

31 1/2

THE WILSONIAN SAILING CLUB MAGAZINE

Number 6

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WILSONIAN SAILING CLUB
HOO, nr. ROCHESTER, KENT

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The magazine of the
Wilsonian Sailing Club
is called "31 1/2" because
the club house, the barge
WILSONIAN, is moored
approximately halfway
between navigation buoys
31 and 32.

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FROM THE COMMODORE

We are now enjoying one of the worst summers for some years, but this has not affected our club activities too much because our boats are propelled by the breeze and not by the sunshine. The later date of the Medway Regatta resulted in a smaller turnout than usual, but we provided the backbone of the Enterprise and Fireball fleets and the winners of the Class B Handicap, John Smith and Susan Dean in their Graduate "Lancer".

The young members training weekend had just finished at the time of writing. We had not intended to make it an R.Y.A. Elementary Course this time, but such was the enthusiasm that no less than ten came away with certificates. Well done. We are greatly indebted to the instructors and helpers, who gave their time to make it possible.

Detail plans for substantially improving and adapting the barge to suit the present needs of club members have been prepared and are fully explained in this issue.

Your Committee is concerned at the increasing cost of laying up the Rescue Boat and Scow at a boatyard each winter. We shall be very glad to hear of any alternative suggestions for undercover storage, where we can work on the boats ourselves.

By the time you get this, many members will have been on holiday and the Wilsonian burgee will have been flown in many diverse places. Why not write in and tell us about the places you visited and your adventures?

Robin Musters

CLUB NEWS

The Secretary's page

This is the first issue of your Club Newsletter in which your Secretary is able to contribute simply as Secretary and not as Editor. Hedda Johnston told me some time ago that she would like to take on the Editor's job when she had finished her degree course and I am now pleased to say that we must be one of very few clubs which can claim to have a newsletter editor with an honours degree in English. I hope that you will all continue to keep her supplied with material so that she has something to edit.

In this issue of the newsletter there is an article explaining what we intend to do to the barge this winter. Inevitably there will be a call for volunteer labour. But please remember that there will be a limit on the number of people who can work in the confined space below decks on the barge and we should not need to call on anyone to turn out very often so long as every member is prepared to lend a hand on at least one or two weekends. But more about that when the plans are a little further ahead.

Talking about planning ahead, will you please make a note in your diaries that the Club's annual dinner (and dance) will be held this year on Friday 27 October and that the location will be the same as for the past few years, that is to say, the 'Bull' Hotel at Birchwood on the old A20 just to the west of Swanley. Full details and an application form for tickets will be sent to you a little nearer the time.

I have again been asked by Mr Edward Brice at Hoo Lodge to request members to keep the speed of their cars down on the track around Hoo Lodge. May I remind you that cars which travel too fast cause stones to be thrown off the track on to the grass and that the stones cause damage to Mr Brice's lawnmowers. You have been asked before, and there is a notice to remind you. There really is no excuse.

On the subject of driving, you have no doubt noticed that some resurfacing has been carried out on the steepest part of the track down to the car park. A small band of volunteers spread nearly ten tons of hoggin with the aid of a vibrating roller which had an effective rolling weight of 7/8 tons. When we had finished, even the cars pulling the heavily laden trailers carrying the hoggin could climb the track without problems, but within one day the surface had been torn up by members' cars. Why? Largely because of bad or inconsiderate driving. We cannot afford to have permanent surfaces put on the tracks, but our hoggin tracks can be climbed without wheelspin if drivers approach the hill at about 10-15 mph and do not attempt to accelerate on the way up; in fact aim to reduce speed slightly as you climb the hill. If you do tear the track surface, please come back and repair it when you have reached the top.

We aim to have a stand at the Dinghy Exhibition at Picketts Lock in the New Year and I would like to hear from anyone who is interested in planning, designing or building a stand (or in due course in running it). In the meantime please keep the negatives of any good photographs that you take on the river or at the club. We may be able to make use of them.

We are looking into the possibility of having a telephone installed at the club so that we are not quite so cut off from the world. There are some technical problems, as you can probably imagine.

May I, both as Secretary and as a Competitor, thank those members who volunteered to help run the barge during the Medway Regatta and the rescue boat. It's a pity that the organisation of the weather was not in their

Peter Bolton

RACING NEWS

ENTERPRISE

Mike Blake

SPRING SERIES

Have you ever heard that old saying which goes: "Never get your boat out, 'til April is out"? No, nor have I, but that is what most of you did this year.

The Spring Series was held over five Sundays during April and May, but never really got going until the last two Sundays. Martin Smith and John Mitchell gave the impression that they had been practising in their baths all winter, because they were treating 1st and 2nd positions as some sort of exclusive club. Nothing stays that exclusive for very long, and Ray Fryatt soon got the feel of his new McNamaras and managed his first win. Colin Clamp was always pushing these leaders hard by coming 3rd on four occasions. The only thing I was going to win in these early races was the Concours d'Elegance, and it occurred to me that the pressures of being Fleet Captain were affecting my performance!

May 7th dawned, the turnout doubled in the morning and sailing got very much more competitive. Dave Vettergreen arrived and promptly sailed away to a very convincing win, leaving Mike Blake, John Mitchell and Martin Smith to finish in that order after a tight race. For the afternoon race a tremendous fleet of 16 went to the line. Derek Laverick emerged as the victor as he so often does when knowledge of the river and sailing skill are at a premium.

On the last Sunday of the series it was obvious that the No. 1 slot was to be fought for between Martin Smith and John Mitchell, who were now reaping the benefit of their early dominance in April. In the morning race the pendulum swung towards John because he managed a win after a close battle with Phillip Holmes and Gordon Belcher. Martin was sixth, which gave him his worst points of the whole series. The tables were completely reversed in the final race when Martin sailed well to get clear of the Bradleys and take first position. John and Stephen Bradley had only come down for the afternoon race to take the fleet by storm. S.B. was 2nd, and J.B. 3rd; they really should make the effort more often.

1. M. Smith (11)	4. M. Blake (42.7)
2. J. Mitchell (14.7)	5. C. Clamp (45.8)
3. R. Fryatt (37)	

WHITSUN CUP

Twenty-one helms managed to persuade their wives to let them put away the paint brushes for the Whitsun Weekend, so that they could compete for the Whitsun Cup. The laurels were carried off very convincingly by Derek Laverick with three wins.

1. D. Laverick ($2\frac{1}{4}$)	3. M. Smith ($7\frac{3}{4}$)
2. G. Belcher (7)	4. R. Fryatt (12)

MIRROR

SUMMER POINTS

A total of fourteen competitors took part in the 4 races which made up the series. Each race had a different winner. The overall results were:-

1. I. McLeod in "Emdee"
- =2. C. Fryatt in "Rondo"
- =2. C. Stevens in "Tavi Too"
4. R. Jordan in "Pointless"

Please note the following Mirror Open Meetings in the area:-
Maidstone - 24th Sept. Thamesmead - 1st Oct.

MIRROR FLEET DAY

Colin Lennox
Fleet Secretary

The morning of Sunday 6th August started bright and sunny (unusual for this summer) and Peter (Mirror "Measles") - standing in for Bob Jones who was unable to be down to run things - organised a very successful day of sailing events.

The programme started with a "Rigging Race" in which many people found out how difficult it is to rig boats at speed, get them into the water and complete a short race. Helms and crews were mainly sitting out to avoid the dreaded falling gaffs. Anyway, congratulations to the winning team.

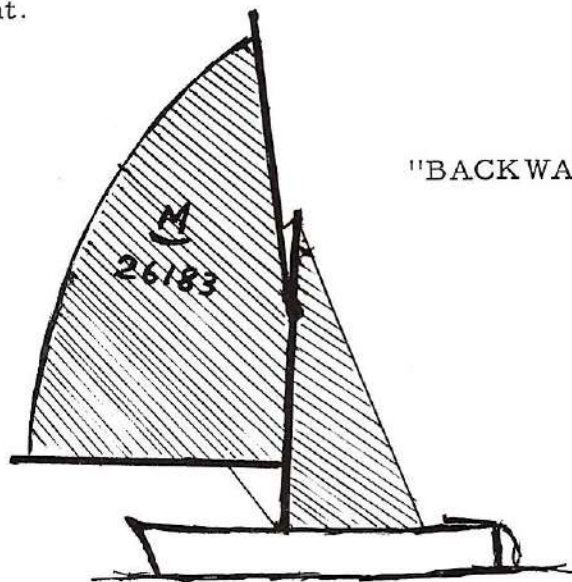
Barry Bew ("Tina Bell") led a "Follow My Leader" event to Hoo Bay. About twelve Mirrors got into the water and it was a fine sight to see a line of red sails completing figures-of-eight and other manoeuvres. Very good practice for all concerned.

Four teams of three boats then took part in the "Relay Race", for which a course was set round the Barge, out to Buoy 31 and back to the beach. Great fun as crews stepped out into six feet of water to hand over to the next in their team.

Then we all stopped for lunch break which was accompanied by a downpour of rain, all members endeavouring to shelter in or around the Block House. Unfortunately, in our efforts of trying to keep dry, lunch boxes, flasks, etc. seemed to be falling around in all directions.

Following in the afternoon was the always-popular event of "BalloonHarvesting", the Balloons being spread by the White Rescue Boat helmed by myself. Great fun was had by all concerned, and without any damage to boats, owing to the superior skill of those who took part. The winning Mirror managed to collect 29 balloons, which I think is a record. After the race the children of the day took great delight in bursting all the harvested balloons by stamping on them; for a time it sounded like machine-gun fire.

With great expertise a few members attempted to complete a short course in a "Backward Sailing" event; their ideas for trying this skill were quite surprising. Also, while this Race was going on, a short Practice Race was set for members who had not raced at all before; it was obviously not found as difficult as it had at first been thought.



"BACKWARD SAILING"

Last of all the Children's Rowing Race. The energy and effort going into this is quite surprising, especially with two crews trying to row in different directions. This special day is greatly enjoyed by families and all those who take part. Prizes are collected for most of the events, which makes the day even more worthwhile. It is a pity that more of our Mirror Fleet did not attend. However, there is always another year. My thanks to all members who helped to make this day a great success.

MIRROR SAILORS PLEASE NOTE - racing against Thamesmead is arranged for 5th November; this is a SUNDAY, not a Saturday as stated in the Members' Handbook.

HANDICAP 'A'

20 boats contested the Summer Points Series and 17 the Morning Points Series, providing a good summer's racing. Following the pattern for the season so far, the Fireballs have tended to dominate with 11 boats entering each series (often with 8 or 9 in a race). Laser entries totalled 5, but actual starts have been, frankly, spasmodic and this is reflected in the results. The entry is completed by two Larks, a Wayfarer, and the lone Tasar, which has put in a particularly dogged effort. The overall results, however, are a Fireball benefit:

Morning Points

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| 1. FB "Goldie Fender" | Mark Goodchild |
| 2. FB "Soulmate" | Rowley Spurgeon |
| 3. FB "Pallo Fuocco" | David Scott |

Summer Points

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. FB "That's Life" | Tony Mason |
| 2. FB "Soulmate" | Rowley Spurgeon |
| =3. FB "Goldie Fender" | Mark Goodchild (2 races) |
| =3. FB "Waeg-Bora" | Roger Johnston (2 races) |

The Fireball fleet continues to grow strongly with the total number of boats on the books now standing at 21; this includes two new Fireball-owning members - welcome.

SOUTH KENT RACE

The day of the South Kent Race dawned sunny and slightly windy - a considerable contrast to the blustery day on which the race had originally been scheduled. Over 30 boats entered the race; this was an excellent turnout for the height of the holiday season. Many of the comments heard afterwards concerned the lightness and flukiness of the winds: "windshifts of 180 degrees"! Sam Brookes (Miracle "P de R"), who came 3rd on corrected time, here describes his experiences.

The South Kent Race this year demonstrated the real dilemma of the dinghy sailor in choosing between beating in short tacks out of a slackening adverse tide, and playing the wind shifts at the expense of having to breast such tide as still ebbed against him.

No problems like this on the way down, which was a broad reach or run with a favourable tide. But, having rounded the South Kent buoy, the divergence of choice was there all the way back to Hoo. At first I chose to play the shifts and ignore the tide, largely because I felt that the northern bank of the river was briefly likely to be more affected by the cloud cover with its stronger winds. As the river narrowed towards buoy 14 the clouds were less impressive and I reverted to short tacking up the southern shore to avoid the tide.

However, in doing this it soon became apparent that the wind shifts were playing a significant part. They were frequent and substantial, so substantial indeed that a mistake on only one tack could find one crossing 50 yards behind a competitor whom one had previously led by the same margin. Having identified the importance of the shifts, it then became necessary to ignore the last of the ebb and to try to work on the shifts alone. By doing this I managed to pick up several places from nominally faster boats, but it was not enough to catch the Graduates who were enjoying wind strengths ideally suited to them. Well done Sue and Ron for well-deserved first and second places. We'll be seeking to redress the balance next time the wind blows hard!

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 1. "Lancer", S. Dean (Graduate) | 3. "P. de R.", S. Brookes (Miracle) |
| 2. "Kagi", R. Mountford (Graduate) | 4. "Short 'n' Curly", M. Blake (Enterprise) |

BARGE IMPROVEMENTS

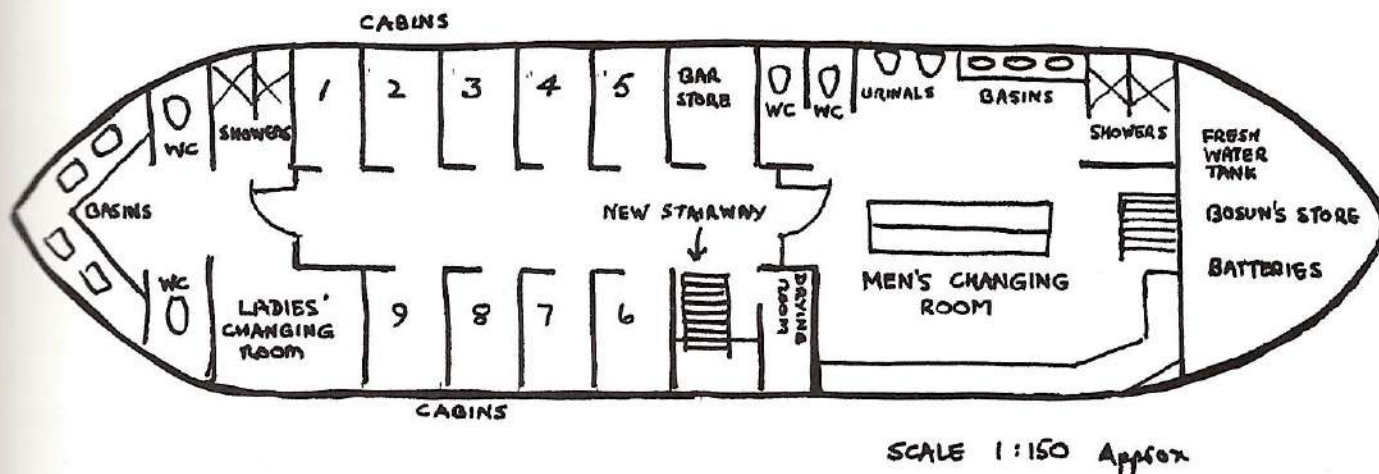
Peter Bolton

About a year ago, an editorial in this magazine drew the attention of members to the subject of future development and, in particular, to the options being considered by the sub committee which had been set up to consider future development. The sub committee's conclusions were discussed at the 1978 annual general meeting when it became quite clear that the cost of finding and fitting out a vessel to replace "WILSONIAN" would be very high. The two options which have been followed since then have been to sound the way, gently, towards a clubhouse on the shore and to make such changes and improvements to the barge as would see us through until a shoreside clubhouse became a reality. An application has been made for outline planning permission for the clubhouse, and the decision of the local authority is now awaited with considerable apprehension and interest. But it is clear that the process of obtaining planning permission (which is itself far from in the bag), designing, financing and building a permanent clubhouse will take many years and there will be a need for our venerable barge for some time to come. So the General Committee appointed another sub committee to consider what should be done to "WILSONIAN". The sub committee's conclusions have now been considered and agreed by the General Committee and it is hoped to get most of the work completed during the 1978-1979 dry season.

"WILSONIAN" is an iron barge. Iron does not rust as quickly as steel, but all vessels suffer from corrosion round that narrow strip known as the 'wind and water' line. Constant lapping by the waves and floating debris causes the paint to wear thin and the rust soon begins to show through. Up to now, the corroded patches have been dealt with on the barge's three yearly visit to the shipyard by 'doubling', that is to say welding on small plates to cover the affected parts. This winter, in view of the barge's advancing years (nobody seems to know quite how many) the yard will be asked to weld new plates around the whole of the 'wind and water' line. Since the rest of the hull seems to be still in good condition, this work should see 'WILSONIAN' through a number of years before any other hull repairs become necessary. The opportunity has been taken to plan for a number of changes to the accommodation of the barge to reflect current use. A plan of the proposed new layout below decks is on the page opposite. The principal changes are a reduction in the number of overnight cabins and a considerable increase in the space provided for changing accommodation. To make this possible, a new companionway to the lower deck will be cut amidships. The space aft of the new stairway will be given over almost entirely to changing room for men, with new showers, washbasins and toilet facilities en suite. At the other end of the barge, the space which is at present given over to the two sets of toilets, the shower and the boiler room will become a new ladies' changing room and provide for their use, two showers, two toilets and four washbasins. Other changes will involve moving the batteries into the bosun's store, aft, and replacing the present coal fired boiler with separate gas fired appliances to provide hot water in the kitchen and in the respective changing rooms. The electrical system, which works surprisingly well considering that the motor which powers the generator is said to have been manufactured in 1924 will be improved probably by fitting a new air cooled engine to the existing generator.

Quite clearly, all these proposals will call for a fair bit of work and money. The biggest bill will be from the ship yard for the 'doubling' and associated work, such as the provision of inlets and outlets for the toilets and showers. It is expected to

cost some £4500. Changes to the heating system, including the provision of the appliances, the plumbing and the installation of gas detection devices will cost a further £900. The estimated cost of the materials needed to complete the fitting out below decks (with members, hopefully, doing most of the work) will be something over £1000. At the end of the day, we should have a floating clubhouse which is better suited to our present needs. There should be adequate changing and toilet facilities for the larger number of sailors that we have than hitherto, and for the visitors at our open meetings. Although the number of cabins will be reduced, they should still be sufficient for normal weekend use, and we are at present considering how to provide additional sleeping space for 'special occasions', perhaps by providing pipe-berths or hammocks in the changing rooms.



"WILSONIAN" proposed lower deck layout.

One obvious improvement which has not been included in the plans at this stage is an enlargement of the saloon. This has not been forgotten, but it has been thought impractical to take on too much during one dry season. The present plans are, however, completely compatible with the extension of saloon towards the after end of the barge with perhaps the provision of a sun deck on top.

If the barge can be taken into the shipyard fairly soon after the end of the 1978 season, we hope that it will be possible to start work on the changes to the accommodation fairly early in the winter. There will be much to do, and the committee would like to enlist in particular the services of any member who feels that he has special skills to offer, especially in carpentry, joinery, plumbing and electricians. The idea is not to impose the whole of the burden of the work on these people, but to get them to help plan and organise the work so that it can be carried out by lesser mortals. If you would like to help in this way, will you please get in touch with the Vice Commodore, Richard Jordan, either at the club or at his home: 39 Elmshurst Gardens, Tonbridge. His telephone number is Tonbridge 358879. We envisage that this part of the work will take place either on a mud berth at Rochester or on a mooring, but in either case mains electricity or a generator will be available to permit the use of power tools. The Committee hopes that when the time comes, there will be plenty of volunteers anxious to tear themselves from the boredom of winter television programmes to work on the barge. Most of the work will, of course, be below decks in the warm and dry.

THE SAILING SECRETARY

ON SIGNALS

Christopher Stevens

Everyone can presumably recognise the sequence of signals for their start on the front of the Race Box - don't forget at the start it's the visual signals which count, not the sound signal (Race Officers remember, please!) - but it's worth knowing the others that you can expect to see from time to time. We now have boards (like those used for starting signals) painted to represent the appropriate flags which will be displayed above the starting signals at the downstream end of the box. If a class flag board is left open at the same time the signal applies to that class. I hope the boards will be more easily visible from the river than flags. The Rescue Boat will of course still use flags. The following signals may be used:-

- i) Individual recall - the class flag board reopened and a single sound signal made immediately following the starting signal. The board will be closed when the offending boat has fully returned behind the line.
- ii) General recall - two sound signals will be made immediately following the starting signal and the First Substitute will be displayed; the class flag board will be reopened. The offending class will then be restarted after all the other classes have started: the First Substitute will be closed and a sound signal made one minute before the new Warning signal (10 minute "gun").
- iii) Postponement - the Answering Penant and two sound signals; usually competitors will be advised of the length of the postponement. The A. P. will be closed and a single sound signal made one minute before the Warning signal is made unless the length of the postponement has been signalled (see Rule 4. 1).
- iv) Shorten course - a course can be shortened at the line (if it is a course of several laps) or at a turning mark of the course. The Rescue Boat is equipped to fly the necessary signals for the latter; with a lapping course the Race Officer can shorten from the Box. Flag or board "S" and the class flag or board will be displayed and two sound signals made as the leading boats approach.
- v) Race abandoned - "N" and three sound signals. (Note - abandoned races can be resailed at any time afterwards unless they are subsequently cancelled.)
- vi) Races abandoned but will shortly be resailed - "N" over "X" with three sound signals. This might be displayed if there is no wind soon after the start but the Race Officer thinks that a breeze may fill in a bit later; a single sound signal should be made when it is removed.
- vii) Races cancelled - "N" over First Substitute with three sound signals.
- viii) Flag or board "L" - displayed on the Race Box means "a notice to all competitors has been posted on the notice board" or flown from the Rescue Boat means "come within hail" or "follow me".

Don't forget too the more important sound signals that may be made by ships using the river:-

- i) Five short blasts - I don't understand your intentions/actions or, more importantly, you are not taking sufficient action to avoid collision - i. e. get out of the way!
- ii) One short blast - I am altering course to starboard.
- iii) Two short blasts - I am altering course to port.
- iv) Three short blasts - I am operating astern propulsion.

MEDWAY REGATTA

For the last two years, and possibly longer, the Medway Regatta has met with extreme wind conditions: in 1977 the winds were strong, and in 1976 very light. This year's Regatta had both extremes within the four days. The first race on the Thursday afternoon was sailed in a good blow but subsequently the wind died further and further away. Classes starting at the Upnor Line, where the water is more sheltered than at Gillingham, had one race cancelled completely. By the start of the RNLI Race on the Sunday afternoon, the wind was almost non-existent; even then, however, many boats still made the effort (probably because they had paid in advance!).

Entries for the Regatta were considerably down this year, probably due to the later date, when school holidays had already begun. The turnout from the Wilsonian S.C. was very good nevertheless. In spite of the light winds, some exciting racing was experienced, especially in the larger fleets.

HANDICAP B

The best result by a W.S.C. boat was achieved by John Smith and Susan Dean, who won the cup for their class in Graduate "Lancer". They also collected some nice prizes for the individual races. C.L. Westwood in Graduate "Oxygen" came second.

FIREBALL

The largest entry of W.S.C. boats was found in the largest class. Home boats numbered 12 out of a total of 22 starters. As the final results suggest, Mark Goodchild and Robin Musters were usually to be seen out at the front, doing battle with the leaders from other clubs. The overall results (W.S.C. boats only) were:-

3-Goldie Fender	M. Goodchild
4-Fun	R. Musters
6-Pallo Fuocco	D. Scott
7-That's Life	T. Mason
8-Jutland	G. Maskall
9-Waeg-Bora	R. Johnston (4 races)
10-Chrysophylax	C. Gregson
=12-Soulmate	R. Spurgeon
15-Promiscuous	P. Heckel
17-Love-A-Ball-Nut	D. Blyth
18-Miss Piggy	P. Bolton (4 races)
22-Salt-Ponk	W. Bailey (3 races)

ENTERPRISE

This class had the best percentage entry of W.S.C. boats with 9 out of 11 starters. In spite of this, however, the cup went to R. Hursell from Maidstone S.C! The other results were:-

2-Kinderbox	D. Laverick
3-Mystery Trip	G. Belcher
4-Clementine II	M. Smith
5-Bounty	H. Kinder
6-Kepami	B. Savnden (4 races)
7-	J. Mitchell (2 races)
=8-Sospan	P. Hawkins
10-Idunno	C. Clamp
11-Slim Picker Fever	C. Brewer

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MEDWAY REGATTA (cont.)

There were also single entrants from W.S.C. in three other classes. The results were as follows:-

LASER

G. Stock came 4th out of 13 starters.

GP14

R. S. Dutton in "Bobcat" was 7th.

HANDICAP A

Last but not least, K. Crook in Tasar "Pentasara" came 9th. The racing here must have been very close as "Pentasara" was within only 4 points of 4th place!

It was good to see so many Wilsonian boats out on the river. Let us hope for even more next year, and also a general rise in the number of entries.

LETTERS

An open letter
from Colin Crawford.

Can you help? Most members of the Club will be aware of the need for another rescue boat and will therefore be pleased to learn that the Committee plan to purchase another one either towards the end of this season or the beginning of next.

The problem is, what shall we get? As a member of the General Committee I have been given the task of forming a sub-committee to look into the various alternatives. The help that I need is:-

- 1) Are there any members who will join me on such a sub-committee?
- 2) If anyone has any ideas on the subject or knows of a suitable buy, could they advise me as soon as possible?

It is the Committee's general belief that a displacement hull with an inboard engine will be most suitable. This view is held primarily because of the security problem that we would have if it became known that the club owned an expensive outboard. There is also the physical effort required to lift a large outboard on and off the boat each week which might be too much for some of our members. Outboards are also more difficult to maintain. It is felt that a hull of approximately 17 feet with a low freeboard would be within the capabilities of all members to handle when called upon to do so. Hull maintenance is also a problem, and if a fibreglass or aluminium hull could be obtained, so much the better.

If you can offer any help or suggestions, please contact me, Colin Crawford, at 3, Fernholt, Tonbridge, Kent. My telephone number is Tonbridge 352387.

THE CHIEF DUTY OFFICER'S DUSTBIN!

DOES NOT GROW DURING

THE WEEKEND HE IS ON DUTY

PLEASE TAKE YOUR RUBBISH HOME!

(If you have room to bring containers when they are full, you also have room to take them home empty)

This is the only letter received for this issue. Surely there must be matters that members other than committee members want to discuss? Articles on racing and other subjects of interest will also be gratefully received. Perhaps some sailors might take up the Commodore's suggestion of writing about places they have sailed this summer: possibly reports of meetings elsewhere where several Club members have raced.

Letters and articles for the next copy to reach me, please, by Oct. 31st (by post), or in person on Oct. 27th (Dinner and Dance) or Oct. 29th (Laying-Up Cup).

Many thanks to all who have contributed to this issue of "31½", making my job initially a little easier.

H. J. J.
August, 1978



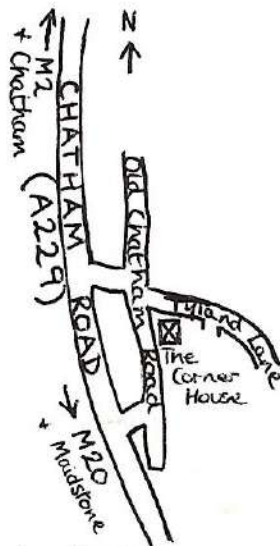
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