

WINDWARD

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE TOLLESBURY SAILING CLUB



April 2006

70TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

Volume 11

Around Britain with Nigel Cowell in Anahita 111

Part 1: Tollesbury to Inverness

The idea to circumnavigate Great Britain first arose when my sister in the Isle of Man announced that my eldest nephew was to be married in August 2004 in Douglas on the Island. I soon realised that Anahita would be ideal for a base there as Douglas has a new marina complete with a half tide gate, pontoons, electricity and water.

Anahita 111 is a 35ft, 1972, Halberg Rassey NAB 35. Sloop rigged with long keel she has a 75 hp Volvo MD21A diesel engine and is fitted with Bow Thruster, Radar, Chart-plotter, VHF, Log, Depthfinder, Wind Instruments and electric windlass. She carries a small rib in davits and a six person life raft in a canister. She has 7 berths, we try to only use 4 when cruising, a pressurised hot and cold water system, complete with calorifier, shower, 2 ring gas stove with oven and grill and a fridge with ice box.

Plans were made and I purchased the relevant C-map charts, at a good discount at the January Boat Show, and John McKay, who had completed the same trip over the two previous years in his 33ft Nauticat 'Naila' offered me virtually all the charts and pilot books I needed. I purchased a storm jib and cruising chute from North Sea Sails, New Rib and Outboard from Marine Maintenance and, to keep the wine chilled, a cool box / freezer to supplement the fridge.

The first leg was to be from

Tollesbury to Inverness and Peter Church of Carpediem fame was to be my crew. The two of us have, over the years, completed many long delivery passages together including from Tollesbury to Dublin on David Mcaslan's 1905 classic old cutter rigged gaff ketch, and it was Peter who did the delivery trip on Anahita 111 when I first acquired her four years ago. He knows the boat well, especially the cooker. (If there was a trophy for the best sea chef, I am sure that Peter would win every time).

At 7.00am on Thursday 29th April 2004 Peter and I departed, 24 hours late due to the weather. I was conscious of the fact that we had one week to reach Inverness - the return flights had been booked with Easyjet and there were no refunds!

Wendy, Harry and Fran were there to see us off, Photos' were taken and we departed into the gloom and rain. There was no wind so Harold (The Automatic Helm) steered the boat. It rained all day and, with whatever wind being on the nose, we just motored but made good time. We were passing Lowestoft when the sun finally came out, but still no wind as we enjoyed Leavett's best Rib Eye steaks with all the trimmings and a good glass of wine to wash it down. We entered Yarmouth Roads with the new wind farm right alongside the main channel. Whilst the wind turbines are a complete eyesore so close to land they make good navigational marks, the official buoyage being lost against the backdrop of towers.

By midnight we had reached



Photography - GEORGE ROGERS

West Sheringham Buoy and headed out across the Wash. The wind picked up again and was blowing force 4 to 5 with the odd gust up to 30 knots right on the nose. Out to sea we could see at least five huge gas platforms and during the night ships were passing us in both directions, probably to and from the Humber. Whilst we were safely cocooned in the cockpit with the awning fully fastened all round, it was very cold and, due to the motion of the boat and the constant spray coming right over the dog house, we slept little. We went seaward of the banks off of Spurn Head, across new sand hole then set course for Flamborough Head which we passed at 11.45 am. Then the "Sea Fret" came down and at times visibility was down to 100 yards and along this stretch of coast it's essential to keep a sharp look out for there are hundreds of lobster and crab pots between Filey Brigg and Whitby.

We arrived off of Whitby harbour entrance two hours before low water. The northerly swell was running straight into the entrance between the piers, no room for mistakes, and with an eye on the depth sounder we made the decision to enter. 2500 revs on the engine and we stormed in! It was a lock to lock

battle on the wheel as each passing wave tried to push the boat into the groins beneath the piers and while the depth didn't go below 2.5 metres, with 1-2 metre rolling waves behind it was impossible to guess how shallow it might have been in the troughs. Safe, we tied up at the fish quay at 5.30 pm some 36 hours after leaving Tollesbury. We had logged 213 miles, at an average speed of 5.9 knots and used 30 gallons of diesel. The marina in Whitby is above a swing bridge and we had to wait until midnight to proceed, it only opens for two hours either side of high water every half hour depending on demand. We were both tired and hungry, it had been too choppy to cook the planned meal, and we had had to make do with snacks, sandwiches and cup o soups. A quick walk round the quayside led us back to a bistro adjacent to where we had moored up. Come midnight the bridge opened and we proceeded up to the marina. We were lucky, even this early in the season it was nearly full but we found a berth and crashed out.

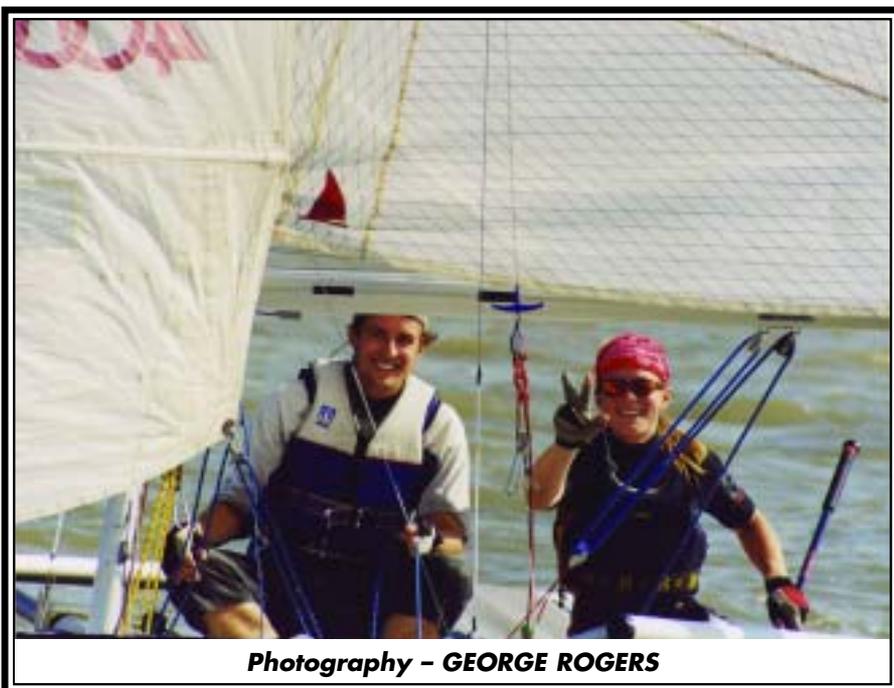
The next morning, Saturday 1st May, we set about refuelling. Fuel is available from the harbour master's office at the marina but you have to

carry it down to your boat in cans, quite an arm stretcher. The bridge was due to open at 12.30 and we followed the local racing fleet out. The wind was still blowing from the North but had eased to 12 knots and though there was a steep swell running into the harbour it was much easier than when we entered. It was a nice sunny day, a rhumb line course was set for Peterhead 353degrees. The autohelm did all the work as we had to motor, and whilst the main was up it was only marginally set and was more of a steadying sail in the swell. By early evening the wind started to decrease and by midnight it was flat calm, we were able to have four hour watches and sleep, but even with the cockpit canopy fully closed it was bitterly cold, probably just above freezing. (I put an Eberspacher on my mental shopping list). The next morning, still flat calm, we had seen no other vessels during the night but for the rest of the day we were accompanied by porpoise, dolphins, seals and hundreds of sea birds. We saw just one fishing boat which seemed to want to cut us up even though he was trawling in circles! Then, 30 miles from Peterhead, I noticed that the electric power was failing. First the autohelm failed, then the electronic chart. I turned off everything except the vhf and navigation instruments, but by the time we reached Peterhead the domestic batteries were flat. Once plugged into shore power everything seemed ok and I put it down to a loose fan belt. We had logged 175 miles in 28.5 hours at an average of 6.1 knots.

The marina in Peterhead is the most secure marina that I have ever visited, not only do you need a key to enter, you also need a key to get out! The harbour master was off duty but luckily a family who lived on their boat in the marina, and who originated from Mayland, helped us



Photography - ALISON SMITH



Photography - GEORGE ROGERS

out. They drove us into the town and arranged for us to be let back in upon our return.

Peterhead is a commercial port and a prison town, an exceedingly depressing place. There are no wine bars, no restaurants nor pubs that served food, all are of the spit and sawdust variety and drunks were staggering round even though it was only 7.00pm. Eventually, though, we saw a fleet of smart cars parked down an alleyway outside an Indian restaurant where we had a superb meal.

The next morning we had to fuel up again only to discover that the fuel barge had been removed for the winter and in its place was a huge gas rig that towered over the marina on the other side of the wall. An ocean tug had arrived to take it out into the North Sea and its departure was imminent, they were just waiting for high water. The commercial port harbour master directed us to proceed to Smiths' fuel depot in the fishing harbour where we were fuelled up direct from a road-side tanker. Another 150 litres of diesel but this time at nearly half the price of that which I bought in Whitby. At 10.00 am we cleared the fuel depot and set off for

Lossiemouth. It was a crisp sunny morning but with 12 knots of wind from the North West, we had to motor sail again. At 11.30 we rounded Rattray head into the Cromarty Firth where the wind increased to 20 knots. On we went passed Frazerborough, Kinnairds Head, Troup Head, The Bow and Fiddle Rock finally reaching Lossiemouth at 8.00p.m. We had logged 61 miles in 10 hours. Lossiemouth is a lovely place, a complete contrast to Peterhead, and the marina is a converted fishing port. Again, no harbour master on duty, but we were lent a key by one of the locals moored near to us with the request that we put our mooring fee in the honesty box and leave the key in his cockpit. Shore power was free of charge! Into the nearest pub, which was full of American Air force personnel from the local air base, where we found that all the tables were topped with glass covering charts of the area - including the final leg up to Inverness! As I didn't have a chart for this leg, only a pilot book, as we downed our pints we memorised as much as possible.

Departing the next morning at 7.00 am to ensure that we arrived at high water at the Caledonian

Canal entrance, with a Southerly Wind of some 15 knots we were sailing at last. Or so I thought. An hour later it rained and the wind dissipated to nothing. Once again we were motoring. We arrived at the Clacknaharry lock entrance at Midday and had to wait for at least half an hour whilst another vessel came down through the locks. Whilst waiting I discovered that my camera was not working and all the pictures taken from Tollesbury to Inverness were lost! That was not the only shock. Before we were allowed to proceed I had to buy a licence, a staggering £275+ £55 in Marina fees for one month though this did also cover the Crinan Canal. A further half mile brought us to the Seaport Marina where Anahita was to be left and where the staff were most friendly and helpful. Shore power was provided and we were moored in front of the cctv camera outside the marina office.

We had logged 481 miles since leaving Tollesbury with 81 hours actual sea time averaging just under 6 knots, though these figures may be slightly inaccurate as I do not know if the trip meter was still working when the batteries failed. We now had two days to spare before the plane home and the delights of Inverness awaited us. Unfortunately there weren't any! But we were saved by the Clacknaharry Inn, in the village of Clacknaharry at the entrance to the Caledonian Canal where one of the most welcoming landlords that I have ever met dispensed a superb house malt!!! (*More from Nigel in the next Newsletter when the second leg takes him from Inverness to Troon, Ed.*)

**"The sea!" cried the miller.
"Lord help us all, it is the
greatest thing God made!"
(Robert Louis Stevenson)**

Everyone Needs a Lift Occasionally

For some time now the committee have been considering how best to provide access for wheelchair users and others of reduced mobility. Though we do not have to do this, private clubs not being covered by the relevant legislation, we felt that it was the right thing to do. Recently, the club was offered the chance to purchase a second hand wheelchair lift and felt that this was an opportunity we couldn't miss, it was made for the job.

The installation of the lift will necessitate some changes to the fabric of the club, particularly the loss of our much beloved alcove and as

I've been sitting in that alcove with my old friends on Wednesday evenings for more years than I care to remember I will feel its loss more than most, but sometimes we have to make sacrifices for the common good. (Don't worry, Graham, I'll build you a new one, Ed.)

The plans, a scale drawing of which are on display in the clubhouse, are thus: Looking from the outside into the club, the front door will be widened and moved to the left and will then be directly in line with the lift which will be installed on the right of the old alcove, with a set of steps on the left. Where the old steps are will be closed off to form part of a larger cellar and the bar will be extended to where the

current steps are.

The toilet arrangements will be improved and reversed with the current Gents becoming the Ladies and Disabled toilet and the current Ladies, the Gents. It will be a bit of a squeeze but it's the only way it can be done. As this will bring the door to the Ladies' toilet into close proximity with the new entrance/stairs, consideration is being given to making the current rear entrance the main one. As always your comments on this are welcome and you can call me on 01206 735858. (Or call in to see him at the clubhouse on a Wednesday evening. He'll be sitting in the alcove!! Ed.)

Regards to you all and have a good season,

Graham Elcock.

'Tis the Season for Fitting-out

With the first breath of Spring
The boatyards and sheds
Become busy scenes.
Masts and spars are scraped
And varnished, blocks oiled,
Sails, ropes and rigging
Overhauled, spliced and mended.
(P.H.EMERSON)

HOMEMADE AIR FRESHENER FOR THE CABIN.

16 cups of water
1 cup of baking soda
.25 of a cup of unscented ammonia
1 tablespoon scented oil or extract - pine oil
Or your choice.
(old sailors' remedy)

PAINT COVERAGE

The label on the can will indicate how many square feet the paint in the can will cover.

Compute the square footage of the surface to be covered thus:

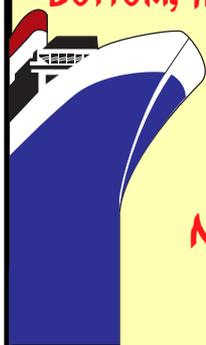
Topsides = (length overall + beam) x average freeboard x 2

Bottom, heavy-displacement hull = (water-line length x beam x draft) x .75

Bottom, light-displacement hull = (ditto) x .50

Deck = (length of deck x beam) - (area of deck structures) x .75

Never spend less on a paintbrush than the cost of a gallon of paint! (anon).



Groundings From the Sailing Sec

To start I'd like to thank the committee for keeping my post open while I was away on maternity leave???

I hope to fulfil the role a bit more effectively now I am a "Domestic God" and so would like to take this opportunity to convey some thoughts for the coming season.

Firstly we have the Calais Rally. If you haven't done this then it's a good introductory foreign cruise. Plenty of help from the veterans of the rally. Don't be afraid to ask, most people are more than willing to help.

Please make sure that you check the program for up and coming races and cruises/rallies

Now the BIG one.

It's TSC's 70th year and so when we have the Tollesbury Smack and Classic Race, September 9th, I hope to have a classic dinghy course as well. So if you have a classic dinghy and want to take part, then please come and see me

and we can see if something can be arranged. If you can persuade anyone you know, then the more the merrier. If you have a classic dinghy or yacht and can contact your class association to see if they want to take part in the day, that would be a bonus. The Winkle Briggs from Mersea have expressed an interest, so we will be setting a course in the Leavings. Also we are contacting the Folk boat association, as there are now three in the club.

All things can be arranged. If you have an idea for the weekend then let's talk.

I will be looking for various roles to be filled as I am intending this to be a day/weekend to remember and so will need people to help. This does not mean that you cannot race. We will put on committee and safety boats. (Again if you have a motor boat and want to take part, I have jobs for you. Like support boats/photography

boats/marshalling on course. And taking non boat owning members out to view the cut and thrust of the racing.

Please can you come and make yourself known to me as soon as possible. I will not ask anyone to take on a role that they do not feel capable of carrying out. But I do need people and boats so that no one person gets lumbered with a massive stress job and walks away saying "never again"

I am going to run a weekend train-

ing on the Yellow Peril which anyone can drive and they don't need a Powerboat 2 certificate. We will also go through the Race Officer's job so that if you don't have your own boat and want to spend a few hours looking after the dinghy fleet, come and get involved. Again please do not think "I can't do that I haven't done it before", I will give all the help you will need and come out with you or team you up with the O.O.D on the first one, and do on the job training.

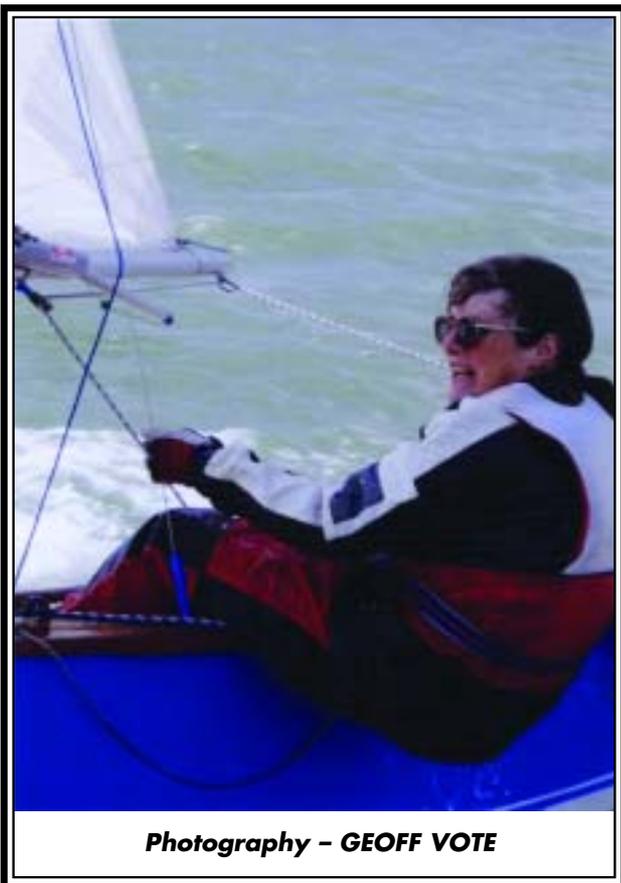
Remember that there will also be someone in the RIB to actually assist the dinghies if they get into trouble. Yellow Peril is there to be Mother Hen and to tow back any boats that require it if the wind drops or it gets broken. There will be a set of "Officer of the Day" instructions that have to be followed and so if there is anything outside the guidelines and you don't feel happy, then you can call off the race but firstly a list people to contact to get further advice or help. You're Not Alone.

Lastly... To all New Members.

If you want to get involved, whether you have a boat or not, please come and find me. If you want to do some sailing or have a go in the rescue boats, come and find me as there are a lot of boats sitting around as owners don't go out, cos they don't have a slave – sorry – a crew to share the beauty of the creek and the gentle lapping of the waves against the forefoot, the creak of the sails on the mast, the calling of the wild-fowl and the gentle swearing of the crew as the skipper gets it wrong – again.

Well that's all for now. Please come and find me if you have any ideas or offers of help.

Kim Stephenson – Sailing Sec



Photography – GEOFF VOTE

From the Editor

Let me start with an apology and follow up with a big thank you. The apology is for not getting another Newsletter out before now. No excuses, I just lost my ARTI (a round to it!). As to the big thank you, that is to you, the membership, for supporting all the new innovations and changes that Caroline and I have made in the nearly two years of our stewardship. Now, of course, it has not been to everyone's taste, there are still those that hanker after the good old days when the place was almost empty on a Saturday night and echoed to the sound of silence, but you can't please everyone in this game. So to those of you that have supported the club in their droves in those heady two years, again, thank you – to the others, sorry. So, actually two apologies. But what a stonking good year we had last year, hey? Record takings over the bar, ditto profits and a large hike in the membership numbers. Can it go on? Er, no, probably not. Because no one, least of all me, can deny that part of the reason for the club's success was due to the difficulties experienced by the Cruising Club. They seem to have turned things around now and that is good. No, you didn't misread that bit, I really did say GOOD. Because having two healthy sailing clubs in a village with such a proud and long maritime history is good for the community of Tollesbury and good for the sailing community. We have always had a good relationship with the Romford navy, oops, sorry, I mean TCC, and long may it continue.

Talking of history, how many of you realise that this year is the 70th anniversary of the club's founding? For some time now your committee has been considering ways to celebrate such a momentous year and whilst we have come up with a few

ideas we would like you to think of a few too. Any suggestions can either be e-mailed to me at this address: crew@bargeemilia.wanadoo.co.uk or can be jotted down on paper and dropped off at the clubhouse. One idea that we are actually acting on is a celebration beer. Mersea Island Brewery are concocting a one-off brew especially for the club and the first samples are nearly ready, all we need is a name. I sent out a signal* recently asking for suggestions for a name for the beer and so far I've received... two. Now come on, all you beer drinkers, you can do better than that. And here's the incentive. Whoever suggests the winning name, and in the event of a tie the winners' names will be drawn from a hat, will be invited to MIB to taste the first pint and will have the honour of being photographed for the next Newsletter. And talking of Photos, (I love a good link, don't you?) The winning pics from last year's competition are printed throughout this newsletter. The entries were of a very high quality and we really want to make this an annual competition. So get out there and start snapping. We especially want photographs for the junior section as last year we had no entries at all in this category.

This year there will be a little disruption in the smooth running of the clubhouse as several improvements are to be made, more later from Graham Elcock, and, yes, one of them IS the overhaul of the heating system. This last winter has been very cold and even though I get down to the club very early to put on the heaters, the place never seems to get warm. So, following several complaints, the committee has finally bitten the bullet and by autumn of this year we will have an all singing, all dancing central heating system with radiators! Welcome to the 21st century. It's also the intention, once the

cruisers are back in the water, to resurface the boat parking area and possibly even extend it still farther.

Here are some notable dates for your diary:

On the 1st and 2nd of April, to coincide with the Spring boat show there will be a boat jumble at the club. You can book your pitch in advance with Ali Smith for £7 or book on the day for £8. The clubhouse will be open from 10.00hrs on both days to provide drinks and snacks.

The adult Fitting-out Supper will be held on Saturday the 8th of April with the cadet one following on the 22nd.

The annual Gooseberry Pie Competition is fixed for the 1st of July.

In between these events we are hoping to hold a number of 'themed' evenings and, once again, your suggestions will be welcome. Look out for them on TSC signals* and notices around the village.

***Back to that 'signal'. If you haven't yet subscribed to this excellent service, DO. It's FREE. Just log on to the club website, www.tollesbury.co.uk, and you'll find very simple instructions (I managed it!) and once you've subscribed you'll be one of the first to know when anything of interest is happening either in the clubhouse or out on the water. If you've never looked at our website before, you'll be amazed. It's an award winning site accessed from all over the world and congratulations must go to our webmaster, Martin Parker, for the superb job he has done and continues to do.**

Finally, just a gentle reminder about subs. They are still the financial lifeline of the club (and they keep the booze prices down!) so if you haven't already paid them, please do so now.

Steve Tachauer, Editor.

Rear Commodore's Report

Last year was a great one for Tollesbury Sailing Club, both out on the water and in the clubhouse. The dinghy fleet is going from strength to strength, as witnessed by the large turnout to discuss the 2006 programme, and a huge vote of thanks must go to George Rogers for his continued enthusiasm and energy. So too the cadets who trounced Mersea Island last season, and on their own water, and came back with an armful of trophies! The cadet membership has continued to grow and, again, a vote of thanks to Gary Harris, his team and, of course, the parents.

On the cruiser side things were a bit quiet with many owners away on extended cruises and to try and improve turnout we are introducing a new concept this season, the Race/Cruise. The idea is a very simple one and works like this. When a race is scheduled in the programme, for example to Harwich, the cruiser owner can make his or her own decision to either join the race or take a more leisurely 'cruise'. Cruisers and rac-

ers will then meet at the given finish point for whatever activities are arranged 'post-race', perhaps a BBQ, before joining the return. As with the dinghies and cadets, the cruiser fleet has grown, with even the Steward threatening to get one of his fleet of boats in the water this season, so we hope that this idea will catch on and that we will see a lot more of you out on the water.

**MORE SAIL! I CRY,
LET HER FLY,
THIS IS THE HOUR FOR ME.**
(ELIZA COOK)

The 2005 Calais Rally was again well attended and, in a joint effort with the Cruising Club, we gained 2nd place for size of turnout. Our own boat, 'Excelle', was joined by Mike Gager, single-handed on 'Floray', Chris, Wendy, Kees and Olga on 'Moana', Les and Megan on 'Sanna Jakoba' and Nigel Cowell on 'Anahita 111', again single handed. As always the atmosphere in Calais was tremendous with scores of boats from all

over the East coast – plenty of time for catching up with old friends as the food and wine flowed. I thoroughly recommend this trip and if you are thinking of joining us this year, I, the sailing secretary or any of the 'Calais Veterans' will be only too glad to offer help or advice. Come on, let's get that first prize back!

Last year's Smack and Classic races, despite the initial set back due to a clash of events, showed a good turnout, winning us an entry in 'Classic Boat' magazine. My thanks go to all those that assisted on the day but especially to Bob and Jilly Wilkinson on Stag 1, Graham and Steve who organised the free beer on the hard and Caroline and her team for the magnificent hog roast. The roast is back by popular demand at this year's Smack and Classic on the 9th of September when we hope for an even bigger event in celebration of our 70th anniversary.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome all our new members and I hope to see you all either on the water or at the clubhouse.

Geoff Smith.



Photography – GEORGE ROGERS

VIC TATE

As most of you know, Vic Tate sadly passed away in October last year.

Vic was a long standing and active member of the club and also 'did time' on the committee.

Over the years, he was one of the most loyal and frequent users of the club's facilities and his contribution to the bar takings must have been considerable. Even when wheelchair bound Vic continued to support us as the judge for the photo competition and as Father Christmas at the children's Christmas party. Many of us have been entertained by Vic telling us about his and Brenda's boating adventures in the North Sea and the Med.

The amount of people attending the funeral and reception were a true measure of Vic's popularity and Brenda did him proud by giving him a splendid send-off in the club that Vic would have thoroughly approved off. We will all miss him and our thoughts are with Brenda, the children and grandchildren.

Kees Spitters - Commodore

Last year the Sailing Club lost a dear friend when we said goodbye to John Clarke after a long illness. For as long as I can remember, John and Tollesbury Sailing Club went hand in hand. Very shortly after moving to the Village with Erica, he joined the Committee when he was about 26 years old although he didn't have a boat at the time. He literally jumped straight in and soon was to be found helping out as crew or more importantly in John's eyes, making sure the beer was in fine fettle and coming thru the Clubhouse door in a regular supply. He became Club Treasurer, ably supported by Erica, just one of the positions he occupied in his long and illustrious time on the Committee. He was Club Bosun when I first ventured out on the waters in Tollesbury, and every week he turned out to oversee the racing. He and Erica made you feel very welcome and put a lot of time and effort in to make sure things went smoothly. As our families grew and young cadets came up thru the sea scouts and then took to the water, John purchased a mirror dinghy which his son Russell took to like a duck to water and Erica had her first tentative sails in. John seemed to prefer the power side of water sports and loved tinkering with engines. Something the Club was to be very grateful for as time went by. He looked after "Yellow Peril" as if it was his own and when the Club purchased a RIB, John's face lit up. Here was a boat with a real engine (His aversion to Diesels was well documented at the time). He set the maintenance and fitting out of the boats to a high order and woe betide the O.O.D who failed to return the radios and kit on time or incomplete. John was one of the guiding luminaries in those halcyon days when we enjoyed the "Tollesbury Fortnights". For a couple of summers up to 20 families all holidayed together and went sailing every day culminating in the "Round the Island Race". Yes we were terribly lucky as the sun shone every day, warm sea

JOHN CLARKE



breezes gave us some terrific sailing and every night a different family threw a bar-b-q where the talk was of the great time had that day and what we were going to do the next. Invariably John's booming laugh would set the tone for the evening and he could easily be identified by a pint jug (it has to have a handle) clutched in one hand and a VERY well done burger in the other. Who could forget seeing him all bedecked in a trapeze harness attempting to crew on John Parker's Fireball. It looked more like do-it-yourself colonic irrigation but JC was laughing fit to burst as they skimmed across the water like a Barnes Wallace prototype. John then purchased an early GP14 and he and Erica had some good times joining in the ever increasing dinghy fleet. They also managed to find time to crew aboard "Muddy Waters" with Martin Parker and it was apparent that sailing was not going to be a ten minute wonder as far as they were concerned. It was only a matter of time before the right boat was found, and very soon "Rumpty" was to be seen gracing the Fleet. John had persuaded Erica that it would be a good idea if he gained his Yacht masters certification; although in typical John fashion a pub had to be fitted in on the homeward leg. A chance to mull over the evening course's finer points. John wasn't one to let work get in the way of his sailing and he and Erica were committed to spending as much time as they could aboard their boat. It's safe to assume they had more hours sailing aboard "Rumpty" in a couple of years than most people do in a lifetime. They enjoyed going "foreign" as well as gaining silverware on the race circuit and of course John still found time to work on the Committee and maintain his Bosun's responsibilities. He was a great friend to many of us, and we were fortunate to share in his love of life, sense of humour and ever widening grin. Let's remember him and smile.

Geoff Vote

Commodore's Corner

It's early March, we've just had some snow and it's freezing outside. The April edition of Practical Boat Owner has just landed on the doormat (a month early?) with lots of articles about sailing, boats and equipment. Can't wait for spring to kick-in and the sailing season to start.

It's been a busy year with a great attendance at club events, both on and off the water. The cadets and dinghy fleets did very well at Mersea Week, we got another joint second for turnout at Calais together with the TCC and the weather was kinder than the previous summer.

George Rogers and his crew of dinghy sailors did a fine job in doing-up the outside toilet block (another work party planned later

this month). Once again, Gill Willson organised some cracking social events and Steve's Jazz and Jam nights proved popular in the autumn until the cold set in. We also enjoyed the talks about Nelson by Rear Admiral Roy Clare and Mackie III's adventures by John Clark.

The Treasurer's report at the AGM revealed record bar takings and a healthy bank balance and boat parking receipts are at an encouraging level. Plans for the new wheelchair access are complete and hopefully work will start (and finish) soon. Those of you that braved the cold Friday and Saturday evenings in the clubhouse will be pleased to hear that we are currently exploring the idea of installing oil-fired central heating with even a radiator in

the ladies' toilet!

This year is the club's 70th anniversary with lots of events planned to celebrate this and you will find more information in this newsletter and also throughout the year via the emailed TSC signals.

This season's race/event calendar has been published and distributed (to those who have paid their subs) thanks to all contributors and it promises to be another good season. Soon the car park will be buzzing with activity when the cruisers are being fitted out and launched and the dinghies take their place as usual.

Do continue to support the club by joining in the activities on and off the water. Have a great season and see you out there.

Kees Spitters - Commodore