



ANNANDALE SAILING CLUB NEWSLETTER



Lochmaben

www.annansail.co.uk

April 2006

Golden Jubilee

PLANS are shaping up nicely for the club's 50th Anniversary celebrations in June and it is particularly rewarding to hear from so many former members, some from several decades ago.

It is clear from their response that our club holds many happy memories and is dear to many hearts.

We are extremely grateful to our recently "retired" treasurer Alasdair Cook, who has not been allowed to rest on his laurels for a moment. He has been inordinately busy poring over old minute books and newspapers cuttings and speaking to former members to compile a "potted history" of ASC. This will be unveiled in the lead up to the anniversary weekend of June 17th/18th.

As for the social event on the Saturday night, tickets are selling well but we would strongly encourage anyone meaning to come who hasn't yet requested their tickets to do so straight away.

For an event of this size it is vital we know numbers as far in advance as possible to help with the organisation of catering and the bar.

This promises to be a memorable night, and we hope we are able to offer something a "wee bit special" for the club's big birthday, including complimentary bubbly, a great menu and an unbeatable band.

Everyone should have had an invitation and order form through the post several weeks ago but if not, we sincerely apologise for any omissions.

To make sure you are part of it, PLEASE buy your tickets **NOW**. Speak to Carol Beattie at the club, e-mail wyseby@uwclub.net or tel: 01461 500 252.



Marathon

25th June 11:00 start

Not quite the Southport 24 Hour but, at 6 hours, just enough to need a wee bit of team planning (e.g. somebody needs to bring the boat). Teams share the sailing so that nobody's on the water too long and a good time is had by all. Wind down and socialise afterwards. Open to all ages.

Contact : Carol as above

Champions!

North-East Area
GP14 Champions

Mark and Duncan Greenhalgh

Derwent Reservoir Sailing Club
29th/30th April

SAILING BOATS? Of course we know about Sailing Boats. Well, dinghies anyway. After all, they're all much alike - OK so some have loose footed mains and some have gaffs, but in general they're all much alike.

But have you thought about the considerable differences in the way that sailing boats developed in the first place? I'm not thinking about bits of square sails rigged on dug-out canoes or reed boats (although Thor Heyerdal did meander across a big chunk of the Pacific Ocean on a bunch of reeds named KonTiki), but about those that developed into real ocean goers.

The Norsemen reached America on Longboats – clinker built double enders with square sails. Arabs ranged across the Indian Ocean in dhows – craft with sharp upward pointing bows, large after castles and one or two lateen sails (in case you can't remember, those are slanting triangular sails, with a dipping lug). Egyptians used feluccas – probably carvel built, quite low in the water and with one large lateen sail. The Chinese had junks – high bows, big after castles, and sails that look like misbegotten Venetian blinds - but they are cut elliptically, with full length battens which permit easy adjustment or reefing. The seamen of the Mediterranean seemed to prefer to row, but most triremes could rig a square sail when the wind was favourable. The proas of the Pacific Ocean were catamarans, but with unequal sized hulls, the heavier one being 'flown', as ballast, when travelling at speed. (Thinks: but what happens on the other tack? No problem, they were double enders with the mast in the middle – to go about swop ends, the bow becomes the stern and it is still the bigger hull which is flying!). (Thinks again: rounding the first mark in a big race could be a mite tricky!)

But what size were these? The Longboats were up to 75ft. European caravels – like 'Nina' and 'Pinto' which went to America with Columbus in 1492 - were rather like dhows, but sometimes had a square sail on a mizzen mast. They too were up to 75ft in length – think five GP 14s – usually about 50 or 60 tons, and with a crew of about 40 (most of whom did not have return tickets). The proas were up to 100ft, with “a crab-claw delta wing sail relying on vortex lift” (!?!)

But who had the first big ships? Who ran the first regular services? Who invented the fenestrated rudder (Yes, they have lots of holes in them!)? Who first thought to build their ships with bulkheads – both longitudinal and transverse? And, to have a better chance of getting home again, who first took compasses to sea?

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To all these questions, the answer is the Chinese. The largest ever junks were in the fleet of Admiral Zheng He. His 1405 expedition, via India and Oman, to East Africa, consisted of 317 ships and 27000 men, the largest ships being NINE masted, about 400ft long and 160 ft wide (think lots and lots of GP14s!). So why didn't China continue to rule the waves? Probably because the Admiral died, the Ming Emperor died, and his successor had a change of policy!! Wow!

But they did continue to build a few big junks for many years. One called Keying sailed from China round the Cape of Good Hope to the United States in 1846/48, and then on to England - crossing from Boston to Jersey in a mere 21 days. The Illustrated London News said of her “her powers of weathering a storm equal, if not exceed, those of vessels of British build” – which, in Queen Victoria's time was quite a compliment!



Junk 'Keying' in 1848



River junk goosewinging



Portuguese caravels 1562

With acknowledgements to Encyclopedia Britannica, Wikipedia, the Children's Encyclopedia* and National Geographic (*1931 edition - and my Mother would be delighted to know that it is still in use, although it's not too hot on things such as the Space Shuttle or computers!). A. M. Cook.