

TOGLINE

WINTER NEWSLETTER 2005/6

Course: The direction in which a skipper wishes to travel, and from which the wind always blows.

Well, here we are again – the start of a New Year – and wishing a Happy 2006 to all our readers.

Christmas is a shadow now. It's history - and a whole new 12 months lies before us. What are we going to do with it?

In my last editorial, I bemoaned the putting away of oilskins and the possibility of hibernating until the sun once more shines on both sides of the hedges. Suddenly, here we are into 2006 and things look a little brighter. Before too long, we will be able to share the excitement of preparing for a trip, to smell the ozone and to feel once again, the lift and surge of the open sea. As one with the wind as it bows the sails and to hear the ripple of water past the hull..... I know this sounds very idealistic. Get real!! We know there will probably be dirty grey skies, no wind or a howling gale with 9 metre waves keeping you locked up in harbour! But – one can dream.....!

It is amazing how interested in weather forecasts and the study of High/Low pressure areas one becomes. Almost without realising it, you find yourself looking out of the window, attempting to practice those skills so painstakingly learnt at night school. The charts start to appear, lists are made and - when the programme comes out - decisions of “which to do....” become paramount. Every year is the same ritual, but I don't think we would change it!

The boat show in London has been and gone and doubtless many boat-owners know what new gear they would like to see on their pride and joy. I watched the TV presentation, which, like the curate's egg, was good in parts. I enjoy James May, (*Top Gear, when all three get together, is almost “Just William” with cars*) but the demo of the new RNLI life-saving dangle was a dilly. James fell into the pool and his head was hardly in the water before the RNLI man was there. No explanation of the technicals, in that it sends a signal to the transmitter, on the boat recently vacated, and triggers a signal to the rescue services. Very useful for the single-hander and well worthy of a follow-up if any members are

interested. A thought occurs – presumably the boat will keep moving, and if the transmitter is on the boat.....?? Is my logic up the creek.....anyone?

I do hope you are enjoying the history of Trent Offshore Group as related by Norman. There may be many members (myself included), who wonder as to the origins of the Group. The name has always seemed to be an oxymoron - (*the TRENT is a RIVER for goodness' sake!*), but reading the story, it is easy to see the derivation, since it was founded inshore! Following on from that, there must be many members who have had “interesting” experiences afloat, either inland or coastal, considering the length of time many have been sailing. “Depitty Dawg”, Arthur Wood kindly volunteered to kick off this suggestion, by providing the example inside – the dreadful Fastnet storm of 1979. Read it. It makes one's hair curl. Thanks Arthur. Would some kind person/persons like to follow up with their experience/s.....?

Until April 30th, here's to sailing and – please – do send 'em in!!



*Ian Calderwood
19, St. John's Close
Ryhall
Stamford
Lincs. PE9 4HS
Tel: (01780) 763748.*

e-mail: Berician@AOL.com

ANNUAL AWARDS

PHOTO AWARDS

Shown below are the two winning Photographs submitted by Neil MacFarlane and adjudged by last year's winner, Mark Davis, to be the best of a disappointingly small number of submissions. Notified in a TOGFLASH, the competition was held at Barrowby Social Club on Saturday, 12th November, when no more than 20 members were able to attend compared with over 40 last year. Mark commented that it was a very difficult to choose from the good exhibits, but he felt these two from the Clyde Sailex in July 2005, best expressed the social atmosphere and enjoyment one can expect from our trips.

A safe haven, after a good day's sailing in happy company!



East Tarbet, Loch Fyne.



This picture by Sarah Cardew of her husband Julian, in deep conversation with a fishy friend, was selected as runner-up or "very nearly the best picture". "Tell me – what's it like in?"

NAVIGATOR'S TANKARD:- most progress during the year.

Jenny Hurst. Jenny completed her Coastal Theory last year, sailed with TOG on several occasions and acted as "pilot" on the Channel Islands Trip last year.

COMMODORE'S CUP:- overall support for the Group over the years.

Brian Morris. Brian has sailed with TOG on many occasions and is a regular attendee at social events.

ELLIS TROPHY:- The most outstanding newcomer.

Sam Brookes. Sam sailed for the first time in Scotland this year, showed his proficiency in boat handling and is the youngest person to whom we have ever awarded an I.C.C.

MILLENNIUM TROPHY: in recognition of contributions to TOGLINE.

Ian Calderwood. Taking over as editor at fairly short notice. (*that's what they said – I'm just reporting! Ed.*)

Hearty congratulations to one and all.

PUSHPIT PRATTLE

by Keith Stedman Presiding Master.



It's not much to do with sailing, but the following story cheered me up during a bad bout of Budgetising!

BOYLES LAW.

The following is an actual question given on a University of Washington chemistry exam mid term. The answer was so "profound" that the professor shared it with colleagues, which is why we now have the pleasure of enjoying it.

Bonus Question: Is Hell exothermic (gives off heat) or endothermic (absorbs heat)?

Most of the students wrote proofs of their beliefs using Boyle's Law (gas cools off when it expands and heats up when it is compressed) or some variant. One student, however, wrote the following:

First, we need to know how the mass of Hell is changing in time. So we need to know the rate that souls are moving into Hell and the rate they are leaving. I think we can safely assume that once a soul gets to Hell, it will not leave.

Therefore, no souls are leaving. As for how many souls are entering Hell, let's look at the different religions that exist in the world today. Some of these religions state that if you are not a member of their religion, you will go to Hell. Since

there are more than one of these religions and since people do not belong to more than one religion, we can project that all souls go to Hell.

Birth and death rates being as they are, we can expect the number of souls in Hell to increase exponentially.

Now, we look at the rate of change of the volume in Hell because Boyle's Law states that in order for the temperature and pressure in Hell to stay the same, the volume of Hell has to expand as souls are added.

This gives two possibilities:

1. If Hell is expanding at a slower rate than the rate at which souls enter Hell, then the temperature and pressure in Hell will increase until all Hell breaks loose.
2. Of course, if Hell is expanding at a rate faster than the increase in souls in Hell, then the temperature and pressure will drop until Hell freezes over.

So, which is it? If we accept the postulate given to me by Ms Teresa Banyan during my Freshman year, "that it will be a cold day in Hell before I sleep with you", and take into account the fact that I still have not succeeded in having sexual relations with her, then, No 2 cannot be true, and thus I am sure that Hell is exothermic and will not freeze."

My grateful thanks to everyone who came to the dinner, to Linda for her organisation and to the staff of the Greetham Valley Golf Club, for making the evening such a success. Here's to next year!!

TAFFRAIL TATTLE – by Norman Allen



Muck!!

In the last TOGLINE, I made mention of another transit and Pilot conflict, this time in the Inner Hebrides. July 1991 saw me sailing a Westerly 376 with Windmill and John Ellis as afterguard accompanied by Ken Merryweather, skipping a Westerly 31, en route to South Uist in the Outer Hebrides.

Upanchoring very early from Salem, in Loch Sunart, we had decided to break the passage at the isle of Muck, which we reached just before 1030. I quote from the IMRAY Pilot: "Port Mor is the main harbour and is identified by its houses" (about ten of them) ... "the leading line is the middle of a group of trees on the hillside beyond the head of the inlet over the gable end of a cottage at the pier 329 degrees, but there are other houses which could be mistaken for the cottage, which is hidden from a yacht coming from the East" (that's us) "until almost in line". I could see no line of trees, neither could Windmill nor John. I radioed up to Ken to ask if his source of information was different. "ADMIRALTY Pilot reads the same" came the reply There was a choice: abandon and go to Eigg or press on with caution.

I consulted with Ken. "Press on" he said "and we'll follow you in!" "Thanks a million," I thought. I could see the

cottage at the pier and, presumably, the "other houses that could be mistaken" but I had no backstop for 329 degrees. We slowly crept our way in, heading for the pier side cottage and the middle of where we thought there ought to be a line of trees, with John Ellis carefully monitoring the depth sounder and Windmill hanging off the pulpit rail like an animated figurehead. Fortunately we were within an hour of HW and had plenty of anchorage space, so long as we avoided the shoals and reefs, and the chartlet in the Imray Pilot was large scale and detailed.

At last we reached the halfway mark between the 2m and 5m contours: I decided enough was enough. We dropped anchor closely followed by Ken. Both dinghies were already pumped up from our sojourn up Loch Sunart so we quickly got ashore. In the village we asked after the trees. "Och, they were taken down by Mr McEwen (the laird) last year. The folk in the nearby croft (cottage) complained that they were taking too much light." "Gee! Thanks Mr McEwen" I thought.

The RYA Presentation (the inside view)

Ann and I arrived at the Church of England's Westminster Conference Centre just after 1100 and received a very warm welcome. There were plenty of people around we knew or who wanted to chat and the time sped by until luncheon was announced, which was to be served in the adjacent Dining Room. There were but ten people to a table: Ann and I found ourselves placed on Table 1 with the current RYA Chairman, Treasurer, Sir Robin Knox-Johnson (the luncheon guest of honour) and Richard Yeoward, Commodore Royal Deeside, who had been nobbled to second the vote of thanks and who proved to be an amusing companion. Robin K-J spoke well – his speech was an hilarious attack on bureaucracy and the stifling effect it was having on our sport.

After lunch we progressed into the Synod Assembly Room which is somewhat redolent of a 1950's County Council Chamber: all light wood, semi-concealed lighting and a platform for the officials. Award recipients were seated in the first few rows of the middle section on blue seats (I later found out that this is where the Bishops sit!) whilst guests were accommodated in the front three rows of seats on the right facing the platform. The Chamber completely dwarfed the presentation ceremony but the AGM was to be held there afterwards and the hope, as always, was that a lot of members would turn up. The Princess Royal arrived within minutes of us taking our seats, apologising for the fact that she was a little early and hoping that no one would get indigestion because lunchtime had been slightly shortened!

I was first off. During my presentation Princess Anne spoke briefly to me and asked a couple of questions, shook hands and presented me with my certificate and medal. It all went like clockwork!

After the Presentation, we all trundled back to the Reception Room for tea. The rest you know from Keith's account in the last issue. We should have gone to the AGM (the last time I attended was with RAFSA) but the joy of seeing Keith and Jenny (as well as Rod and Liz from EMRYA) proved too great a distraction. All I can add is to say "What a day – and thanks a million to all of you for making it happen."

REPORTS

The TOG Story by Norman Allen

Part II A Fully Fledged Club 1985 – 1987

The next marker in the Flotilla's progress was the 1985 Easter Navex. I chartered 'Black Arrow' again: the crew loved her because she was so fast downwind. Weather was gusty and wet for the first part of the week but fairer up later. We had decided to concentrate on navigation once more: readers should bear in mind that DECCA and RDF sets, although installed throughout the RAFSA fleet, were still a rarity on private chartered vessels so this was a further opportunity to gain proficiency in the use of these aids. We went into every nook and cranny from Gosport to Weymouth and from Weymouth back to Bembridge and thence Langstone harbour. In the crew were Brian Hill, Ken Merryweather and Mike Lawrence with Stuart Watts and Liz Hammond (both now at college) and the Mate was a chum of mine from RAFSA. It seemed we called at some 10 harbours/anchorages and achieved 158M. Navigating some of the tighter entrances such as Bembridge or Beaulieu with a draft of 7.5 feet provided interesting exercises.

The Summer sailex that year was well up on numbers (unfortunately some applicants had to be turned away) and five yachts took part. As an innovation each yacht was made self-accounting: a pupil purser was appointed and given an imprest by the Administrator (Brian Hill): if the money ran out then the crew would have to cough up. Amazingly the system worked like a dream. Those pupil pursers were a tight fisted lot!

It was an exciting week as the weather was not kind. Midweek, snugly anchored up behind King's Cross Point, to the South of Lamlash on Arran, in a full gale, Brian radioed me up to say that his Mate, Liz Hammond, had temporarily trapped a finger in the anchor cable whilst releasing it from the hawse. She was now free but the finger was swelling up. There was absolutely nothing that we could do that night (other than put a splint on it which Brian had done) as it would have been suicidal to launch a dinghy. In any case the nearest township from the shore was Lamlash, some four miles away and the rain was now torrential. We got her to a doctor in Tarbert the next morning: she re-appeared on the pontoons with her left hand heavily bandaged and splinted because she had fractured one finger in two places.

On a more hilarious note, one recalls Mike Lawrence's mid week adventure in his Sigma 28. The smaller Sigmas were very 'tender craft' and had to be carefully handled in strong winds. Mike had brought his wife as an 'experience' for her (she was somewhat reserved about the usefulness of sailing craft). Mike went below to check his position and handed over to his Mate, V1th former Andy Jackson. The handover did not go smoothly: before Mike's feet touched the cabin sole Andy had lost control and the yacht went flat, so flat that the mast temporarily touched the water. She came up with no problem but there was chaos below. Mike's wife, Yvonne, stuck it out for the week but never sailed offshore again!

My expedition report summed it up. "The week's sailing had been hard but enjoyable and in great contrast to last year. This year has seen no sunbathing, very little motor sailing and a lot of sail handling. As a sail training exercise the week could not have been bettered." That year we had

enlisted another adult trainee, Don Stevenson, and amongst the new influx of school members were the young Rob Ellis and Beverley Allen, both of whom were to prove loyal and useful members, and eventually office holders in TOG.

Total strength of the Flotilla was now five adult skippers, three adult mates, two V1th form mates and 22 hands (including one adult). The Toothill headmaster was well pleased with our progress and accepted office as Honorary Commodore. To reflect his increased secretarial and financial responsibility the RN administrative title of Captain of the Fleet was purloined and Brian's Administrator title was dumped. In addition my legal position was clarified by County Hall and I became the first non staff member to be given command of any school expedition – answering directly to the headmaster and, through him - County Hall. What had I done!

The next Flotilla expedition was the Easter Trainex of March/April 1986. Our yacht was the two year old 'Skyflash', a Jeremy Spencer OOD34 and just replaced as RAFSA's No. 1 racer. My comments at the end of the report read, somewhat euphemistically, "the weather was inclement throughout the week but this failed to dampen the crew's enthusiasm. Throughout this report one reads the words 'cold', 'wet' and 'blustery' until the fourth day out which reads:- "By now the crew had become inured to bad weather and the forecast of F8 to F9 met with little comment. Reefed well down, 'Skyflash' set sail (from Cowes) to Yarmouth on the ebb tide....." Mike Hall, a co-student of Ken Merryweather, joined the crew, having obtained practical experience sailing in the Humber: he later became an invaluable member of Council for eight years. Also joining as purser was Mick Sylvester (a parent) who brought a deal of panache to the post as well as instigating the Easter Trainex's "No 1's Cocktail Party" at 1800 hours on the middle evening of the week. Our total mileage was just over 70M but my closing comment summed it up. "The Mate, Brian Hill, was diligent and enthusiastic throughout a trying week..... and is to be congratulated on doing so well on his first time out in this capacity: a very stiff rudder, that needed a lift out, proved a nuisance all week; near gale force winds prevented us from mooring at the Folly Inn up the Medina; a couple of hundredweight of hail was deposited into the cockpit in a severe squall off Newtown; a worn genoa gave up the ghost in another sudden squall and entering Beaulieu River with a yacht drawing 6.5 feet in murky weather and a breaking sea gave him a good introduction to navigation on the hoof!"

Preparation for the 1986 Clyde Sailex started just after Easter with growing excitement in the School. To widen participation in running the Flotilla a governing body was instigated called the Skippers' Council, to which all those who had sailed as a skipper were entitled to membership. This was an important step because, in a sense, we now had a form of corporate governance. One early result was the design of a badge (the Toothill hunting horn in dark green on a yellow background), which led to the manufacture of some burgees and later some embadged school sweaters which were allowed to be worn as school uniform (imagine what a cachet that was). It was also decided to introduce the rank of boatswain, so that a moderately experienced pupil could take over the running of the deck, leaving the mate more time to be introduced to practical navigation. This system worked

very well and saw the progression of youngsters from deckhand to boatswain and then mate in the VIth form .

To be continued

REPORTS FROM COUNCIL MEMBERS

PRESIDING MASTER :

KEITH STEDMAN



I am sorry to report of the sad loss of **Brian Walker**, a long term member and keen supporter of TOG. Brian passed away on the 28th January, 2006. He was awarded the Commodore's Cup in 2004 for his overall support to TOG over the years. His enthusiasm and his willingness to lend a hand, will be missed by those of us who have sailed with him.

Should you wish to make a donation in memory of Brian, contributions should be made payable to Royal National Lifeboat Institution care of Funeralcare, Tudor Square, West Bridgford, Nottingham, NG2 6BT.

DEPUTY PRESIDING MASTER:

ARTHUR WOOD



3 DAYS IN AUGUST 1979 – The Fastnet Race.

That dreadful year when many yachts foundered during the race, resulting in considerable loss of life. At the time, we were of it, although not in it. We had trailed our homebuilt Manta 19 "Woodpecker" to Dale in Pembrokeshire, an east-facing village in the estuary of the River Cleddau, to christen her at sea. The following detail is extracted from my logbook of those fateful days.

On Saturday 11th, we launched her from the slipway of the Yacht Club about 21:00 and anchored for the night in the bay. Wind direction was N/W F1-2.

On the 12th, a lack of wind meant we stayed put.

Monday 13th, dawned with a slight swell and some fog. After lunch in the Yacht Club, we decided to sail, but a sudden change in the wind to Easterly, F5/6, soon changed our minds and we moved out to a deeper anchorage. The weather forecast seemed vague F4/5/6/7/8 - so we put out a double anchor.

Tues. 14th: 00:15 forecast promised severe gale 9, which began about 02:00 from S/E. By 10:00 veered S/W, F8/9 and by 14:00 veered further to the W. F7-9. At 18:00 (low water), during a lull to F7, we moved as close to shore as was practicable. Our engine was barely able to push the boat into the wind. The new position was more comfortable and the wind finally eased to F6 by 21:00, decreasing to F4 by 00:00. We finally got ashore at about 10:00 on the 15th after 36 long, wearing hours on the boat.

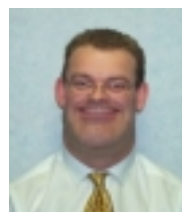
I made the following notes a few days later when the terror had subsided!!

This being our first gale, we didn't realise its possible severity. When it grew in strength, the swells slammed continual jerks through the boat when the anchor cable came up short. Around dawn, the wind took the inflatable moored alongside by its painter, and stood it, like a kite, on its transom – we lashed it inboard. The boat astern of us had a bow wave as if it were underway. Kelp was forced up the anchor chain and piled on the foredeck. Mid-morning, we heard some bangs and saw a yacht, gunwale-deep in blown spume, drifting towards some rocks with white water blowing 200 ft. into the air. The star-shells had aroused the crew who suddenly appeared on deck, somehow turned the boat and eventually motored back to their anchorage. Two youths, each in an inflatable, one rowing, the other trying to assist with his engine, could make no progress against the storm and had to seek refuge on other boats. While awaiting rescue, the inflatable with the engine suffered the same fate as ours – but stayed upside-down. We learned later that a Dutch yacht had broken its mooring and been wrecked, the owner fortunately escaping with his life. The coastguard remarked that he had been "very worried" at the height of the storm. The plate-glass windows were bowing under the pressure of the wind. the mid-channel light, 40 feet high, was being submerged. and his anemometer, reading to 80 knots had been destroyed – the cones had been ripped off and the spindle bent!!

And you STILL enjoy sailing..... (Ed.)

-MEMBERSHIP

PAUL RATCLIFFE (01778 341475)



May I remind Members who do not pay by standing order that membership subscriptions for 2006 are now due. Payment by cheque made payable to Trent Offshore Group please.

Also if you have been on the Friends (non-members) mailing list for over two years then you run the risk of being removed. Continued mailing is subject to council approval. If you have not already done so, please either consider joining or contact a member of me to grovel for an extension for another year.

The last time a tried to email the Group about one third of the addresses on my list failed. If you are not receiving any email from us, perhaps there is a mistake in the address I have or you may have a new address. If so please could you send an Email with TOG in the subject line and name in the message to me at paul.ratcliffe@virgin.net
If you have any new qualifications please also let me know. CU sailing in 2006

LINDA JONES **-SOCIAL EVENTS**
(01572 787501)



The Annual Dinner –time for change – was it worth it?
YES !

Declining numbers for the Annual Dinner, from 90 to 40-ish, was a sign that we had to do **something**. It was essential to give back to TOG members an annual event that was worthy of the Group and to appeal to TOG partners (some no doubt long suffering from Tall Stories and Salty Boots). The Committee made the decision to commit to a new concept – a Dinner Dance at a new venue – Greetham Valley Golf Club. Saturday 21st January 2006, showed that it was worth it – the first time I have received such enthusiasm from people at the event, and wanting to book for next year.

67 members and guests attended. The room was comfortable and attractive with the tables of 8 in the round – conducive to relaxed banter and socialising. It was great to see a broad range of ages.

Arrivals 7-7.30pm, then sitting down at 8pm to an excellent 3-course meal - with a choice on the night. This was followed by Keith's speeches and Award presentations. He successfully managed to keep a tight slot as promised. (*Keith - someone wrote to me praising the event – "Ambience, meal and **entertainment**" I did wonder if the latter referred to the jokes !*)

The disco got going at 10.30 pm and soon the dancing got under way for those inclined to boogie, until 1.00am... and for those that like to stand around the bar and spin yarns, there was a comfortable bar and seating area, both conducive to socialising.

I appreciated the positive responses for which, many thanks. Any further feedback will be more than welcome. **Please** continue to support our events. It is a wonderful opportunity to meet with so many people with a common interest. We aim to make the events something to look forward to, and unmissable.

I have to mention the staff who were most welcoming and courteous. The wine list offered a good choice and was reasonably priced.

The raffle raised £160 for RNLI.

Next year, lets spread the word and aim higher!

Peter Fletton is hoping to organise informal monthly

meetings at **Greetham Social Club** on Friday evenings, starting the end of February. They are to be for a general chat about sailing and an opportunity for the exchange of views. **See back page for further details.**

FUTURE SAILING EVENTS

DAVID BRETTL (016233 882924)

See back page for full details.

French Canals – French Inland Waterways
May 13 to May 20.

For those who have weathered storms in challenging conditions and do not have anything to prove and equally for those who do not want a demanding trip, a springtime saunter in a roomy motor cruiser through rural France is proposed. No tides so no dawn starts. No sails so no heeling. No waves so no rolling. Just rural countryside with beautiful scenery, rich with Breton flora and fauna. A few old towns with castles and narrow winding streets, apple orchard, lush dairy pastures and coasts teeming with fish.

In Brittany there are over 400 miles of waterways, mostly rivers but linked by a canals built in the early 1800s as a means of avoiding the blockade imposed by the English. At Redon, the river Vilaine is crossed by the Nantes-Brest canal and this is the most likely starting point as, from here, there are five different ways to go.

Berth fee is expected to be in the region of £250. Redon is an easy 2 hour drive from the ferry port at St Malo and has a main railway station.

South Brittany. W/c 13th May

Norman Allen is minded to re-visit South Brittany this year. The last time was in July 1993 with a Sailex of four yachts. Unfortunately, the area is too popular during the French school holidays so, with the exception of the islands of Houat and Hoedic and the L'Orient outport of Port Louis, the harbours and anchorages were staggeringly overcrowded. We intend to sail on 13 May, thus avoiding our Bank Holiday and the concomitant traffic. I have a crew already, but if a couple more are interested, I can ask David to charter a larger yacht. There are some lovely harbours and the weather should be kind. Interested members should lodge their names with David Brettle and e-mail me on annlabazouge@wanadoo.fr as soon as possible.

East/South East Coast – June with Peter Fletton*.

Hebrides/NW Scotland/St Kilda – 22 July – 29th July, and to 5th August .

Would need two weeks to attempt Outer Hebrides/St Kilda. Charter from Crab Haven, Oban (preferred), or the Clyde. Proposed dates with two or three yachts.

North Wales/Conwy – August with Paul Ratcliffe. (Possible charter with Conwy School of Yachting).

Milford Haven – August/September with Richard Vincent*.

October Sailex. Wed. 4th Oct. – 8th

Wash/East Coast/North Sea – long weekends with Colin Brockett.

Norway and Croatia were also suggested as possible locations. Suggestions from other council members would also be welcome.

Bawley oyster boats and Thames sailing barge weekends are another possibility. See Arthur Woods!

PLEASE NOTE that we do need to have early commitment, with deposits, for all our trips, just the same as any other holiday organiser. See Booking Form and questionnaire at back

**Once again - this year it is strictly :-
NO DEPOSIT – NO BERTH!**

-NAVIGATION



CLIVE CRANKSHAW (01664 454403)

Automatic Identification System

Experiences of John Barfoot FRIN, with the AIS Engine – for feeding to a computer or chart plotter. (with thanks to the newssheet “Fairway”)

The NASA AIS ENGINE, unlike the **AIS Radar**, is intended for use with a PC. The Engine comes with a cable for connecting to a PC's serial port and with a program called “SeaClear” capable of receiving AIS information in NMEA 0183 format, together with a sheet detailing the installation. GPS information **can** be input to the AIS engine for onward transmission to the PC, but I used a GPS 'mouse', which connects directly to the PC's USB port.

After installing the SeaClear program on my laptop, I was a little disappointed to discover that the charts for displaying ships' positions were very rudimentary - i.e. you have green land and blue sea. On printing the “SeaClear” manual, I discovered that one can input certain proprietary electronic charts, which you may already hold. These can then be calibrated to ensure correct relationships between lat. and long.

The AIS transmissions (around 170MHz) are picked up on a general-purpose marine VHF antenna, which was installed on the boat's pushpit.

Each ship is represented by a triangle with a line pointing forward. I was disconcerted to find one ship, which had the symbol showing as a reciprocal of what it should have been! The reason for this is unknown but, according to NASA, it is not a problem with the Engine, which means it must be something to do with the ship in question.

With SeaClear, a numeric list of the ships visible on the screen is generated. By clicking on a number in this list, it is possible to 'look' at the information for a particular ship. However, this is trial and error, as the numbers in the list do not appear on the screen next to the symbols, making it impossible to choose a particular ship. The information for a selected ship (identified by a dotted box around the symbol), appears in a panel giving data such as :- MMSI number,

length, beam, heading, speed and course over the ground, range and bearing, name of ship, rate of turn, etc. Some ships provide more information than others and most omit the ship's name. A rate of turn may be displayed as 360 or 720 deg. per minute which is clearly wrong and should probably be 0 deg. per minute.

The symbols on the display are very useful in seeing how ships were positioned in the shipping lanes and the courses they were following. It made it easier to decide how to pass through the lanes, without impeding vessels. SeaClear also records your track.

I encountered a problem that had many ships showing on the display and at other times I had one, two or even none - even when I could clearly see half a dozen ships within 5 miles of me. One possible reason was that my VHF antenna was only 2 metres above the water. Trying the Engine at home (*I live on the south coast*), I had similar problems, despite having a much higher antenna and trying three others. Sometimes, over a dozen ships as far away as mid-Channel would appear but, 10 minutes later, maybe only a couple. I have a VHF communications receiver in the same room and this was clearly receiving the AIS signals. I was sufficiently concerned about this to return the unit to NASA. They checked it out at Dover Harbour and gave it a clean bill of health.

Conclusions

An AIS receiver is a useful bit of **additional** kit for small craft but, like all aids, should be treated with caution - especially when you realise that not all large ships (over 300 tonnes) carry AIS e.g. warships. The ability to obtain a ship's MMSI number means that it should be possible to communicate directly with it assuming that you have a DSC radio. Especially useful, assuming it is correct, is heading and rate of turn information, as this enables you to see whether a give-way ship is altering course - or not. Although I am using SeaClear for the chart display, other electronic charts are capable of displaying AIS information. Maptech assured me that they would soon be 'AIS compatible' with the NASA unit. I felt that there should have been more documentation regarding the use of SeaClear, but my biggest concern is over the differences of my results. I still need to find out why.

A cautionary tale, perhaps? Still need Mk. 1 eyeball???

-ADMINISTRATION – COUNCIL MATTERS

NEIL MACFARLANE (01159 663028)

-PUBLICITY – TOGFLASH

RICHARD VINCENT (01476 860739)

-TREASURER

RICHARD OAKES (01636 640414)

-RACING

NIGEL PASK (01780 720435)

TRAINING



MARK DAVIS/COLIN BROCKETT

(01949) 860815/ (01205) 722886

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

Please see the notification of the next First Aid Course and an Application Slip on the reverse at the end of TOGLINE.

Colin has offered sailing experience over a range of weekends on the Wash/East Coast, to TOG members and friends on his yacht 'Nosey'. "NOSEY" Is a PARKER 325 (33ft) lift-keel yacht, well equipped with safety and navigation aids. Accommodation for six in three cabins - four berths being available on any trip.

Tele:- 01205 722886. Mobile: - 07904 349829.

Email.colin@brockett5.fsnet.co.uk

WEBSITE

You **MUST** see our website
www.trent-offshore-group.co.uk

-BOSUN'S STORES

MARK DAVIS (01949 860815)

for Sale!

One diagonal serge REEFER JACKET, 42 inch chest, 31 inch length. Moss Bros of Covent Garden.

Free to good home!

Excellent condition, last worn at 2004 TOG Annual Dinner, but deemed by "Management", not "fitting" enough for the Presentation!

Double-breasted style, with three buttons on each side. The original black RAFYC buttons have been transferred to the new jacket, but black anchor buttons are readily available at any yacht chandlery.

Contact the Bosun, Mark Davis, on 01949 860815 if interested.

ASIDES

Anagrams from "The Centre" magazine.

DORMITORY.....DIRTY ROOM

PRESBYTERIAN..... BEST IN PRAYER

ASTRONOMER.....MOON STARER

DESPERATIONA ROPE ENDS IT

THE EYES.....THEY SEE

GEORGE BUSH.....HE BUGS GORE

THE MORSE CODE.....HERE COME DOTS

SLOT MACHINES.....CASH LOST IN ME

ANIMOSITY.....IS NO AMITY

ELECTION RESULTS....LIES - LETS RECOUNT

MOTHER-IN-LAW.....WOMAN HITLER

SNOOZE ALARMS.....ALAS! NO MORE Z 'S

A DECIMAL POINT.....I'M A DOT IN PLACE

THE EARTHQUAKES.....THAT QUEER SHAKE

ELEVEN PLUS TWO.....TWELVE PLUS ONE

from Bob Wright

A man was walking down the street when he was accosted by a particularly dirty and shabby-looking homeless man, who asked him for a couple of dollars for dinner. The man took out his wallet, extracted ten dollars and had the following conversation.

"If I give you this money, will you buy some beer with it instead?"

"No, I had to stop drinking years ago,"

"Will you use it to gamble instead of buying food?" .

"No, I don't gamble. .I need everything I can get just to stay alive."

"Will you spend this on greens fees at a golf course instead of food?"

"Are you NUTS!" replied the homeless man. "I haven't played golf in 20 years!"

"Will you spend the money on a woman in the red light district instead of food?"

"What disease would I get for ten lousy bucks?"

"Well, I'm not going to give you the money. Instead, I'm going to take you home for a terrific dinner cooked by my wife."

The homeless man was astounded.

"Won't your wife be furious with you for doing that? I know I'm dirty, and I probably smell pretty disgusting.", "That's

okay. I just want her to see what a man looks like who has given up *beer, gambling, golf, and sex*

TRENT OFFSHORE GROUP TRAINING

Early last year (2005), a form requested you to submit any requirements for training and training courses that you would like, and be interested for our Group to run. This was sent to all members. Of the 140 sent out, we had **SIX** replies, i.e. just over 4%, so it was assumed that no training was required apart from those that had replied.

Because of the small number who wanted various courses, it was impossible to arrange any of the required ones. We were able to help some for the VHF and Radar courses, by joining in with those arranged by Peter Fletton for his, and for Mark Davis' students, who were studying various RYA Shore-based courses. This is no bad thing, as it does broaden the opportunity for us to offer certain courses.

May I remind you all that, although to hold a Y M certificate one must have a current First Aid Certificate, it is **most prudent** for anyone taking a vessel to sea, that at least one member of the crew has an up to date certificate.

We have therefore arranged to run a **FIRST AID COURSE** to be held on **SATURDAY, 18th March 2006, the venue being :-**

The Scout Headquarters, Bishops Drive, Southwell, Notts.

@ a cost of £ 27-50, including the certificate and First Aid Manual.

Our instructor will be **Michelle Nelson**, who is a qualified RYA instructor and examiner so will tend to make the instruction more relevant to marine needs.

An application form to attend is enclosed with this Tog Line.

Should the course be over subscribed! then a second one will be arranged ASAP after the first. Possibly Sunday 2nd April 2006. at Greetham.

PLEASE SUPPORT YOUR GROUP.

Colin J Brockett.

Training Master