

PAC Journal

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The best that science can devise and that naval organization can provide must be regarded only as an aid, and never as a substitute for good seamanship.

Admiral Chester W Nimitz

What's On The Horizon?

Events for your diary:

✚ First Aid Course	Saturday 27 th August 2016 (Fully booked)
✚ Slip Operators Certification	Saturday 10 th September 2016
✚ Flotsam and jetsam sale in the PAC car park	Saturday 10 th September 2016
✚ Annual working bee.	Sunday 15 th October 2016
✚ Pittwater Sailors Christmas Party	Sunday 4 th December 2016
✚ PAC Christmas Party	Sunday 11 th December 2016

Calling All Yard Tenants

Nearly all the work at PAC is done by volunteers. However the volunteers that have been keeping the yard clean are now not available to do the job.

Keeping the yard clean now is the responsibility of the members who use the facility. If the yard is not cleared of the accumulation of leaves they will block the drains and cause consequent flooding - not to mention the fire risk if it doesn't rain. Also there is an accumulation of "stuff" around some of the boats. The yard is for storage of boats and trailers only. If you are using space in the yard to store "stuff" please remove it or stow it on your boat. This could however be an insurance issue in case of a fire. Please ensure the space allocated to you is clear of leaves and "stuff".

CNL – A Final Bit of Fine Tuning Brings us to Version #8.

The review of the new Rules started in November 2015 and since then we have had feedback and comments from the registrar and members and are now on Draft 8 of the new Rules.

Below is a summary of the changes from Draft 7 to this latest Draft 8

The Table of Contents has been updated

R33 to update the ordinary business of the annual general meeting to what the current process is

R64 to reflect the current process of payment approval, and

R65, as a small co-op, we have a choice to appoint an auditor. As mentioned in earlier drafts the Club currently has its accounts audited and that this status remains with the change to the new rules. It is for members in the future to decide if they would want to change from this position.

As with all the previous drafts if you have any comments or feedback please send an email to the Secretary at paqclub@tpg.com.au by 9 September 2016.

The Rules Committee believes this is the final draft and pending any feedback received the next steps are as follows:

1. Standardise formatting prior to submitting Draft 8 of the rules to the Registrar for approval.
2. When approval is received from the Registrar
3. The members then need to pass a special resolution to approve or reject the adoption of these rules
4. It is expected that this vote is likely to occur after October

This link [click here](#) takes you to the Club's website and under 'Co-op' - 'Club Rules – CNL' you will find Draft 8 of the Club Rules - CNL

Our Tuesday Boys – The Spirit of PAC

I started giving Arthur Wilson a hand roughly fifteen years ago trying to keep the old club house standing but to no avail; the marina decking was also failing but it was too far gone. Arthur was kept busy with all the other maintenance so I asked Ross Taylor if he could spare some time on Tuesdays. We started by putting down treated pine decking with spacings and used stainless steel screws that Casey could get us at a better price which helped us. We were able to put down approximately eight to ten boards a day. It was a bit slow going and that's when James Aston and Bill Giles offered to lend a hand. Then Phillip O'Leary followed by Tony and John Liston joined in so we got through quite a few jobs. I think the best part was, and is, our morning teas, with Rob Besson who has the Gardens looking good and Allen Barnes who keeps the pumps and filtration system working.

Between us we have done some big jobs such as the marina and the pump house as well as numerous small jobs.

We enjoy doing all these bits and pieces plus the company of all those who have a cuppa with us so come down and join us on Tuesdays and I mustn't forget to mention Mazy, Fleur and Starboard.

Vic Parker

Calling All Slip Users

Please be aware that during the period 1st September until 30th November use of slip #1 is restricted to two days only. If any additional days are required please contact the slip master, by email to the club, paqclub@tpg.com.au for approval. This will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

The First Aid Course

This course is now fully booked but if you missed out and there is enough demand we may be able to run another at some time in the future. Please don't turn up on the day, "on spec," as the instructor will only have prepared those with reservations.

An Expedition to Antarctica

A great travelogue by Noel Phelan

To read Noel's amazing story please [click here](#).

An Expedition to Antarctica

A great travelogue by Noel Phelan

My Expectations

Based on little knowledge and no experience these were my expectations.

- Survive the Drake Passage if we have a rough crossing and live to talk about it. I have been out in very rough seas before without getting sea sick.
- View fantastic scenery of snow covered mountains, glaciers and icebergs. I like this type of scenery and enjoy colder weather.
- See interesting wildlife including whales, seals and penguins. I had never seen a whale close up – only from a distance.

The Preparation

The expedition company provides lots of information and endless checklists of what to take including

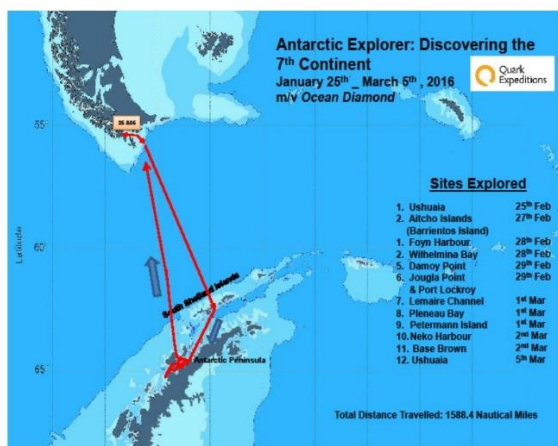
- Layers of clothing, thermal underwear
- Waterproof trousers
- Thick socks
- Neck warmer, balaclava and hat
- Heavy duty gloves
- Swimsuit?
- Seasickness medications
- Waterproof lightweight backpack
- Travel Insurance

Fortunately Katmandu had a sale at Christmas so I was able to get all the clothing required at a good price for the February expedition. However the travel insurance provided more difficult. When you are 75, a cancer survivor with a pacemaker getting life insurance is a bit of a challenge. Finished up upgrading my Visa card to provide travel insurance. Still required completing many forms and a medical from my GP.

The experience during the expedition was somewhat different to the picture painted by the advice in the brochure. The parka supplied was of such good quality all I needed was a T shirt and long sleeve shirt to keep my upper body warm. Similarly my wet weather sailing pants over jeans kept my lower body and legs warm. The layers of thermal underwear were never unpacked. The key to keeping warm and comfortable seemed to be thick socks in the supplied boots and a neck warmer, balaclava and beanie or hat. This may have something to do with my lack of hair.

With no need to carry extra layers or remove layers I did not need a back pack which made life boarding and disembarking the Zodiac easier.

The Journey to Antarctica



The route was Auckland, Buenos Aires and Ushuaia. Many of the expedition boats leave from Ushuaia. I arrived in Buenos Aires at 3pm with a flight to Ushuaia at 4:35 am the next morning. On arrival at the domestic airport at 3:30 I was greeted by an airport in chaos due to an air traffic controller strike. Communication provided difficult and with help not forthcoming I missed the flight. The Argentine airline refused to take any booking for flights later in the day due to the strike and reluctantly allowed me to book for the next day. My brain was running overtime thinking about a plan B to make the boat in time. Back to the hotel at 5 am and a free day to enjoy Buenos Aires and lots of phone calls to make to let everyone know I would be a day late, however just in time to make the boat. Things are different in Buenos Aires

- Very few signs in English, very few people speak English and no English TV. Very few bars and pubs.
- The lift in my hotel had a door that you open to get access to the lift.
- Pedestrian chaos, pedestrian crossings are where people play chicken with cars.
- Lots of security staff and spruikers outside shops.
- Lots of people serving and lots doing little.
- Very few people with mobile phones or gadgets on the street.
- Some homeless people on the streets and children begging.
- Mainly small cars, Fiat, Peugeot, Citroen, Renault, Toyota and Chevrolet
- Traffic lights where the red light is larger than the green and the sequence is red, orange then green. This allows everyone to get away quickly!!! Imagine if we had this in Sydney.
- The police cars resembled old fashioned “dodgem cars” with large rubber bumpers protruding both front and back. I was imagining all sorts of things happening during a police pursuit or the need to remove a broken down car from holding up traffic. Maybe a good idea for Sydney.

Ushuaia

Ushuaia is a lovely small town. It has a Navy presence and a Maritime museum. The museum is housed in a former prison. I found it unusual seeing museum exhibits in prison cells. Cars queued for petrol in the town centre. Many cruise ships visit the port. There are also several rescue boats to help people in trouble crossing the Drake Passage. There are lots of monuments to the Falklands war and for the sinking of the frigate General Belgrano by the British nuclear submarine HMS Conqueror. The flag of Argentina was flown in many places including homes. I also learned a new definition for “Happy Hour” – the hour when you can buy goods at a

discount. A block of the main street was closed due to a demonstration by government workers who were burning wood from pallets in 44 gallon drums to keep warm. It sounded more like a party than a demonstration with all the happy singing and dancing.

[The Expedition Ship – Ocean Diamond](#)

Ocean Diamond is an ice strengthened ship with stabilizers. It has a crew of 144 and a maximum of 189 guests. The engines of over 7,000 horsepower and run at constant speed driving variable pitch propellers propel the ship at 15.5 knots. There is an open bridge policy allowing guests to visit the bridge on most occasions. I spent quite a bit of time here talking to the captain and officers and watching the navigation and steering of the ship. An amazing array of instruments to help navigate an ice field. There was always a plan for the day, however there had to be flexibility with the weather and what presented itself in the environment. One day the plan was changed as we found a pod of over 12 whales in a bay on our way to our destination. The Zodiacs were quickly deployed and we spent most of the time whale watching. It was interesting to hear the discussion between the expedition leader and the captain. One wanting the best experience for the guests and the other wanting to get the ship back to port undamaged.

Zodiacs are stored on the stern of the ship and can be deployed and retrieved by two high speed cranes in minutes. The kayaks are also stored on the stern of the ship and are put on top of the Zodiacs for launching.

The air conditioning of the ship ensured comfort regardless of the conditions outside. Many people wore shorts while on board. There was open dining enabling one to meet lots of others for breakfast, lunch and dinner. The food and service were of excellent quality – a buffet breakfast with individual orders if required and a three course dinner with choices from a limited menu. Wine, etc was an additional cost.



[The Expedition Staff](#)

Being a Canadian company many of the staff were Canadians. Most of the staff had extensive qualifications. Sessions were held each night and during the day while crossing the Drake Passage

The staff included

- Historians who covered the exploration of Antarctica
- Marine biologists and ornithologists
- Geologists/Glaciologists
- Naturalists
- A photographer to assist guests taking photos
- Guides for the Zodiacs
- A doctor

All the staff took a turn at driving the Zodiacs which gave great variety to what you were told during each trip. What stood out was that all the staff loved their job, were passionate about their area of expertise and their enthusiasm to share their knowledge and be helpful.

The Expedition Guests

The guests came from all over the world. It was possible to share a cabin. I shared with a young man from Taiwan who had just finished his medical course and was travelling for a year before taking up a job in a hospital. Many of the guests were “single” males whose wives/partners had declined the invitation to accompany them. Taking precautions against sea sickness was practiced by most before the Drake crossings. The small numbers at the restaurant told the real story. A couple of people did not leave their cabin during the crossings.

The Highlights of the Expedition Were: Spectacular, Amazing Scenery

We had good weather with both sunny and cloudy days to give variety to the scenery. Day after day of huge snow covered mountains, glaciers and icebergs. Photos cannot do justice to this landscape. Seeing the ship looking so small against the mountains gave a real appreciation of the scale and size. We were given a good appreciation of the current situation to try and preserve this environment.

Zodiac Trips



Only 100 people are allowed onshore at any one time so once the Zodiacs were launched half went on a cruise around the area and the other half landed at an island or the mainland. The boots were required to be “cleansed” in a liquid before leaving the ship and on return to preserve the environment. The Zodiacs took 10 people and had 60HP Yamaha outboards that could get them up to 20 knots on smooth water. Not a lot of fun being the “windbreak” at the front of the boat on a high speed run. It gets a mite cold. It was very exciting pushing through sea ice at times to get to the landing. Getting on and off the Zodiacs was a bit of a challenge at some locations, however we were given a technique that generally worked. On some occasions the outboard was switched off and we enjoyed the absolute silence of Antarctica.

Icebergs

We had a continuous parade of icebergs during the trip. All different shapes and sizes and colours including a beautiful blue. It was very exciting to see one “rollover” as the warmer water melted the ice beneath the water to make the iceberg top heavy and when disturbed by a wave, roll over. The Zodiacs ensured they kept a safe distance away from this dangerous situation. We cruised around a bay known as the “iceberg graveyard”. A current moves the icebergs that have calved into this bay which makes for a very spectacular sight.

Open Bridge

The ship had an open bridge policy where you could join the captain and officers and see how the ship was navigated and controlled. Being a curious engineer and sailor I spent many hours on the bridge looking at the amazing array of instruments and controls and talking to the staff. Many of the expedition staff were also on the bridge with binoculars looking for interesting things for the guests to see.

Lemaire Channel

The Lemaire Channel is kilometres long and very narrow with steep, high mountains on either side. This is one of the spectacular passages for the expedition. It can be blocked by large icebergs. As we entered the channel all looked OK with scattered small icebergs. As we progressed through the channel the icebergs increased in number and essentially blocked the channel. The sight from the bridge was not good. However the captain slowed the ship to ensure low speed collisions with the icebergs and used the bow thrusters to try and find an easy passage through. I went down to the bow of the ship to see and hear the icebergs being pushed aside or broken to allow the ship to pass. Lots of noise as the icebergs were crunched and pushed together and sometimes on top of each other. A real appreciation of the power and capability of an ice strengthened ship.

Glaciers

Apart from seeing lots of glaciers we had the opportunity to climb a couple. It was heavy going in the soft snow. However the view from on high made it all worthwhile. The sound of rolling thunder heralded a glacier calving. We heard this several times and were lucky enough to see the fall of the ice into the sea twice, thankfully from a safe distance. A large wave can be generated in shallow water by the ice fall.



Whales

We were fortunate to enter a bay where there was a pod of a dozen or more humpback whales at play. They were diving continuously and displaying their flukes and one breached several times. On a number of occasions the whales surfaced within metres of the Zodiacs. On asking the guide if a whale had surfaced under a Zodiac I was told the whales were smart enough to know where they were relative to the boats. The seemingly effortless and graceful movement of these huge creatures was a treat to watch.



Seals and Penguins

We had several opportunities to see various types of penguins and seals both when on land and on icebergs. Both were undergoing moulting, apparently quite a painful process requiring very little activity to preserve energy.

History

The historians did a great job explaining all the explorers over the years with the major ones in some detail. Scott, Shackleton and others were brought to life. I had a new appreciation of the difficulty and hardship endured by these people.



The People

Last but not least were the very interesting people on board from all walks of life and different cultures. I was able to stop dead or start a conversation with the Americans with two words; “Donald Trump.” What I admired most was the large number of people that did the, “polar plunge,” towards the end of the trip. The, “polar plunge” was a dive into the freezing water from the Zodiac loading platform. To ensure safety they had a belt around their waist with a rope attached to the boat and crew ready to do any rescue. There were some very quick exits from the water to take the warming cocktail on offer. Needless to say I “wimped out” on this activity.

Thank you so much Noel for this awesome yarn. When you delivered this talk to PAC members I was in Alaska experiencing some similar experiences so I really appreciated reading this.
Michael Hyland, Editor.