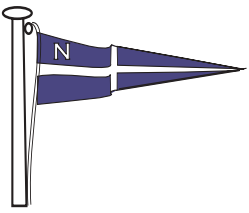


The Pennant

SUMMER 2005



The newsletter of
**NEWPORT USKMOUTH
SAILING CLUB.**



The Pennant CLUB MATTERS

Swipe cards

The swipe card system is now in place at the AES entrance gate, please co-operate.

Security gate

Our own hydraulically operated gate is now almost complete apart from the swipe card system, hopefully this will all be operational shortly.

Sodium lighting

The plan to put sodium lighting on the compound in order to deter unwelcome visitors in the night is also well underway, final costing is awaited.

Fire safety

As it is proving very difficult to get effective fire fighting equipment on the compound mainly due to lack of sufficient water pressure it is mooted that all members will be asked to confirm that they have adequate fire extinguishers on their boats (as they should under the terms required by most insurers). This will be done at the renewal of membership each year at the same time as members are asked to confirm that their boats are properly insured. It is suggested that any member found not to have insurance will be asked to remove their boat immediately from club premises.

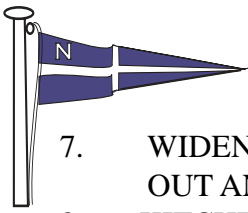
Dinghy safety !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

The committee have asked that we include this reminder in the Pennant following two incidents in the last few weeks of our own members having very lucky escapes when their dinghy's capsized. There was an incident in Cardiff bay recently when two yachtsmen tipped their dinghy while between ship and shore. The outcome was that one man died and the other (luckily?) was taken to hospital with hypothermia. We all know that the vast majority of boating accidents leading to loss of life occur in, on or from dinghies and tenders. We have all laughed from time to time to see members perhaps "three men in a boat" with only a few inches of freeboard and not a lifejacket between them. Most of us have done it from time to time. There is an old saying, "familiarity breeds contempt". This is very true, most of our members are familiar with boats and the sea and can often become blasé about what should be common sense and every day safety precautions. So the word from the committee is that our members are important to us, please exercise care when in your tender.

Looking for work?

The following is a list of jobs that need doing over the next few months. We are asking for members willing to help to advise any flag officer or committee member that they are willing to undertake one of these tasks to claim a few work hours and help the club get these jobs done.

1. REMOVE GALVANISED. TANK ABOVE SHOWER BLOCK.
2. FIT DOOR BETWEEN GENTS SHOWER AREA AND AREA BEYOND.
3. LAG PIPEWORK.
4. FIT INSULATION TO ROOF SPACE
5. IN GENTS TOILET/SHOWER AREA, FIT SUSPENDED CEILING AND INSULATE.
6. CLEAN UP BAR AREA AND DECORATE.



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7. WIDENING OF ROAD BETWEEN WINCH HOUSE AND OLD CONTAINER (DIG OUT AND FILL IN WITH HARD CORE AND CONCRETE).
8. KITCHEN FLOOR THOROUGHLY SCRUBBED (MEN'S JOB), ALL CABINETS CLEANED AND OVEN/COOKER CLEANED!
THIS JOB MUST BE DONE BEFORE THE CRUISER RALLY AT END OF MAY (28/29 MAY).
9. YELLOW LINES TO BE PAINTED AT HYDRAULIC GATES.
10. OUTSIDE OF GLAS OF WINDOW OF BOILER ROOM, WHERE INSULATION WAS FITTED, TO BE PAINTED.

MATERIALS WILL BE PROVIDED AS AND WHEN REQUIRED

Why not start some of your work hours now and avoid that panic toward the end of the season when the weather is against you doing any but indoor jobs?

These jobs all need to be done!!!!

WE COUNT ON MEMBER'S CONTINUED SUPPORT

PLEASE CONTACT THE UNDERSIGNED OR DAVE HOWELL

Dirk Doorduyn

Vice Commodore

THE LAUNCH

Again the launch took place without any major problems, other than having to use a large dinghy as a water taxi due to Puffin being out of action. One boat suffered some damage during the launch but for the most part the day was a success.



COVER STORY

BBC TV Presenter Kate Humble feeding a freshwater Amazon Pink "Bota" Dolphin in the recent Amazon Abyss TV series.

Our own Richard Bull was divemaster on the series. His full story starts on page 7.

TRAINING

The first of hopefully many First Aid courses were ran by the clubs training department recently. The trainer was Gary Grant, and the participants were Alison and Andrew Preece, Jane and Robert Lynbeck, Ron Donovan, Mike Jones-Downing, Ron Simmonds, Arthur Harris, Julia Oliva. There were also a couple of dummies on the course as well, (apparently)



We also offer our congratulations to the successful Yachtmaster course this year.



The class of 05

THE CRUISER RALLY

The Cruiser rally took place on the weekend of 28th and 29th May in rather inclement weather on the Saturday but much improved on the Sunday. Sadly the affair wasn't particularly well supported by our members but a good crowd of visitors from our friends at Portishead swelled the numbers nicely



*Grouse in pursuit of Moonraker,
Photo courtesy of Jim Orr.*

CHILDRENS DAY.

Our once yearly feast of childish fun is being organised for Sunday the 17th of July, commencing at about 11.00am. Marcia Doyle will be visiting with another group of children from Chernobyl who we hope to entertain in our usual inimitable style. Numbers and gender as yet unknown. **WATCH OUT FOR THE NOTICES.**

High tide on that day is at 15:40 and coincides with one of the knickertwister series so we will need those members who are prepared to come forward with the loan of their boat to ensure all the children get a boat ride on the day. It will be open again to the children of all the members to come along and meet their Belorussian counterparts and hopefully have a fun day. **VOLUNTEERS PLEASE** to man (or woman) the galley to cook lunch and tea for the children, to help run games, face paint, Motorcycle rides, horse rides, shoot guns (always popular). **MOST IMPORTANTLY**, we also need members to fill a shoe box with goodies for the children. Following the success of the rucksacks idea again we will purchase some rucksacks and then fill them with selected shoe boxes so the responsibility for filling a rucksack doesn't fall on one member.

I am sure you all remember how much fun we all had last year and all the years before that, I don't know if it's possible to make it better but with your help we can try.

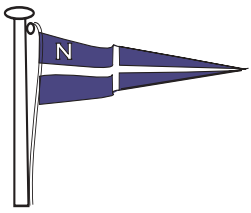
If you feel you can help or have idea's, thoughts or suggestions please

CONTACT:

Ray Ford on 01633 264178

Or

Ron Paraman on 01495 249035 (email) paraman@croes44.freeserve.co.uk



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NUSC Win The Weston Plate

The Weston Plate Race is open to teams of 4 monohulls from any sailing club affiliated to the BCYA. The responsibility for hosting the event rotates around the clubs. This year, following the withdrawal of Cardiff Bay Yacht Club, we agreed to host the race which was held on Sunday the 12th of June.

With a forecast of light north westerly winds, the competitors from Barry Yacht Club, Weston Bay Yacht Club and NUSC gathered in the clubhouse on Saturday night for detailed discussions of tactics ratings and the beauty of nighttime skies over Newport. As Sunday dawned, with clear skies, the talk over the full fried breakfast (cooked by Michelle and Howard) was of a leisurely down tide drift, shortened courses and a sunbathe on the way to Barry. How wrong we were.

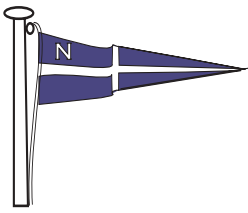
At eleven o'clock the race started. By the time the fleet had reached the West Usk Buoy, the NUSC team of Aquila, Force Five, Greenfingers and White Satin were occupying a commanding position holding 4 of the first 5 places. As the race progressed, the wind steadily backed to the west and rose to a blustery force 5. As the tide increased so did the waves. Sails were reefed, waterproofs donned and the crews settled down for a gruelling 18 mile beat around Newport Deep and the Holm Middle buoy to Barry harbour.

By 3 o'clock we had all arrived safely and whilst waiting for the tide to turn for the homeward journey the results were announced. NUSC 12 points, BYC 15 and WBYC 23. NUSC had won. The Weston Plate Trophy is now proudly on display at the clubhouse. We will get to defend it next year – competition for team places is expected to be tight so start practicing now.

Boatman gets it wrong!



This American got his understanding of the word “launch” a bit wrong, anyone got any good ideas for a caption, all the americans could come up with was “Jeronimo”.



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Amazon Abyss. What the TV didn't tell you!

There are certain things that you expect to see on a boat - any boat that you can live on anyway. Like a compass and a selection of anchors - but life is full of surprises!

Let me explain. When the BBC asked me to go to the Amazon for 6 weeks and run the diving on their series "Amazon Abyss" I jumped at the chance. It was 6 weeks work for a start and it was big job - 3 underwater camera crews and 2 topside crews. On top of that I had never been to that part of the world. A short while later, about two months before the film shoot, the BBC called again and asked me to go out to Brazil for a week or so on a recce to check out the boats, the water conditions and a bunch of other things. I was to rendezvous in Manaus, 800 miles up the Amazon, with an American submersible pilot called Paul because at the time we were considering using submersibles to film in the 100metre depths of the Rio Negro. Very soon it was obvious that the conditions in the rivers of the Amazon Basin were entirely unsuitable for manned submersibles but Paul was a man of great experience of things watery so I was delighted to have his assistance, advice and opinion on the rest of my recce. He was also good company in the evenings to share a few Antarctica Beers. (Supposedly the very brew being sipped by Sir Peter Blake when he was murdered by pirates in the Amazon!)

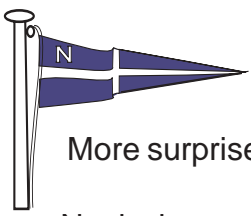
A good way to start the investigation seemed to be by having a look at one of the boats that we would be using. Amazon River boats are fantastic affairs. Two or even three decks above the water, shallow draft, and built of the most exotic of hard woods - there's plenty of it about. The boat that we were on at that point was one of the proposed accommodation boats and it had about 10 twin but very cosy cabins, a dining area, a galley and a small wheelhouse up forward. There followed a lively exchange between Paul and myself about the facilities on the boat - "Have you seen this, have you seen that" sort of thing. "Yes its great isn't it" or "No show me". Eventually Paul said to me "Have you seen the compass?" "No" I said.

"Nor have I" he said.

There wasn't one. Now, the boat skippers know their patch of the Amazon like their own back yard but in some places you can't see the other side of the river, and well, you sort of expect to find a compass on a boat that size.



The three boats with the dive boat "Castelo Guedes" in the foreground.



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More surprises to come.

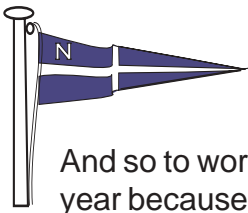
No deck gear. No winches or anything and that meant no anchors! These boats don't anchor. When the need arises they are beached and lashed to a tree. (When in Rome and all that, but I've got used to having anchors about. My own wooden ketch has a big CQR, a big Fisherman, a small Fisherman and a couple of Bruces -and its dwarfed by these big river boats!). We checked out the other boats including the dive vessel and one that we were going to be using for flying the ROV (Remotely Operated Vehicle). No compasses and no anchors and we were going to need to anchor these two vessels. This was exactly the sort of thing that I was on the recce to find out so having found out, what was to be done? Simple, place a lot of faith in Amazon navigation methods and find somewhere local where we could buy a lot of rope, a lot of chain and some hefty CQRs.

Back in the U.K. I debriefed at the BBC in Bristol and gave the producers and directors all the good news - fast currents, large logs and other debris floating down the river, and absolutely appalling visibility underwater. Possibly not the best conditions for filming underwater! And the Piranhas - everywhere, loads of them.

Making films underwater has never been easy but at least this had a good pioneering feel about it so in early October 2004 about 30 of us converged on the Amazon jungle town of Manaus. Most of us came from the U.K. but we had a sound recordist from Hong Kong, a cameraman from Germany, and a presenter and camera crew from the U.S.A. It was a bit of a reunion for many of us, as virtually everyone had worked with someone else on the crew on some previous project. I last worked with Americans, for instance, on a film called "Killer Squid" in the Sea of Cortez. Meeting old friends is important because, in a very small way, it offsets the real big downside of this sort of work - spending weeks away from your family. That's one thing that I will never get used to or be happy about.



The normal mode of transport when spotting away from the big boats, pictured are two of the local guides.



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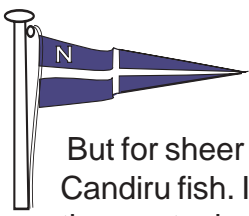
And so to work. I hope that some of you saw the series when it was broadcast in May this year because I was quite pleased with the end product. I say this because there were many times when there seemed to be a big question mark over the whole project. It seemed that we were spending all day and most of the night filming and getting nothing worthwhile. What made it happen was the unity of purpose and camaraderie of all concerned - a determination to make it happen and if filming 14 hours a day didn't produce then how about 16 hours a day? (One of the topside cameramen, Matt, went to his cabin to get a lens and when he didn't come back we went in search. He was found standing, propped up against the cabin wall snoring and sound asleep) I suppose you could put it all down to professionalism but it doesn't always happen like that. A few film shoots become just a job and when the going gets tough you think of the invoice. This wasn't like that.

I knew that the Amazon was big before I went there but the reality of its was something that hadn't anticipated. 800 miles inland there are places where it is miles wide and 100 metres plus deep. Early on in the trip, the director decided that we would head downstream to film in the Rio Arapuins at Santarem. It didn't look much on a map but it was 3 days travelling on the boats and that's going with the flow of the river! Sometime later we wanted to film in the small tributaries of the Rio Branco and this involved a 2 day journey upstream from Manaus along the Rio Negro then a sharp right into the Rio Branco itself.



Some of the local wildlife, giant otters.

There are some pretty big fish too. The massive Jau Catfish which is said to pull swimmers under and the 2 metre long Pirarucue which is a major food source for the people of the Amazon. I have to say though, that after what seemed to be my 98th grilled Pirarucue fillet, a large cod and chips would have been gastronomic heaven. And what about the Piranha? They come in many shapes and sizes but none of them seemed very interested in us. In fact, they were so easy to catch that they frequently found their way on to our dinner table. One night, as I looked down at the Korky the Kat type fish skeleton that was all that remained of my recently devoured piranha, I could only imagine the tabloid headline - "MAN STRIPS PIRANHA TO THE BONE IN SECONDS!" Even if the piranhas didn't live up to their gory reputation, there were plenty of critters out there that were waiting to poison you, crush you, eat you or penetrate you. Get bitten by the Amazon Coral snake and you are dead in 3 minutes. Let a 20ft long Anaconda wrap itself around you and there's not much hope. The Black Caiman (local brand of crocodile) looked at you through hungry red eyes as you canoed through the jungle at night.



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But for sheer unpleasantness there is little that comes close to the smallest species of Candiru fish. It's a primitive looking little carnivore that can penetrate human beings through the most private of bodily orifices - and surgery is the only way to remove them.



Richard (Centre) stands looking hungrily on while Miguel cooks the most recent catch.

After 2000 miles of river travel, over 600 man dives, some as long as 3 hours, and a million mosquito bights, we had done it - just. We had filmed the aquatic life of the rivers of the Amazon basin. It was hard but it was satisfying but 6 weeks is a long time for 30 gringos to live and work on boats in that heat. It was time to go home but not just yet because the Brazilians thought different. They cancelled our flight from Manaus to San Paulo so we missed our San Paulo to London flight. When we finally did get to San Paulo the following day there was an incident that seemed typical of how resourceful we had become in hostile environments - like airport check ins. We were flying economy class but the sound recordist announced to the check in that we all had to go to the first class lounge. When questioned as to why he said "Because my mother is president of the Potters Bar Historical Society!" We were duly ushered to the first class lounge. I hardly believed it myself but it did happen. Great trip, great ending.

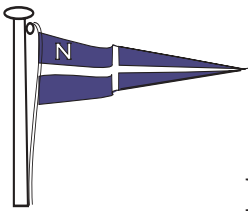
What next? "Celebrity Shark Bait". Don't ask!

By Richard Bull

My thanks to Richard Bull for an excellent article and for the 20 odd photos. It was really hard picking which ones to leave out. For those of you who managed to catch the program I am sure you will remember the fantastic images it presented. Not least the sight of Richard walking (or running) on water after a close encounter with a "three minute snake"; or the BBC team and guides hand to hand combat with a huge Anaconda in an attempt to move it to a safer area before it became a threat to the local village children and the villagers were forced to kill it.

I am looking forward to seeing "Celebrity Shark Bait" filmed in the waters off South Africa, and hopefully Richards following article.

RonP.



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Probably the best picture in the world!!!!



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The committee have brought to my attention the fact that some members have complained that the Pennant should include more articles about the club and less about general sailing, boating, naval, nautical history and other matters.

Simple folks, instead of criticising, give me the articles to put in it!

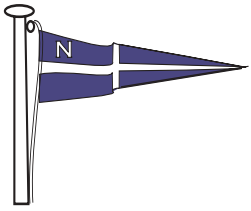
Your other alternative is to offer to produce the Pennant yourself.

While I edit the pennant I will however always reserve the right to edit or leave out completely, items that I consider rude, belittling, insulting or unworthy in any way to other members, groups or the committee.

As always, I offer my sincere thanks to those few members who regularly contribute items to these pages.

A comment was also made that the Pennant contained articles that some members felt were unsuitable for children. Any members who feel that this is the case please let me know. I will remove you from the mailing list and you can download any parts you feel suitable from the internet copy on the club web page.

RonP



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