



# ROTAFLOAT

The International Yachting Fellowship of Rotarians is a group of Rotarians dedicated to promoting yachting as an opportunity for fellowship and service. This Fellowship operates in accordance with Rotary International policy, but is not an agency of, or controlled by, Rotary International.

ISSUE 75 DECEMBER 2008

## COMMODORE'S MESSAGE

I am sad to report the death of Past International Commodore Andrew Mitchell who has also been the official historian for IYFR for many years. He attended the Convention and PCC last year but has been suffering from cancer ever since. Fortunately Chris and I managed to visit him in an Exeter Hospice. We send our condolences to his daughter Fiona and her partner Paul, and also to his many friends. A tribute appears in this issue of Rotafloat.

It has been brought to my notice that a large number of our Fleets have supported charitable events and assisted those who are less able than ourselves. I am delighted to hear of these activities—truly Rotarian ideals. However, we must remember that we are not a fund raising or profit making organisation but, with the ideals of Rotary and as Rotarians ourselves, we can support good causes and events through our local Clubs. This is indeed one of our objectives. Our prime object is to promote Rotary fellowship and understanding between nations and our members through our love of sailing and activities on the water.

The fellowship within our organisation was particularly outstanding during the Convention and PCC last year. It was especially brought home to Chris and me by the many kind enquiries and good wishes we had following her accident. We thank everyone and are now looking forward to seeing many of them again in Birmingham. Whenever we have been to Conventions the local people have been extremely kind and welcoming, we now are looking forward to being able to return the hospitality to our overseas visitors.

Since the last Rotafloat I have been welcomed to the Fleets in Helsinki and Åland. We have also attended the first meeting of the new National Bridge of Italy held in Catania Sicily. Separate reports are in this issue of Rotafloat and I thank all those involved with our visits for their generous friendship and hospitality.

Chris and I now send you every good wish for the festive season and happy sailing in 2009.

Bryan Skinner International Commodore IYFR

LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING YOU AT THE  
INTERNATIONAL I.Y.F.R. A.G.M.  
23RD JUNE 2009  
AT THE BOTANICAL GARDENS, BIRMINGHAM

## COMMODORE'S DIARY

14/01/09	GB & I National Bridge meet at London Boat Show
27/02/09	Meeting Germany North Fleets at Kiel
06/03/09	Possible visit to Swiss Fleet
13/03/09	G B & I AGM at Woodhall Spa Lincs.
29/05/09	Visit Netherlands Fleets
05/06/09	Visit Sorrento with Incoming I.C. Terry Stretton
10/06/09	Visit Broads Fleet with Terry Stretton
12/06/09	Visit Thames Fleet with Terry Stretton
18/06/09	Depart for Birmingham Convention with Strettons Winters and Colliers
23/06/09	International IYFR AGM and Handover to Terry Stretton
25/06/09	Post Convention Cruise in Scotland

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## INTERNATIONAL REAR COMMODORE 'S VISIT TO ITALY

I recently had the opportunity to meet with two of the Fellowship's Italian Commodores while visiting Italy for both pleasure and as part of my IYFR duties although, we so enjoyed it, 'duties' seems a misnomer.

But actually our 'IYFR journey' began a week earlier in Lisbon, Portugal. This city will be the host for the 2013 Rotary International Convention, one of the two conventions that I will be responsible for the IYFR activities as International Commodore. I wanted to get an idea of what the city was like and what it had to offer. We have no fleet there but the various Rotary clubs I visited made us welcome and introduced us to the contacts needed for potential venues five years from now.

Arriving in Italy we first spent four days in the Naples area visiting Regional Commodore Francisco Clemente and then four days in the Genoa/Levorno area with Commodore Sergio Santi



Members of the South West Napoli Fleet  
Antonio Pomicino 2nd from left, R.C. Franco Clemente on right  
I.R.C. Clint in the middle.



A warm reception for  
I.R.C.'s 'First Mate' Bev!

of the Italy North West Fleet. Both visits were memorable and unique in their own ways.

While in Naples we took the hydrofoil ferry across to Sorrento where we were met by Iyforian Antonio Pomicino of the South West Napoli Fleet with his rather large and fast power boat 'Middle Day' for a quick trip out to the island of Capri for a dip in the sea, a delightful break. We returned to Sorrento and attended a hosted dockside lunch with numerous members of the fleet. We felt that we were amongst friends whom we had known for years.

After sitting in Franco's and Barbara's back yard eating figs off their tree the evening concluded with a ferry ride back to Naples, watching the sunset and darkening image of Mt. Vesuvius as numerous small towns around the base of the mountain set off firework displays—beautiful, but I do not think it was done just for us!

We then flew to Genoa where we were met by Commodore Sergio Santi of the North West Fleet. We lunched and toured with other Rotarians at the Cantine Lunae winery at Ortonovo hosted by winemaker Paolo Bosoni. (Check them out at <http://www.cantinelunae.it>)

The next few days were busy visiting several tourist attractions. We had a private tour of the Italian Naval Academy—a fantastic museum not generally available to the public. This was followed by lunch at the officers' club there. We also were invited to sail for a very unusual event aboard the Italian brigantine 'Italia'. This is the largest brigantine in the world and was



Sergio Santi Commodore of Italy North West Fleet and I.R. Commodore Clint Collier on board the 'Italia'.



Raising the Rotary Flag onboard the 'Italia'

purchased by a local yacht club to be used as a youth training vessel. Since they could not man and maintain it they entered into an agreement with the Italian Navy who now runs the vessel for them, an interesting cooperative agreement. The day we went out showed the potential for this kind of arrangement. The sail was arranged and sponsored by the Rotary Club of Bra through the IYFR Fleet and it was to sponsor handicapped people of all ages. IYFR organised the sailing whilst the Rotary Club found the participants and sponsored them, including chartering the bus that brought them down to the boat. An outstanding example of what Rotarians working together from Clubs and the Fellowships can accomplish!

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Then, almost before we knew it, it was time to leave. Ciao Italy! It was indeed a great visit and an outstanding example of what Fellowship is all about. I can not thank those who I met along the way enough for their welcome and warm hospitality. All I can say to you, our fleet members, is it is your Fellowship too. Take advantage of it and make your next vacation an IYFR VACATION!

Clint Collier International Rear Commodore.

## INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE NATIONAL BRIDGE OF ITALY

Eight Italian fleets, together with International Commodore Bryan Skinner and Chris, met at Catania Sicily between 2nd-5th October 2008 to inaugurate the National Bridge of Italy.



Fleet Members from left to right: Milena is Gerardo's wife, Laura is Sergio's wife, Sergio Santi is F. C.. NW Italy, Gerardo Martino is F. C. Salerno, Antonio Gigante F.C. SE Italy, Luigi Falanga F.C. Sicily, I.C. Bryan and Chris, Franco Clemente R. C. Italy, Gennaro Coretti F. C. NE Italy

The gathering of some of the Iyforians began on the sail-training vessel '*Italia*', (details of '*NAVE Italia*' appear in the earlier report by I.R.C. Clint Collier.) where they were joined for a sail by a group of young homeless people now hosted in Pope Giovanni XX111 Community. The success of the voyage was confirmed by the happy smiles of the one-day sailors as they disembarked at the end of the afternoon. Really this is a ship that 'embarks uneasiness—disembarks smiles!'

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The next day many more Rotarians and lyforians joined the gathering including I.C. Bryan and Chris. A day of sightseeing was followed by the official meeting at a restaurant in the evening. There the Commodores gave the I.C. and Sicilian friends a short but substantial brief on what was going on and what had been done in the last two years of tremendous increase in the Italian Fleets. Franco Clemente the Regional Commodore, as the bearer of the tradition and history of the Italian Fleets reminded members that in 1997 he and the late Silvio Musumed from the Palermo R.C. and their respective Fleets were both chartered by Fabio Favelli, then Regional Commodore and Fleet Commodore of the only one Italian Fleet. He finished by presenting Luigi Falanga F.C. Sicily with an old Sicilian Fleet pennant that had been given to him by Commodore Musumed many years ago. I.C. Bryan concluded the meeting by presenting each Commodore and the Brigantine Captain, CDR Giovanni Tedeschine ITN ,with his much appreciated pennant.

At 09.30 hours the following morning I.C. Bryan Skinner's five stars burgee was hoisted as he was piped aboard the '*Italia*' at the start of an excellent cruise with luncheon. At 16.30 the I.C.'s burgee was lowered and given back to Bryan before he was piped descending the gangway. The IYFR pennant was hoisted again, together with the YCI's, where they will remain to show solidarity of the Rotary commitment.

Sunday 8th October was spent visiting Taormina the world-renowned Ionian pearl. The enchanting position of the old fortified Greek colony of Tauromenion, loved by the Romans, beloved by the Saracens, the Arabs who renamed her Al Muizziah, the Byzantines, the Normans, the Aragonese, the Bourbons, even Lord Nelson himself had a beautiful villa close to Taormina.



lyforians enjoying the view on Taormina, Sicily

It had been a lovely day that ended all too soon. With very happy memories we made our way home via airports and seaports. Although this was the end of the first meeting of the eight Italian Fleets, plans have already been made to meet in the north of Italy next Spring, then in Sorrento and, of course, in June at the Rotarian Fellowship Convention in Birmingham.

Editors' article taken from a report received from Sergio Santi Commodore Italy North West Fleet

## I.Y.F.R. G.B. & I. COMMODORE'S HANDOVER WEEKEND 25TH—27TH JULY 2008

The sun shone for the whole weekend from the Friday night's "Hog Roast" by the river at Danesfield to the Sunday River Thames trips on the Thames Fleet 's boats.

The main event on the Saturday started with a trip on a large river boat covering the sights of Henley-on-Thames and the famous Royal Regatta course. The boat moored outside the Leander Rowing Club where members enjoyed pre-dinner champagne. Outgoing GB & I Commodore Jenie Pressdee performed the Handover to Commodore Michael Pooley who welcomed the visiting International Commodore Bryan Skinner and eighty-seven members and guests.



Bryan Skinner, Michael Pooley and Jenie Pressdee together with  
Rotary District 1090 Governor Malcolm Boddington

After an excellent dinner Captain Ian Gibb, ex captain of the Canberra cruise liner, past Commodore of the P&O and Princess shipping line and Elder Brother of Trinity House gave an interesting and amusing talk of his experiences at sea. A collection on the night was made for the speaker's preferred charity, the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, which raised £350.

GB & I Commodore Michael stressed the need for increased membership and encouraged inter-fleet visits, but most of all to enjoy the fellowship with our members at home and abroad.

## PAST INTERNATIONAL COMMODORE ANDREW MITCHELL 1919- 2008



Following a hard start in life as a Barnardo's boy, when the second World War began Andrew enlisted in the RAF. He served with distinction and was decorated as a war hero, but then was shot down in Palestine, thus ending his service. He married Patricia in 1955 and later became a Lloyds Member, also joining the 'Little Ships' Club' in London. This was where the original Yachting Fellowship of Rotarians was formed by John Barrett.

Andrew, with others, was a founder member of the Suffolk Fleet. He met Martin Lockney, the then World Commodore, who nominated him for International Rear Commodore. Between them they then initiated proposals to heal the rift between GB&I and the World Fellowship.

When Andrew became World Commodore in 1991, he and Pat travelled the world and re-organized IYFR to its present Three Area System. He also personally supplied all the regalia used by the International Officers. Andrew and Pat made many friends all over the world, with whom he remained in contact. Sadly Pat died in 1995 and soon after Andrew became a victim of the Lloyds of London problems.

Andrew continued to be an active Rotarian and member of IYFR. He attended most of the International Conventions. He became our official historian and was the author of the 'Gold Book', recounting the history of IYFR since its conception in 1947. It was following the Convention in Los Angeles this year that he became ill and was transferred to hospital in Exeter,

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near to his daughter Fiona. He was later transferred to the Hospice where he died.

We in Rotary and IYFR are members of a huge organization, but sometimes we have the good fortune of knowing, supporting and working with an individual who has made a difference. Such a person was Andrew Mitchell.

Main contributor John Billingham, National Past Commodore GB&I.

## INTERNATIONAL COMMODORE'S VISIT TO THE FINLAND FLEET

Finland Fleet had the exceptional opportunity to meet IYFR's International Commodore Bryan Skinner on 29<sup>th</sup> August 2008 in Helsinki. The Finland Fleet has had activities since 1992 and this was the first time that an International Commodore had been able to visit Finland. Bryan told us that he tries to visit as many countries as possible during his two years as International Commodore.



Left Hannu Karhuketo, Juha Mikkonen, Pertti Myllynen, Lorenz Michael, Bryan Skinner, Seppo Seljavaara and Jaakko Rautio.

Seppo Seljavaara Commodore Finland Fleet

## THE DINGHY DOCK

A while ago I was asked by Past International Commodore Andrew Mitchell to write a few words about the “Hands Across The Border Dinghy Dock” that was installed by the Vancouver Island Fleet of IYFR at English Camp, Garrison Bay, San Juan Island, USA.

How is it possible that it is called “English Camp” when it is obviously on an American Island? This takes us back to the Pig War of 1859. Three years earlier, the Oregon Treaty set the 49<sup>th</sup> Parallel as the border between Canada and the United States of America. The line was to go down the middle of the Strait between Vancouver Island and the continent. The British felt that Rosario Strait should be the dividing line, giving San Juan to the British but the Americans thought that Haro Strait was the way to go. Both sides appealed to the Boundary Commission, and to push things along, the Hudson’s Bay Company established a sheep farm on the island. By mid 1859, twenty five American settlers had taken up residence on the island. On June 25, 1859, an American, Hyman Cutler, shot and killed a pig that was rooting in his garden. The pig was owned by Charles Griffin, an Irishman, of the British side. The American offered \$10 as compensation but Griffin wanted \$100.

When the British authorities threatened to arrest Cutler, the Americans called for Military Protection. Sixty-six American soldiers were sent to the island to stop any threats to their citizens. Of course, the whole thing escalated. Soon there were 461 Americans with fourteen cannons and five British war ships off the island with two thousand one hundred and forty men and seventy guns, but there was no shooting! Both sides had orders to defend themselves, but to not shoot first. Wanting to reconcile the problem, US President James Buchanan sent General Winfield Scott to negotiate with Governor James Douglas. The ownership of the island was still in contention but it was agreed that both sides would maintain a small garrison, no more than one hundred men each to keep the peace. The two camps enjoyed friendly relations socially and in sporting competitions for some years. The ownership of the island was finally referred to a neutral party, Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany, and in 1872, San Juan Island was given to the United States of America. The British garrison withdrew in November of that year and Americans left two years later. The English camp remains to-day and is now a National Historic Park. The Union Jack is raised and lowered by American park staff each day.

So much for history! Garrison Bay was a favorite spot for the Late George Kent, Past International Commodore and his wife Gwen. One week-end, circa 1984, the newly formed Vancouver Island Fleet had a great rendezvous there. We were discussing the difficulty of going ashore through the mud flats. The idea was put forth for us to build a floatable dock and tow it over to Garrison Bay to improve the situation. Being a man of action, George Kent immediately recruited Ramsay Murray, an engineer, to design a dock that would not be too expensive. Murray sketched up a design of some light floats of timber and Styrofoam. We met at the construction company yard managed by Fred Bartlett, the president, at that time, of the Victoria Rotary Club. Saws and hammers were put to work and soon ten small floats were constructed. These were towed across Haro Strait to Garrison Bay. The shoreward end was .

anchored to a convenient rock and the outward end was tied to two barrels of concrete as anchors. It was not the most stable arrangement but it made it possible to get ashore with mud free shoes. The Vancouver Island fleet felt happy about their gift of a dock in a "Hands Across the Border" gesture. However, the American Corp of Army Engineers felt that the structure was not up to their safety standards so pilings were driven and the dock improved.

A year later, a ceremony was held with the Vancouver Island Fleet and the American Park Service Officials acknowledging our efforts. The final outcome satisfied everyone. The American IYFR members provided a Pig roast to commemorate the occasion. The following year a plaque was attached to the rock at the end of the dock.

This plaque was donated by a member of our fleet, Dr. Phil Neroutos, a dentist. After all, who should know more about plaque than a dentist?

**Gordon Nickells**

IYFR Past Commodore (1984)  
Vancouver Island Fleet



The dock in 1985 after the Army Engineers drove pilings etc



Dr. Bob Young, George Kent, Jim Toakley,  
Dr. Les Vesconcellous (USA) Cecil Prouse 1985

## AN INTERESTING ENCOUNTER

During our cruise of the San Juan and Gulf Islands we had an interesting encounter. We were anchored in Winter Cove on Saturna Island and when trying to de-anchor found our anchor rode would not budge. 'Yikes!' We went forward and backward and starboard but couldn't manoeuvre to port (wind and current). We were contemplating cutting the line when a gentleman and his son arrived in their tender to offer their assistance. While we had the rode tight, the son put his face in the water and informed us that the rode was wrapped around a large sunken log and we could, maybe, drag the rode off with a weight. We, instead, had

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them push us around with the tender so we could just drag the rode (chain) to the port side. Great!! It worked and the anchor was retrieved. While all this was happening I am thinking, "I'm sure I know this person" but, they being from an American vessel, well maybe not. While departing the cove, after thanking them for their assistance, Deb also mentioned that they looked familiar. So, out came the binoculars and Deb declares a IYFR burgee. Not just any old burgee, but a couple of flag officers' burgees. Now, out with our burgee and about turn to find out who they might be. Upon seeing the vessel's name "*Resolute*" and another familiar face emerging from the cabin, we knew it was Bill and Katia Robinson and family. We all had a nice chat before leaving for a second time and assuring that we would meet again in Ganges.

This was a perfect example of "Rotary Rules" in action, reaching out to help a stranger in need. And, we were rescued by the immediate past International Commodore! Now the moral of this story, ***FLY YOUR BURGEE WHEN ANCHORED OR AT THE DOCK!*** You can bet I will from now on.

## INTERNATIONAL COMMODORE BRYAN SKINNER VISITS ALAND FLEET

Following my visit to Helsinki, I was taken by my host, Seppo Seljavaara to Turku, and in the morning we boarded the Viking Ferry to Åland. The owner Nils-Erik Ekland, very kindly lent me his beautiful cabin, where I had everything I might need for the journey. The ship was an enormous car Ferry, which even had facilities for Conferences. We had a lovely breakfast, and I was invited onto the Bridge.

On our arrival, we were met by the Commodore, Robert von Pfaler, and driven to a cottage in the forest, owned by Tor Strandberg, which was to be my temporary home. After a change and a couple of hours rest, I was taken to a restaurant at a Golf Club, where I met twenty-two members of the Aland Fleet and their wives. After a convivial meeting I was escorted back to the cottage, with only the ghost to keep me company for the night !

The following day, the Rear Commodore, Tor Strandberg, took us on his boat for a two hour cruise to Rodhamn Yacht Club, in the island archipelago. Those attending were, the Commodore, Vice Commodore Bengt-Olof Olofsson and his wife Eila, Rear Commodore, and Treasurer Guido Lindroth and Gun-maj, and the Secretary Kurt Nystrom and Vappa. Also, representing the Regional Commodore, Anders Kagstrom came in his own boat. We had a picnic lunch, before returning for my trip back to the airport.



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I thoroughly enjoyed my trip and hope to return someday, after my term of office, with Chris. My thanks go to all who made my visit so memorable.

Bryan Skinner International Commodore

## HANDS ACROSS THE BORDER

This year in late August the “Hands Across the Border” celebrations, that occur between the Pacific Northwest USA fleets and the Canadian West Coast fleets (not a spelling error!), was held at Ganges, Saltspring Island, British Columbia, Canada. Some thirty boats attended bringing with them a school of Rotary Mariners with their friends and families. The weather was perfect (well almost), the bond of fellowship and enjoyment so strong that we had “retired” Rotarians who happened to witness some of our escapades signing up as IYFR members and headed back to Rotary. ‘Kinda WOW!’

The event, which was organized by Dan J Kelly, was a Gala affair with something for everyone. The Vancouver Island Fleet rolled out its now world famous horseracing. There were six Canadian horses and four American horses, and the Americans galloped off with all the prizes!



Awaiting a jockey



Preparing for the ‘off’

The weekend’s highlight was a dinner dance on the Saturday evening. The dance was to live music performed by a superb rock band who sure knew how to light up night, the dinner was delicious and some ladies even wore dresses. (Only in Canada Eh?). This year was the 24<sup>th</sup> celebration of “Hands Across the Border”. The Wheel was passed from the Vancouver Island fleet to the Seattle fleet. Next year marks the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and we are sure looking forward to that!

Janette Chudleigh Rear Commodore The Vancouver Island Fleet.

# I Y F R REGALIA



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