



The Bitter End

Editor: Bill Reynolds AP



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Newmarket Power & Sail Squadron
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From the Bridge...

By now, most of us have put our boats to bed for the winter. Some lucky devils are planning winter escapes to warm locations where they can swim, fish or boat away from the snow and cold. Others, me included, suck it up and face the Canadian reality head on. Snow blower and warm gloves at the ready, we wait for the boat show and dream of spring launch.

Winter is a great time to build on your skill base. It is an opportunity to take a course to improve your summer boating experience. I have enrolled in the Junior Navigator program along with 7 other NPS members. We are learning to use a sextant to "shoot the sun" to determine our lat and long. This is how mariners mastered the oceans before GPS and is a great back-up in case of equipment failure. Of course, November weather tends to be cloudy so if I had been on the ocean over the past couple of weeks without a GPS, my sextant wouldn't have been much use. I suppose that is why so many of the sailors from time gone by sailed in the sunny south.

Newmarket Squadron is again offering winter courses for beginners and experienced boaters. We are accepting applications for the *Boating Basics* course for people who need to get their Pleasure Craft Operator's Card (PCOC). *Beyond Basics* is a new course offering that builds on skills and knowledge needed to operate a boat with confidence. *Intro to Navigation* is a program which introduces chart reading skills for boaters who plan to travel into new waters. *Advanced Piloting* is open to mariners who have navigational skills that need to be honed. This course carries on from skills developed in the *Seamanship* classes. Finally, we are again running the *ROC/M Radio* course which is required for any boater who uses a VHF radio. Course registration can be done on line at www.boatingcourses.ca.

As 2015 is set to close, I would like to express my thanks to everyone in our Squadron who has worked to meet the CPS mandate: *to increase awareness and knowledge of safe boating by educating and training members and the general public*. We are boaters who look after boaters. I recently heard one of the Squadron Commanders say that our goal is not to get people out on the water; it is to get them home safely after they have been on the water.

Have a safe and enjoyable holiday season.

On behalf of the Bridge,

Bill Reynolds, AP
Squadron Commander

The Newmarket Power & Sail Squadron Bridge 2015-16

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Boating Courses 2016

Our Training Officer is organizing courses for this year. If you wish to participate in our programs, check out our website at <https://www.cps-ecp.ca/Newmarket/> and register for the course that meets your needs. Our classes run on Tuesday evenings at Dr John Denison HS in Newmarket.

Boating Basics (Pleasure Craft Operators Card): January 19
Beyond Basics: February 23
Introduction to Navigation: April 5
Advanced Piloting: January 19
VHF Radio (Radio Operator's Certificate/Marine): May 10

Mark Your Calendars!



Newmarket Power & Sail Squadron will be celebrating its 40th Anniversary in 2016. We are organizing a dinner to be held at the Police Association Building in Newmarket on Friday, April 8, 2016. Join us for an evening with old friends, good food, and our mystery guest speaker.

Details to follow.



The Origins of Grog

"A diesel likes its oil like a sailor likes his rum" - Captain Ron

From the earliest days of sail, men needed liquid during voyages. The most readily available liquids were water and beer. As there was no method of distillation or preservation, water was taken on board and stored in casks, replaced at the end of the voyage or at ports of call. Beer was also stored in casks. Water quickly developed algae and turned slimy, and beer turned sour, so the custom was to drink the beer before it soured and then turn to water. Stale water was sweetened to make it more palatable, and was often sweetened with beer or wine. The original ration of beer for seamen was a gallon a day, a significant amount to store over a long voyage. As the British Empire grew and longer voyages became more common, the problem of spoilage and shortages increased.

The origin of grog begins with Vice-Admiral William Penn, father of the founder of Pennsylvania. In 1655, during Penn's campaign for Cromwell in the Indies, Penn arrived in Barbados and captured Jamaica. Unfortunately Jamaica had few stores of beer or wine. Jamaica did, however, have rum. Penn, therefore, began the use of rum as a ration.

Although it became common, rum was not part of the "Regulations and Instructions Relating to His Majesty's Service at Sea" until 1731 at which time a half a pint of rum was made equal to the provision of a gallon of beer. In the early days this was specific only to ships in the West Indies, and rum was not diluted.

Vice-Admiral Edward Vernon is known as the father of grog. Vernon was a noted seaman, and victorious at Porto Bello. He was also a constant critic of the Admiralty and a supporter of better conditions aboard ships. He derided pressment and advocated better treatment of sailors. His sailors gave him the name of "Old Grog" because of a waterproof boat cloak he wore. The boat cloak was made of grogam, a thick material which was a combination of silk, mohair and wool.

By Vernon's time straight rum was commonly issued to sailors aboard ship - and drunkenness and lack of discipline were common problems. On August 21, 1740, Vernon issued an order that rum would thereafter be mixed with water. A quart of water was mixed with a half-pint of rum on deck and in the presence of the Lieutenant of the Watch. Sailors were given two servings a day; one between 10 and 12 AM and the other between 4 and 6 PM. To make it more palatable it was suggested sugar and lime be added. In 1756, thanks to Vice Admiral Vernon, the mixture of water and rum became part of the regulations, and the call to "Up Spirits" sounded aboard Royal Navy ships for more than two centuries thereafter.

If the use of grog was common practice, the mixture was anything but standard. Vernon ordered a quart of water to a half a pint of rum (four to one), others ordered three to one, and Admiral Keith later issued grog at five to one.

Dilution of rum into grog did not solve the problem of lack of discipline. In 1823 the Admiralty conducted an experiment cutting the daily rum ration in half, to 1 gill (5 oz.). In compensation they issued tea and cocoa, increased pay two shillings a month. In 1824 the experiment became permanent with the added bonus of an increased meat ration. However, as a gill at that time was equal to four double whiskies today, it was still a very strong mix.

In 1850 the Admiralty's Grog Committee, which had been appointed to investigate problems associated with the ration, released a report which confirmed the relationship between drunkenness and discipline problems, and recommended the ration be eliminated altogether. As before, they recommended giving seamen compensation by way of increased pay. However, Effective January 1, 1851, the Admiralty rather than ending the rum ration, merely decreased it. The rum ration became one half gill. Because of the decrease in amount, an effort was made to improve the quality. Rum brokers experimented with blending and blending formulas eventually became closely guarded secrets.

Although the American Navy ended the rum ration on September 1, 1862, the ration continued in the Royal Navy. Toward the end of the nineteenth century temperance movements began to change the attitude toward drink. The days of grog slowly came to an end. On January 28, 1970 the "Great Rum Debate" took place in the House of Commons, and July 30, 1970 became "Black Tot Day," the last pipe of "Up Spirits" in the Royal Navy.

(Editor's note: When the Second World War began my father was drafted into the army. He appealed to a local politician (who eventually became my grandfather) to be transferred to the navy. He claimed that this was because he preferred to sleep in a hammock but photographic evidence of the "up spirits" line on deck of his Corvette and the big smile on his face shows the grog was part of this decision.)

The Guy Cruise

A tradition has been established at my Lake Simcoe Yacht Club. A small group of sailors go on a week-long cruise after Labour Day. The rules are simple: boats are single handed, the destinations are chosen based on the wind and safe anchorages for the night and meals are shared with each skipper preparing a dinner or breakfast for all others. This year seven boats formed the Guy Cruise fleet. Over six days we completed some 70 nautical miles mostly under sail. With the exception of one day of motoring, we had winds of ten to fifteen knots each day. The cruise took us from the west side of Simcoe to the East and from the North end to the South. We sailed all points of sail and had a great time.

The Cruise provides an opportunity to develop and improve our skills both in navigation and sailing. After our first day, one of the boats had to be towed to harbour when electrical issues prevented its engine from starting after a lunch break. With six other skippers we had more than enough tools and expertise to find and fix the problem.

Later in the week one of the boats lost its dinghy. We mounted a search and found it floating between Strawberry Island and the eastern shore. The dinghy was recovered and the cruise continued.

We enjoyed great food in good company. I ate more bacon, sausage, eggs, and potatoes in that week than I usually eat over the whole summer. I'm looking forward to joining the group again next year.

MERRY CHRISTMAS



To all our members and your families
From the Bridge of the Newmarket Power Squadron

Dear reader:

If you have comments or suggestions for The Bitter End we would love to hear from you. Share your comments by sending them to *The Bitter End* at npsinfo@mailonly.ca.