

The Tomahawk

The bulletin of the Tomahawk Owners Association

March 2011

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Editorial

Posted with this issue of the Bulletin are the minutes of this year's AGM. I've not included them in the text as members may wish to keep the AGM documents separate from the Bulletin. The AGM was well attended and as Don notes (below) the only snag with holding the AGM at the boat show is that there is little time to hold the AGM, see the show and have a good chinwag!

Members should particularly note pages 7 and 8 of the minutes which deals with the maintenance and distribution of the TOA membership list. Any member who does not wish to be included in this list should contact the Secretary, Tony Hepworth on a.hepworth@ntlworld.com

Elsewhere in the Bulletin there is part 1 of an account of Peter Llewellyn's cruise to the Netherlands; if there are other members with interesting stories of such cruises (whether or not by Tomahawk!) please do find the time to send them to me (jengo@talk21.com) for the Bulletin – I'm sure there's a wealth of material out there amongst members!

The Commodore's Bitt

We have had two or three fine dry days down here in the sunny southern half of Britain, though my sister in Glasgow tells me it's still snowing up north. I have started work on *Malibu*, removing the Houdini hatch originally installed by David Meacher in 2000. This started to leak a couple of seasons ago, at a point where the alloy lid had received a sharp V-shaped ding, distorting the rubber seal. The ding was probably caused by the mast heel striking it whilst raising or lowering the mast, and I have made a mental note always to be present on deck during mast stepping, rather than at ground level operating the club's mast crane. Mast raising ideally requires four people and some club friends, I'm afraid, make up in enthusiasm what they lack in capability! I have taken the opportunity to clean up the hatch void with "silicone eater", and hope in the coming week to reinforce and enhance the snug fit of the replacement hatch with some hard epoxy filler, using the old hatch (liberally coated with releasing wax) to fill in some of voids left from the original fitting. The old car-bonnet lid of the original Tomahawks was quite a thin piece of moulding along its top curve.

I bought the replacement hatch (another Houdini) at the London ExCel boat show, obtaining a useful £40 discount from its list price on TCS Chandlery's stand. There was a good turn out of TOA members at the AGM, including several non-committee members who combined their attendance at the meeting with a day at the show. They made a useful contribution to our discussion on the TOA pennant, the result of which you can read in the AGM Minutes. It was good to meet members face to face, and to catch up with old friends in the RYA suite later. Some members have observed that there is insufficient social time built in to our current AGM format – in other words there isn't enough time to "do" the show, conduct the AGM *and* socialise. I have some sympathy with this point of view, but cannot readily think of an alternative. Please use the TOA forum to make alternative suggestions.

Since the last Bulletin, Penny and I have enjoyed a four week visit "down under" to Australia. This enormously exceeded our expectations, and although the wettest summer the Aussies have experienced for years, we have an abiding memory of gum trees under blue skies and extremely friendly and welcoming people. We were certainly made very welcome at the Royal Yacht Club of Victoria, on Port Philip Bay, Melbourne. My niece's husband is tactician on *Bullet* - a 31 foot Bull

9000, and invited us to crew during a mid-week "twilight" race. Although the same displacement as a Tomahawk, the Bull 9000 has a seven foot fin keel plus bulb, and large retracting bowsprit (see photo below). All the club's Bulls are dry launched, and our second photo shows *Bullet* being lifted at the end of our race, prior to being placed on her mobile cradle. Normally raced six up, owner/helmsman David was glad of two extra bodies as there was a lively F5 gusting F6 during the hour and three quarter race. After a disastrous start (last over the line when squeezed the wrong side of the windward marker) we finished eighth out of eighteen after some exhilarating sailing. I have to admit driving to windward with a deep fin makes a twin keel Tomahawk feel very slow indeed. But hey - what would we do with a seven foot fin keel on the East Coast's shallows?

Don Baines, TOA Commodore, *Malibu*



A Bull Class on a reaching plane



Bullet being recovered after racing

Mick Ballance 16.12.1930 – 7.1.2011 : An Appreciation



Opposite: Mick enjoying a glass of wine at the 2005 TOA East Coast rally.

Mick Ballance was one of the oldest members of the TOA, and had possibly been a Tomahawk owner longer than anyone, having bought the one-year-old *Mojave* (pronounced Moharvee) in 1974. He never raced her, maintaining that a good cruising boat had large fuel and water tanks, two good anchors, plenty of chain, a comprehensive tool kit, a full medical chest, proper survival gear and a well-stocked galley. "You'll never catch up with them lightweight racing boys with all that sea-going gear on board!" Mick enjoyed sailing on the TOA's East Coast rallies. His extensive knowledge of Tomahawks will be sadly missed by his East Coast TOA friends.

Mick was born and grew up in Withernsea, on the Humber's Spurn peninsular. Withernsea faces the North Sea with its north-easterly gales, and probably gave Mick both his love of the sea and his legendary resilience. It also gave him his distinctive Yorkshire vowels and

wickedly dry sense of humour. Always interested in practical matters, Mick did his National Service in the Royal Air Force as an aircraft mechanic, serving King and country in North Africa. Soon after returning to civilian life he trained as a Handicraft (wood and metalwork) teacher, met and married Phil (a primary teacher and former Wren), and moved to Essex.

Mick extended his teaching outside the school, being a watch leader with the Sail Training Association, and volunteering regularly for passages on the *Sir Winston Churchill* and the *Malcolm Miller*. Here he could combine his love of the sea with his gift for getting the best out of young people. It gave him an inexhaustible fund of stories.

Mick also did his bit towards teaching adults how to sail. Both he and Phil were qualified RYA Instructors and Examiners. For many years they worked as a double act, with Mick teaching the Day Skipper shore-based course each winter, and Phil the Yachtmaster. In the summer months they used their Tomahawk to offer practical sailing instruction. *Mojave* regularly undertook North Sea crossings to Holland, Belgium and France, adding to Mick's repertoire of yachting yarns. When Phil sadly died

nearly ten years ago Mick was devastated, but being a resilient Yorkshireman got on with his life and moved to a house on Maldon's waterfront overlooking *Mojave's* berth.

I undertook my RYA Coastal Skipper practical exam on *Mojave* in 1989, with Mick as examiner, and two other students – one doing his Day Skipper practical and the other his Competent Crew. We had five memorable days sailing in and out of the Blackwater and Crouch, up the Wallet to Harwich and up the Colne to Brightlingsea. Periodically Mick would throw his handmade Dan buoy over the side calling "Man Overboard!" and sometimes removing the key from the engine ignition. Following these manoeuvres he was full of constructive advice to all three of his students on test – imparting wisdom without making anyone feel inadequate. During our passage up the Wallet the sou'westerly wind appeared to be increasing, and I asked Mick if we should perhaps take a reef in? "You're the skipper," was his reply, "if you want to take a reef in, you take a reef in!" Once we had rounded head to wind I realised that perhaps two reefs were called for, and having arranged this, set off once more in the direction of Harwich. "I hope that was OK?" I asked Mick. "Aye," he said, eyes twinkling, "but I'll tell you something – if you hadn't put two reefs in, I'd 'ave failed you!" Some years later I acquired my own Tomahawk, *Malibu*, and was always pleased to welcome Mick on board. His suggestions for improvement were tentatively offered, but were always worth noting.

Mick had been a member of the Maldon Little Ship Club since 1968, and after moving to Maldon was a regular visitor. Wednesday evenings won't be the same without the opportunity to yarn with him. He was a Member, and former Chairman, of the Nautical Institute in London, and had numerous contacts throughout the maritime and yachting worlds. During his time in Maldon Mick was an active supporter of the Maldon and District RNLI, and never needed asking twice to go forth with the collecting boxes during RNLI weeks.

Some MLSC friends arranged an eightieth birthday celebration for Mick on December 16th. We made him a special chocolate cake, iced with a picture of *Mojave*, an "80" on the mainsail, and a single candle at the top of the mast. It was to be our last chance to be with him. We will remember a kind and warm-hearted human being, a very good sailor, and someone always ready to help others and share with them – young or old – the joys of sailing.

Don Baines

[Note: *Mojave* is now on the market. Enquiries should be made to Cathy Dines at Downs Road Boatyard, Maldon. 01621 840982]

Membership Subscriptions 2011

Members are reminded that membership subscriptions for 2010 are now due but continue to **remain at £12.00**.

Subscriptions may be made by cheque (payable to the 'Tomahawk Owners Association) and sent to: **Gordon Keyte, Cherry Bank, Dippenhall Street, Crondall, Farnham, Surrey, GU10 5NZ.**

Alternatively, members may wish to pay electronically; if so please contact me on jengo@talk21.com and I will forward the TOA account details.

When you pay your subs could you indicate whether you would like to receive the Bulletin via email? It would save much in copying costs and postage.

Tomahawk built in Lego!

Last Christmas the editor celebrated his 70th birthday, an occasion well marked by wonderful presents and a lovely family gathering. Among the presents was a miniature model of *Nokomis* – which was to be built in Lego from a specially designed kit. The actual build started at about 11.00pm on Christmas Day and the job was finished several glasses of scotch later in the early hours of Boxing Day. The result is shown opposite – no, it doesn't float and there are no sails but I'm told the helmsman is a pretty close representation! For the technical, the designer was my son Jamie who used a Lego website to design the boat from a selection of Lego components. The assembly instructions are in two volumes!



The Netherlands 2010 Part 1 Portsmouth to Amsterdam

By Peter Llewellyn

A friend, Al Blowers, who incidentally used to own Starfall, (which always does well in the Round the Island Race) had decided to take his S&S She 31, Sherpa of Rame, which was berthed at Hornet in Gosport and head for Holland and new cruising grounds.

At the end of May 2010, Al, Danny Prior (assistant bosun at Warsash SC retired) and I met up at the joint services club, stowed our gear and had a meal at the club before turning in early. We departed at first light on the Saturday morning and headed for Brighton, through the Loo channel. We had to do some motor sailing, but the passage was uneventful, until we were passing Brighton sea front, when a strong south easterly kicked and rain began to fall, rapidly reducing the visibility. The back wash off the harbour wall when we reached the marina made it very difficult to make the entrance.

The weather improved overnight and on the Sunday we set out for Dover. The wind was fitful and we had to use the engine on occasions. As we approached Dover we passed various marine landing craft and naval vessels, making their way home after attending the Dunkerque 60 anniversary commemorations. The tide made the entrance to Dover tricky.

On the Sunday we had an uneventful trip to Dunkerque. There was a fair amount of traffic in the Straits, but it was all very orderly and on more than one occasion we heard bigger vessels calling small vessels crossing the straights, telling them to hold their course and saying that if they got too close they would alter course and pass behind them.

The marinas in Dunkerque were very full and there were still some of the little ships there, but we managed to find a berth. The next day, we didn't need to leave until late morning, so we went into the town to explore and buy some food, including some good seafood which Danny the daemon chef prepared whilst underway on our next leg.

Our next passage took us to Blankenberge in Belgium a very popular seaside resort. We had no problem in finding a berth there, after a pleasant sail, although the electrics did cause some consternation. The posts were pay in the slot, and having secured Sherpa, we tried to connect up to the nearest one which would not take the one euro inserted. We tried everyone in turn, until we had all our cable run out and a spare connected and came to a post with a label on it saying the charge was 50 cents! The one 50cents kept the fridge/cooler running until the next day. Again, we went exploring the next morning and had a walk along the seafront.

On the Wednesday, we set out from Blankenberge, for Vlissingen in brightening sunshine with a stiff breeze and had an exhilarating sail past Zeebrugge. Entering the Westerschelde, the tide was sweeping us along at an alarming speed and we needed to cross the estuary to enter the canal system at Vlissingen. Huge vlcs were approaching and picking up pilots to take them up to Antwerp and it was a little unnerving picking the right time to cross, at the same time dodging the ferries that were plying back and forth.

Al had read all the books and regulations which indicated the discharge of any form of waste into the water in the Netherlands was forbidden. He had borrowed a portapotty and had brought a large plastic container for domestic waste water. However, having told the lock keeper of the measures he had taken, it was indicated that they don't bother about older boats that don't have holding tanks. Although Al had also obtained and was carrying all the necessary paperwork and forms for crew details etc, he was never asked for any of these items throughout the cruise!

On entering the canal system we saw Forebear 8, a large motor cruiser, from our club at Warsash owned by Harry and Jackie North, who met up with us the following day and cruised with us up to Amsterdam.

We motored up to Middleberg through a number of remotely controlled bridges and found a very convenient mooring, close to the sailing club where we went for a beer in the evening. The following morning we walked a short distance to the town centre where it was market day. Danny the chef went shopping and Al and I had a wonder around the market and sat in a cafe overlooking the square marvelling at the number and variety of the bicycles and contraptions the locals were using as transport for themselves and their children.



Yacht basin bridge, Middleberg.



The Sailing Club bar at Middleberg



The harbour, Veere



Cheese stall, Goes



Barge and pusher



Dordrecht, nothing vertical!

That afternoon we motored up to Veere, a beautiful little harbour with a very quaint waterfront and a good sailing club bar overlooking the entrance. A friendly Frenchman made fast alongside overnight.

On the Friday morning we left Veere and sailed down an inland sea skirting round numerous wooded islands, devoid of buildings, but dotted with tents and encampments. Further on the waterway narrowed and we had to resort to the engine to reach a huge lock system which took us out into a tidal area. We navigated around a large headland and waited to enter another lock which took us into yet another canal leading to Goes. This canal was through a very rural area where many of the local population were sunning themselves with very little left to the imagination! We had to wait for about 45 minutes for a rail bridge to open to reach the town centre, so we took the opportunity to enjoy a gin and tonic. Many of the marinas are owned and manned by sailing clubs and their members and the one we were heading for was one of the best we encountered. We were met at the entrance by a wild looking bearded Dutchman bare footed and in nothing but shorts on a brakeless bicycle and directed to a berth between wooden piles and flanked on both side by other vessels, nose to the shore with a short jetty to one side of the bow giving access to the shore. We were in a circular tree lined pool, with lawns running down to the waters

edge and picnic tables and benches only feet away at which we had our meal on the Saturday night. The natives were very friendly and we took full advantage of the clubhouse. The bar consists of a series of fridges stocked with bottled beers and the odd soft drink. There is no barperson, just an honesty box and the price of the beer 75cents! I took the opportunity to get rid of all the shrapnel I'd accumulated on my trips abroad for some years.

We spent Saturday and Sunday in Goes, and went to a concert in the church given by the Surrey Youth Orchestra. Sadly there were no more than a couple of dozen people there, although they had played the previous night to some 6 or 7 hundred people.

We then travelled out on the same canal back to the tidal waters and had a long passage via various waterways and canals to Willemstad, a pretty fortified town and then the following day, to Dordrecht. Outside we had to wait about three hours for a railway bridge to open (it only opens two or three times a day). We stayed in the yacht club's marina which is accessed through a small swing bridge off the main river.

After a good look round the centre of the town and dinner on board, we went to the club. There must have been some 50 or 60 men, all standing facing the bar with music and stands and a conductor putting them through their paces. It was the Dordrecht male voice choir who meet there at least once a month. They welcomed us with open arms and invited us to join in which we did with gusto. Most of the material consisted of sea shanties, many in English and a good time was had by all!

The following day we skirted Rotterdam and locked past a huge storm barrier, heading for Gouda. We found a pleasant mooring near the town centre, but the facilities for boat owners were appalling. We ate out in the evening having visited the cheese market and having dodged the most violent thunderstorm.

The next leg of the journey found us in Oude-Wetering for the night before heading to Haarlem. There were no facilities there and we would have had to moor next to the road in the town centre so we carried on, paid our first fee for travelling down that section of canal and found a quiet berth at a secluded yacht club for the night. Whilst waiting for a lock the next morning we saw an eel fisherman tending his nets with a heron sitting on the bow of his boat which he fed with the occasional eel.

We continued through a series of bridges in convoy with other yachts, the shores becoming ever more industrialised, until we reached the North Sea Canal and turned towards Amsterdam. There are numerous waterways entering the canal from both sides and an amazing amount of traffic. Some of the barges are linked together with tugs pushing them, and hundreds of feet long, so one has to keep a wary eye. There are also the hydrofoils which travel at huge speed up and down between IJmuiden and Amsterdam to contend with. We eventually berthed at Sixhaven marina which is across the canal from the main station.

The rest of the day we spent tidying up the boat and sightseeing in Amsterdam.

We left AI with the boat and caught a train from the central station to Schipol and flew back to Southampton. We seemed to spend more time taxiing round Schipol than we did in the air to Southampton! It's a huge airport.

I went back with AI for a further period of nearly three weeks in July/August to cruise further north, about which I will write in the next newsletter.

Tomahawk Spinnakers

We don't seem to hear much about spinnakers in the Bulletin – possibly because the Tomahawk is such a great cruising boat – who wants to go faster?

Nokomis was bought with three jibs, a mainsail and a spinnaker and over the past 20 or so years, the three jibs have been replaced by a furling genoa and the main has slab reefing (controlled from the cockpit).

The one sail that hasn't received much attention on *Nokomis* is the spinnaker. As supplied, the spinnaker halyard is rather short with cleats on the mast and the spinnaker has to be hoisted from the fore deck. Likewise, the spinnaker pole control lines have to be adjusted and cleated on the mast – all of this making a lot of work for the fore-deck hand! The spinnaker bag has to be attached to the pulpit where, now that the furling gear is in position, makes for little room for the spinnaker to be drawn out smoothly. Recent experiences in the Round the Island Race revealed how long it took to deploy the spinnaker – some improvements were definitely called for!

Initially, I explored the idea of replacing the spinnaker with an asymmetric cruising chute since this could potentially be used single handed and in any event, would avoid handling a spinnaker pole. The

problem here is that there needs to be sufficient clearance at the tack to draw the chute through behind its luff but ahead of the forestay. On *Nokomis* this would require an extension to the stem head – not impossible but an expense I'd rather not have.

Another problem with cruising chutes is that they are of little use for dead down wind sailing and this is inevitably needed on the RTIR! So, I've decided to stay with the existing spinnaker and improve the sail handling arrangements. The first modification is a side launch bag that can be clipped to the guard rails before sailing. (A 'snuffer sock' was considered but seems a bit OTT for a small boat like the Tomahawk.) Next, the spinnaker halyard will be replaced by a much longer line that will allow the spinnaker to be hoisted from the cockpit. The spinnaker pole control lines will also be lengthened so that the pole can be controlled from the cockpit – to avoid having too many cleats on the cabin roof, I plan to use some of the reefing cleats to secure the pole lines. Hopefully this will make spinnaker hoisting faster and less of an ordeal for the deckhand!

However, it would be interesting to see how TOA members have dealt with this problem. I would be delighted to receive comments and suggestions on how to improve spinnaker handling – and perhaps continue this theme in the next Bulletin.

Gordon Keyte

Tomahawk Skeg

TOA Website manager Ian Bremner has dismantled the skeg on his *Cochise* in order to remove the lower rudder bush. While the skeg was removed he has made tracings and taken photographs in case any member needs to make one. Ian is happy to send full size tracings and pics - just email Ian on lanbremner77@btinternet.com

TOA 2011 Rally programme:

East Coast Rally, July 28 to August 4th, Contact Don Baines, donbaines@keme.co.uk

See last page (p8) for details.

South Coast

Yarmouth, 14 and 15 May: Contact Peter Llewellyn, pjmjl68@yahoo.co.uk

Tentative bookings have been made at Harold Hayles Yard in Yarmouth for the weekend of 14th & 15th May for up to ten boats including two 35 ft and a 30ft. The 35ft boats will be charged at £33, a 30ft at £28.50 and the Tomahawks at £24 each. Water and electrics are available at no extra charge. They will require confirmation of the numbers, including boat names nearer the time. At this stage we propose booking one or more tables at the Wheatsheaf, as their food and wine is always good.

Members planning to attend this event should contact Peter (email address above) as soon as possible so that Peter can confirm numbers.

Cross Channel, 9 to 13 June: Contact Peter Llewellyn

For the cross channel rally, the dates are 9th – 13th June, leaving on the Thursday evening and sailing over- night to Cherbourg which can be entered at any state of the tide. We then have the option of sailing around to St Vaast la Hogue if weather permits and returning from there on the Monday. High Water Portsmouth on the 9th 1758 BST . If there is too much south in the wind, we could always sail down the Solent and out via the Needles to achieve a better angle of attack! On the return, on Monday Low water Portsmouth is at 15.20 so one would have an east going tide on entering the Solent from 14.20 to 21.13, an hour before high water.

Again, members planning to go on this rally should contact Peter well before the event so that he can liaise on arrangements for meeting up, bad weather plan, etc.

Keyhaven, provisionally 15 and 16 September: Contact Roland Liddell,

conservatorsw@aol.com

Further details concerning this event will be published in the next Bulletin.

THE SIXTH TOMAHAWK EAST COAST RALLY
Thursday July 28 - Thursday August 4 2011



HAWKEYE & WI HIO CROSSING THE HARWICH DEEP WATER CHANNEL, TOA RALLY 2010

The Tomahawk Owners' Association has arranged an East Coast Rally for all Tomahawk owners and friends on July 28 - August 4 2011. This year we plan to visit the River Medway and The Swale, and if the winds are favourable to head up the Thames to Tower Bridge and St Katherine's Haven.

The approximate itinerary will be : Thursday evening Bradwell Marina, Friday evening either Harty Ferry or Stangate Creek, Saturday evening Chatham Marina, Sunday evening Queenborough, Monday evening St Katherine's Haven, Tuesday evening Thurrock Yacht Club, Wednesday evening Bradwell Marina, (or home mooring for Medway / Harwich boats), Thursday evening home mooring for Blackwater boats.

Such a week long cruise is very weather dependent, and may include some early (04.00) starts to work the tides in The Swale and the Medway. But there are some fine Spring tides from Monday to Wednesday, and with a favourable wind by leaving Queenborough by 07.00 on the Monday it will be possible to pick up the early flood all the way to St Katherines (45NM) to arrive before HW at 15.50.

A barbecue is planned at Harty Ferry or Stangate creek on the Friday; or eat ashore in Queenborough if the wind requires us to seek shelter.

We'll give it a go anyway ! Detailed passage plans to be circulated to participants July 24.

If you would like to join us, please contact Don Baines (*Malibu* - MMSI 235033149) on : 01621 853979, Mobile : 07596 508812, email : donbaines@keme.co.uk .