



AQUARIUS S.C.

THE MAIN SHEET

Spring 2006 Edition

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COMMODORE'S REPORT - Nigel Knowles

Welcome to this, the first newsletter of 2006 and the first under the governance of your new management committee! Actually its not really "new" - most of the team who have served the Club so well for the last few years continue - albeit in slightly different roles. That said I would like to record the Club's thanks to Ron Munden who steps down from the Management and Bar Committees and welcome Dave Jennings and Stuart Schaffer who bring some new blood to the Management Committee.

Most of all however I want say a "big thank"-you to Mike Baker who stepped down from his second term as Commodore at the end of November: Aquarius has been blest with some excellent Commodores but Mike's tenure has been outstanding.

He has been an inspirational leader who has very much led from the front - whether this means drawing up the Club's Health & Safety Policy, rebuilding the Bar or making sure that the ladies loo is spic and span before a social function.

I guess we all have our own list of highlights of his tenure-winning the mid-Thames trophy? -then hosting it and losing it to Hampton?, Bodgit & Co's escapades? battling the bureaucracy associated with the new licensing act?.....Most of all Mike has ensured that we are a happy Club and we are all indebted to him. He is also a thoroughly nice guy and I for one have very much enjoyed working with him- Thanks Mike!

Mike steps down with the Club in generally sound shape, but one of the issues that the Committee will be addressing is the need to attract some new members - particularly younger ones who want to sail.

Our total membership has been fairly constant over the years, but the numbers who actually take to the water on Sundays has declined and those who do sail are getting quite "mature". It's great that we have the potential for a "golden oldies" sailing program for retired members on Wednesday afternoons but we do need to ensure that younger members are attracted to the water also.

This problem is common to many sailing clubs and the RYA will be chairing a discussion about it at the Commodores Conference (held in conjunction with the Dinghy Show at Alexandra Palace - of which more in a later newsletter).

I believe we need to raise the Club's profile so that potential sailors are more aware of us and in particular we all really must get behind our Open Days this year (May 6th & 7th) with both advertising and by encouraging our friends and colleagues to come down and try sailing.

On the social side the social committee, ably led by Diana Carpenter, have planned an active program, comprising the usual favourites and a couple of new ideas. As an experiment we have provided a 3-course Sunday lunch at the Club on two occasions over the winter. Twenty two members sat down to roast beef and trimmings on Dec 11 - my thanks to the Courtney family and Liz Archer who organised it - and 28 enjoyed roast chicken on Jan 22 followed by a cruise cum treasure hunt up to Sunbury lock.

This was then followed by our traditional (if traditions can be established in a mere 4 years!) "ladies" night. By common consent this was the best yet - 45 members and their ladies enjoyed a superb evening of Venetian style Masquerade and a lot of gondolieri had a lot of fun preparing for it!

Well done Rodger! and our thanks to the resident orchestra (Pat Halling and Mike Leigh) and to two mystery cabaret artistes masquerading under the name of Bodgit Ballet. The only problem is how to follow this up next year!

These social occasions highlight the inadequacies of the Clubhouse for the larger gatherings. We can't realistically do much about the size of our premises but we can improve the facilities. Accordingly the Club's maintenance contractors of Bodgit & Co. have a number of improvements planned.

Top of the list is an upgraded galley. In addition the window frames on the river frontage need replacing, the back door is to be replaced, the Bosun's store restored and the upstream ramp repaired.

The list seems endless! - but I believe very strongly that we have to refurbish the Club if we are to provide members with the facilities they rightly expect and are to attract new members.

The constraint is not so much financial but rather a human one - our inability to find sufficient people willing and able to organise and undertake the work. If you would like to get involved please speak to Bodgit & Co (aka me or Mike Baker)

The Sailing Programme starts again on 26 March and is preceded by the start of season party on 18 March (7.30 for 8.00pm). I look forward to welcoming you all there!

Website

The website is the best place to find the latest information on things like the new Flag Offices & committee members, rules & bylaws, news, and duties.

It is also excellent for looking up historic data with 6+ years of newsletters, race results, and news available.

Ferry Meadows 25/09/05

Ferry Meadows is the last SigneT open of the year. Eight boats turned up at Neene Park, just outside Peterborough, to settle the outcome of the annual point's series. Aquarius was represented by Mike Stevens and his crew Robert with ST368 and Mike Baker and Keith Hatton with ST369. Other SigneTs came from Paxton Lakes SC, just down the A1 at St. Neot's while others came from the Midlands.

Three races were run commencing at 11:00am. During the morning the SW wind strength was 2 gusting 3 but gradually increased as the day progressed. The course used a good portion of the lake and included a long spinnaker run from the second to third marks.

The racing in this particular meeting was interesting. Instead of developing into a procession, based on experience, positions were constantly changing. All three races consisted of a beat to Mark 1(s), a short reach to Mark 2(s) and then a long run to Mark 3(s), a broad reach across to Mark 4(s) and back across to Mark 4(p), followed by a long beat back to the line and another lap. Total distance covered each lap was about 1½ mile's and to make things really interesting there was a club race going on at the same time, plus several trainee sailors and wind surfers milling about to cope with. The sailing was fast and furious and Keith and I loved every minute of it.

Richard Cannon retained the senior point's series trophy, despite not even sailing at the last meeting. The final results of the Ferry Meadows open were as follows:-

Pos	Pts	No	Helm	Crew
1	2	ST368	M. Stevens	R. Britton
2	4	ST369	M. Baker	K. Hatton
3	5	ST414	M. Overs	P. Overs
4	6	ST907	J. Cowern	F. Cowern
5	10	ST199	S. Mann	AN. Other
6	10	ST522	C. Whiteside	S. Whiteside
7	11	ST919	S. Leeding	J. Leeding
8	13	ST41	T. Field	H. Whiteside

Not a bad result for Aquarius boats and crews really.

Mike (Over Easy) Baker

Last Working Party of 2005

This working party has held on 1 October and was primarily to finish up the grounds work, started at the last working party. The work was directed by young Bodgit (a.k.a. Nigel Knowles) who was the only one who seemed to know what was going on.

Some twenty-five people turned up with an amazing array of power tools and vicious looking saws, machetes and croppers. While Team 1 cleaned up the driveway Team 2 started on the area behind the clubhouse. The old fencing was removed, trees thinned out and the ground cleared together with the rain-water gullies. A large bonfire was lit beyond the Bosun's store which burned all day.

Team 3 meanwhile started along the top of the bank towards the car park. Again the old fencing was removed and the trees and shrubs trimmed and the telephone cable buried underground.

While all this was going on Diana and Janet prepared a lunch of baked potatoes & chilli which was consumed as soon as it appeared on the tables. Ground work obviously makes people very hungry. It was great! I thought lunch might slow people down but, quite the opposite, they pitched back in again and were joined by others arriving for the afternoon shift.

By the time I left the club the transformation along the bund, behind the club and up to the ramp, was remarkable. The roadway down to the blockhouse was fantastic; I've never seen it so clear along the curbs. The old place really looks pretty spiffy! My thanks to everybody who put in a remarkable day's work, great job boys and girls!

Mike (Over Easy) Baker



Frostbite lunch



About to launch for the frostbite cruise

Nigel & Anne's Lunch & Frostbite Cruise Sunday 20th Jan 2006

The day, which dawned truly freezing but gloriously sunny, boded well for the promised Frostbite Cruise. 28 club members and friends duly assembled at the clubhouse in good time for the lunch - which was provided (very impressively, we thought) by Nigel and Anne Knowles. Thank you both for all the hard work involved in producing such a delicious meal. The apple crumble was particularly memorable with several diners going up for "seconds" (perhaps we could have the recipe for the next club magazine, Anne?).

After lunch, 20 of us (replete but willing) split up between 1 motor cruiser, 2 motor sailers and the club's patrol boat, to take part in Nigel's exceedingly cryptic quiz. Don and Helen Barnett (ably assisted by Gnasher the dog, who also provided us with on board entertainment!) managed to accommodate 8 of us in "Zareba". Laurie Bridges transported a further 5 willing quiz participants in his Leisure 17 with another 4 enthusiastic members traveling in Dave Jennings' Manta 18. (At one point Dave did try to change over to sail but as the breeze was down to a mere whisper he had to give it best.) With Bryan Clements at the helm, the patrol boat managed to seat the remaining 3 eager beavers.

We all thoroughly enjoyed the cruise and had great fun trying to unravel Nigel's clues - the solving of which, due to the fertile imagination of the group on our boat, produced much hilarity and mirth! Dave's crew managed the highest score with 12 correct answers out of the 15 questions set. After a highly entertaining outing we all returned to the clubhouse in time for afternoon tea provided by Stuart.

Footnote: Nigel was telling me that the original quiz was compiled about 25 years ago and when he checked it out the Friday before the quiz he discovered that 70% of the clues were no longer relevant! He then spent a memorable time in the patrol boat battling with the elements (and the controls) trying to set new questions. No wonder they were cryptic!!

Anne Bond

Photos by Mike Baker

AGM, Prize Giving and End of Season Party

This year's AGM was held in the clubhouse on the evening of 3 December 2005 and marked the end of my three year term as Commodore. The meeting was chaired by the club President George Bray and after acceptance of last year's AGM minutes started with the usual Commodores and Financial reports.

Prior to the elections, there was an additional item. This covered recent amendments to the club rules and by-laws. Some of these were required as a result of applying for our new club premises certificate while others were needed to incorporate changes in the sections concerned with berthing and payment of annual subscriptions. Under the clubs constitution these amendments needed to be formally proposed, explained and approved at a club AGM. After some discussion the meeting voted for their adoption.

Note: For members who did not attend the AGM it is important that they acquaint themselves with the changes to the club Rules & By-laws. This can be done in two ways. Firstly they can be found on the club's website. Secondly a hard copy can be found on the notice board in the clubhouse. Please note that this copy is for reference and info but should not be removed from the club.

Next on the agenda was the election of officers and management committee for the coming year. Nigel Knowles was unanimously elected as the club's new Commodore. An excellent choice! Nigel was my Vice Commodore and I cannot think of a better person to guide the club through the coming years.

The Club's Flag Officers, Management and Social Committee members were then elected. Details of these appointments can be found on the website. After George closed the AGM Diana Carpenter, Linda Wheeler, Joan Garrett, Linda Rowley, Janet Edwards and Joan Bray served a buffet supper together with mulled wine and mince pies.

This was followed by the presentation of the annual sailing 'pots' overseen by the Sailing Secretary Richard Cannon. Graham Thompson seemed to have done particularly well this year winning just about everything. Catharine Bridger was awarded the 'most improved helm' trophy.

The evening ended with socialising in the bar. Pete's cappuccino machine worked overtime and the smell of both mulled wine and fresh coffee made the old place feel quite Christmassy. I must be getting soft in my old age!

Mike (Over Easy) Baker



Struggling with the quiz on Zareba

2005 Annual AQSC Dinner

The first Aquarius SC annual dinner that I ever attended was held at a pub on the Staines Road. Later, after a couple of poor experiences at venues, the dinner transferred to the club house but everything required had to be hired or brought in. Now we have acquired all the crockery, cutlery, tables, chairs, linen and wine glasses needed and only have to hire-in the caterers.

The dinner itself has gone from strength to strength and this year demand for tickets outstripped capacity with some forty-eight members and guests being accommodated. Lyn and I missed last year's dinner because we were in India but this year our timing was a little better and we joined everybody else on the evening of 19 November to enjoy this year's bash.

The organisation of course started months earlier with Diana, our Social Secretary contacting "Food for Thought", who did the catering in 2004, and agreeing a date and requesting menu selections.

Rodger Wheeler meanwhile quietly set about acquiring the table wine. The week before the dinner it was becoming apparent that we were likely to be oversubscribed. This is unfortunate because obviously we would like accommodate everybody who wanted to come, but, the club's only so big. It's for this reason that we always encourage people to book as early as possible and we do give priority to members over guests for as long as possible.

On the prior Wednesday Joan, George and yours truly set about clearing the clubroom, washing all the table wear and bringing in the tables and chairs and scrubbing the galley from top to bottom.

On the Friday a small army of helpers, including Diana, Peter, Nigel, Richard, Linda, Rodger, Joan, George, Stuart laid up the tables and took care of the hundred and one things needed for the following day.

Saturday was fairly quiet with only Diana and Pete going down in the afternoon to let the caterers in, but by 6:30pm, early arrivals started to take care of the last minute arrangements and by 7:30pm the clubhouse was filling up fast.

Those gentlemen that have them always wear dinner jackets; well we don't get too many opportunities nowadays. Everybody, especially the ladies, looked great. Having only seen people in sailing gear for much of the season evenings like these are a real opportunity for members to get dressed up and is probably only surpassed for sheer 'glam' by the Ladies Night held at the club over the last two or three years around Valentine's day. Now that is an eye opener as anyone who went to last years bash will tell you!

I thought the dinner was great. Trying to serve forty-eight covers in the confined space of our galley is no small undertaking but "Food for Thought" managed superbly, despite the door to our old cooker deciding to take the annual dinner night not to shut properly.

The dinner was followed by an excellent raffle organised by Bob Sumners and Janet Edwards. The evening continued with dancing until late. I think we left at around 2:00am'ish.

My thanks to everybody who worked hard to make the evening a real success and particularly Diana Carpenter who planned and organised the event. Nice one Diana!

Mike (Over Easy) Baker

A Place in Our Lives for Books

When was the last time you curled up in front of the fire and read a good book, over Christmas perhaps? Houses used to come with fitted bookcases and there weren't so many other things to do and occupy our leisure time. At one time they were part of life; there was always time to loose oneself in a good book.

Good fictional hard and soft backs are still out there. There's no lack of well established and contemporary authors to choose from. I read a fair bit but friends often say to me "why bother, I'll just wait for the film". That's such a shame because, with one or two exceptions, the film is never as good as the book. Characters and places are the Directors interpretation and not necessarily what a reader might visualise.

One of the best recent film versions of a book was Peter Jackson's Lord of the Rings, but even that missed out characters and events that were in the books, and worse still changed certain events from one place to another compared with Tolkien's original story.

Wilbur Smith's books are totally engrossing. He mainly writes about Africa and often weaves fictional stories around actual historical events. His latest book, albeit a year old now was Heat of the Sun and concerns the fall of Khartoum and the death of Gordon. The characters and events he describes are spell-binding; it is truly difficult to put down once started. His earlier books often use ancient Egypt as a backdrop and if you have never read "The River God" and "Warlock" you have a treat in store.

Now days some books get hyped in much the same way films are. Who ever had heard of Dan Brown before "The Da Vinci Code", the film rights of which were snapped up before the book was even published. Interestingly the subject matter turned out to be pretty controversial and had the Catholic Church up in arms and a number of TV pundits discussing its contentious premise. Great for sales mind!

Of recent books I suppose the "Harry Potter" series must be amongst the most successful. The right stories tapped into the right audience. However, I wonder how many of JK Rowling's adoring fans that rush to see the new film releases in their thousands ever read the books or even care that there are books.

Does a lack of reading contribute to the general deterioration of the English language? Does it affect the ability to use language correctly? Or should we just acquiesce to 'quick speak', typified by telephone texting. God, I hope not! So back to the beginning; when did you last read a book?

Mike (Wilbur Smith fan) Baker

Thanks

I would just like to take this opportunity to thank Nigel and the club members for the diving book that was presented to me at the AGM. It was most kind of you and much appreciated. I wish Nigel all the best in his new position as Commodore and I'm sure he will receive the same support from the Management Committee and membership that I enjoyed.

Mike (Over Easy) Baker

Christmas and New Year

Well, there goes another pair! I'm talking about Christmas and New Year 2005. Now perhaps things can get back to normal.

No more shops with tacky decorations and continuous loop carols. No more jolly, snow laden, TV adverts. And no more traffic jams caused by frantic people trying to find Christmas of dubious suitability. Now don't get me wrong I love Christmas. What I don't like is all the commercial palaver that goes with it including sales on Boxing and New Years day.

Father Christmas, who's he? Oh yes! It's me! On the topic of presents my son and daughters advice is "just give us the money Dad and we will spend it in the after-Christmas sales, that way you get more bang for your buck", or "if you must give us a present don't forget to enclose the receipt so we can take it back and get something we actually want or at very least get the right size".

Catering's a nightmare! Are you the perfect hostess? It would seem that unless you bought everything that is 'not just food' but 'M&S food' you couldn't possibly be. Mind you the people at Park who want you to put so much away every month and will then supply you with a hamper of things you never knew you needed at Christmas, might disagree. At Christmas everyone you ever heard of is trying to flog their cook books (a thousand and one ways to ruin a turkey) or get you to by their Christmas CD.

During December the country goes mad. People are suddenly overcome with an unexplained desire to festoon their houses with every electrical Christmas decoration ever devised. Neon Reindeer browse on the front lawns and plastic inflatable Santa's parachute from chimneys. House competes against house and road competes against road. The world's gone crazy!

Is it just me who thinks it or come Christmas do television schedulers take leave of their senses? If I have to sit through another re-run of 'The Great Escape' or 'The Sound of Music' or a Morecombe & Wise Show made back in the year dot I think I'll go nuts. Programme schedulers must have a full frontal originality lobotomy as a prerequisite to getting their jobs.

What I do like about Christmas is, despite their mobile phones continually ringing,, having my son and daughter to stay for a couple of days. They seem to enjoy themselves and, to date, have never expressed a desire to be anywhere else. They drink the cocktail cabinet dry, view anything to do with washing up as an alien concept, including loading or unloading the dishwasher. There's no hot water available from the time they arrive to the time they leave and wet towels are permanently festooned over the radiators. Their idea of Christmas decorations I suppose.

They do however like silly board games, which I find quite amusing as I can't stand them, with the exception of Backgammon. But, Lyn and I do love having them to ourselves again, albeit just for a short time over Christmas. I guess we should count ourselves fortunate that they are still around and want to spend the holiday with us.

Mike (Tongue in cheek grumpy old man) Baker

Boat Show 2006 at Excel

I hadn't been to the boat show since it moved from Earl's Court to Excel, so this year Lyn & I decided to give it a look see.

We went on Monday 9 January, the day of the underground rail strike! Good start I thought but actually it made little difference. If anything it made life easier, because judging from the attendance, a lot of people decided not to go, which made getting around very easy.

The show is massive but divided up quite well. Clothing & chandlery, electronics, dinghys, windsurfing, large and small power boats all have their own areas together with the pool and the external berths out on the wharf.

Boat prices to suit everybody from £200 to £5.9m; unfortunately there weren't many wood boats about, seemingly everything nowadays is fibreglass short of HMS Grafton, a Royal Navy frigate, moored outside which was steel and Kevlar.

I suppose the biggest exhibitor was Fairline with an array of very large and up-market motor cruisers that you would have needed to have won the Euro Lottery just to get on their stand. I'm not a great lover of fibreglass but I have to admit the new Huntress, once of Fairy Marine, did look "the biz". Her manufacturers had managed to retain all her rakish good looks, style and power in a package that certainly was attracting a lot of attention.

An oddity at this years show was an increase in 'stretched' inflatables, some capable of carrying eight or so people in 'open-air' luxury. Some of these had absolutely enormous Mariner outboards larger than some inboards being exhibited at the show. Very curious looking boats and probably aimed at the American market.

Most of the dinghies on display were examples from manufacturers rather than classes and again, no wood. Satnav for boats has really taken off this year in line with their popularity in cars. I was talking to one exhibitor about navigation the old way, in case the electronics went down, and he smiled and said their sets were relatively so cheap have two, one as a back-up!

Outside some very cold looking salesmen were trying to interest people onto their gin palaces but without much luck. Most interest seemed to be with the larger sailing yachts.

HMS Grafton was getting ready to receive borders watched over by heavily armed Marines who looked decidedly uncomfortable at a boat show. I'm sure they would have been a lot happier doing their thing somewhere else.

Lyn couldn't decide which motor cruiser she would like and settled for some very curious, bendy, silicon rubber cookware. No don't ask, talk to her about it next time you see her.

We finally gave up mid afternoon and laden down with catalogues and brochures made a run for it before the rush hour started. I really enjoyed the show, much easier to get around than Earl's Court, well laid out and just about every aspect of boat covered. I might even go again some time.

Mike (what are we going to do with all that fibreglass one day?) Baker

Thoughts for Today

- Old sailors never die ... they just get a little dinghy.
- Work is for people who don't go boating.

How to Achieve Inner Peace

Lyn passed the following on to me. I used it during my AGM report but since then one or two people asked for a copy. It kind of hit the spot and I thought you all might find it amusing ...

I'm passing this on to you because it definitely worked for me. By following the simple advice, I have found inner peace. The article read "The way to achieve inner peace is to finish all the things you've started". So I looked around the house to see all the things I started and hadn't finished ... and before leaving the house this morning I finished off a bottle of red wine, a bottle of white wine, The Bailey's, Kahlua and Wild Turkey, the Prozac, some Valium, some cheesecake and a box of chocolates. You have no idea how freakin' well I now feel. You may pass this on to those you feel are in need of Inner Peace.

Mike (High on Life) Baker

Aquarius at the Pantomime

After last years take on Panto's which turned into something of a history lesson (sorry about that) this article will be short and sweet "Oh no it won't, Oh yes it will!" ... see! It's starting again.

This year The Club's regular band of 'Pantophiles' went to see Aladdin at Richmond Theatre. Simon Callow of Four Thingy's and a Wotsit fame starred as Ebanarzar while Christopher Biggins was Widow Twankey.

If the thought of Mr. Biggins in a dress didn't float your boat Aladdin also starred Patsy Kensit as the Genies of both the Ring and the Lamp, depending on the colour of her dress. I never did find out who played Aladdin but I always thought principle boys should be played by girls; well there you go, another tradition gone to the wall.

Simon Callow made a great tongue-in-cheek villain constantly erring into classical Shakespeare prose to great comical effect. Some of his interaction with the genie was hilarious. It was great entertainment and the audience really got into the spirit of it all, which after all, is what Panto's all about.

Another Panto tradition, I managed, was to drop a whole box of chocolates on the floor and then step in them. Lyn said I did it on purpose because she'd eaten all the nutty ones. That's not true of course, it was the caramel ones! No doubt our dedicated little band of addicts will soon be twisting Diana's arm to book seats for next years Panto 'fix'.

Mike (He's behind you!) Baker

The Commodores Ice-Box Sunday

When I said in the bar one evening that the Hawker SC used to race on New Year's Day I didn't really think that Nigel was listening. He obviously was and the result was a cool club sail on Sunday 22 January up to Sunbury lock and back.

In fairness this followed a very good lunch of soup, roast chicken and vegetables followed by crumble and cream provided, at the club, by Ann and Nigel Knowles. Not content with just a sail Nigel also turned it into a quiz by concocting a whole series of observation questions that had to be answered along the way.

He's a bit devious our new Commodore, going to have to keep an eye on him! I'll say no more, because I think you will find a very good report on the day elsewhere in this newsletter.

Mike (our team won!) Baker

Mascheranda

Rodger's been at it again! This year 'Ladies Night' was a Venetian Masked Ball... he's a little devil!

Planning commenced in The Club bar (where else) in mid January under Rodgers chairmanship. Actually it was more like bar-stool-ship but what the hell! Several pints later things were definitely getting out of control.

The conversion of the clubhouse into a Venetian Palace was vetoed by Bodgit & Son (planning permission aside). The re-modeling of Waterman to make it look like a Gondola was considered to be a 'little ambitious' and Bryan Clements offer to convert the patio into a replica of St. Mark's Square just wasn't taken too seriously.

Eventually however the relevant details did get sorted and actions assigned to whomever didn't get out of the place fast enough. The clubhouse did, sort off, get converted into central Venice with a series of graphic impressions around the walls and curved arches replacing the normal 'squareness' of the place; The club watering hole was converted into the "Cafe Rialto su Thamis-sis" and low-and-behold even Waterman got a Gondola makeover.

Rodger worked out the menu, set about procurement and arranged for waiters, barmen and a cabaret. Even the dinner tables got a makeover and ended up black!

Rumours also started filtering in that masks and costumes were being actively sought by the rapidly increasing number of people who had applied for tickets. Obviously 'Ladies Night' fame has spread to the furthest reaches of the membership.

The masked ball was held in the clubhouse on Saturday evening 11th February and promised dinner, dance, entertainment and modest debauchery; I think that's a contradiction of terms and should probably have read 'immodest debauchery'.

The laid up tables were themed black and gold and looked pretty 'spiffy' complete with candelabras.

As the guests arrived they were greeted by Rodger and our Commodore Nigel with a variety of multi-coloured aperitifs and a flower for each of the ladies.

The costumes were amazing and as someone once said "a picture paints a thousand words", I will leave it to them when they appear on the club's excellent website.

Pat Halling and Mike Leigh provided some suitable music and it wasn't long before Aquarius took on a very Venetian ambience.

An excellent dinner was served by Rodger Wheeler, Mike Rodgers, Leo Bond, Nigel Knowles, Charles Dennis and George Bray all dressed as gondoliers.

Following a very relaxed dinner one or two of the tables were moved to make room for dancing and the cabaret. I won't say too much about the entertainment apart from Pat and Mike's contribution was superb, as always.

The contribution made by 'Ballet Bodgit' had to be seen to be believed. I saw it and I still don't believe it; and what about the Gondola MS Bodgit? Nigel had a lot of fun making that I can tell you. Rumour has it that it is destined for Ebay. So if you've ever wanted your own, somewhat cut down, Gondola get on, and get bidding.

The Mascheranda ended with socializing around the bar. I thought the evening was a resounding success, I just hope the Aquarius ladies thought so too. Grateful thanks to Rodger and Nigel for organising the whole thing, and to the small army of 'gentlemen' who helped out on the night and with the clearing up on Sunday morning.

I'm hoping someone has metaphorically twisted a suitable ladies arm to write a female perspective of the evening. At the end of the day it was the Ladies it was all done for so I guess they should have the last word.

The problem the club now has is how is it going to top that next year! Ideas in writing please to the Commodore; better now know as, Nigella (Prima Bodgit Ballerina) Knowles.

So what's the history of the Venice carnivals? Well ... they date way back to the year 998 when history records that Croatian pirates raided Venice and kidnapped several Venetian girls. Some young Venetian noblemen traced the pirates and managed to rescue the girls.

To celebrate their achievement a large festival was held. This event laid the tradition of the Venice Carnival which is still celebrated annually in the city at the beginning of February.

Roots of carnival, not to be confused with the above, go to the Latin culture. Origins of this holiday lay in the famous Roman saturnalia or wild party/orgy.

Now I've got your attention! The main tradition of saturnalia was to destroy the difference between master and slaves. During the holiday slaves were allowed to sit at the masters tables and even abuse them. However, in order not to spoil the fun, people wore masques.

This practice went to Venice and the masque became a key feature of the carnival. Carnival reached its peak in the 18th century where it became the main event of the year. At the carnival nothing was judged and nothing was considered too shameful, bold, dissolute or too heedless.

For two weeks honourable people could indulge in vices with no need to justify themselves. All they had to do was put on a masque to become unrecognizable.

The wearing of masques and costumes was well established by 1436, when masque makers or Mascereri were officially recognised with their own guild. Commedia dell'Arte masques are based on characters like Harlequin. With its origins in Renaissance Italy (early 16th Century) the Commedia dell'Arte was one of the earliest forms of theatre as we know it today, starting with street performers donning masque to draw attention to themselves.

After the big European revolutions however the carnival tradition was lost and only after the Second World War, when Venice became one of the main tourist centres of Europe, did the tradition start to recommence.

Here endeth the history lesson for this year!

Mike (Wealth of trivia information) Baker



A big **THANK YOU** from Rodger Wheeler to all who helped with Mascheranda.

Mascheranda Menu

Aperitifs:

Sanguinello (Blood orange, Ice (alcohol free))
Curacao (Cava, Blue curacao, Ice)
Tintoretto (Cava, Pomegranate Juice, Ice)
Marco Polo (Cava, Menta peperita, Ice)

Table wines:

Frascati DOC 2004
Montepulciano d'Abruzzo DOC 2004

Antipasti:

Warm Picadella
Warm Ciabatta with herbs, garlic and olive oil
Celery, cucumber & carrot batons and dips
Ricotta with Olive Oil
Paté
Mixed Olives with herbs, olive oil
Cornichons
Ciabatta with Olives

Secondi:

Pollo Cacciatore (Chicken breast with passata, chopped tomato, onion, mushroom, garlic basil, oregano etc.)
or Canneloni with Ricotta and Spinach
or Lasagne

Aubergine and Ricotta and Mushroom Gondolas
Peperonata (layers of fried onions, courgettes, mushrooms and peppers with herbs and olive oil)
Peas, Haricots
Gratinata del Delfino (Sliced potatoes in a cream and garlic sauce baked with a gratin of gruyere cheese)

Lemon sorbet

Dolci:

Black Forest Gateau and cream.
Clementines

Formaggio:

Assorted Biscuits & Cheese board: (Pecorino Romano, Dolcelatte, Gorgonzola Piccante, Reblochon, Comté della Savoia, Gruyère della Svizzera, Tomme della Savoia, English Cheddar)

Toast "Libiamo" - Cava Brut

Filter Coffee

Terry's All Gold Chocolates

Masheranda Re-Masquerade Ball

February 14th Valentines Day, but on Saturday 11th the ladies of AQSA were given their own special valentine evening and "Wow" what a night to remember.

As we arrived at the club we were greeted at the door by Mike of Bodgit & Son, "with your late guys!" Whoops I thought it was 7-30 pm for 8, I was wrong again, will I ever listen.

On entering the club Rodger gave me a carnation, at least I think it was him behind the mask?, And a drink by Peter resembling a gondolieri, gonzo from the muppets, and a bird of paradise. As I looked around it was hard not to notice the trouble the men of the club had gone to, to make this a very special night.

We all sat down to dine by candlelight with a meal cooked and presented by the gondolieri of the club, lets make this evening the AQSC Olympics, first on the starting blocks was garlic bread, pizza dips, vegetables, marks out of ten - eight.

Next to go was the chicken with vegetables and potatoes au gratin, half way through this there was my husband Keith resembling Zorro causing a commotion at the far end of the table when he lost his beard, was it in the vegetables or did it go on to the floor?, Lyn went to his aide and found it by his

chair, but unfortunately he lost it again, only to find it stuck to the bottom of his shoe, I can't take him anywhere. Marks out of ten for the second entry nine, nil pts for Keith's performance.

Lets take a break and have some entertainment. The moment had come for the ladies to be serenaded by the magic of Pat with his violin and Michael on the piano, what a wonderful performance, superb, fantissimo, ten plus for a first class act.

Next on was ballet Bodgit, have you ever seen two sugar plum fairies gone wrong, they bought the house down. Entrance was by their very own gondola M.S.Bodgit, and the outfits had to be seen to be believed, they were great!

Can we have a repeat performance please, marks out of ten- ten plus joint first place, but one point added for costume design.

And so we come to the end of the evening, and what an evening we had, thank you one and all for all the hard work, wonderful meal, and great entertainment. We will never forget it.

On a final note - An amazing £125 pounds was raised for Paul's "White Peaks Challenge" (Scope Charity Ski), thank you to everyone who gave their support to this very worthwhile charity.
Madeline "Powder Wig" Hatton



Venetian Palace
clubhouse



Ballet Bodgit

Sailing and Social Programme March 2006 - May 2006

Generally at 11:30 on Sundays there will be a Fun Race, Match Race or Training Session depending on conditions.

The Wednesday afternoon Series will start on 17 May and end on 13 September. Start time will be 4 p.m. The bar opens at 8 p.m.

The Cundy Trophy long distance race will take place, on a day when the weather is suitable, concurrent with the scheduled Sunday afternoon race.

On Saturday afternoons, from May to September, Racing and Cruising will take place according to demand.

The OOD is responsible for organising the provision of cakes and milk for the afternoon tea at 3 p.m. on race days.

The Aquarius Open Days are 6th and 7th May; members are asked to bring friends and neighbours who might be tempted to sail.

On the Late Spring Holiday, Sunday and Monday 28-29 May, we visit the Bewl Spring Regatta with Allcomers handicap races on Sunday and pursuit races Monday

On the Late Summer Holiday Monday 28 August we visit Bewl Water for their Autumn Regatta with pursuit races.

Date	11:30 a.m.	2:00 p.m.	3:30 p.m.	Duty Officers, Evening & Notes
March				
Sat 18				A special Start of Season party with Pat Halling's Le Sextet de l'Hot Club d'Aquarius Richard Cannon, Pat Irving, Laurie Bridges
26	Fun Race	Spring Race 1	Spa Race 1	
April				
2	Fun Race	Spring Race 2	Spa Race 2	Peter Carpenter, Sarah Herbert, John Botterill
Sat 8		Visit to Kew Gardens and/or Kew Steam Museum with Pub lunch		
9	Fun Race	Spring Race 3	Spa Race 3	Rodger Wheeler, Linda Wheeler, Tony Adcock
16	Easter Egg Trophy, 4 races, best 3 count			Tony Allen, Brenda Allen, Roy Clough, Monday is Bank Holiday
Sat 22				Quiz night with George Bray including Fish & Chips
23	Fun Race	Spring Race 4	Sprint Race 1 & 2	Nigel Knowles, John Neale, Brian Clements
Sat 29	MID-THAMES TROPHY at Littleton SC			Bank Holiday weekend
30	Fun and training races for new members			Richard Cannon, Anne Bond, Eric Bridgewater
May				
Sat 6	Aquarius Sailing Club Open WEEKEND			Richard Cannon, Pat Irvin, Charles Dennis
7	Open day, Training and Funday Racing			Rodger Wheeler, Linda Wheeler, John Botterill
14	Fun Race	Spring Race 5	Spa Race 4	Tony Allen, Brenda Allen, Graham Thompson. SCOA Paxton
21	Fun Race	Spring Race 6	Spa Race 5	George Bray, Joan Bray, Mike Baker
Sun 28	BEWL VALLEY SAILING CLUB Spring Open Regatta, Allcomers Handicap Races			
Mon 29	BEWL VALLEY SAILING CLUB Spring Open Regatta, Pursuit Races			

Start Of Season Party

**There is a real treat for this year's Start of Season party at the club on Saturday 18 March 2006
7.30 p.m. for 8.00 p.m. (prompt start).**

For your entertainment and for one night only:

***Le Sextet de l'Hot Club d'Aquarius*
perform at the Café Rialto su Tamesis.**

**- with Pat "Grapelli" Halling violin,
Mike Leigh keyboards,
Dave Richmond bass, Judd Procter guitar,
Tony Kinsey drums, Ann Halling percussion,
and vocalist Mandy Leigh.**

**Disguising yourself in French attire is optional,
but it would add to the atmosphere.**

"Un petit goût" will be provided during the interval.

Club Open Weekend

This year's open weekend will be over the weekend of 6th & 7th May. It's never too early to start talking about this because it's a major annual recruitment event. We really need to introduce some youngsters to Aquarius and any ideas to this end would be gratefully received. I've already been in touch with station manager at Radio Jackie who has agreed to broadcast some publicity for us in the run up to the weekend. I will also have posters and fliers available in good time, plus newspaper adverts.

What I need you guys to do is distribute this PR material in good time and talk to friends, neighbours and family about the weekend. Encourage them to come down and bring their friends. Posters and hand outs should be put in your local shops, schools, libraries and anywhere else that you can think of. Scout, Sea Scout and Guide groups in your areas should specifically be targeted. Let's see if we can get a record number of people down to the club (and afloat) this year.

Mike (Publicity Mgr.) Baker