



THE WILSONIAN SAILING CLUB MAGAZINE

Number 4

December 1977

WILSONIAN SAILING CLUB
HOO, nr ROCHESTER KENT

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"31 $\frac{1}{2}$ " is the newsletter of the Wilsonian Sailing Club. It is called "31 $\frac{1}{2}$ " because the Club headquarters, the barge "WILSONIAN" is moored in the River Medway almost exactly halfway between fairway navigation buoys 31 and 32

IN THIS ISSUE:

Message from the Commodore.....	1
Club news.....	2
MYA.....	3
Dory Story.....	3
Training.....	4
Cartoon.....	6
Racing and fleet news.....	6 & 7
Small Ads.....	8

A SIGNAL FROM SAM

It's a humdrum world we live in, hedged about with restriction and direction with little enough incentive for personal initiative and enterprise. Small wonder, then, that sailing and especially dinghy sailing should be so popular a sport since it supplies satisfactions in just the area where the regimented society fails to provide them.

But now the dinghies are either at home or on their way there by trailer and roofrack while the winter storms blow. Never mind, catch up on all that decorating, visiting and gardening you have neglected during the summer and start preparations to enter the 1978 season with an even more competitive boat and, more important, with an even more competitive spirit than in the season just ended.

Put a little time on one side though during the close season. There will be some winter work to be done at the Club and we shall need all your shoulders at the wheel when the work parties are announced.

Sam Brookes
Commodore

CLUB NEWS

The Secretary's page

My apologies to members of the club for the late arrival of this edition of the club newsletter which was originally intended for October.

With considerable regret, I have to report the death of one of our newer members, Brian Clamp. Brian, who sailed an Enterprise called "Idunno" leaves a widow, Hazel, and two children to whom we offer every sympathy. Shortly before his illness, Brian had offered to take over the duties of House Secretary in response to my pleas in the last edition of "31½". Steve James has in fact taken over these duties for the present. Steve has recently moved and his new address is 25 Queens Road Snodland, Kent. Telephone: Snodland 241754.

Many members will remember Mike and Nancy Pickett's son Richard who was an active member of the club for many years and was House Secretary for a year or so before moving on to bigger boats and full time sailing. Richard has had the misfortune to have an accident while working on a yacht in the Mediterranean which has led to the loss of a foot. At the time of writing, Richard's parents were visiting him in hospital at Nice and had reported that Richard was in remarkably good spirits. I am sure that we all hope that he makes a rapid recovery and soon learns to cope with his incapacity.

There is no pleasure in being able to give only bad news but I have to inform you that the General Committee has decided to increase subscriptions for the 1978 season. The financial position of the club is sound but prices are still increasing and we have to think ahead, particularly in view of the need to improve or replace the barge "WILSONIAN". (More about that on a later page). The new subscription rates, which are inclusive of VAT are as follows:

- Family membership.....£17
- Ordinary membership
(over 21).....£12
- Ordinary membership
(age 18 - 20)....|.....£6

- Junior membership (under 18).....£3
- Country membership.....£5

Dinghy park spaces will cost £7 for the first space and £10 for each subsequent space. In the usual way, the cost of junior membership plus a dinghy space is the same as the cost of a second space. The reason for this is to encourage younger members of families to become members in their own right when father buys them a boat of their own.

Now that the 1977 season is over, all dinghies should be removed from the club by the end of November. If you have not yet removed your boat, please take it out as soon as possible. The dinghy park will not be locked after 1st December and we shall want to carry out some work in order to try to recover some additional space.

That brings me to the subject of winter work parties. Major work this winter will include some track resurfacing, additional sea wall building and minor repairs to the downstream slipway. We do not propose to do this until after Christmas so please make provisional notes in your new diaries for Saturday and Sunday 18/19 February. In the meantime the sailing committee are repairing the race box and winter maintenance on the club's motor boats is being carried out professionally at Machin and Knight's yard at Rochester.

There will be no Christmas party this year, but plans are in hand for a New Year party to be held on Saturday 14 January at Trottiscliffe village hall. Trottiscliffe (pronounced Trosley) is a mile or so to the East of the junction of the A227 and the A20 at Wrotham. An order form for tickets is enclosed with this newsletter.

A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all.

John Brown

STOP PRESS
Finalised dates for working parties are:
29th JANUARY
18/19th FEBRUARY

"Oh, Come All Ye Faithful"

W I L L S O N I A N
S N O W F L A K E
P A R T Y
T R O T T I S C L I F F E V I L L A G E H A L L
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7.30 P.M. U N T I L ? ?
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FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

The editorial in the August edition of "31 $\frac{1}{2}$ " provoked some correspondence. Clive Brewer wrote: "Surely there can be little doubt that the most desirable club development to pursue is the acquisition of a permanent shore based club house. The advantages of having one are obvious and hardly need saying: - quick and easy access to toilets and changing rooms etc, with no risk of missing a race because the dory has broken down or that there are just too many people to be ferried across in the time available; one weekend duty saved; ready shelter when it rains; children do not have to wear lifejackets; mains electricity; seven days a week access." These thoughts were echoed by Gordon Turnbull who also stressed the inconvenience of the barge for families with young children. He went on: "To build a clubhouse would be a challenge and a saving in the future in that once built it would be there for good.....I feel sure that there would be some help from builders and surveyors in the club." Mr Turnbull thought that a shore based clubhouse could be bigger than the barge and would permit the club to promote dances etc.

Surprisingly, nobody wrote to me to say that whatever happened we should retain a floating clubhouse as a feature of the club though Clive Brewer passed on his ideas about accommodation afloat if a shore based clubhouse proved unattainable. But I am forced to wonder whether my biased Editorial in the August issue (which was intended to get a response) was not perhaps a little too misleading. I said that overnight use of the barge had fallen to the point where it is used by only 2% of the potential users. What I did not want to do was to give the impression that this was always the same 2%. In fact although there is a small core of folk who use the barge regularly, many members use it at some time during the season. I am quite sure that there is little justification for one point made by Mr Turnbull when he said: "As for the need for overnight accommodation, I for one feel this to be unnecessary. As you mention in the August issue, only a certain "clique" of club members avail themselves of this facility and I personally feel that a certain amount of hostility would be indicated if outsiders tried to enter into it." It would be unfortunate indeed if this was an impression that had been created and in my experience although the regulars are likely to know each other (that goes without saying) newcomers are always made welcome.

So where do we go from here? Well, the two sub committees set up by the General Committee are still at work. The barge replacement sub committee is looking at various options and at the availability and cost of craft which might replace the WILSONIAN. It is interesting to note that the Island Cruising Club at Salcombe have recently provided themselves with a new floating clubhouse, an ex-Mersey ferry called the "EGREMENT" which they purchased for \$25,000 but the finished project after repairs, towage and conversion will have cost £100,000. If we can expect the finished cost of a new vessel to be four times its purchase price, the cost of replacing the "WILSONIAN" will be very high indeed. Meanwhile an alternative suggestion is that "WILSONIAN" should be given a new lease of life by replating her around the water line and the feasibility of that is being looked at.

The shore development sub committee has been looking at and discussing with the people concerned the obvious problems such as mains services of which the most complicated is drainage. They intend to put in an application for outline planning permission in order to test the temperature of the local authority on possible development in an area of woodland which they are anxious to preserve.

Maybe the subject of redevelopment would be a good one to air at the Annual General Meeting in February? That gives you all about two months to think up your resolutions and to decide what you will say.



Medway Yachting Association

The Medway Yachting Association is seeking applicants for two posts. The first of these is SECRETARY to the Medway Regatta. The applicant must be able to type and work on his or her own initiative. The post entails attending meetings, recording minutes, and general administrative work. During the Regatta (on 13 to 16 July inclusive in 1978) the Secretary must be in full time attendance. A typewriter and duplicating machine are supplied. The post carries an honorarium of £200 per annum.

The second position is that of TREASURER to the Medway Regatta. The post requires full time attendance at the Regatta for the collection of money. It carries an honorarium of £100 per annum.

Applications for either post should be sent to the Secretary of the MYA, Mrs D Whittaker, 120 Broom Hill Road, Strood, Rochester Kent. Her telephone number, for those seeking further information about the positions is Medway 76309.

DORY STORY

Messrs E S J Engineering of Island Street, Salcombe are the designers and builders of the Salcombe Dory which we use as a ferry boat. The original craft was a basic hull used by local crab fishermen to transport crab pots between the quay and the deep draft fishing vessels in the harbour. We had the design developed to take an inboard engine and the firm now builds a wide range of vessels based on the original hull design powered with inboard or outdrive engines. Illustrated opposite is a version with protective bridge and 42 hp Mercedes outdrive engine intended for use as a fire tender, tug, detergent sprayer and what have you. E S J are clearly grateful for the lead given to them by the club and the proprietor has said that if any of our members are in Salcombe and find an urgent need for engineering facilities, workbenches, tools etc, he will be pleased to help out. Mr Jelinak is the proprietor, (though I doubt whether I have the right spelling of his name) and a very pleasant chap he is too.



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THAT TRAINING COURSE AGAIN

Karen Fitzpatrick (age 16) describes the summer training course as seen by one of the students

On 25th July, at nine in the morning, seventeen of us assembled on the barge with our instructors. The weather was fine and the conditions just right to learn to sail in. The first task was to find our cabins and sort our sailing gear out. I had been looking forward to the course because it was like a holiday as well as a time to learn. When our timetable had been arranged for the day, we were all given a notebook and a pencil to keep our notes in. We then had to go and get changed into our wetsuits ready for the morning. About seven Mirrors were used for the course as they are most suitable for learners. Also a GP called "Bali Hai" was used for the course. All the other children were divided into twos to go in the Mirrors while Lyn Gambleton, Claire Fryatt and I went in the GP. Before lunch we all went out for a sail to get used to the boats, and then we were called in at 12 o'clock. The next thing on the timetable for the afternoon was rowing. We took it in turns to row across the river while our instructor watched us. Our afternoon rowing turned into a rescue because we spotted an Enterprise that had run into trouble. The people in the Enterprise told us that the rudder had fallen apart and gone, so we ended up towing them back with us. When we arrived back on the barge after putting the boats away, we were given a lovely chicken dinner.

On Tuesday morning it was like murder. I was woken up at 6 o'clock by the noise of the younger children laughing and talking. To drown the noise I listened to my radio with the earphones. For breakfast we had bacon and egg. During the morning we practised "going about" and "man overboard" drill. We also learnt how to pick up a mooring. After lunch, a visit to Upnor Castle had been arranged so off we went. The visit was very interesting as the caretaker of the castle told us about the history of the river. In the evening we were given a lecture about first aid and then we went to bed.

Wednesday morning wasn't as noisy as Tuesday because the younger ones had been warned the night before. In the afternoon we were given a lecture about the capsizes drill and then we had to go out and actually do it. We used one of the Mirrors for the capsizes drill and we were ferried out to it, two at a time. I didn't know what to expect because I had never capsized before, but once I had had my turn I was quite confident for the next time. If you have never capsized before, you are always frightened of what might happen when you get a sudden gust of wind. Since I have done the capsizes drill it has made me more confident of the water. When everyone had done the capsizes drill we all went back to the barge to find hot chocolate and biscuits waiting for us on the table. Later on, a treasure hunt had been organised. After the treasure hunt it was decided that we should have the barbeque on the beach. We were allowed to cook our own sausages; that's why they were nearly burnt.

On Thursday morning we were taught how to gybe properly and later on we had a lecture about the tiller extension. In the afternoon, Lyn, Clair and I were allowed to go out in the GP on our own. When we got back to the barge we had a test to do to see if we had learnt something on the course.

Friday was the last day of the course. I don't think any of us wanted to go home as we had just started to get used to sailing every day. After a lecture on the rule of the road and the basic racing rules, Lyn, Claire and I went out in the GP again. This time we had to sail a triangular course. At teabreak we were all given our RYA logbooks. Someone had made a lovely chocolate cake with "WILSONIAN" written on it and at the end of the day we were all given some of it.

I would like to thank all the instructors and helpers who gave up their spare time to organise the course. The organising and catering for seventeen of us was marvellous. I don't know how they coped with us all, especially at meal times. The food was really good. I would recommend this course to other children for next year because it is very educational.

LETTER

To the Editor,

4 Pilkington Road
Orpington, Kent

We would like to write to say thank-you to all the people who helped to run the junior sailing course. Those who taught us and those who cooked and looked after us and also the people who lent their boats for us to sail. We enjoyed it very much and learnt a lot.

With thanks from Martin and Mark (Powell)

RACING AND FLEET NEWS

LAYING UP CUP

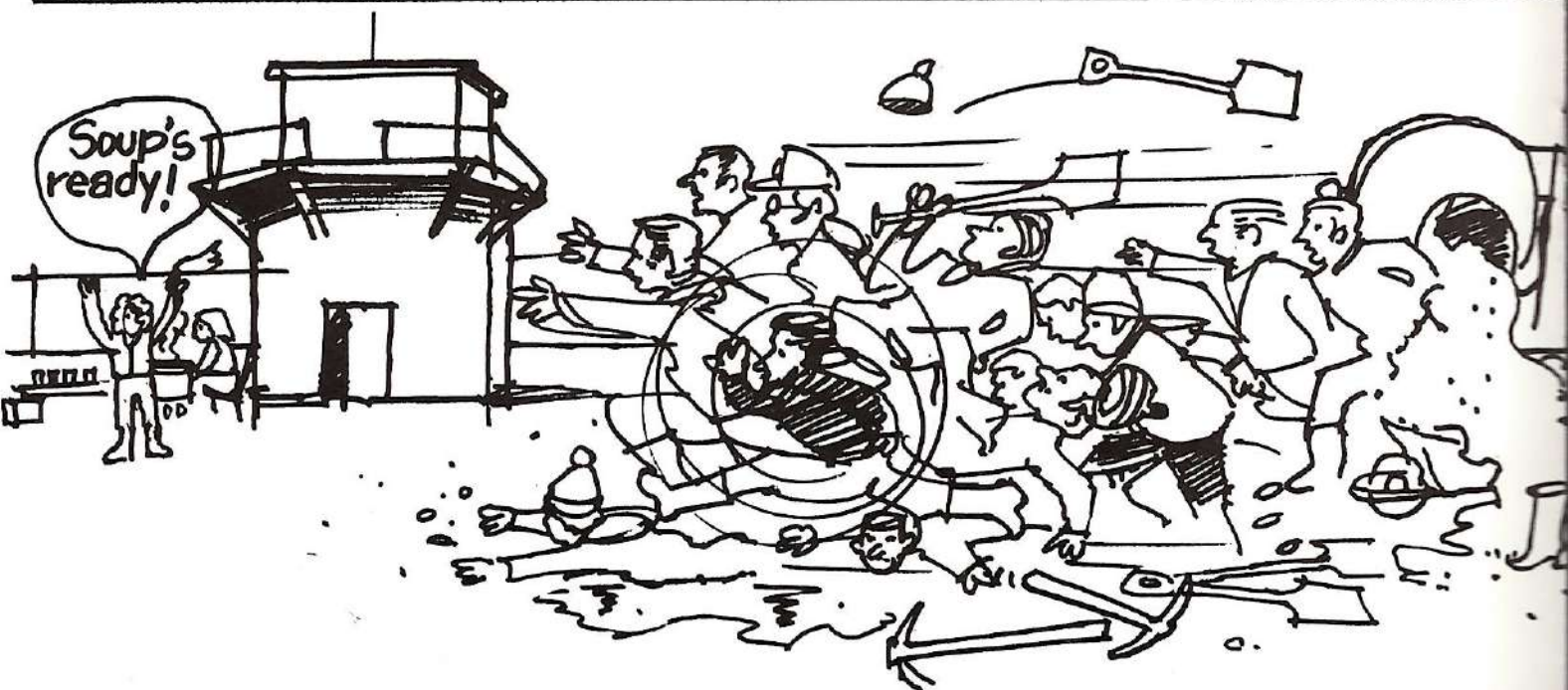
Robin Musters

The finest October we have enjoyed for years brought a splendid turnout of 49 boats. How many knew a cold front was coming in from the West as the 'High' drifted away over Eastern Europe, or had heard the forecast of gales for Wight and Dover? By the time the rescue boat engine had been started, the cloud was thickening and the flags flying briskly. The first mark was 30 to port and the SSW wind made the starting line heavily biased in favour of the dockyard end. The Fireballs predictably drew ahead on the reach down to 26 and 27. The exhilarating run down to 23 was tricky in the gusty conditions with the wind dead aft and a few went over. Back up wind to 24, 26, reach and gybe at 27 (Oops) and once more the dicey run down to 23 claimed several more victims.

Steve James was first to finish in the Fireball he had just fetched from Christchurch a minute ahead of Roly Spurgeon who has also acquired a newer 'Ball. But 8 minutes lead was not enough to beat David Vettergreen in Peacemaker, who in turn was beaten by Philip Holmes only 30 seconds behind in a GP for a change. Simon Shaw in Spindrift was 3rd, Clive and Roy in Climactic 4th. Thirty two boats finished and the rescue boat helped some of the seventeen who retired.

For the second race a shorter course was set and again it paid to start near the far end of the line with clear wind to fetch 29. Fireballs again got there first closely followed by a couple of Enterprises leading the pack. At this stage, a coaster coming up and confronted by a mass of dinghies left the channel to pass inside 29; just as well it was high water. After a short hitch back to 30, the fleet powered off down to 27 and 26 rounding both to starboard to avoid a gybe. Back to 30, plane to 31, down again to 28 finally back to 30, 31 and finish. This course was more to the liking of the faster boats, Roly Spurgeon and Terry Sullivan (Fireballs) saved their times by 20 to 30 seconds from Philip Holmes in Joybell and Ray Blyth in After Ours. Meanwhile further back the fleet were being sprayed by small racing powerboats. With the wind gusting 10 to 20 knots in as many seconds that only four boats retired says much for the skill and determination of both helms and crews. A fitting end to a great season.

Results: 1. Joybell(GP)Philip Holmes; 2. Spindrift (GP) Simon Shaw; 3. Peacemaker (Ent) David Vettergreen; 4. After Ours (GP) Ray Blyth and Tavi Two (Mirror) Christopher Stevens; 6.(Fireball) Roly Spurgeon.



THE BIG MOMENT FOR A WINTER WORKING PARTY

MIRRORS

The Class finished the season with a similar number of boats turning out as had done at the beginning - too few of course - but losses to the Handicap and Enterprise fleets were replaced by some newcomers. The single handed series was again popular and produced a good entry though one race was lost to gales and another abandoned for lack of wind. Winner was Rob Jones in Palm Patch; second Roy Russell in Humpty Bong. The Erica Cup for the summer series went to Colin Lennox in Rollocks and the Autumn points to ex-Commodore Martin Fish sailing Thiseldo largely as a result of his crew's interest being kindled by the elementary course in July. Peter and Arthur Leigh in Measles took the Minim Trophy.

Our return match for the Bounty Trophy with Hoo Ness YC was disappointing with a very small turn out from the visiting club and some poor timekeeping. The trophy stays with us for another year. And to go out with a bang, five boats went up to Thamesmead on November 5th. Unfortunately their skills at close quarters and in coping with the violent (to say the least) windshifts between the tall buildings which surround the lake were too much for us and they retained their shield as convincingly as we retained ours when they visited us on the Medway at the beginning of the season. However the racing was good fun in the best of company.

Finally, I shall be stepping down from the job of fleet captain at the end of the year. Rob Jones has been proposed and seconded and has agreed to take on the work so I hope you will give him your votes at the AGM and your full support throughout the season.

Christopher Stevens

GP 14

This is the first opportunity I have had on which to thank everybody concerned in making such a success of our open meeting. The weather did not come up to expectations, being very light on both days, but apart from this everything went really well with plenty of praise from the visitors. The Enterprise Class organised everything superbly in a most competent style. Our own club members turned out in force and provided 21 out of the 40 competing boats. The event was won by John Ball and Andy Johnson in Destructable (Wembley SC); second, David Kite and wife in "Smuggler" (SEGAS SC); third, Dave Gilbert and Arthur Suttee (Wembley SC) in "Confusion". Best result in any race for a club member (5th) and best overall result among club members (10th) went to Peter Crisp and Richard Barber sailing "Golden Wonder". Results of the 1977 long series events were as follows:

Spring points

1. Peter Crisp "Golden Wonder"
2. Mike Doherty "Bin"
3. Ray Blyth "After Ours"

Morning points

1. Gill Cummings "After Ours"
2. Mike Doherty "Bin"
3. Bob Dutton "Bobcat"

Summer Points

- 1 Ray Blyth "After Ours"
2. Steve James "Kumali"
3. Roger Ransley "Move it"

It is at this time of the year that the class should be giving serious thought to the nominations for class officers for the coming season. Mike Doherty has offered to continue as Deputy Class Captain, but I shall be standing down due to other sailing commitments. We do need an urgent nomination for Class Captain for 1978.

It has been an interesting and rewarding year for me and I would like to thank everyone for their support and advice especially Mike Doherty and my wife June.

Richard Jordan

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SMALL ADS

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ONE OR TWO CHILDRENS' WETSUITS to fit height 4' - 4'3", reasonable condition. Ray Powell 4 Pilkington Road Crpington Telephone Farnborough 56326.

YOUNG CREW FOR MIRROR DINGHY Wanted, or would be interested in crewing in another dinghy. Have Fireball experience. Patrick Shaw (age 15) 57 View Road, Cliffe Woods nr. Rochester. Medway221051

LOST

Leigh Trophy weekend (18.9.1977) 1 Club Sweater. Please return to Bob Fitzpatrick 78A Maidstone Road, Rainham. Med.363942

FOR SALE

MIRACLE 36 "Nick Nack" Certificate, bailer, launching trolley. Good fast boat £455 Bob Fitzpatrick Medway 363942

QUADRANT LIFEJACKET with zip front to fit child 6 - 10 stone £5 ono Tim Bolton, Meopham 813029

WET SUIT TOP, new, made from a kit but unused. 32" chest, height 4'11 - 5'3" Peter Bolton Meopham 813029

MIRROR 39453 "Little Red Rooster" Very good condition throughout. Jeckells sails, spinnaker and chute, s/bailer, launching trolley. £225. Karl Webster, 41 Nine Acres Lane, Cuxton, Rochester Phone Medway 73586.

MORE WANTEDS

SEABAT, SUNFISH or similar for car topping Karl Webster, Medway 73586.

THE CLUB is in need of some wheelbarrows and a dumper truck. Any member finding any at bargain prices is asked to contact the Secretary.

SMALL ADS are free to members. Just send your copy (for sale, wanted, swops etc) to the Secretary.

FOUND

By buoy 24 on 11 September, HOLT ALLEN spinnaker pole with hook ends, for Mirror

STAINLESS STEEL sailing knife and lanyard, found in the dinghy park.

Claimants (for either) to the Sailing Secretary, Robin Musters, 123 Hadlow Road, Tonbridge, Kent. Tonbridge 353437