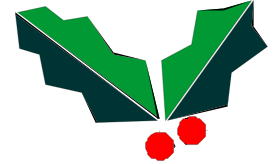


# NEWSLETTER



## December 2005

### Editorial

Just a Christmas quickie to pass on some essential information, such as next year's social calendar and (wondrous news) Steve Cox's email address (see the committee list). 'Whatever next!' I hear you ask – A strange light in the sky? A virgin birth? Rare, non-alcoholic gifts at the Three Kings? Must be the time of year.....

As the season of flooding and pea-souper fogs spoils our rowing again, we take you back to the balmy (barmy?) days of July to enjoy Brian Swindells' tale of intrepid boating in 'God's Own County'. In the land of whippets, flat caps and even flatter vowels, three mature Upton members joined the ARA rowing tour to give the rivers Ure and Ouse a flogging they'll never forget (please note that 'The Shambles' is a part of York). Brace yourself for the photos!

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### Captain's Log

Flooding and thick fog have already interfered with our rowing this winter, leading to several cancelled outings, including the mini-head on 11<sup>th</sup> December.

### Competition

Little to report apart from a scratch Vet C quad that represented the club at the Veteran IVs Head of the River on the Tideway on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2005: Ron Paterson, Peter Barker, Mark Brooks and Johnny Birks achieved a time of 23:34 from Mortlake to Putney.



## **Fund raising / social calendar and other notable dates**

The fund raising sub-committee has been working hard on trying to finalise the calendar for next year so you can get it into your spanking new diaries. It currently looks something like this:

<b>Friday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2006</b>	Quiz night at the Sports Pavilion, Upton.
<b>Friday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2006</b>	Skittles Evening, Drum and Monkey, Newbridge Green Upton.
<b>Friday 8<sup>th</sup> April 2006</b>	Theme evening of food and frolicking in the Memorial Hall, Upton. The theme is still to be decided but a medieval night (or was it knight?) was discussed.
<b>Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2006</b>	Sponsored half marathon to Tewkesbury (Upper Lode) and back followed by boat(s) naming ceremony and brunch.
<b>Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2006</b>	Spring Fayre, in the morning in the Memorial Hall, Upton
<b>Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2006</b>	Garden Party in the afternoon at Welland Court
<b>Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> July 2006</b>	Upton Regatta
<b>Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> July 2006</b>	Upton Sprint Regatta for novice crews from pubs, clubs, firms and just good friends.
<b>Friday 13<sup>th</sup> October 2006</b>	Upton RC Club Dinner, Memorial Hall Upton
<b>November 2006</b>	Line dancing in the Memorial Hall - Date to be confirmed

We look forward to seeing there!

Peter Barker and the hard working sub-committee

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### **‘Rookie’s Remeniscences’ - The 12th ARA Rowing Tour; July 2005.**

This year’s tour, organised by Weyfarers RC and City of York RC, took place on 28th to 31st July and was planned to cover some 39 miles of the rivers Ure and Ouse navigation through the Vale of York in North Yorkshire.

The tour fleet comprised nine boats; two Solent Galleys – sweep oar 4s, a single skiff, an Alden double scull, two quads, and two double scull skiffs – one of which was, of course, Upton’s very own Pablo with Peter (the Commander), Ron (the engine room) and me, Brian, (the cabin boy) on board – “Three Men in a Boat” but no Montmorency!

The tour party numbered 38 rowing and coxing in addition to John and Caroline Turnbull who handled the organisation and to whom we were indebted for the smooth and seamless management of our tour. Crews came from widely distant parts of England – the Solent Galleys from Southsea, the Alden crew came up from Castle Dore in Cornwall and, representing the north, we had a boat from Tees Rowing Club. Thus we had a wide representation of UK rowing – sea and estuary rowing from Southsea and Castle Dore as well as the more familiar, and probably more delicate, river paddlers from the Thames and the Severn.

With the Solent Galley crews from Southsea was Pat Sherwin. Pat, the founder and doyen of recreational rowing in the UK, was the “moving force” in the organisation of the ARA annual rowing tour for most of the previous eleven years. Ill health now limits his involvement but he was still very much present on our tour as “lookout” in the bow of a Solent Galley. Reminiscing at the bar, where a lot of the tour seemed to take place, Pat related stories of rowing around the Isle of Wight in a Solent Galley in a little over 7 hours. “Of course, you have to get the tide right” he said modestly. He claimed that a Galley could be rowed at 8 to 9 knots – that is in a heavy boat with no sliding seats which seemed to require a stroke rate of over 30spm just to go downstream on the Ouse! Nothing relaxed about this recreational rowing!

We, the Upton crew, set out from Tiltridge, with “Pablo” in tow, at noon on Thursday 28th July and it was raining – not a good portent for three solid days on the river! We progressed north entertained by Peter’s compilation of Mark Knofler’s music. “That’s “Dire Straits”” I said, keeping fingers crossed and hoping that dire straits was not the message for the next three days!

Late afternoon we arrived at the venue for the tour start, Ripon Motor Boat Club (RMBC) at Littlethorpe close to Ripon. It was still raining and it was cold – but then we were in Yorkshire! And what can one expect in a province where even the natives summarise the climate as “nine months of winter followed by three months of bad weather”.



*Ron Paterson and Peter Barker approaching the York Millenium Bridge*

Anyway, braving the rain, we off loaded and settled Pablo on the quayside and then transferred Pablo's trailer to Cawood some 30 to 40 miles distant anticipating retrieval three days later at the finish. I would add that Cawood was on the tidal Ouse and looked menacing as a point of arrival – arrival at mid ebb could have seen one going on to Goole and awaiting the turn to get back to Cawood – but more of that later.

We installed ourselves in the tour hotel in York, the base for the tour – we were to be “bussed” out and back each day to pick up and leave boats at overnight stops. The tour programme started with a pre-dinner social chat – in the bar, of course – to get to know fellow travellers. I was surprised, nay astounded, to meet a former near neighbour, Elisabeth Greene and her daughter, from when we lived in Warwick in the 1970s. Elisabeth had also only recently taken up rowing – so we had that in common – but she went on to say she was single sculling at Warick Boat Club - so I quickly changed the conversation to squash! Then dinner with Lynette Skelton, a Kiwi living on Sydney Harbour whose life was devoted to taking part in rowing events around the world, gave an international flavour to the tour and underlined what a serious business recreational rowing could be.

Friday morning dawned overcast but not actually raining and after breakfast we “bussed” out to RMBC to start the tour proper. Launched Pablo and got away about sixth boat down the first leg, the Ripon Canal, which joins the River Ure at Oxclose Lock.

For background, the Ripon Canal is the northerly end of the “North Yorkshire Navigations” which was planned as long ago as 1766 when the engineer, John Smeaton (1724 – 1792), presented a proposal for five lock structures on the 8 miles of the River Ure, and the 2¼ miles of the Ripon Canal itself. Public subscription raised £15,000 and a petition was made to Parliament in 1767. The works were carried out by the engineer, John Smith, and Milby Lock and cut were completed in 1769. One of the first cast iron bridges in the country was built over the canalised section of the waterway to carry the Great North Road at Boroughbridge – and only replaced in 1946 (I remember it well!). The canal was opened in 1773, and carried flax for the Knaresborough linen industry, as well as timber and coal. Although the British Transport Commission obtained royal assent for the abandonment of the Ripon Canal in 1956, it was successfully restored right into the centre of Ripon in September 1996.

Thus a leisurely row, Peter and Ron paddling, took us along a pretty canal for half an hour and then into the first lock, Oxclose, with most of the tour fleet. A short dissertation from the Commander on the subject of “lock piddlers” kept the assembled company amused – I will say no more but those further interested must ask him some time! With John Turnbull doing the honours on the sluices and gates, we entered the River Ure. The guide notes said “the Ure is a pretty and uncrowded navigation”; true, and with the exception of one cruiser seen coming up river, we were alone to enjoy the countryside. Past Newby Hall and its splendid gardens, through the second lock, Westwick, having picked up a fisherman's line on the way (very familiar - but sorted out with no hard feelings!), we stopped for a picnic lunch near Boroughbridge.

The afternoon saw us on down the Ure, through Milby Lock, past the junction where the River Swale joins the Ure. We eventually finished the day at the RAF Water Sports Club at Aldwark having rowed about 12 miles from the start at Ripon Motor Boat Club. Hauled out the boats and embarked onto the bus for the trip back to our hotel in York.

The evening was spent looking at York – a walk through the Shambles and around York Minster. Supper at Michael's Brasserie was much appreciated with Peter (the Commander

and renowned vintner) choosing the wine and demonstrating how it should be consumed – and he will always henceforth be known as “two bottles Barker”!



*“Two bottles” Barker and Brian Swindells showing a clean pair of zephyrs to the good folk of Yorkshire*

Day two dawned dull but still dry! Bus out to Aldwark, launched the boats and on down the Ure passing SwaleNab where the “Ure” changes its name to “Ouse” and Ouse Gill Beck joins. Through Linton Lock and then down a wide stretch of river with high embankments taking care to follow the channel buoys to avoid the navigation hazards in the shallows.

At Newton-on-Ouse we lunched at the Dawney Arms – Rabbit Pie and beer! Good lunch but not conducive to afternoon exercise and I struggled to “turn on” consistently well enough to meet the critical eye of the Commander – I claim to have been suffering from the “rabbit’s revenge”! However, after lunch we carried on past the grounds of Beningbrough Hall and its park. The River Nidd joined shortly, the Ouse now much wider and more substantial as it gathers tributaries passing through characteristically flat, but pleasant, countryside. In late afternoon, skirting the village of Nether Poppleton, we approached York, with its skyline dominated by the Minster, and we hauled out the boats for the overnight stop at St. Peter’s School on the north west edge of the city. We had rowed 15 miles in the day.

Back to the hotel, this time only a short walk and, in the evening, the tour party had a formal dinner at the Dean Court Hotel in York – with more fine wining and dining!

Day three, still overcast. Back to the boats and on down the river through the centre of York. To quote the guide book: -

“The river Ouse makes its passage though York, where all the major sights are tightly enclosed within the city walls, and none are more than a short walk away from the moorings. To the south of Skeldergate Bridge the River Foss joins from the east. The riverside to the south of the city is extremely pleasant as you pass under the attractive millennium bridge, its cable stayed structure inspired by bicycle spokes. Look out on the east bank for the Roman

Well, then swing round under the A64 and pass the impressive Bishopthorpe Palace and grounds, then pass under Naburn bridge to once again enter open countryside”.

Shortly after Naburn Bridge, with Peter and Ron pulling strongly, we were hailed from the bank by John Turnbull, our tour organiser. It transpired that due to the state of the tide the fleet would not be able to pass through Naburn Lock about a mile or so further on. Beyond the lock the river is tidal and the lock only operates for two hours either side of high water. Unfortunately, in the late morning, as it then was, the tide was at low ebb so the tour came to a premature end short of its planned ending at the village of Cawood by some six or so miles. Distance covered from York was about 6 miles giving a total for the whole tour of about 33 miles.

So we again embarked on the bus for the final leg to Cawood and the farewell lunch after which we faced the problem of “boat in Naburn”, “trailer in Cawood” and “car in York”. Problem solved with the support of Peter’s sons, who had arrived to take Dad on the next stage of the Pennine Way. John Turnbull assisted with recovering the trailer and eventually it all came together and Ron and I returned Pablo to Tiltridge, at which point the sun came out!

All round a wonderful and most enjoyable cruise – the “Ouse Cruise”. A taste of recreational, social rowing at its very best!

Brian Swindells

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**Committee 2005/6**

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*Cox of the Year, Dominic Round, at the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Party*

**N.B. The Club is looking for a cupboard in which to store the new junior lifejackets at the boathouse. If you have a spare one please contact Gabby (number in table above).**

