects on universities and research funding in which I used to have a direct interest, the RYA has published a preliminary check list of “regulatory challenges”. These include: red diesel; border controls; invasive species; biocides; and European marine protected areas. However, it seems that national requirements for sailing qualifications (for example by charter companies), are independent of the EU. Also, the International Certificate of Competence (ICC) comes under the aegis of the UN Economic Commission for Europe – not the EU. Until Article 50 is triggered and the two year count-down for the UK’s negotiations of a new “relationship” with the EU, sailing between the UK and other European countries or our charters within the Mediterranean, and VAT and Customs rules should remain much the same.

**Finn, Laser, 470, 49erFX, Nacra 17, Skud** and so on – not so familiar names that spring to our minds, but those of “vessels” that encompass Olympic sailing with the first races starting on Monday 8 August - not forgetting the later Paralympic events. Britons are reckoned to have good medal chances in eight events. Major concerns about pollution and microbiological water quality in Guanabara Bay, Rio, have prompted the World Health Organisation to advise athletes to “minimise their time in the water”. This, along with various other preventative measures to reduce the risk of infection. Changed days from when I watched the Olympic sailing at Weymouth Bay four years ago and I wish our sailors fair winds and good health!

**TOG council met recently** and we welcomed Paul Burghart as a new member of Council. Paul is an experienced skipper and has recently taken up offshore racing in exotic locations. He has agreed to update TOG’s *Skippers’ Handbook* (note the correct use of the apostrophe)....(*duly noted – Ed*). This was produced in the pre-digital age and with lessons learnt from the Caribbean, needs to offer advice on charter contracts and handover protocols. Other imminent Council changes are a replacement for John Bryant, Expeditions Master, who has

decided to stand down after several years’ splendid service in updating our sailex booking and invoicing systems and tough negotiations with charter companies. Also, I have decided to stand down as Presiding Master after five years chairing Council and a few other minor duties. As my predecessor, Keith Stedman, said when he relinquished the role “we need someone of drive, vision and vitality ...”. Well, the search now resumes and I would add to these attributes a touch of (relative) youth and perhaps some chromosomal variation to leaven Council.

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## REPORTS

### TOG Isle of Man Sailex June 14th to 23rd 2016

#### BRAVADO’S DIARY

By Arthur Wood

##### Sat

14.30 Crews met for a sunshine lunch at Largs Marina.



14.45 Tesco van arrived with 60 man/days victuals

18.50 Loading and briefing complete .Depart, set sails and head south in NW F3.

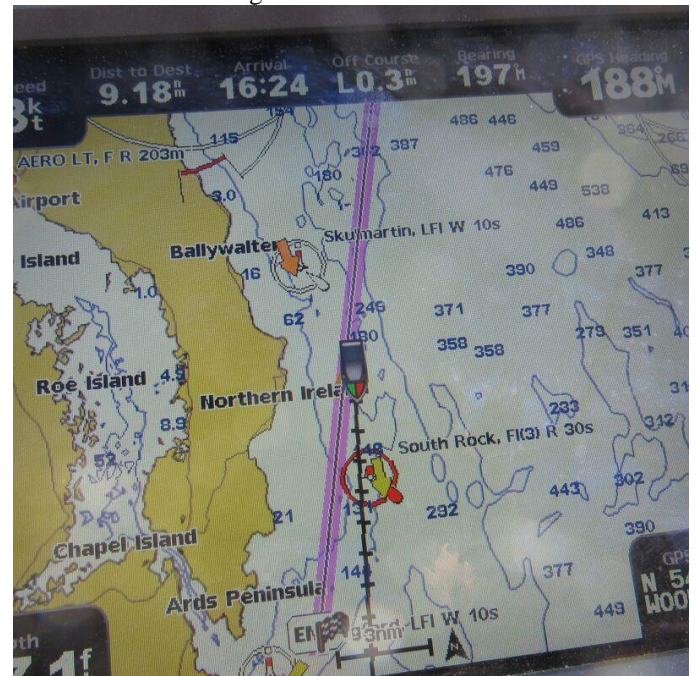
21.30 Anchor in Lamlash Bay

**20nm in 3 hrs**

##### Sun

04.00 Weigh anchor and motor south in flat calm and watch sunrise.

06.00 Ailsa Craig abeam . Seals on shore but almost no birds to be seen. Now sailing .NW F3-5.



15.00 Entrance to Strangford Lough abeam. Sails furled to motor in headwind through narrow entrance channel.

17.50 Anchored in Strangford Lough in bay with 360 degree views and watched sunset.

**94nm in 14hrs**

##### Mon

09.00 Weigh and carefully explore shallow lough under motor. Montains of Mourne and many green hills all around.



10.00 Portaferry abeam . Enter narrows in strong ebb and deceptively smooth sea.

11.00 Sailing in light wind and reduced visibility .

14.00 Wind died so motoring towards Peel.

16.00 Moored to harbour buoy to wait for lock to open.

20.00 Secured to pontoon in Peel Harbour.

**50nm in 11hrs**



## Tue

A day ashore to explore the island .The hard men went cliff walking while lesser men joined Ruth and her friend Jean, who lives on IOM and who took the others on a car tour . In the evening we all dined very well ashore at BOATYARD restaurant.

## Wed

10.00 Depart Peel in dull damp weather with light westerly wind. Sailed to Port Erin where we anchored in pale sunshine for lunch in the cockpit before motoring through the narrow, rocky, Calf Sound.

16.00 Moored to buoy in Port St Mary. Dined on board and went to bed early.

**22nm in 4hrs**

## Thur

07.00 Everyone up early due to strong sunshine so slipped mooring and motored on smooth water around Calf Island and headed NW.

Soon the forecast SW 5-7 began to develop and full sail was set. As the wind increased so did our speed and the size of the following seas until, despite reducing sail, it became very hard to steer .The mainsail was then furled and we ran under a full foresail at up to 9kts for several hours.



14.10 Approaching Bangor marina. Furled sails in heavy rain and moored to pontoon. Boat heating system and shore facilities soon dried everything. We dined on board and then went ashore for a beer.

**71nm in 7hrs 10min**

## Fri

10.00 Depart Bangor under engine, but soon a SW F4 resulted in a fast broad reach to Ballycastle

14 25 Secured to pontoon and headed to pub.

**45 nm in 6hrs 45min**

## Sat

08.35 Depart Ballycastle under engine with light following wind and strong favourable tide so motored to Sanda Island.

13.00 Anchored for a cockpit lunch in full sunshine .We all liked this place so we stayed there and took turns in walking over to the other side of the island.

**29nm in 4hrs 25min**

## Sun

07.08 Weighed anchor and motored in full sun towards Loch Ranza.

13.00 Near Loch Ranza, a variable wind arrived so sails were unfurled and for several hours we sailed wherever the wind took us.

By mid-afternoon we were sailing up West Kyle and had to do two tacks at the narrows. This was the first time in the whole trip we had to tack.....

18.00 Anchored at entrance to Loch Riddon.

**53nm in 11hrs**



**Mon**

07.20 Weighed anchor .Pilotage all day due to lack of wind. Anchored for lunch in sunny cockpit and watched nearby seals.

15.20 Secured Largs marina.

**30nm in 15 hours**

Total trip mileage -- **414nm**



**Sailing by Numbers: Sailex No. 3 or - What actually happened on the IoM.....**

*By Ruth Edwards*

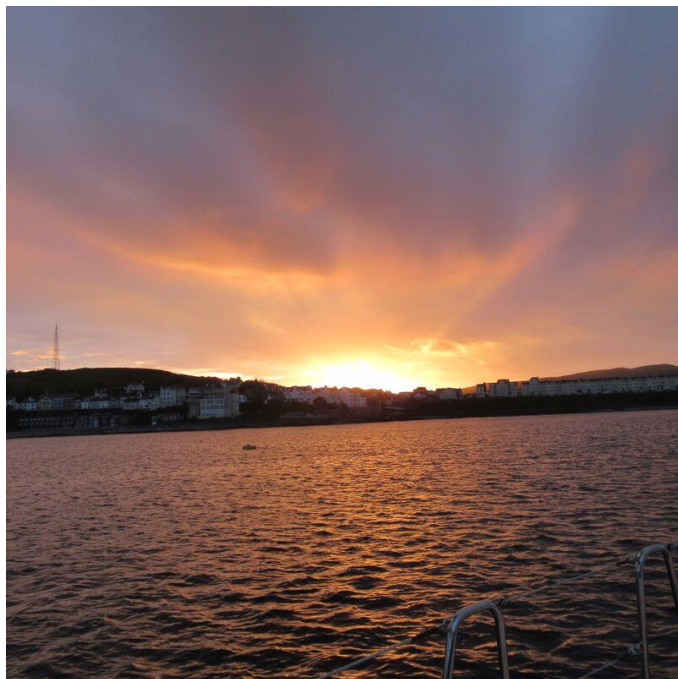
TEN days on a yacht?! Yes please! – and so we headed north for the Isle of Man Sailex. 280 miles later,

six TOGgers assembled at Largs. After lunch we met our Bavaria 45 – claimed to hold ten sailors, we could only assume that meant four couples on very good speaking terms, plus two children or diminutive adults. As the shortest present, I offered



to take a bunk but the final arrangement was two twins (no earplugs provided ) and two singles, leaving the saloon free.

**Next came the food.** First ever victualling was overcome with the help of Skipper Alan’s list, a three-hour meeting and the simple means of an on-line order. Simple?! Four hours and 144 items later I’d totally lost the will to click, and final items were bought locally. Delivered direct to the pier head, box after box appeared and the bag mountain grew. Just when we thought we’d sink in the marina, even more boxes were discovered and unloaded. Passing sailors said “what a great idea!!” and we smiled – faintly. Happily there was plenty of storage.



**Our first stop was Lamlash** – and an early night ready for a dawn start. Three watches of two were established, ours was first. By Ailsa Craig the sun was up – as were twenty or so seals basking on the beach. A fine sail to Strangford Lough followed, 93 nm logged to anchor drop. An anchor alert was set and sure enough it went off – at three a.m. Re-set, we slept soundly and were ready for our next target – Peel.

A short wait there and we were over the sill, through the bridge and into the harbour. Here were showers - (man made) - where Mark 3 on the heat control gave a blissfully hot soaking; the dial however went up to 8 – at which point you presumably stood well clear and enjoyed a sauna.

**Here also lived our friend Jean**, who kindly took three of us on a car tour of the Island’s south. Lots of visitors at the Calf, round which we would sail back to Ireland, the Island’s east coast weather being unfavourable. We very unsportingly sent photos of our cream tea and scones to the other three TOGgers, by now slogging along the coastal path. (I don’t think they replied). Reunited, all seven of us spent the evening in the Boathouse enjoying fresh seafood.

**A short passage via Port Erin to Port St Mary** ended in glorious sunset and again we anchored and slept early, ready for our next major passage to Ireland. On arrival at Bangor a shortage of tonic water was declared and a search initiated. A couple of pints (or so) were enjoyed in Jenny Watts’ bar whilst two of us procured the missing items with help from the friendly locals.

**And in Bangor** happened one of *those* coincidences. The pontoon numbers were missing so we tied up alongside a French yacht, thinking we could move later if need be. Given the all clear to stay put, we were half way through dinner below decks, when a lone piper close by played a half dozen tunes beautifully. We gave him a hearty round of applause and I shot upstairs to ask the Frenchman if he knew Bill Millin. Bill was Lord Lovat's piper and, under his orders, played the troops ashore on D-Day (the Germans thought him mad and spared him). He's a hero to the Normandy people; and his son and daughter-in-law are good friends back home. Piper Yves was proud to have played for Bill three times, and wrote a message for our friends who, thanks to modern communications, knew about this long before our return.

**Next stop was Ballycastle**, a delightful town with traditional shops, in beautiful countryside. Two large bags of bananas having proved insufficient for TOG breakfasts, we made haste to buy more than the small shop had probably sold all week. A planned sortie along the coast to the Giant's Causeway, with lunch off Rathlin, was abandoned in favour of sailing to Sanda. Anchoring off this small outpost which had boasted one hotel – once – we deployed the dinghy. All six visited the lonely lighthouse, with its astonishing two columns of stairs, totally enclosed so the keeper could reach the top in safety. The weather was by now hot and sunny and the walk over the island with views out to sea simply glorious.

**After an idyllic stay off Sanda**, we proceeded to the Kyles of Bute – and a good breeze! We tacked for the first time in the whole voyage, whilst watching a junk-rigged yacht overtaking everything in sight. The beauty of the Kyles in early summer is outstanding, and we pressed on to reach the delightful anchorage of Caladh. As a 45-footer, we had to claim our spot early. Two more boats joined us and we did worry about swinging room, so close were they. Happily our anchors held and we were first out in the fresh, verdant morning. Passing the scenic Cowal peninsula on our homeward leg, we practised MOB and turning under power.

**Three large cakes** and four full meals kindly supplied by crew members had, along with the aforementioned supplies, sustained us for several days and the grocery store was now



reducing to an acceptable level. Arthur and Brian demonstrated their culinary skills in coaxing tasty dishes out of what remained – much to the relief of the storekeeper. Moored off Millport for our final lunch, we were serenaded by some twenty seals on a nearby islet.

**Safely back in Largs** at the end of a memorable voyage, we enjoyed a drink in the Sailing Club with its stunning views out to sea, followed by dinner at Scotts. All six of us had thoroughly enjoyed the 414nm sailex, and a longer voyage will hopefully feature in future TOG programmes. My grateful thanks to Ann for her help planning the food, and Skipper Alan, Andy, Arthur, Brian and Salty for their company and kindness.

*Apprentice Ruth Edwards.  
(Guardian of enough ginger nuts, bar cakes, soft drinks, etc etc for next three sailexes).*

### Scottish Sailex 2<sup>nd</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> July 2016 *Sleat Odyssey Jeanneau 439*

*by Andy McWilliam*



**Crew**  
Becky Onians  
Andrew (Tommo) Thompson  
Mary Walker  
Alan Mortimore  
Andy McWilliam (Skip)

**The crews of Explorer of Sleat and Sleat Odyssey** assembled at the stone pier at Ardsvar, just across the small Armadale bay from the recently revamped ferry terminal, which has a new feature - Ferries can't get in or out near low water. "Oh dear, What a shame. Never mind". Anyway, moving on. The heavy rains of the day magically disappeared and the sun shone, whilst we unloaded the cars with food, drink, and gear onto the pontoon, to be swiftly transferred by launch to our respective vessels. I was well impressed. Handover and familiarisation was delivered on *Sleat Odyssey*, as both vessels had few differences.



#### **The Passages**

##### **Saturday:**

18.30hrs, and both vessels are away to spend the night at anchor in the small bay between Ornsay and Syke, some 7 miles to the North East. *Sleat Odyssey* dined on a Lasagne prepared by Jane and Alan Mortimore. We were to eat well.

Too well. The north going tide in the Kyle Rhea was to begin at 13.00hrs.

**Sunday:**

Variable mainly SW 2 to 6, between heavy showers the morning was spent inspecting Loch Houran, it's fish farms and it's remoteness. En route to the Kyle Rhea, the main halyard jammed at the mast head and having consulted Mark at 'IoS Yachts' we used the topping lift, only to learn that the newly replaced main sail met unreasonable resistance. It was all we could do to get the first reef in. So slightly reduced sail it was going to be. No big problem.

We whipped through the Kyle into Loch Alsh, and had a cracking sail under the bridge and over the sea to Syke, picking up a mooring at 19.00hrs. Sunday night was curry night - 'Skipper's speciality'.



**Monday:**

Water tanks topped up, we slipped Portree and headed north to the Northern tip of Syke. Becky helms us through the disturbed waters of Rubha Hunish, through the islands of the Little Minch to North Uist. Spoilt for choice, we finally settled on a night in the tiny Loch Beacrevik; beautifully calm and pretty too. A walk ashore, chat to the locals and two large steak pies washed down with red wine and beers.



**Tuesday:**

With a NW3/4 occ 5 forecast, it was a passage South past Benbecula via Loch Maddy to the South Uist gem of Lock Skipport. Anchored to a circular lagoon with many tiny islands around it. Andy Tommo was our Dinghy master for the evening, taking us all to inspect the shores. G&Ts on the poop deck and Dinner - a second curry – we enjoyed a very calm

night, to wake up to a beautiful, sun lit morning in such a remote location. To many, this is what yachting is all about.



**Wednesday:**

When it's that good, it can only worsen. 0515hrs – The crew weighed anchor and Mary glided us out of Loch Skipport, full sail but first reef in. We'd have liked more. In the still of



morning we spotted a huge minke whale some 200 metres off. 2hours later and we were putting in the second reef. The rain and the wind hit us and we had an fairly uncomfortable passage to Rhum. We had already given up on Canna, which is a pity as we had hoped to take on some of Scotland's earliest potato crop! We anchored at low water in Loch Scresort, and took a well-earned rest.

**Thursday:**



Suitably rested, it was time to go ashore. The crew delighted at the chance to stretch legs in the rain. We visited to grounds of

Kinloch Castle and two mares each with a young foal. Then onto the social heart of the Loch Scresort, the village hall and the shop along with honesty box. Self-service was order of the day. A pot of tea, a jingle on the piano and a chat with Dutch



skipper Eric Schepers and wife, partaking of a week together away from the summer season offering skippered sailex around many a coastal whisky distillery. Another attraction was the sea otter hides. Trouble was, the otters were not attracted. So it was back to *Sleat Odyssey* and out for a sail. We tried or Eigg, but as it was gusting SSW Force 8, we turned 180 and pushed on back to Canna, where we spent a restless night on the anchor in Force 7 winds with only slight land mass protection. Alan and Andy were up on deck a few times that night. "Still no potatoes". "Has anybody seen my woolly hat"?"

#### Friday:

*Sleat Odyssey* ambled East to the Point of Sleat - Skye's most southerly point, from where the wind came onto the beam and we quickly reached Armadale Bay, collected the mooring and



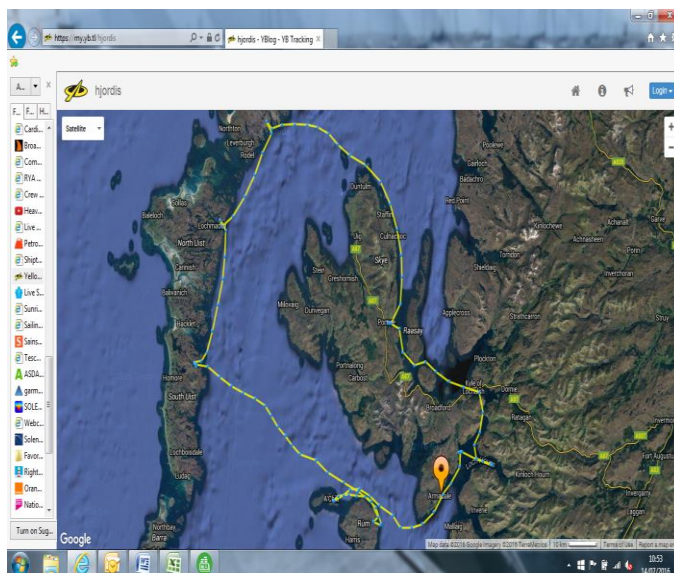
enjoyed a small G&T to celebrate the circumnavigation of a striking island and crossing of the Minch.

*Explorer of Sleat* came home an hour later. The usual gathering of gear and cleaning the vessel was followed by a delightful evening ashore. In dry conditions we walked half a mile to the Ardsar Hotel. The manager obviously attended the same charm school as Bob Geldorf, but we enjoyed simple meals and drinks, before strolling back to the dinghies and slumbers.

**Saturday:** 09.00hrs

Disembarkation was swift and precise. A few hugs and goodbyes and crew members scattered in all directions for an incredibly wet journey home. Just as it began!

220 miles over water - a few more over the ground.....



Thanks to all on board and to especially to John Bryant for working yet another memorable Sailex.

*Andy McWilliam*

### Channel Islands Sailex – 10<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> June 2016



**What really happened.....**  
*By Ian Calderwod*

#### Friday 10<sup>th</sup>.

**There we were – just shy of midnight**, five hours into the crossing to Guernsey, mid-channel

and off the port bow, a line of green lights in echelon, advancing like the Spanish Armada, crossing our "T". Behold, the Traffic Separation Scheme. Each light was a ship, of indeterminate size, but each one a hell of a lot bigger than



us....

**Fifteen of us had gathered at Lymington Yacht Charters** on the Friday 10<sup>th</sup> June. We collected "*Forever*" – a Jeanneau Sun Odyssey 42i. One of the three similar yachts on the Channel Islands Sailex. Our crew consisted of Dave Bond, Skipper, Paul Burghart, *Mate*, John Byrne, newcomer Sara Thompson and myself as slaves. The other two boats were *Morning Dew* skippered by Will Russell and *New Dawn*, skippered by Phil Greatham. Supplies loaded, safety briefings completed and faults noted. No radar, no Chart-plotter below

– but – our mast was 20cm taller than the other two....must be a plus point when it comes to sail area and performance.

**We left Lymington** about 18:00, aiming to hit the Alderney Race at slack water, slid west down the Solent past the Needles and into the Needles Channel. Turned left (sorry – port) at Bridge Cardinal and headed for the Alderney Race about 9 hours away just west of south. Unfortunately, nature



had gone into a sulk, killed the wind so we donked merrily the whole way (13 hours...). Crossing the shipping lanes was quite interesting. As mentioned above, the row of green lights westbound seemed to go on forever and we had to thread our way through them. Fortunately, the spacing seemed to be such that when we got up to the light it passed either astern or ahead. Quite amazing really, but obeying the Rules of the Road (Colregs), meant that each knew what the other was doing. Five miles farther on, a row of red lights in echelon – the eastbound lane.....once again, no problems except for one lone ranger abeam. We started off with a red light and white light which meant he was heading our way. Some hasty calculations whilst we decided what to do, when Paul spotted that both red and green and the white light in the centre were visible – he had changed course to pass astern.

#### **Saturday 11<sup>th</sup>.**

**The Alderney Race** we hit dead on the button at slack water - carefully calculated of course..! Shortly afterwards, we realised we could see bodies instead of disjointed voices and the horizon took on a solid line as night gave way to day. St. Peter Port came up on the nose and the entrance lights were fortunately in our favour. We decided to moor outside the marina at the visitor's berths to give us the flexibility for departure times to Jersey. After the trip over, with little sleep, we went out for breakfast, had a walk around St. Peter Port, then settled down to relax. Had a nice dinner ashore and then crashed out for the night.

#### **Sunday 12<sup>th</sup>.**

Up bright(???) and early and then off to Jersey. Nice sail in company – somewhat overcast but a steady westerly and no rain. Coming to Jersey from the North-west requires rounding Corbiere with its treacherous reefs and requiring precise navigation along the south coast. We made a careful passage plan and followed the marks to the letter. It gives a good feeling when everything pans out according to the charts. The entrance to St. Helier is a little complicated with its leading lights and concealed entrances, but we made it to the fuelling pontoon. Having topped up, we carried on to the visitor's pontoon near the ferry terminal. We moored there again, as before, to have the flexibility to move when we wished without the constraint of the tidal sill into the marina. The

only problem being a long walk from the pontoon to the town proper – good for the exercise I suppose. We had a wander round to the showers and then did our own things. In the afternoon, poor Sara wasn't feeling well so Paul took her to the hospital. She had to stay in overnight, so the retirement party for Will Russell in the evening (at a very expensive fish restaurant!) was a little muted for we three –, Dave, John and myself. Paul was really keeping an eye on Sara. They have been good friends for several years. Paul turned up at the party eventually, managing a bite to eat, with the info that Sara was to stay in hospital overnight. That evening, back on the boat, we decided to stay in St. Helier, uncertain as to the outcome.

#### **Monday 13<sup>th</sup>.**

**Not good news.** Sara decided to fly back to Blighty rather than be operated on in Jersey. Paul once again ran himself hollow sorting out a flight, all Sara's belongings and ensuring she got to the airport safely. Fortunately, she was able to walk and travelled on the same flight as Adrian Johnson from *Morning Dew*. Adrian was solving a problem at home and was intending to return on Thursday. Once things settled down and when Paul returned, we decided to make for Sark and spend Tuesday there. Off we went, in company with Phil Greetham and his crew. Since Will was intending to be back at St. Helier to meet Adrian on Wednesday, they decided to troll off to St. Malo hoping to meet up with us at Alderney.

**That extra 20cm** of mast height on our boat and resultant increase in sail area, certainly made a difference. Paul is an absolute whiz at sail handling. He competes in the Antigua Sailing week and is in charge of the mainsail on the yacht over there. (There's MUST be a story there, Paul.....). As is the idea of sailing, he is forever adjusting and tweaking; a couple of inches in the genoa sheet, an inch or two on the mainsheet or traveller and hey presto - an extra knot! We usually arrived first..... A brilliant evening ensued as we moored on the west coast of Sark – no harbour, so up to a buoy. Drinks out, feet up



and a meal prepared by the Skipper. – Bliss. Phil's crew blew up the dinghy and he buzzed happily around to make sure everything worked. He came alongside at Paul's request and received a thorough soaking from Paul's water pistol..... Just hooligans really – but such good sports.

#### **Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup>.**

**Today we tackle Sark.** So – inflate dinghy, an exercise in itself. Check that motor works. Dave tazzing around like a demented dragonfly - (kept away from *New Dawn*...) and sussed out the landing area. Phil got there first, landed Robert McWilliam on a rock, who promptly stepped off up to his





knees in the oggin... Bad move. Very stony with a few rocks. All ashore safely. Eventually. Avoiding that rock. Rest of crew of *New Dawn* after. Next problem. A zig-zag STEEP path seemingly as high as Everest. The fit ones amongst us ran lightly up it. (Paul and John). David, as befits a skipper, made sure that this ancient wasn't left alone in case something drastic happened to him. We finally made it to the top after



several stops to admire the view..... Thanks, Dave! Arriving at "The Village" – the centre of excellence and "capital" on Sark, we espied a CAFE – oh boy, a well-earned coffee and a doughnut! The crew of *New Dawn* appeared after a few



minutes and joined us on the patio. Relaxed and chatting, all was peaceful when, suddenly – PAYBACK TIME!! A shower

of water appeared from nowhere and splashed Paul. Phil had secreted a squeezey bottle filled with water in lieu of a pistol. Swift retribution – Paul thought it had started to rain. Honour satisfied!



**There is a fabulous "taxi-rank"** in the centre of the Village. Horses and carts – all neatly lined up waiting for the influx of tourists from Guernsey. We wandered over and chatted with



the drivers. The upshot was a tour of the island for 9 of us in a 10 -seater – plus the two drivers – one under instruction. A strong welsh cob made short work of hauling us and we enjoyed two good hours with stops all along the way. A beautiful island Sark. Small, but perfectly formed. Somewhat tainted at the moment by the Barclay Brothers who seem to be turning it into a giant vineyard. Not all the



inhabitants are happy about it. Tarmac is unheard of, but tractors and carts are all the transport allowed so it matters not.

A nice pub lunch then back to the bleary old bateaux. At least it was downhill this time.



**Slipped mooring**, somewhat hampered by a loose rope underwater getting friendly with the prop. We managed to unwind it and whilst doing so, “*New Dawn*” turned back and solicitously asked if they could be of assistance. All the while, as is the wont of TOGgers at the slightest hint of discomfort to another, furiously taking photographs for posterity. Panic over, we enjoyed a lovely sail to Alderney and another safe?? mooring to a buoy. *Morning Dew* joined us here. Adrian had decided to stay in Blighty, so they came straight up from St. Malo. – a pretty long hop. A water-taxi is used in Braye harbour for going ashore, but on this occasion, your scribe decided to have a quiet evening. A glass of wine, a beer and a cheese sandwich as a chaser after dinner. With feet up in the cockpit on a beautiful evening aboard – utter bliss. Upon the return of the roisterers, (latish and noisily), a final round-off to the evening with a bottle of whisky. I think it was about 2 a.m. when we hit the sack.....

#### Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup>.

**The decision was made** to have another day in Alderney and explore the island. Ashore, we hired four electric-assisted



bikes and toured the island. What a game. It must be thirty years since I last rode a bike, but electricity is the best thing since internal combustion. Hills? Pah – no problem. “Keep off the gravel bits” said the man. “Of course”, we said. Huh. The first branch we came to – off down the track to the castle. We had a fabulous time exploring various points on the island, slaking our thirst (regularly) and feeding the inner man. From about 11:00 to 16:00, four potential Tour de France entrants raced around, flat over the handlebars downhill and sailing

effortlessly up the hills. From St. Mary’s, in the centre of the island, to Braye harbour is a marvellous downhill the whole way... .

In the evening, fish and chips ashore and a pleasant evening



for all crews in the pub. Upon our return to the yacht, your scribe inadvertently slipped his foot off the toerail whilst trying to be first on board. He tested the temperature of the water up to his waist, fortunately retaining a death-grip on the top of the gate stanchions. Three hefty crew members hoisted him back onto the RIB and a second effort was more successful. I hasten to add - for posterity – that I was perfectly sober! Naturally, a bottle of rum appeared to ensure that he didn’t succumb to hypothermia. A perfect end to a memorable day.

#### Thursday 16<sup>th</sup>.

**Once again into the breach on a sunny morning** and the chicken run across the TSS. We motored initially out of Braye as the wind was fitful, but soon the iron sail was switched off and the proper sails hoisted. With a quartering F4/5, heading Northward, *Forever* picked up her skirts and dug deep, Paul on



the main, John on the genoa and off we went. The wind picked up as we went along, the traffic was light and all was well with the world. A brilliant sail, leaving the others in our wake and first into Yarmouth. We were intrigued when we spotted *New Dawn* doing some pretty pirouettes on the way, we assumed adjusting sails as the wind picked up. The Needles Channel and “Bridge” West Cardinal to starboard, we swung into the Channel with wind and tide in our favour. Beautifully timed – of course! An evening in Yarmouth with our farewell dinner at “On the Rocks”, a restaurant we all wot of where you cook your meat to your own satisfaction on hot lava rocks. Yummy! Naturally, a round-off aboard as per normal.....

**Friday 17<sup>th</sup>.**

**A short hop today across the Solent** to home base at Lymington – one of John’s famous breakfasts on the hoof. Final refuelling, round to the pontoon, warps ashore and “finished with engines”. A thorough clean-through of the yacht as is the wont of TOG Sailexes. Final farewells, then off back to our respective homes around 12:30 p.m.

**Once again**, a superb week with thanks to so many people. The Gods for our weather, Dave, John and Paul for taking good care of me. The warmth and friendliness of everyone in the flotilla, the laughter and the comradeship, engendered by a disparate set of enthusiasts working as a team. John Bryant for all his wonderful organisational skills making it possible, John Byrne for his culinary skills and Dave and Paul for making sure we got there and back – safely. I raise a glass to the Trent Offshore Group. Long may it prosper.

**240 NM( Approx – no log) 7 night hours.**

### **Addendum**



The most interesting and intriguing part of our tour around the island of Sark was the causeway between Sark and Little Sark. The causeway was already there naturally. As can be seen, It was considerably upgraded and concreted to its present state by German prisoners-of war under the direction of 259 Company, Royal Engineers.

The steepness of the approach is foreshortened by the photograph but, believe me, it is steeper than it looks. Most of the “taxis” will not go across – but some do....



As a matter of interest, when you happen to have an Olympic Winner who comes from your part of the world, (in this case, Braye, Alderney), you naturally paint your telephone boxes gold....(so the story goes)

### **Finally.....**

*A traveller, desperate for water, was plodding through the desert when he saw something far off in the distance. Hoping to find water, he hurried toward the object only to find a little old man at a small stand selling neckties. The traveller asked, 'Do you have water?' The man replied, 'I have no water. Would you like to buy a tie? They are only \$5.' The traveller shouted, 'Idiot! I do not need an overpriced tie. I need water! I should kill you, but I must find water first.' 'OK,' said the old man, 'it does not matter that you don't want to buy a tie and that you hate me. I will show you that I am bigger than that. If you continue over that hill to the east for about two miles, you will find a lovely restaurant. It has all the ice cold water you need. Travel well.' Muttering, the traveller staggered away over the hill. Several hours later he staggered back. 'Your brother won't let me in without a tie.....'*



**TOG 2014 Sailing Programme**  
Trent Offshore Group  
TOG Members and Friends,  
November 2015 -2016



**EOS16 The End of Season Sailex** **OPEN FOR BOOKINGS** This year we are working to promote this event as "Bring a Friend" for a long weekend final sailex for 2016. We will hold this on the South Coast - charter company to be agreed, starting Friday 7th October for 3 days.

All these events are detailed on our web site - see the sailing page reference -

<http://www.trent-offshore-group.co.uk/sailing-programme/>

Bookings can be made by following the link at the top of the sailing page. Further information from any TOG Council Member or myself.

**An Announcement from our Social Secretary, Andy MacWilliam...**



**As part of the TOG - Social Program - July to November 2016 an evening on the:**

**Great Central Railway 'Real Ale Train' (with a Pie option)**

**18.15 hrs Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> October Loughborough - Great Central Station**

**Information**

<http://www.gcrailway.co.uk/special-events/real-ale-train-sat-15-oct/>

*\* A really good night out in recent years - strongly recommended!*

***Sold out early last year - many disappointed not to get on board***

**Adults**                    **£16.00**  
**Pie** veg option        **£ 4.00**  
no concessions

**Please could I ask you to:**

1. Book your own tickets (and pies)
2. Tell me (ideally by Email) who is coming, and send me a mobile number ( in case we need it on the night).

**\* Please tell me ASAP but definitely - before September 25<sup>th</sup> \***

I'll then ask to group everyone in the same section of the same carriage.

We look forward to a good turn out and yet another enjoyable social event.

Andy

**Andy McWilliam (TOG Social Secretary)**  
**6 Spinney Drive, Quorn, Loughborough LE12 8HB**