

Britannia Squadron

2005 Christmas Dinner



Date: Friday December 16, 2005

Time: Cocktails at 1830, (Open Bar)
Dinner at 1900

Location: Sunset Room of the
Britannia Yacht Club,
2777 Cassels Street
Ottawa, Ontario

Menu: Full turkey dinner. A limited assortment of wine will be provided at each table.

Cost: \$20.00 per person (Including wine.)

ALL Squadron members, their guests and students presently enrolled in the Squadron training program are welcome.

Please call Fred Herrndorf (613 226-2964), prior to December 6, to make reservations for this event.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Nov 17 th	7:30 P.M. Bridge Meeting Britannia Yacht Club
Dec 16 th	Squadron's Christmas Dinner Britannia Yacht Club
25-27 Oct 2007	CPS National Conference Marriot Hotel, Ottawa

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The Running Fix



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Past Commanders

1964-1966	James B. Milne
1966-1968	Earnest E. Criddle
1968	Peter Wilson
1968-1970	William K. McConnell
1970-1972	Paul C.M. LaDelpha
1972-1973	Arthur N. Huddleston
1973-1974	George W. Booker
1974-1976	Ralph C. Smith
1976-1978	Ellen Devine
1978-1979	Edward Wiggs
1979-1980	Jack Buchanan
1980-1981	Kenneth Findlay
1981-1983	Jim Craig
1983-1985	Wm. Newlands
1985-1987	Stuart McNeely
1987-1988	K. Joan Feltham
1988-1990	Howard G. Peck
1990-1992	Larry Brown
1992-1993	Alex Falkner
1993-1996	Elaine Gregory
1996-1997	Ed Gauthier
1997-1999	Chris Borgal
1999-2000	Bruce Henderson
1999-2000	Laura Seidl
2000-2001	Jessica Austria-Henderson
2001-2002	Rino Thériault
2002-2003	Chris Brown
2003-2005	Nelson Hardy

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Now that November has arrived and a wonderful boating season comes to a close, and our thoughts turn to preparing our boats and homes for another winter, some of us might be wondering how we will keep busy over the next few months of cold, often dreary winter days. One of the best and affordable activities that I know of, to help pass away the winter blues, is to

take a boating course. This is a great way to increase your knowledge base and be better prepared to venture out on the water in the Spring, at the start of a new boating season. There is no doubt that taking a boating course significantly increases our appreciation of the sport of boating, no matter what type or size of vessel that you may own. Please take the time to consider, if signing up for a boating course will be beneficial to you this winter. Registration information for the January 2006 training program can be found on the B PSS Web Site. (www.storm.ca/~bpsscps)

I am pleased to announce that we have found a new treasurer for Britannia Squadron. Mr. David Root has accepted the position of Squadron Treasurer and will officially join the Bridge on November 16, 2005. He will carry the rank of 1st Lieutenant. Mr. Root has had an extensive career in finance and brings with him, many valuable and useful skills that will help ensure that the squadron's finances are on the right track. As is the usual custom, Mr. Root will be officially sworn in as a Bridge Officer at the November 16 bridge meeting. The Squadron Bridge is still looking for a Training Officer and a Supply Officer in order to bring the bridge staff to full compliment. It is important that we fill these positions as soon as possible so that the squadron can continue to offer a varied training program that will benefit all boaters in the area. If there is anyone in our membership who can spare one evening per month to attend a bridge meeting, please contact me or our Executive Officer, Fred Herrndorf.

I would like to announce that this year's Squadron Christmas Dinner, will be held on Friday December, 16, 2005. It will take place in the Sunset Room at the Britannia Yacht Club at 1900. All members and their guests are welcome to attend. It is your squadron, and it is your opportunity to help celebrate the holiday season along with the members of your bridge. Please refer to the announcement elsewhere in this issue of the Running Fix for further details.

In closing, I look forward to seeing many of you at the Christmas Dinner in December. For those squadron members who will not be able to attend, on behalf of all of us who are serving on the Bridge, we wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Joyful Holiday Season! ❖

Summer Storm

By Ted & Venetia Moorhouse

Monday August 8/05, having returned to Trillium V, after a 10 day land cruise we departed Little Current at 1410 and were soon running before a hot wind, north on the Wuabano Channel. Venetia suggested I give U Got A B Kiddin a VHF call and much to my surprise we were rewarded with a scratchy response as they were departing Spanish. They were in company of Blue Horizon. Happy hour at Eagle Island! We anchored just south of the small island in Eagle Harbour. After two nights Blue Horizon departed but this harbour still had a hold on us. The hot weather persisted. Before noon Venetia and I dinghied north to Frechette, where we took a close look at the rather nice cottage on a shallow harbour on the south side. Returning, a mildly vigorous south west wind gave us some refreshing spray. Over my shoulder McBean Mountain only about 4 miles away was barely visible. Later, just after Venetia had invited Milton and Val-le for a 1630 afternoon visit, Coast Guard Weather broadcast a "severe thunderstorm watch" for the North Channel. I received this information with some scepticism reflecting upon the seemingly frequent exaggerations on the TV weather channel. At 1610 Venetia claimed she heard thunder and shortly my weak ears also detected a distant low lazy rumble, characteristic of an itinerant summer thunder shower. In the hazy afternoon sky the source of thunder was veiled, however it seemed to be south of us, off the port bow. Radar confirmed this with a small return at the extreme of its longest range, 16 miles. Although the sky was darkening I was mildly disappointed when Milton postponed their immanent arrival as it seemed to me the shower would likely skirt the harbour anyway.

By 1625 a sprinkling began. What luck I thought, this might help the parched Blueberrys. The gentle rain was joined by frequent stabs of ground lightening descending from a black broad band of cloud about a mile south, far more vigorous than I expected. Radar showed a strong return, spread across the screen, bearing down on us. Several other returns to the south east and north west also materialized suggesting that storms were building elsewhere. This could be exciting I thought, as a real gully washer began with vigorous gusts. Venetia shrieked our jib sheets are in the wind and she jumped to secure them. I fetched my camera to catch a view of the now hardly visible island with the wind whipped water in the foreground. Before I could shoot a great gust caught the dinghy. It was not completely airborne while showing its full belly. Putting the camera down, I lunged to the transom, to haul the dinghy in close and tie the painter as low as possible. Even though I was protected by the dodger and biminy I was soaked through.

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Ship Figureheads

Robert Dandurand P

My mate and I were in England this past July and made a point to visit the National Maritime Museum. On the way, we docked at Greenwich to see the Cutty Sark. I was vaguely aware of the tale but found out that, in 1790, Robert Burns wrote the poem *Tam o' Shanter*. Burns imagines that after drinking into the night with friends, Tam o' Shanter begins his dark ride home alone, crooning as he goes. Seeing a short-skirted witch dancing in the churchyard, Tam yells something drunkenly appreciative, and although the witch angrily flies after him, she is only able to yank the tail off of his horse just before he gallops across a bridge. Tam is safe on the other side, knowing that witches cannot ever cross running water, such as that flowing beneath the bridge he's just left behind. A copy of the white witch figurehead, horse's tail in hand (see picture), is on the tea clipper's bow and the original is displayed inside the vessel, as is an impressive collection amassed over a lifetime by a 'landlubber' with a passion for nautical articles, Sydney Cumbers (a-k-a 'Long John Silver'). He presented the collection in 1953.



The origins of the figurehead and other forms of ornament lie in prehistoric times. The decoration and carving of vessels was common among the seafaring civilisations of the ancient world with evidence of Egyptian examples dating from before 3,000 BC. The precise reasons for the painting of an eye, or the mounting of a carved head in human or animal form, near the bow of a boat are uncertain. The Chinese and Egyptians are credited with having originated the practice when seafarers of those two ancient civilizations instituted the custom of painting oculi (eyes) on the bows of their vessels, believing that these adornments would enable the ships to find their way. The Phoenicians not only adopted the primitive eye motif for their trading vessels at an early date, they later adorned the prows of their galleys with carved wooden likenesses of deities, animals, birds, and serpents. The prows of vessels in which the Vikings, Danes and Normans engaged in their far-flung operations rode high out of the water and were frequently tipped with intimidating dragons, sea serpents of fierce animal heads.

Women used to be considered bad luck on a boat, unless they were naked: then they calm storms at sea. Supposedly faith in the pros of female nudity was why figurehead design turned toward topless women for models, replacing lions, serpents, dolphins and Poseidon.

Changes in the design of ships have always affected the size, shape, and position of a figurehead. The construction of fore and after castles in the fourteenth century left no obvious site for the figurehead and they were replaced with heraldic designs and painted decoration on larger vessels. From the second half of the fifteenth century onwards, further technical innovation permitted the return of the figurehead. The decoration on the warships of the expanding European navies became increasingly elaborate during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when nations and city-states throughout Europe began vying for nautical supremacy. At that time, England, France, Spain, Portugal and Holland, as well as the Italian city-states of Genoa and Venice, began jockeying for power, and the increasingly lavish and sophisticated vessels that were launched from their dockyards continued to stress the importance of intimidating figureheads.

The high water mark of figureheads was reached during the clipper-ship era dating from the early and middle years of the 19th century. The graceful bows of these streamlined ships presented an excellent opportunity to display figureheads to their best advantage. By the late 19th century, however, figureheads on most vessels gave way to simpler and less expensive billet heads (i.e. scroll carvings resembling the end of a violin). This change took place because the carvings were expensive and easily damaged, either by rough weather or in battle.

Figureheads and other carving continued to adorn wooden sailing vessels until they disappeared with the gradual introduction of modern steam-powered steel ships.

Sources:

- www.geocities.com/cptblood_1999/figurehead.html
- National Maritime Museum website (<http://www.nmm.ac.uk/>)
- Cuttysark.org.uk
- www.schoonerman.com/figureheads.htm
- Battleshipmc.com ❖

Narrow Boating in England

Robert Dandurand

My mate, Lisa, was to be in Cambridge, England, on business in mid-July and suggested I join her for a few days of R&R. "Not for me the spouses' tours", I said. She was not to be deterred and suggested I look over some websites on navigating the canals of England. I had mentioned, on occasion, my wish to travel through France on a *péniche*. England would do just as well, she argued.

We looked at sites and asked for brochures. We looked over boat amenities, prices, date availability and routes. We made a choice, sent our deposit and started daydreaming.

After landing three hours late in Heathrow and missing the last bus to Bath to reach Hilperton by taxi before closing hours at the Marina, we were lucky to reach an employee willing to wait for us after hours to provide access to our rented boat, and sparing us to find alternate accommodations for the night. We board the *Elaine* from the stern into the permanent sleeping cabin with double berth. The middle section has the enclosed head, sink and shower. Next comes the gas stove, sink, fridge, storage space and salon area with its double settee. There is even a colour t.v.

The next morning, we are provided instructions on the handling of the 47-foot narrowboat, its daily maintenance, and the operation of the locks and swing bridges we will encounter before being released to our adventure.



Narrow boats meeting.

During the industrial revolution of the early 18th century the transportation of heavy goods by road was limited by a poor road network. Cart-horses were the only form of pulling power and the alternative of movement of loads by river was very limited. In 1759, the Duke of Bridgewater obtained an Act of Parliament to build the first canal from his coalmines. Built using just hand tools, the canal tunneled right into the mines and coal was loaded directly on the horse-drawn boats. Over the next 30 years, numerous canals were built but the introduction of the railway

brought an end to the commercial use for the canals. Today, the revitalized canal system greets thousands for pleasure use.

The pace is to be slow, that of a brisk walker = 4 mph, allowing to admire the scenery and avoid damaging the banks of the canal. We set off easterly on the Kennet and Avon Canal, getting a feel for the boat. The canal is narrow, at about 18 feet, narrower at bridges (eight feet!) while the boat is six and a half feet wide. Within an hour, we come to the Semington Swing Bridge. Lisa feels more comfortable dealing with it than maneuvering the boat so I very slowly approach the bank, and while remaining idle, she steps ashore, goes to unlock the padlock and chain and swings the bridge. I put on a burst of throttle and nose the boat back to the middle of the channel to pass the bridge and then immediately power down and rest against the temporary dock on the other side while she reverses her actions and steps back aboard and I motor off again.

We continue on to Semington and come upon the first series of locks. We didn't know how much time would be involved at each lock and how many boats might be ahead of us so we had decided that we were to go the other way, towards Bath, where only a couple of locks were on route after testing out the boat. I execute a 180-degree turn using the "winding hole". As most of the canal is 18 feet wide and the average narrow boat is 61-foot long, there are these "gashes" every few miles that widen the canal to 72 feet, allowing boats to turn around. We then moor along the embankment for it is time to find lunch! As you might know, the canal is bordered by a towpath, as there was a time the boats were pulled by horses or oxen, which is now used by walkers, cyclists and boaters. All are allowed to moor along the towpath, as it is all public property. Where there is no towpath, private owners guard their embankment. We didn't provision before we left and there are no grocers for miles around so we ate at the Somerset Arms Pub. To me, it is remarkable to sit in a building from the 1500s that still serves its designed purpose.

Anyway, we returned to the boat and pulled the spikes we used as mooring stakes and pushed off. The canal is sinuous and bordered with mature poplars. The forest is remarkably clear of underbrush. We made it to Widbrook Bridge by 19:00 and decide again to moor and lock up for dinner. We had plotted to stop at the Beef & Barge Pub, with its boat "parking lot", but decided to stay against the embankment for the night and walk there and back. The bangers and mash were tasty and plentiful.

The next morning is sunny and warm. I do the required inspection by opening the weed hatch, checking the coolant level, the oil level, and grease the propeller shaft before starting the engine. We have little distance to cover before encountering our first lock. I come alongside the dock and tie up as Lisa goes to operate the paddles and gates to let me in. This one is a double so another boat asks to join me. We drop approx. 12 feet before the gates open

Narrow Boating in England *(Cont'd)*

again. I throttle slowly out and must find space to wait for Lisa to join me. She has to navigate through a narrow street, a restaurant, and a patio full of patrons to reach the embankment. Luckily she was given directions at the lock or she might have been lost in the warren.

We keep chugging along and admiring the scenery. The Avoncliff Aquaduct is an impressive sight and architectural feat. Aware that we must return the boat by 10 a.m. tomorrow and the distance to

make good, we decide on turning back mid-afternoon near the Dundas Aquaduct. Lisa will operate the lock again at Brandon-on-Avon and we'll find a suitable mooring spot by dusk within walking distance of the town but not in time to dine (9:00 p.m.) so we had to resort to East Indian take-out!

Our last morning on the boat is rather a sad affair: we were getting quite comfortable with the routine and pace and we have to turn it in already. ❖

The English Navy ensign and Trafalgar

By Robert Dandurand P

In this year of commemoration of the Battle of Trafalgar, the historic triumph of the Royal Navy conceals a little known piece of naval lore.

In 1627 the English Fleet (as it was then) was divided into three squadrons, the Red, Blue and White, in that order of seniority, and each had an English ensign in the appropriate colour with St George's Cross in the top corner. By 1653 the order of seniority had been changed to Red, White and Blue and in 1702 a large red cross was placed on the White Ensign to differentiate it from the French ensign, which at the time was plain white. In 1707, following the political union of England and Scotland, the three ensigns came to bear the Union Flag in the top corner as they do

this day. In 1801 the additional red diagonal of St Patrick's Cross was added to the Union Flag and the three ensigns then took their modern form.

Nelson was the Vice Admiral of the White Squadron, so Trafalgar was fought under the White Ensign in 1805 rather than the Red or Blue one. In 1864 the squadron system was abandoned and the entire Royal Navy adopted the White Ensign, meanwhile the Merchant Navy was allocated the Red Ensign, and the Blue Ensign was reserved for non-military government ships.

The White Ensign remains the premier British maritime flag and is worn by all Her Majesty's ships. Several other nations have developed their own versions of the White Ensign including Australia, India, Jamaica and Nigeria.

Pirated from Scuttlebutt Europe # 832 ❖

Summer Storm, continued from page: 3

Venetia and I started out from the companionway into a maelstrom of moving water, a short 1 foot chop would have been greater if not flattened by the torrential downpour. HAIL! Small ice pebbles lightly plunking upon the cabin roof were but a mere introduction to a roar accented with heavy loud bangs. Soon the cockpit was dancing with ice while the water surface resembled a catered landscape, waves all but obliterated by the ice avalanche. As the hail pounded almost horizontally, Trillium was rocking about 10 degrees one way and the other, when suddenly a blast from the north drove us over almost 45 degrees to port. Small items flew to the cabin floor. As she was swinging to round up, the blast veered east and knocking us over to starboard by the same amount.

Trillium wrenched at her rode like a pit bull bent on destruction. Away we went. Venetia shrieked "We're dragging! We're getting closer to those rocks!" At least now we had enough visibility to see them. Mercifully the hail had stopped.

"No it can't be!" I exclaimed in denial, not my ground tackle that only dragged briefly once in Turnbull. As Venetia bounded forward I fired up the diesel, when I noticed she was right, we were broadside to the wind. Venetia hauled in the anchor until it

could be reset and deployed a lot more rode. The wind had died to a dull roar when Venetia returned to the cockpit, her shirt clinging to her torso like the paint on the nose of a jumbo jet.

Soon the VHF was abuzz with skippers comparing experiences and it seemed none were any more violent than ours. Within an hour the waters calmed and we found ourselves sharing the surface with a floating garden of twigs, oak leaves and pine needles. A pine fragrance filled the evening air. Later, surrounded by heat lighting on all horizons, we were unable to sleep so we played Scrabble until after 2300. Venetia usually wins this game but this evening I won by almost 100 points. At least I got something right and maybe the weather guys don't exaggerate as much as I had previously thought.

Winds were recorded at 66 knots. We had 70 feet of rode out, with 60 feet of chain of the 70 ft. The depth was 13 feet, from deck to bottom. The 35 lb Kingston anchor had been well secured. This may make you think about the amount of rode you let out!!! ❖

Editor's Note: See the article on the Squadron's website for the photograph of damage to the Bimini:

www.storm.ca/~bpsscps/trvl_Trillium/trillium3.html