



31/2

THE WILSONIAN SAILING CLUB MAGAZINE

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WILSONIAN SAILING CLUB
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"31 $\frac{1}{2}$ " will be published in the last week of March, May, July and October. Contributions, letters and advertisements should be sent to the Secretary to arrive not later than the first day of the month in which the newsletter is to be published. Advertisements are free to club members.

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NEEDLESS VANDALISM

When we read in the newspaper about the increase in vandalism, about arson in schools, and about the motiveless violence of hooligans at football matches, most of us are able to sit back and say how thankful we are that that sort of thing doesn't happen where we live, or where we work. It's only when something happens to you personally, or when you see the effects of crime at first hand that the real nausea begins to creep in. Our anger is then mixed with a feeling of bewilderment; we ask ourselves why on earth anyone would want to do such a thing. On Friday 5 May, vandals struck in the Club car park where a small number of members' cars were parked because there was a training course in progress. From some, odd bits and pieces were taken; from another, engine parts were removed and thrown into the wood; but one car received the "heavy" treatment. A window was smashed, the aerial was broken, the tyres were deflated, and every panel on the bodywork was deeply scored by dozens of scratches. In a world where crime is increasing we cannot remain immune; we have been lucky until now. The article on page 3 was contributed before this incident took place but it reminds us, opportunely, that we must exercise vigilance and care. The woods provide an easy means of escape; there may be advantage in parking on the other side of the car park where the risk of being seen or caught is greater and might deter the prospective thief.

CLUB NEWS

The Secretary's page

February and March are rather hectic months for your Secretary when in addition to the normal business of the club there is the annual general meeting to arrange, duty lists and the amendments to the handbook to prepare, the addressograph cards to get up to date as the last of the renewals of membership come in, - and this year, in addition, the first edition of the new newsletter to be edited. Not surprisingly, perhaps, some things get missed and there was no mention in your last package of goodies of the maps of the river which have been prepared for the club by Richard Jordan in cooperation with Chris Stevens. The maps are on a plastic material so that you can write on them with a wax pencil, but so that they last longer you can purchase transparent plastic covers for them on the barge at a price of 10p.

If you race, the fact that you are afloat is recorded on the race sheet. For some time your Committee has been concerned that no such record is kept when people launch for non competitive sailing. We have been lucky so far in that no dinghy from this club has "failed to return" without someone being aware and organising such help as was needed. To monitor the safety aspect and also to give us an idea of how much cruising is being done, we have installed another notice board on the inland side of the race box. Please enter brief details of your launch on the board. These should include the date and time of launching, the boat class and sail number and the dinghy park space. The last item is to permit an easy check on whether you are back. A pencil will be provided. Please use the board for every launch, whatever day of the week.

It is high time that we pensioned off the more spindly of our saloon tables. Does anyone have or have access to a sturdy medium sized kitchen table in reasonable condition and surplus to requirements? Offers to the Secretary please; transport can be arranged.

During the summer we plan to renew the railings and fascia board around the balcony of the race box. The new timber has already been purchased and is safely stored. It will be Saturday work unless anyone can devote weekday hours. The favoured time from the weather point of view will be late June or early July. Are you a reasonably competent D.I.Y. man (or girl) who can spare some time to join the team? We would like to schedule the work in the next week or two. Volunteers, please contact Sam Brookes.

The extended range of activities this year has made it difficult to cover all the duties on the duty list without asking anyone to undertake a second stint. We are at present short of Chief Duty Officers on the following weekends: 30/31 July, 27/28/29 August (this can be split), 24/25 September, 8/9 October, 15/16 October, 22/23 October, 29/30 October. We are short of assistant race officers on 5 June, 6 June, 31 July, and 20 August; someone in the kitchen on 5 June, and rescue boat crews (or cox'ns) on 14 August, 28 August, 29 August, 11 September, 23 October and 30 October. Volunteers for these to contact the Secretary please.

Our very capable House Secretary is likely to be moving home very soon and we shall need someone to take over his duties, which are concerned in the main with ensuring that the barge is properly victualled and stored. He does this, and organises social functions with the aid of the House Committee. I shall be pleased to hear from any member who would be interested in the House Secretary's job, or in membership of the House Committee.

Colin Brown

LOCK IT UP

Everyone remarks on the delightful rural seclusion of our club and we all enjoy the benefits, but as the leading article in this edition of "31 $\frac{1}{2}$ " makes painfully clear, our very remoteness makes us vulnerable to loss or damage from intruders. There is a public footpath along the beach, and the woods, although on private land, are used by members of the general public. We must not forget that cars and trailers - and not necessarily our cars and trailers - can now be brought right down to the dinghy park. Have you ever considered just what our vulnerability means in money terms? Two hundred and fifty sailing dinghies each with a value of several hundred pounds - - - frightening isn't it?

In fact, the recent incident apart, the record of theft and vandalism has been remarkably light in recent years but only because we have stressed the need to keep our facilities secure. Here is a check list:

1. Don't leave the car park gate unlocked except on Sundays and on those other days when we have events scheduled.
2. During the week, lock the back gate to the dinghy park whenever you pass through it.
3. Lock the dinghy park gates from the outside if you go sailing leaving the dinghy park unattended; and take your key with you - someone else may quite properly lock the dinghy park gates while you are away.
4. Keep the race box locked unless there is racing planned for that day.
5. If you are leaving a gate open, then lock the padlock on the gate or chain to prevent it being removed. We have lost several padlocks through failing to take this simple precaution.
6. Finally, when locking the car park gate, be sure to pass the hasp of the padlock through the hole in the post. Just locking the chain to itself around the post is no security at all.

In fact some clubs have been less lucky than ours, and we have been asked by the Medway Yachting Association, on behalf of the Kent Police, to draw the attention of members to an increasing number of thefts from boats, both on the water and on the land. The Police would like to hear from anyone who has been offered any of the following items at "bargain" prices; they have all been stolen from member clubs of the Medway Yachting Association:

Honda 800 generator	Henderson Mark IV Bilge pump
Box of tools	Black and Decker Electric Drill
5.5 hp Johnson Outboard	Binoculars
motor - cream; Serial	Philips portable television
No. CD 19339308	River charts

The Police have asked to be advised by any member who has property stolen or damage caused to their boat, or finds another person's boat broken into, and Club Members are also asked to report any suspicious movements on the river particularly during the night or late evening.

Hoo is covered by the Police from a local office which comes under the general umbrella of Rochester Police Station. The number to ring is MEDWAY 41566.

MEDWAY REGATTA

The Medway Regatta from Thursday 21st to Sunday 24th July 1977

Dinghy racing - cruiser racing - social events

Details available in leaflets on the barge or from the Secretary.

TRAINING AGAIN

Talking of sail training, - who wants to learn about topsail halyard bends, bumkins and parrel balls any way?

Perhaps you do, or ought to!

Such terms don't actually improve your sailing skills, but they can and do ease the process of describing nautical things accurately and properly. Communication in sailing is, as in all walks of life, essential from teaching beginners, through to ocean racing. It's OK to talk of the "big sail", "ropes" and "pulleys" to start with but the proper terms can soon be learned and provide much interest in themselves. Have you thought how many boating terms originate on land? Transom (doors), braces (trousers?), cockpit (where it all happens), goose neck (not much like it nowadays), crutches (most people call them rowlocks), breast hooks (!?) etc.

It's surely not yachting snobbery to use the correct terms, just good sense. And surely a little pride will not be disallowed? There seems nothing to recommend the use of the word "helm" to describe the person rather than the thing; even in this age of equality, do we have to drop the "-man"? (I suppose we could always say helmsperson - Ed.)

So find out what a bumkin is and a parrel as well, because there are small boats not a mile away from your club which use them, and their owners use the topsail halyard bend to hold the gaff up. And while you're about it, how about splicing your own ropes as well - it's not so difficult.

If you need any help, ask the more experienced members in the club, or one of our RYA qualified instructors (of whom we have four) or senior instructors (six). For those who already know it all, why not take one of the several instructors courses yourself - for details see the first issue of "31½" Members of your club pioneered sail training on the Medway, not only setting up the Medway Yachting Association Coaching Committee, but following it up with instructors, and practical courses for beginners. As a direct result of this early involvement, the Club has recently received RYA recognition as a training establishment. The "Principal" of the establishment is Robin Musters; Ray Blyth has been appointed the Club's training secretary. If you would like to pass on your knowledge and experience to others, there will be an instructors course at the club in October. If you are interested, contact Ray Blyth at 27 Beechy Lees Road, Otford, (Telephone Otford 3251).

Sailing courses seem to be as popular as ever. The course for the elementary certificate in May was fully subscribed. Those who are more experienced may be interested in the intermediate and advanced courses to be held in September; names, again, to Ray Blyth. These courses are based on a continuous assessment of the helmsman's progress, for sailing time is assumed and the course aims to broaden the experience and to refine the techniques. For those who contemplate a more advanced course but are a little apprehensive about what they are letting themselves in for, the syllabus is contained in the RYA Dayboat Logbook or RYA booklet G4. Briefly, the candidates must have about 50 hours experience as a helmsman to enter the intermediate course and something like two years experience for the advanced course.

As the advanced course certificate is the basis for the instructors and coaching scheme, quite a high standard is expected. Subjects covered in the intermediate course include sailing a given course to best advantage on all points of sailing, getting a boat out of awkward corners, such as a lee shore (no, not the back of the dinghy park), heaving to, anchoring, reefing, towing, bends and hitches, simple meteorology, simple splices and whippings, rules of the road, first aid, tides, elementary use of compass and of course, boat and sea terms.

The advanced course covers the same sort of ground as the intermediate course but to a more detailed extent and adds knowledge of maintenance repair, different rigs, racing etc.

It seems to be the case that people on the courses have a lot of fun and make new friends, - especially the newer members. Even the instructors get a laugh or two on some occasions: for example when one instructor asked his pupil to pick up the next buoy downstream and the pupil, mistaking buoy 31 for the small buoy indicated by the instructor, said that he thought it looked a bit too big to get it in the boat. Well, it was only a Mirror.

And finally, just to prove that the instructors get wet too, here is a picture of Ray Blyth helping to sort out the knitting, - or more precisely giving some personal assistance to two of the youngsters engaged in capsizing practice on an elementary course.



RACING AND FLEET NEWS

HANDICAP

34 boats, over half the number in the fleet have entered in one or more of the races in the Spring points series; an encouraging start to the season. For those of you who have not ventured out yet, dont be put off by the occasional spot of rain. You are missing some excellent Spring breezes.

Over all results over the Easter weekend showed Sam Brookes in his Miracle to have scraped into first place, $\frac{1}{4}$ point clear of Derek Cummings in his brand new Laser - who took the prize for the first single hander; not bad for the first time out. The handicapping system worked well so that only $\frac{3}{4}$ point separated the first four boats.

The results to date in the Spring points series show different leaders with Geoffrey Maskall in his Lark in a strong overall position. Robin Musters (Laser) is well placed among the single handers.

R.J.

SAILING SECRETARY

Easter was early and cold, but some good sailing was enjoyed with fresh westerly breezes. 38 dinghies took part in the weekend's racing. The barge was just back on the moorings in time and everyone had worked hard on the previous weekend to have her ready.

It was a bright and breezy day for our Mirror match with Thamesmead sailing club on Saturday 23 April. Our Mirrors distinguished themselves by winning two short races before lunch in Force 5 to 6 winds with the odd Force 7 squall thrown in for good measure. Conditions were much the same on Sunday 24 April when a number of hardy souls turned out to race over short courses in Cockham and Short Reaches. There was a marked reluctance to reef and cap-sizes were frequent. Not so much a matter of "Did you?" but "How many times?". Some weaknesses of gear also came to light.

After an initial hiccup, or should I say "bleat" the starting horn has been adjusted and is now going full blast. We are indebted to John House for a splendid hand-operated stand-by horn and to Roy Court and his Sea Scout troop for the replacement backmark pole.

There is now hardly any unallocated space in the dinghy park and there are waiting lists for spaces for Mirrors and Enterprises. Every time we have a gale, a few dinghies get blown over; make sure yours is on a wide trolley or tied down. An orange daymark has been added to the Club buoy used as an upstream mark to make it easier to see and by the time these notes appear we should have erected the marker on the Dockyard end of the starting line. It is a black and white pole surmounted by an orange disc. If anyone has a set of international code flags (15" x 12" or 21" by 18") to spare they would be much appreciated for dressing the barge overall for our Jubilee Regatta and for the Medway Regatta.

Things will be hotting up, literally as well we hope in the months of May and June. May will have seen the first of the races in the Commodore's cup series. This popular event is especially good fun with all classes racing together. Your best three results count, so if you missed the first one, (on 22 May), that's no excuse for missing the others. Miracles and Graduates will have had their open meeting on 28th May.

June starts with the Jubilee Regatta. The Spring Holiday weekend is usually the most popular week end of the season and this year, with an extra day, we expect to get some really fine sailing. The Novelty race on the Monday afternoon will be a cunning combination of nautical orienteering and treasure hunting. There will be a supper on the barge in the evening - bookings to the House Secretary as advertised at the club.

Our first cruise in company is on 18th June for anyone who would like to explore the remoter parts of the estuary. With our large and active fleet of Enterprises, we are expecting a big turn out for their "BLUE JIB" open meeting on the following day.

Saturday afternoon handicap racing begins at the end of the month. Midweek evening racing may have already started by the time these notes appear. If you want to join in - ring Clive Brewer on Maidstone 831330.

We have entered a team for this year's R.Y.A. Dunhill Team Competition, which is a national contest. There are 222 club teams entered, with 17 teams from 12 clubs in the South East area. Each team consists of 3 boats of any class agreed between the competing clubs. The first round is being sailed in May and we have a bye. Our area final is at Chipstead sailing club on Saturday 24 September.

Robin Musters

ENTERPRISE

Forty members of the Enterprise and GP classes went to the Rochester Cruising Club to hear Donald Forbes of Musto and Hyde talk about sail setting for different conditions of wind and sea. The discussion on spreaders was of particular interest to Enterprise owners. He held us captivated for an hour and a half and after refreshment there was a further half hour of lively questions.

We started the season with a record fleet of 52, already increased to 58. Martin Smith has bought John Goudie's "Clementine Two" and has already tasted success with her, while Clive Brewer has acquired "Slim Pickings Too" - previously sailed by Gerald Stock.

12 boats took part in the Easter Cup which was convincingly won by David and Pat Scott with two wins and a second. Geoffrey Ball in his new boat "Trigger" beat Philip Holmes by just one point to take second place. On 17 April, Derek and Valerie Laverick found the light airs to their liking and won both races. John Mitchell, a convert from GP's, showed that "Slim Slow Slider" is not that slow.

Mayday produced a really worthwhile turn-out of 14; let's hope that this sets the tone for the season. In the morning, Robin Musters set an ambitious course, which Martin Smith just failed to finish within the time limit in spite of a good lead. We were pleased to welcome three additions to the fleet: the Bradley brothers, Steve (11763) and John (13262) and Brian Clamp ("Idunno"). The wing freshened for the afternoon race; Derek Laverick beat Martin Smith into first place, while Philip Holmes put in another consistent performance finishing third.

The programme of BLUE JIB open meetings in the Southern Area sponsored by Harp Lager is on the Class noticeboard on the Barge. Curs is on 19 June. We had 33 to our first one last year: let's beat that. The area championships are on 2 and 3 July at Stokes Bay, a tidal part of the Solent, which should suit us fine. Don't forget that membership of the Enterprise Class Association is a requirement for Blue Jib races. You get cheap insurance, a yearbook and a very informative quarterly diary for your money. Finally, a welcome to new members Michael Adkins (19005), Allen Beaver (13946) and Edward Chantry (374). We hope they'll be racing soon.

RM

GP FOURTEEN

Firstly, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome members both old and new to what promises to be a good season's sailing with an increasing number of GP 14's on the waves as each weekend goes by.

With the latest batch of new members we now have a fleet of 39 boats. This is a few less than last year, though what matters really is the numbers who actually sail.

Some of the newer members of the Club are "crew only" members which should help to get more boats out. If you are short of a crew, please see me as soon as possible. One very welcome "old" face among the regular sailors is Ray Blyth who was prevented by business activities from sailing his own boat last season.

On behalf of past and present members of the fleet I would like to say a special "Thank you" to last year's class captain Derek Cummings and to add to it my personal thanks for all the assistance he has given me. I hope that, temporary infatuations with a Laser permitting, he and Gill will be back in action with "Dede" during this season.

Mike Doherty ("BIN") is acting as fleet vice captain this season. Any problems or suggestions (not rude ones), please contact Mike or me.

It is apparent that some people who are new to sailing are a bit nervous about joining in the racing and to gain experience go off on their own away from the fleet. In my opinion, the best way to improve your sailing is to "sign on" for the races and to follow the other boats round the course, - but keeping out of their way if you are not making a bid for the honours. At least in that way the rescue boat will be keeping an eye on you, and someone will come to find you if for any reason you have difficulty in getting back. I am sure that you will soon find that you want to take part for serious. The class can only benefit from your active support, and if you do not claim to be the best of sailors, - well, practice makes perfect (so people keep telling me).

There are some Saturday cruises planned on the programme for this year. They should be interesting and an especially good opportunity for the non-racing sailors among us.

The Fleet will be well represented at this year's National Championships at Troon by Mike Doherty and Leslie Molyneux in "BIN" and Steve James and Ken Flowerday in "KUMALI". Derek and Gill Cummings are going to give support. Good Luck to them all.

Richard Jordan

MIRROR

The weather was true to form for Thamesmead's visit to the club on Saturday 23 April. Like last year, the day brought a good force six with rain squalls and the promise of hairy conditions when the tide turned to the flood against the Westerly wind blowing straight down Cockham Reach. Four Thamesmead boats trailed down and half a dozen of our own Mirrors turned out. Charles Clement and his brother had their first swim before the start, but went on to finish second. WSC boats finished 1, 2 and 3 followed by the four Thamesmead boats.

If anything it was now blowing harder and a two lap course was set using buoy 31 and the Thumb buoy. Molly and Ray Fryatt discovered what the thumb buoy looked like from underneath; those that stayed upright were sailing virtually blind through the squalls and the Thamesmead boats found that fashionable inboard sheeting can come away in your hand. WSC finished 1 and 2 with two retirements; Thamesmead 3, 4 and 5 with one retirement. WSC winning on aggregate points two of the three planned races retained the shield. An informal race in the afternoon was a catalogue of disasters, but the Thamesmead team promised to come back for our Mirror open in July. Our special thanks to those who were on duty.

Despite some defections to trapeze work, eight Mirrors turned out for the class junior (under 18) race on Sunday 1 May. Most boats had some difficulty in getting anywhere near the start line in almost windless conditions; however Mark Bew found a helpful eddy close to the barge and worked out something of a lead in the drift down to 31 only to lose it to Charles Clement in "MOJAC" and David McKay in "HOT DOG" when a

little air picked up first in mid channel. After the thumb buoy, Arthur Leigh in "MEASLES" joined the three leaders and some close tacking ensued with just enough breeze to keep the boats moving steadily but while the first three worked down the centre of the channel, "MEASLES" stood well over towards the island and rounded buoy 30 in the lead. Clare Fryatt in "FIREBIRD" had also gone out to the side of the course, but towards the dockyard shore and made up a lot of ground in doing so, passing "TAVI TOO" and "HOT DOG".

The need to ease sheets to get across the channel ahead of a Russian freighter put Mark Bew ("TAVI TOO") somewhat below the line at buoy 29, meeting the leading boats as they came away from the mark. A port and starboard incident resulted and he was able to round the buoy while "MOJAC" completed his 720 degree turns.

On the run back, with "MEASLES" and "FIREBIRD" well ahead, and "MOJAC" covering them, "TAVI TOO" reached straight across to the dockyard shore to escape the ebb. "FIREBIRD" covered; both boats overtook "MEASLES" and the finishing order was "FIREBIRD", "TAVI TOO", "MOJAC" and "MEASLES". "HOT DOG" was fifth, followed by Paul Bew in "TINA BELL", Richard Jordan jr. and Richard Fryatt in "POINTLESS" and Hugh McLeod in 43042, sailing his first race ever.

Prizes will be presented to the first three boats to finish at the Jubilee Regatta.

Christopher Stevens

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