

THE BAGPIPE

TWENTY - SIX YEARS OF THISTLING

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photo by george silk

POWER TO THE THISTLE IN 1971

MIDWINTERS ISSUE

George Silk

THE BAGPIPE

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of
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It is little enough to merely say thanks from all of us to Nina and Rod Glover. This Bagpipe crew followed a succession of editors who had steadily upgraded the magazine. They more than continued that trend. No small part of present Bagpipe excellence is to their credit. Now it is time to say - WELL DONE, GLOVERS. YOU ARE A TOUGH ACT TO FOLLOW!

It is also time to get to work on the next two years. Format and appearance will be about the same for 1971. Also the same is that chronic thirst for good articles and pictures. Good material is a job for the whole class. Like hiking, it may hurt but it pays. And speaking of hiking . . .

There are cynics who doubt men have walked on the moon. They weren't there to see it, and the idea just doesn't sit well in their minds. And having sometimes moved upwind well in heavy air with a light crew, there were once lingering doubts in the mind about the need for a heavy crew when it blew. These doubts are now gone.

A decent technique in research work is to carry an experiment far beyond a reasonable point to prove the effect of a certain factor once and for all. We did this with a vengeance during a day sail on Lake Ontario after the Westport Nationals. Conclusion - whenever we moved marvelously well in heavy air, with just my lithesome daughters for crew, it was mainly because they hike like fullbacks.

During the CORK Regatta at Kingston in September, we trailed Dick Landon's 769 and my 668, plus a nephew's Lightning, from our summer place in Sackets Harbor, New York to Kingston, Ont. We planned to sail out to watch a few starts and then sail about 35 miles across the end of Lake Ontario home to Sackets Harbor. The course was a series of endless tacks around Wolfe Island in the St. Lawrence and then around peninsular projections from the east shore of the lake. Our wives (after considerable dialogue) drove home with trailers in tow.

We did see the CORK activities and were delighted to see Thistlers and ex-

Thistlers, Dennis Clark, Jack Wanenmacher, Bruce Goldsmith and Dennis Posey doing well. Those Tornados are absolute screamers on a reach. In the early afternoon, we began the beat home in big seas on a south easterly heading, in the face of a roaring wind out of the south. The Coast Guard was flying honest to God gale warnings, the cloud cover was low and the day was dark and raining. We had four rather big people on the rail during the first half of the trip with a combined weight of 730 lbs. Handling the jib was Scot Landon who had just finished an interesting week crewing for Kent Foster. We had fine boat speed and good stability, but were forced to luff the main heavily.

After beating about 17 miles, the other Thistle crew was cold from a capsize, and the Lightning was lagging. We rendezvoused under the lee of Grenadier Island where the Lightning skipper transferred to our boat, now giving us a crew of five, weighing over 900 lbs. The other two boats went into Cape Vincent to call home (and their wives) for their trailers. We headed for home as the light waned and the wind got more impressive.

The effect of our 900 pound crew was incredible. The boat no longer acted like a centerboarder. She had all the feel of a heavy ballasted keel boat, with unlimited power. We no longer luffed the main, and we did little heeling. We left the bailers open, and they sucked constantly. We went over and through the seas as if we had a big diesel or an old furnace in the hold.

The experience was so sweetly different from thrashing upwind in heavy weather with a light or even conventional crew, that the two can't be compared. It was all power and drive.

When we finally tacked around Point Peninsula and were able to crack off to the East, we broke into a full and fast plane which was not broken for nearly 10 miles. With the boat so low in the water, the wake astern was something - WOW!

The advantage of a heavy crew in heavy air is obvious and long recognized. For this Thistler any lingering questions have been answered. The best go-fast in a good blow is a device called the hiking strap.

Afterthoughts - Tacking in a gale after dark with five aboard has very little future. The unquestioned hero of our little crew was that half-frozen neophyte, Dr. Jim Herold, who rejected all chances to quit. All afternoon he muttered things, like, "magnificent last frontier", between his repeated exertions in mal de mer.

And, since you ask, nothing broke! Absolutely nothing!