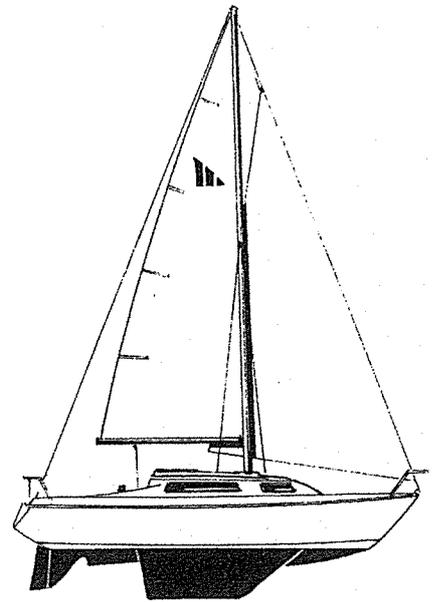


The Tomahawk Owners Bulletin

November 1999



Welcome from the Commodore

Bill Garrod
West Sussex
"Crystal"

As the first Commodore can I personally welcome you to the association. We Tomahawk owners are a very discerning lot. We have a boat which is fast and easy to sail but will look after you in the event of bad weather.

This is the first newsletter and its coming out at the end of

the first season of the association. David Collinson started everything off at the end of last year and since then we have recruited some 30 members. We know a lot more boats than this were made and the number of its members determines the strength of the association. Enclosed with the newsletter is an application form for membership and I would ask each of you to try and recruit at least one new member next year.

On behalf of our Editor Mike Juer can I ask you to submit letters, articles

etc or anything you think might be of interest to other members. Logs of cruises, modifications to our boats etc. they will all be of use for future Bulletins.

For the future we plan at least 3 rallies next year. We have a member in Jersey who is waiting to welcome a flotilla of Tomahawks. Geoff Hilditch our Treasurer is planning a meet on the Isle of Mann for all you West Coast sailors. Mike Juer and I will again organise a south coast meet.

LETTERS PAGE

Coastguard Encounter

Dear Editor

In July this year the Cutty Sark tall ships were docked for 4 days at Greenock on the Clyde. We sailed our Tomahawk (Sioux) the 6m from Kip Marina to pass alongside these magnificent ships. A carnival atmosphere and glorious weather brought out the crowds, every conceivable craft you could think of was afloat including a 2 man rib from our local coastguard station. The crew were very friendly and gave us a wave each time we passed.

Having returned and tied up at our berth at Kip, two imposing coastguards came onto the pontoon and stepped beside Sioux. "Is this your boat?" one of them asked. My mind started racing, we had only been to see the tall ships, did they think we had taken contraband on board? He then asked "How do you like it?". Neil introduced himself and proceeded to tell me that he too owned a Tomahawk, which he

kept at Tobermory on the Isle of Mull, and having passed us earlier in the day followed us into the marina.

I invited Neil on board and we proceeded to exchange stories and compare the changes we had made to our boats. Neil had not heard of our association but was very interested and I have passed his details to our secretary.

One more for the list.

Kenneth Craig
Kirkintilloch
"Sioux"

Seeking Advice

Dear Editor

I'd be glad if you could ask other owners for advice on a number of small points.

- 1) How do I replace the lower bearing of the rudder
- 2) How do people keep the cockpit drains clear?
- 3) How can I really fix this table – so that it doesn't move on its pedestal when 12/13 stone of navigator leans on one end?

I have sailed as far as Guernsey, Alderney and St Vaast – but largely for lack of suitable crew of about my age, I now stick to the I.O.W. for a few days plus day sailing and club racing!

Good luck with your organization.

Hugh Roskell
Poole
"MoonRover"

How is your rudder?

Dear Editor

I was acquainted with this problem during a visit to Barry (Wales) where two Tomahawks had suffered loss of rudder control. The original design featured 3 mild steel (!?) tangs welded to the rudder stock. All three welds had corroded and failed in both cases. Mine was about 16 years old at the time (the two at Barry were younger) so I split the rudder along the fore & aft center line and found one tang hanging on by a "thread" and the other two "on the way". The three M.S. tangs were replaced with 5 high grade stainless ones and welded by a

knowledgeable welder with a more compatible filler rod. Foam filling with an affinity for water was probably a contributory factor to the problem in the original design. I stiffened the two halves of the rudder and omitted the foam filler. Seems O.K. so far. I am a qualified engineer although do not claim expert knowledge of welding technology.
James Barnes
Bridgewater
"Haida of Wareham"

Tomahawk Ownership

Dear Editor,

I really switched on the computer tonight in order to do the household accounts, this depressed me and added to the sadness already felt for the day.....today was the day that the boat came out of the water.....- no more sailing in her for five months. I thought I would do something constructive and write to you and so end the day on a positive note. I am Patrick Hill and live with my wife, Lesley, in a beautiful part of Cornwall on the

Lizard Peninsula overlooking Falmouth Bay. The River Helford is close by, the whole area gives wonderful sailing opportunities. It was always an ambition of mine to learn to sail which was one of the reasons we chose to live near the sea and live in this part of the world. We moved here in 1996 and very soon thereafter joined the Helford River Sailing Club where we learned to sail in dinghy's. This experience reinforced the desire in me to sail and acquire a keel boat.....I have to admit that my desire was greater than Lesley's, following several capsize's, the privations of dinghy sailing and strong self preservation instinct she is somewhat of a 'reluctant' sailor and really only likes to go sailing when there is no wind. When first I started looking for a suitable vessel, as a novice, I had no idea what to look for in a boat or what the budget would run to. Initial hopes were that a couple of thousand would buy something suitable but I soon realised that my ambitions to cruise and sail around the world (this is on hold) would

cost substantially more. Having explored what was available and sorted criteria...separate heads (important for ladies), headroom; I'm 6 ft, Lesley is 5.10", inboard diesel and what we could afford, the choice seemed to be between a Centaur and a Tomahawk. I was using an old supplement from PBO, 'Which Boat', as a guide. The Tomahawk appealed because of its reported sailing ability and not being regarded as a floating caravan and also because of the reputation of the designer and builder, plus it was regarded as being good value for money. There don't appear to be many Tomahawks in this part of the country, we looked at two, liked what we saw and bought the second. Siouxsie, for that was her then name. She had been launched in 1980, and had on the whole been well maintained and was well equipped, ready to sail, which was good news from a novices point of view. The fact that she was not too far away, moored at nearby St. Mawes, making the first sail not too daunting was also a plus factor.

We bought her in June of 1998 but to date have only sailed in and around Helford and Falmouth as we gain experience we hope to venture further. We renamed her 'TANGALOOMA' in memory of the place in Australia where we had our first sailing trip and which confirmed the wish to sail and own our own sail boat. Since renaming her, although she has not sunk, the backstay has needed replacing, the fresh water tank burst and the head gasket went on the Yanmar YSM 8. We are fortunate that we have a mooring not 10 minutes walk away in Gillan Creek and so if the weather is suitable we can drop what we are doing and go off sailing. In winter I have a trailer and so she is brought to the house and I am able

to work on any necessary maintenance. Last year it proved necessary to renew the engine mountings and it seemed sensible at the same time to replace the stern gland packing. Fortunately I have an aptitude for things mechanical but boats and their workings are something new, however needs must and the realisation has to how much things cost in the marine world it is apparent to me that the more you can do yourself the better. As mentioned earlier, the headgasket went, this was at the beginning of the season, I dread to think how much this would have cost to have been repaired professionally, as it was the bits and pieces cost a small fortune.

This winter I want to examine the Heads, they are confined to say the least. I would like to know how much of the internal moulding is structural and whether or not it is possible to modify to increase the area available for ablutions, even if it means losing a berth. It would seem that earlier versions had different layouts to the Sioux. Can anyone help? Another query.....there are no sacrificial anodes affixed to the hull.....should there be?.....should I worry? It does not appear that there has been any electrolytic activity. I am aware of and have renewed the anode in the Yanmar.

Patrick Hill
Cornwall
"Tangalooma"

Almanacs & Pilot Books delivered to your door for free.

We received a fax recently offering new Almanacs for 2000 & Pilotbooks delivered to your door FREE OF CHARGE. Contact Michael J Clarke, Marine Chart Services, Thrift House, 60d Oxford Street, Wellingborough, Northants NN8 4JJ Telephone 01933 441629, fax 01933 442662. All they ask is that you prepay by credit card or cheque and you pay the cover price of each publication.

Editorial Column

Michael Juer
Oxfordshire
"Warpath"

Well it's off the ground – the T.O.A. that is. Very soon my boat will be on the ground propped up precariously by bits of wood – a subject that's been depressing me lately. It's that time of year and I'm at least cheered by the first bulletin requests for advice and tips for you lucky readers. Grey days and maintenance beckon but the TOA will keep our faith alive!

The Coastguard Encounter letter reminds me to ask you all to keep your eyes open for other Tomahawks. We have a form for new members, copies available from this office. Keep a few on your boat to cast across at the appropriate moment. So far we have around 30 members so keep up the good work. Talking about coastguards, I see that the RNLI's has launched an initiative that includes a free onboard review of your safety equipment. Called Sea

Check, the scheme is reported to have received excellent response from the boating public. It is



available only to RNLI members but shouldn't we all be one?

And then there's the subject of the rally that never was. Well, what can I say except that a Force 6 plus did not encourage us to venture across the Solent.

Apologies to any members who actually braved the weather. A new rally will be arranged for the new year – more news in the next Bulletin!

Of course, the hot news on the press today is that PBO have published a Tomahawk review in their December issue. To be precise, it is my boat (blush!) as I was lucky enough to be third on the list when that journalist called! The others couldn't help. It's a complimentary review as far as the Tomahawk class is concerned, and hopefully will encourage future owners and ferret out more members.

More articles and suggestions for Association Events needed. We would like to arrange a number of events next year to give everyone a chance to meet up and swap stories.

We have had an enquiry from a Phil Martin of 1 Grizedale Close, Sothall, Sheffield, S20 2DP who is interested in buying a bilge keel Tomahawk – anyone with one for sale please contact him.

A French Summer

When David Collinson, Keewaydin, set off for the Mediterranean, he took the scenic route up the Seine to Paris and down through the French rivers and canals. Here he recalls the journey with all its ups and downs.

The scenic route through France appealed to both me and my wife in order to take our newly purchased 21 year old Tomahawk 25 from Topsham to the Mediterranean. Years ago our previous yacht, an Achilles 24, had made the passage by sea, but now that we were both retired and over 65 we had more time available to enjoy the journey through the waterways and canals. Besides, it would be an interesting and learning experience for us both.

At Topsham we craned Keewaydin into the water on a beautiful April morning, then we motored gently down the River Exe and out to sea, hoping to find some wind and have our first sail. In the event, we motored across a glassy sea to Brixham, where we spent a few days sorting things out. We discovered that the furling genoa wouldn't furl, so we made a visit to Atlantic Spars in

Dartmouth, who repaired it for us.

We set off from Dartmouth on April 17th at 1400 bound for Cherbourg, enjoying a splendid crossing and a night's sail with a gentle following wind and a nearly full moon. There was just one problem - in mid channel the boat started to fill with water - we had a leaking stern gland and just to make matters more difficult the main bilge pump failed to work. Later we found a match stick obstructing one of the valves. However, a desperate man and wife can work wonders with a bucket and all went well.

From Cherbourg we sailed to Le Havre via the charming port of St Vaast-le-Hougue. We got held up in Le Havre - the regulations for the river compelled us to make the 70 odd mile trip to Trouen in the hours of daylight, and there is no stopping allowed on the way. In the early spring it means

there are only two or three days each fortnight when the tide makes this possible.

Gales were blowing hard, and we were not able to cross from Le Havre to the mouth of the Seine. We thought we were going to miss the slot, so in desperation and against all the advice in the guide and pilot books, we asked for a passage to the Seine via the docks and entered the Tancarville canal. It worked very well, all the bridges opened for us as we passed along. We spent a rough night moored between two dolphins by the Trancarville lock gates in company with a very large car-carrying barge which arrived late and ran his diesel engines all night.

Next morning we were ready to lock out into the river Seine and enjoyed the most magnificent passage, pushed along by a near spring tide. At times we

made 12 knots over the ground, past wonderful scenery. The banks of this majestic waterway are mostly well wooded, but we also passed high chalk cliffs. We shared the river with several ocean going ships, and, according to the pilot book, this stretch can accept vessels up to 80,000 tons wt»0t 0 feet. It certainly pays to keep a good lookout astern, as these monsters catch you very quickly - and leave a great deal of disturbed water when they have passed.

We carried the tide most of the way, and to our great surprise and relief we arrived in Rouen at 1830; comfortably within the hours of daylight. In fact we had taken only seven hours and ten minutes to make the 60-mile journey. Next day our friends John and Dagmar in their 9 metre Catalac 'Kiwani's' joined us in Rouen. They had also taken the passage by the Tancarville canal.

Rouen is an interesting city and the facilities are adequate so we stayed three nights before moving on. The tides above Rouen are not strong and cause no trouble unless you wish to enter the small marina of Elbeuf. Then you

must get your timing right to cross the sand bar.

Soon we arrived at Amfreville and met the first Seine lock. These locks are very large, 180 metres long by 11.4 wide (590ft x 36ft) designed for ships rather than small yachts. After the first lock the river changes its character and becomes more tranquil and passes through beautiful countryside. Gently sloping banks and beautiful houses alternate with thickly wooded stretches, and we passed beneath dramatic sheer cliffs on which stood chateaux, castles and churches. The nearer you get to Paris, the more difficult it becomes to find attractive stops for the night, but one beauty spot that must not be missed is the marina in the nature reserve by the Mericourt lock.

Our entrance to Paris was sensational. We had by chance arrived on Pentecost Sunday when the banks of the Seine were lined with Parisians in holiday mode. On seeing the red ensign on our boat they were waving and calling 'welcome to Paris'. There can be no better way to arrive in Paris than to pass under all

those magnificent bridges and to see the beauty of the city unfold before your eyes. And then to enter the Paris Arsenal marina right in the centre of town - just by the Place de la Bastille, it was marvelous. With all facilities available and Paris on our doorstep, we just had to stay for a few days.

The river above Paris, apart from the few industrial areas, continues to be just as beautiful, we paused at Fontainebleau to see the Chateau and to do some shopping and then continued to our last Seine lock, the Champagne. Locks are the danger points, damage to the yacht or mast can easily occur, and we had a near catastrophe in this one - narrowly avoiding severe damage. It ended with us turning round in the lock and making a quick exit, we then had to wait for two hours before there was space available for us to enter again.

We had chosen to take the Bourbonnais route to the Mediterranean via the Canals du Loing, Briare, Lateral, and Centre joining the river Saone at Chalon and the Rhone at Lyon, so we turned right leaving the Seine at St. Mammes,

and joined the canal system for the first time.

The canals form an important link between the major river systems of France. They are a delightful experience, you move serenely between beautiful meadows with white cows calmly grazing. Sometimes you pass between tree lined banks, long easy stretches where you can enjoy the peacefulness - and always the splendid bird song. But the calm is often broken by frenzied action as you pass through a series of locks. Then in the evening, if you are lucky, you can stop near a country Auberge to sample wonderful hospitality with the food and wine of the region.

Our yacht was far from ideal for the canals, drawing 1.4 metres (4ft 8inches), and it was difficult to get near the banks and this caused problems for mooring, both for the night and while waiting for locks. We found it advisable to stop for the night near to a lock so that we could walk forward to tell the lock keeper when we were ready to start. He would then telephone the next lock to advise them of our passage.

We passed over the longest aqueduct in Europe, nearly half a mile long, at Briare. It carries the canal high over the River Loire and was engineered by Mr. Eiffel of Eiffel Tower fame. We then climbed to over 1200 feet on the du Centre canal, before being spewed back into the wide River Saone at Chalon and returned to civilization.

The River Saone was rather a disappointment the banks were so high the view was limited, but in a day or so we joined the Rhone at Lyon and what a contrast. We were ejected from the first lock at speed into the very fast flowing canalised section, then back to join the river again and past beautiful scenery at Vienne and Les Roches de Condrieu, famous for its special wine. So we proceeded on down the Rhone through wonderful and majestic river scenery and gorges, interspersed with the canalised sections with the locks and hydro-electric power. The locks are even bigger than those on the Seine, the largest being the Bollene when we were lowered 75 feet in the lock. The river is wide, often more than

half a mile, and flowing powerfully. There's no room for mistakes, and not many places to stop when you need to. Our last Rhone stop was at Avignon beside the famous bridge.

From the Rhone we entered the Petit Rhone, which is about the size of a normal river in England, and then we rejoined the canal system again for the last leg of the journey. The canal Rhone-a-Sete takes you through the Camargue with its wild horses and flamingoes. We even came across a gypsy wedding where the men formed a guard of honour for the happy couple and fired a volley of shots from their guns after the church service. We passed through the wetlands, where they still harvest the rushes, and had wide views of the distant blue Cevenne Mountains.

All too soon we arrived at Sete, our journey's end, passing through the five swing bridges of the town to find the marina and the view of the Mediterranean at last. It took nearly three months from when we first started, but what a route to travel and what an altogether unforgettable experience.