

From the pulpit



Ben Ainslie calls his *Rita*. Why, I don't know. Fellow Olympians Stevie Morrison and Ben Rhodes were reprimanded by the RYA at last year's Skandia Sail for Gold Regatta for naming their 49er after a Kooks song, *Jackie Big Tits*. Predictably, I suppose, the story made the *Sun*.

Naming boats is a strange business. There are people who name cars, especially in the days when cars had character, but it's hard to imagine much soul in a Mondeo GL. But boats, as you know, are almost sentient. They are unpredictable, they bite back if you're not careful and bits fall or fall off with monotonous regularity. What's strange, though, is less the names themselves than the way they are chosen.

The late Blondie Hasler used to find an empty field and shout his chosen name. "And if I felt a complete idiot, I'd know it was wrong." Some people combine family names to create monickers like *Velsheda*. For others it will be the latest in a line of yachts, like *Yeoman* or *Oystercatcher*.

The Editor tells me that his *Firefly* is so named because when she was being built he climbed on her upside-down hull and thought she looked like a giant Firefly dinghy, which he raced when young. He called his first yacht *Gillygaloo*, which is about as silly as it gets.

My first boat was called *Melita* after the music for the sailor's hymn 'Eternal Father'. It had a certain ring to it for someone in my profession, I thought, but after I'd been in peril on the sea too many times I decided to move on to (yes, my toes curl when I think about it) *Serenity*. Sadly, it changed little.

The Vicar



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# Berrimilla goes north

In 2005, after taking part in the 2004 Sydney Hobart Race, Alex Whitworth and Pete Crozier set sail via the Southern Ocean for the UK and the 2005 Fastnet Race. They returned to Sydney for the 2005 Sydney Hobart, completing one of the most amazing small boat voyages of recent years.

In the middle of the Southern Ocean they realised that the nearest human beings were the astronauts on the International Space Station so they made contact and one of them met them in Falmouth on arrival.

This unlikely tale became even more extraordinary when they were invited to give a presentation about their voyage at Louisiana

State University by Leroy Chiao, who had been commander of the ISS at that time. Here they met Pascal Lee who runs NASA's Houghton-Mars Project on Devon Island in the North West Passage. This led to an invitation for the pair to visit Devon Island by sea in *Berrimilla*, to arrive in time to observe the total solar eclipse on 1 August.

Unfortunately, Pete Crozier was unable to make it so Corrie McQueen, a circumnavigator with Arctic experience, joined Whitworth as crew when they left Sydney bound for Alaska in April on what they call the 'Berrimilla-Down-Under-Mars'.

After a hard trip they arrived in Alaska



Corrie McQueen, Alex Whitworth and Kimbra Lindus, crew for the Passage. Above: the 33ft *Berrimilla* has had some great adventures. Top inset: Alex on approach to Unalaska

where they were joined by a third crew member, Kimbra Lindus, and set out for the North West Passage.

They completed the Passage in early August. Not bad for a GRP 33-footer with no ice protection. Sadly, they did not make Devon Island in time for the eclipse. They hope to arrive in the UK in mid-September.



*Berrimilla's* crew have kept a highly entertaining blog at [awberrimilla.blogspot.com](http://awberrimilla.blogspot.com). Here's an excerpt from 20 August:

'From an Old Fart on an Old Barge out in the Baffin Boonies: the NW Passage knows neither victory nor defeat, it just exists, grimly and sometimes terrifyingly indifferent to our presence, like the Southern Ocean.

We have been profoundly, astonishingly lucky and the best we can say is that we have negotiated our way through. We made some really good calls on the way, but each could have been disastrous had we been wrong. We could not have got through a day earlier and now we have a bit of time to get down to Cape Farvel and across the Atlantic to Falmouth.

Still a difficult ask and there are storm warnings further south. If we stay lucky, then about four weeks and I'm going to sweat every minute of each day.'

Built in Brazil, the eco-yacht *Pangaea* will be the base for Mike Horn (below right) and his young crew



## Pangaea expedition

South African explorer Mike Horn, 42, has already accomplished many feats: circumnavigating the Arctic Circle; sailing, walking and cycling around the Equator; and in 2007 taking his family, including two young daughters, to the North Pole (below).

This month Horn embarks on a four-year expedition to cross seven continents, four oceans and reach both North and South poles. The *Pangaea Expedition*, named after the supercontinent that existed 250 million years ago, aims

to take 144 young adults (13 to 20 years old) who will join Mike at different stages around the world.

After initial training in Switzerland, including basic sail tuition, the young 'ambassadors' will go to such places as Antarctica, the Himalayas, Siberia and the Indonesian Seas, where they will be educated on environmental issues, experience new surroundings and perhaps clean up a little on the way.

"I am no Al Gore," claims Horn. "I am not an environmentalist. I plan to show these young people the beautiful things I have seen and teach them how to respect Nature."

The explorer's home for each stage is the 115ft 'eco-friendly' yacht *Pangaea*. Designed by Brazilian

Thierry Stump and built in São Paulo by 250 of its inhabitants, it has been adapted to use the latest sustainable technologies: solar panels, low emission BlueTec engines, a recyclable aluminium hull and trawling nets to collect bottles and other rubbish from the sea.

Twelve applicants for the first expedition to Antarctica have now been chosen, but for more info see [www.mikehorn.com](http://www.mikehorn.com)

