

The RNVRYacht Club

NEWS UPDATE

SUMMER 2015

By the Commodore:- *Summer Cruise 2015*

I was full of admiration for the perseverance of the yachts that battled along the South coast to get to Ramsgate & Dover for the Summer Cruise. Well done to Alouette, Black Swan and Blue Rider. They encountered up to 40 knot gusts and very heavy seas, mostly on the nose and it took these yachts a lot longer than anticipated to get to Ramsgate. However, with some relief they did make it for the dinner at the Royal Temple YC, which I hope was enjoyed by all. Our guest was the commodore Frank Martin and he gave an enlightening talk on the history of the RTYC.

On Saturday a trip to the Ramsgate Tunnels was arranged and about 14 club members had a most interesting guided tour. These tunnels under the town are some of the most extensive in the UK and the underground system could house all the inhabitants of Ramsgate from air raids in WWII. They were created just in time by the town Engineer who persisted with his ideas against opposition.

Two weeks before our cruise the town enjoyed the 75 anniversary of the Dunkirk Little Ships which saw Ramsgate Harbour very full of some 50 Dunkirk Little Ships and the town council organised several events for them.

Last week we saw another local event of National importance, The Bi-centenary of the Battle of Waterloo, the last of the 200 anniversary commemoration of the French Napoleonic Wars. The events included the landing at Broadstairs "Viking Bay" of the "New Waterloo Dispatch" and the Waterloo Services at Canterbury Cathedral. Many parts of Ramsgate date back to this era. The re-enactment was done by the East India Company sailing Squadron who undertook to row the dispatches ashore.

The Commodore's little boat!

Over the winter I have been refitting a Verl 790, 26foot cruiser/racer which I bought with Stan Jacob. This was bought at an auction and was somewhat in a neglected state of repair. We managed to get her ready for the summer cruise, with only having been out in her twice before. For a yacht 38 years old, she performed admirably and the engine kept going, we also managed to find quite a few more faults. Stan and I have

decided that this yacht is available to members for experience or just fun. Please let your friends know.

Volunteer

Vice Admiral Sir Donald Gosling KCVO RNR through the Gosling Foundation is an outstandingly generous beneficiary of the sailing world. Some members may be aware that our yacht "Volunteer" had some necessary hull repairs undertaken at the beginning of the season. So it was with great pleasure that I was able to accept a very kind grant from The Gosling Foundation. This not only contributed to the cost of the repairs but provides a buffer for other incidents.

She is now much improved and the "Volunteer" project has demonstrated it is a draw for members to the club and it has assisted in encouraging new serving members at younger ages.

I would like to say a huge thank you to Sir Gosling for his generosity and a big welcome as an honorary member of the RNVRYC.

Nigel Collingwood
Commodore RNVRYC



On a later occasion the Commodore of the Royal Temple Yacht Club reported:-

During June we welcomed numerous visiting yachtsmen. One highlight was the formal dinner for a delightful group from The Royal Naval Volunteer Yacht Club at the start of their annual cruise which sees members sailing from their home ports on the South and East Coasts and meeting up for several weeks of cruising. RTYC has a number of members who are also members of the RNVRYC and, in fact, Nigel Collingwood is their present Commodore. We enjoyed an excellent meal and an enjoyable evening in very good company. We would certainly welcome RNVRYC back if they wish to visit the only Royal Harbour in the UK in the future.



YOUR COMMITTEE: The rules sub-committee has been addressing the issues that have been commented upon over time. The big item, Name change, is not going to happen. Our club name will remain the same. There will be some detail on clarifying the formatting of the name. There are anticipated to be significant recommendations to other rules and improving the opportunity for franchise for members unable to attend AGMs. A report will be prepared for submission to the main committee for consideration and presentation to the members in the New Year.

BY EDITOR: I regret there is an absence of reports of some more notable activities of the club. I expect these to be part of the Autumn printed Newsletter.

THE CLUB PROGRAMME SO FAR:

2nd-4th May: Bank Holiday Meet
Buckler's Hard (Rotating Supper) & Gin's Farm.

8th -21st Jun: East Meets West Annual Cruise.

Dinner RTYC Ramsgate, Calais

17th Jun Dinner In Dunkerque

27th Jun; Round The Island Race Solent & IoW

4/5th Jul; East Coast Meeting – RNVR/ RNSA Bradwell

31st Jul - 10th Aug Baltic Revisited British Kiel YC

22nd -31st Aug: Five Castles Cruise Solent Area.

Stories and photos will appear in the printed Autumn Newsletter.

THE CLUB PROGRAMME TO FOLLOW:-

10th Oct: Autumn Meet Dinner at Hornet SSC - Mike Morgan

11th Oct: Laying-up Lunch RNC&RAYC - Peter Costalas

20th Nov: Annual Dinner HQ Wellington Temple Stairs

- Nigel Collingwood & Peter Culver

7th Dec Christmas Party

13th Jan AGM Naval Club

ROUND THE ISLAND RACE:- A very different event from last year. No wind shadows, or holes, just a lot of it. Peter Costalas, seen here with deep concentration, helmed throughout most of the race. A list of the Club member boats is shown below.

Sail number	Boat name	Boat type	TCC	Division	Flag
GBR5253	SILVER SHAMROCK	Half Tonner	0.899	IRC Division 3C	SILV
GBR6504N	TALISMAN	Seaquest Prima 38	1.067	IRC Division 1B	GRN
GBR8883R	VOLUNTEER	Beneteau First 40.	1.057	IRC Division 1B	GRN
GBR3144L	MYST	Jeanneau Sun Ody	0.952	ISC Rating System	DAYG
GBR3132L	SAPPHIRE	Hunter Legend 36	0.968	ISC Rating System	DAYG
GBR9111T	KARELIA	Beneteau 50	1.083	ISC Rating System	BLCK



THE AMERICA'S CUP RACING came to town with all the song and dance of 220,000 people on Portsmouth Common, we are told, viewing the 4 races in the Solent. This will be repeated in July 2016. The RNVRYC joined in with berths in Hornet and a dinner at HSSC. Above includes the Ben Ainsley Racing HQ in the Camber docks at the entrance to Portsmouth Harbour.



RNR OFFICERS ASSOCIATION LIVERPOOL – SEA URCHINS

One of our members Cdr Phil Russ as President of the above association whose members are known as Sea Urchins would like to extend a warm welcome to RNVRYC members in the North West to attend any of our monthly lunches at HMS Eaglet. Lunches are held on the second Wednesday of the month, at a cost of £18.00 for a three course meal with coffee. Please come along. You might like the cut of our jib! Should you be interested please contact Phil Russ or Cedric Loughran whose details are in your handbook or on the website.

FOR THOSE PREPARING FOR THE 2016 CARIBBEAN CRUISE –

or, does modern technology reduce the confusion of battle?

Operation “Urgent Fury”

Next year’s Caribbean Rally is returning to the Spice Island of **Grenada** which in 1983 was the setting for one of the lesser known conflicts of the Cold War. Grenada was granted independence from Britain in 1974 but in 1979 a left wing coup lead by **Maurice Bishop** and his “New Jewel Movement” seized power and suspended the constitution. For a time, the left wing movement had a measure of popular support and work started on an international airport to boost tourism and stimulate the economy. In October 1983, an **internal power** struggle amongst the coup leaders resulted in a radical faction detaining Bishop briefly before executing him and some of his closest aides. The increasing left wing leanings and especially the close ties with Castro’s Cuba were of considerable concern to the US and outline plans had been made for US intervention to halt the spread of communism in the area. There were on the island, 400 or so US medical students at the St Georges University medical school and a mistaken belief that the airport under construction would be used by the **Soviet Union** in the event of war. The new coup was the trigger for these plans to be put into effect and a task force was rapidly assembled from some units that had been earmarked to go to Lebanon.

The British Foreign Office became aware of some of this activity and when Bishop was executed on 23rd October, RNHQ at Northwood was alerted and a flash signal was sent to the West Indies guardship **HMS ANTRIM** which had just started a visit to Cartagena Columbia. The signal instructed HMS ANTRIM to “proceed with all despatch” to Grenada to evacuate British Nationals if things took a turn for the worse.

I was going about my duties onboard HMS ANTRIM that day and together with the other Heads of Department, I was called to the Operations Room and briefed by my Captain that instead of hosting the cocktail party, we were to make immediate preparations to sail at 1800hrs. We completed fuelling, embarked fresh provisions and having disembarked the pilot, and worked up to 28 knots on an easterly heading for the 900 nm passage. Throughout the 24th October we continued our fast passage skirting Aruba and preparing the ship and ship’s company to **receive evacuees**. In the early hours

of 25th October as we approached Grenada, we were overflowed by a USN aircraft which refused to speak to us on the radio even when challenged. It is fortunate his IFF was operational or he might have been the first casualty of the operation which by this stage was well underway. As day broke, we found ourselves surrounded by the USN Task Group which comprised the carrier USS Independence, several Assault Ships and a bevy of escorts with many helicopters buzzing around. By mid-morning we had been able to contact the Task Group Commander to explain our presence and were invited not to impede the operation. During that day we observed the activity from a safe distance but witnessed some of the **escorts firing on ground targets** and explosions from the vicinity of Point Salines airport which we later discovered were from collisions of US helicopters. It was a surreal experience seeing the USN in full combat order whilst we were there in our tropical whites with lots of goofers on the upperdeck with cameras at the ready. After 24 hours of hard fighting ashore, things started easing up and the Governor General Paul Scoon was brought out to us by USN helicopter to speak with our Captain and use our secure communications to brief the Foreign Office. It soon became apparent that there would be no requirement to evacuate British Nationals but we also learned the Governor General had been asked by the US to retrospectively request the **US invasion**. To make it look better diplomatically, 300 or so troops and para-military units from other West Indian islands were rapidly airlifted in to assist in the restoration of order. They did not take part in any of the fighting.

We now know that even as the first units were being landed, Ronald Reagan spoke with Margaret Thatcher to reassure her that the US was not going to invade. The Lady was not impressed! What else do we know? The US suffered 19 fatalities, many from **Blue on Blue** incidents largely caused by poor communications and a lack of proper maps. They had relied upon tourist maps with the new airport hand drawn there on, hence map coordinates were imprecise. A marine outfit fighting in the north of the island was unable to contact the Task Group to call for an air-strike until they rang the Pentagon from a call box to pass on the request. The opposing forces sustained about 65 fatalities (Cubans and Grenadians) but 24 civilians were also killed, many at a mental hospital which was **bombed in error**. No medical

students were hurt or even threatened and the airport was found not to have had any secrets – it had been designed by a Canadian company and construction was being overseen by a British company albeit with local labour and 500 Cubans. In the liberation process, somebody left open the gates of the Grenada Zoo and all the animals escaped except for one injured vulture! Coming days after the US Marin Barracks in Beirut had been blown up with heavy casualties, the operation did however restore some confidence in the US military and it went down well back at home.

We in **HMS ANTRIM** patrolled up and down the coast for the next 2 weeks until it was clear that normality was being re- stored ashore. We were then released to continue our deployment which included a brief stop at Grand Cayman, chasing the odd drug running speedboat and visits to West Palm Beach and Savannah.

Grenada, as seen today, bears few scars from 1983 but Hurricane Ivan in September 2004 caused widespread damage and decimated the spice crops. I visited the island 4 months after Ivan and the harbour was still littered with sunken boats, many roofs were missing and they were still rounding up the convicts that had escaped from the prison where the walls had blown down. The tourist industry has recovered, cruise ships visit and the international airport now bears the name of Maurice Bishop, the deposed leader of the original coup. The locals are a friendly bunch leading a typical Caribbean lifestyle and a pleasure to meet so no worries!



The aftermath of Ivan.



A peaceful St George's Harbour

MikeMorgan

