



31½/2

THE WILSONIAN SAILING CLUB MAGAZINE

NUMBER 8

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WILSONIAN SAILING CLUB
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THE SOUTH KENT RACE - 1978
(photo - Mark Otway)

The magazine of the
Wilsonian Sailing Club
is called "31½" because
the clubhouse, the barge
WILSONIAN, is moored
approximately halfway
between navigation
buoys 31 and 32.
"31½" is published
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CONTENTS

Club News	2
House Committee '79	3
Class News	4
Sailing Secretary's Notes	5
Our First Race	5
The Dinghy Exhibition	6
Jaws?	6
Small Ads	7

The opinions expressed in this magazine
are not necessarily those of the Editor or
the Club Committee.

Copy date for next issue:
31st May, 1979

CLUB NEWS

Club events began this year with the Snowflake Party, held at Trottscliffe on January 20th. It was well organized by our new and efficient House Committee (see facing page) - then designate, now elected. Not only was the evening thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended, but it also made a good profit for the Club's funds.

In spite of the festivities, a small band of Club members, and some co-opted relations, were down at Hastings by 10 o'clock the following morning to collect the new Rescue Boat, "Leanda". The purchase of this boat was the culmination of a lengthy search involving much hard work, by Colin Crawford in particular.

The removal of "Leanda" from the enclosure of the Hastings and St. Leonards Fishing Association to the awaiting Land Rover and trailer in the road required considerable strength and the assistance of all three previous co-owners. With the Commodore pulling at the end of a long rope, with one of the party throwing wooden slats from beneath the stern of the boat and another replacing them under the bow, and with the rest heaving across the shingle, "Leanda" eventually reached the trailer and was loaded on. The whole procedure looked not unlike the building of the pyramids, only without the crack of whips. Unfortunately, no one had a camera.

The drive home had its excitement when the Land Rover was stopped by the Sussex Police, out for a Sunday drive; they felt that "Leanda" did not resemble the broken-down car which they thought the Land Rover's plates suggested it ought to be towing. The police looked round in some trepidation as two cars (the Club convoy) drew up, and the occupants emerged and sauntered along to see what was happening. The law was not to be put off, however, and the legal procedures were completed. The Club party then adjourned to a pub in Lamberhurst to celebrate the purchase. From there "Leanda" was taken to Tonbridge, where Robin Musters has since been working on preparing her for use on the Medway. Suggestions are invited for renaming her; the yellow Rescue Boat is called "Bluebird".

The AGM in February was well attended. The main business of the evening comprised an excellent presentation, given by Clive Grindley, on the feasibility of a shore-based clubhouse. After the following discussion it was proposed that a sub-committee should continue to investigate the matter and report, with more detail, to next year's AGM.

The refitting of the barge is nearing completion at the time of going to press, by means of a voluntary workforce composed of a minority of members. It is unfortunate that the majority felt it was their right to paint their boats or go sailing while others worked on their behalf. Our thanks must go to Richard Jordan who has put in so much time to ensure that we have a splendid clubhouse afloat. Whereas the strains of moving house would be enough for most of us, he has been able to cope with the "WILSONIAN" too.

Finally, the Club stand at Picketts Lock seems to have been a success and to have attracted a good number of enquiries; several applications for membership have been received as a result of the publicity. Ken Hewett had built an eye-catching stand, painted in the Club's colours and surmounted by a red flashing light - the latter by courtesy of David Sutton (and Singer!); Liz Lyne produced drawings of various Club activities which drew a lot of favourable comment; and John Smith also assisted in the organization (see article on page 6). In addition the Club was advertised by a large poster on the Marauder stand, and several interested people were passed on from there.

Let us hope that it was worth the effort (including Peter Bolton's over-indulgence at breakfast with Yachts and Yachting!) by those involved, and that we can fill the dinghy park this season. Let us hope, too, that we can fill it with keen sailors.

House Committee '79

One result of the 1979 AGM was that the Club now has a full House Committee. This year's Committee is hoping to produce, in addition to the usual barge facilities, social events that will appeal to all tastes.

The week to week running of the kitchen will be in the hands of Debbie Gregson. Once the barge refit has been completed we hope to provide hot pies every lunch-time in addition to the usual food. We intend that pies should be ordered one week in advance, to cut down on the amount of waste that occurred last season.

The bar will be run along the same lines as in previous years by Chris Gregson and John Mitchell. The alterations made to the bar this winter will make life much easier for the barmen.

Barge maintenance will be in the very capable hands of Colin Brierley. Doubtless the members opting for Saturday duties will be hearing from him very shortly, if not sooner!

John and Margaret Mitchell will be organising the catering for visiting clubs, open meetings (with the help of the class running the event), and also training weekends (again working with the other club members involved).

We hope any Class Captains intending to run social evenings will contact the House Committee, as we may be able to help out with food and drink.

Social events will be under the overall command of Pat Scott. (See the proposed programme below and keep an eye open for further information.) If anybody would like to help with catering for social events throughout the year, could they please let Pat know, as she would like to compile a list of willing cooks!

Following the recommendations of the 1978 General Committee, there will be no formal dinner this year. We are therefore proposing a GRAND BUFFET DANCE AND PRIZEGIVING, to be held at The Pavilion, Hever Castle on Saturday, November 10th. The Pavilion is set close to a lake in the beautiful gardens of Hever Castle, which lies between Tonbridge and Edenbridge. The atmosphere of the Pavilion is luxurious but relaxed, with tables set informally around a superb dance floor. There is of course a large bar. An excellent professional buffet will be laid on, providing as much food as anyone can eat. A band will provide music throughout the evening. All this for only £6, considerably cheaper than last year's dinner/dance, and representing even better value for money in terms of quality of the food and surroundings. We hope you are all going to make a note of this date in your diaries NOW and give your whole-hearted support to this new venture which is the most important social event in the Club's calendar. No excuses will be accepted for non-attendance!

1979 SOCIAL PROGRAMME

JUNE 16th - Social (Sheppey Y.C. visit)

JULY 14th - Regatta "At Home"

AUGUST 26th - Bank Holiday Barbeque

SEPTEMBER 29th - Barge Social

NOVEMBER 10th - GRAND BUFFET DANCE & PRIZEGIVING

JANUARY 26th - Snowflake Party, Trottiscliffe

CLASS NEWS

ENTERPRISE

Mike Blake
Class Captain

CLASS MEETING

There was an enthusiastic gathering of about fifty people at the Class Meeting held on Saturday, 27th January, and thanks to the resourcefulness of Ray Fryatt we were able to see two very good films :-

1. "Quest for Gold" - about the Mexico Olympics.
2. "Sail to Win" - on tactics and technique.

Robin Masters attended as our guest and kindly presented trophies to the following prizewinners:-

1. Martin Smith - Spring Points Series, 1978
2. Gordon Belcher - Summer Points Series, 1978
3. Derek Laverick - Autumn Points Series, 1978

When everyone had been well fed and "watered" (our thanks to Margaret Mitchell and Chris Gregson), class members were asked if they had any complaints, suggestions, questions, etc., but there was no response from the floor, which on retrospect I put down to the soporific effect of the aforementioned refreshments.

I am sure those who attended will agree that it was a welcome break in the middle of this winter to see boats being sailed in glorious sunshine again. Indeed, if you had a good imagination you could even make believe that you were at the helm of "Superdocious".....!

ENTERPRISE ASSOCIATION

If you are the proud owner of an Enterprise and you haven't heard of the Association, there will be some leaflets available at the Race Box during the course of the season. (If you would like one now, phone me and I will post one to you - Farningham 863595.)

As a recognised Fleet, we are expected to ensure that all helms enjoying the benefit of Club Races are members of the Enterprise Association. Whilst I think it would be against the spirit of amateur sailing and not in the Club's interest to enforce this to the letter of the law, I think a sensible compromise must be introduced in order to protect our Fleet status. Therefore we are adopting the following points for our races in 1979:-

1. E. A. membership will be obligatory for our "Blue Jib" Open Meeting.
2. All class members will be accepted for Club Series Races but if you finish the race in front of an E. A. member there is every possibility that you will be protested out of the race as being "out of class". This is also very likely to happen in a Handicap Race, as Mirror, Miracle, GP14, etc. owners have to be members of their Class Associations, so obviously you won't get much sympathy from them!

If you are a sailor who enjoys an occasional trip out in a Club Race then the aforementioned will not affect you at all but, if you do like to race regularly in order to qualify for a prize in the Club Events, then it would be in your interest to join E. A.

MIRROR

Bob Jones
Class Captain

The season opened with our visit to Mote Park, Maidstone. Perhaps the snow that week put people off for only two boats arrived to see the last of the ice melt before sailing began. We found the very light winds with large shifts difficult to sail in, but the last race was closely contested for final place. Although we were nowhere near the leader, we had a good day out.

Please note that on 16th September Maidstone Sailing Club will be coming to the Wilsonian to sail in our races. These two events were arranged so that each set of members can see how the other club sails.

As you may know, there is a lot of talk in another of our fleets about spinnakers, and I have had a couple of queries concerning sailing a series without "the third sail". If you feel that we should try, say the summer series, without spinnakers please let me know. Also let me know if you feel strongly that spinnakers should be allowed in all races. Then come and sail. Less than a third of our Mirrors sailed in any race last year. Some of the successful ones have left so there is room for all.

OPEN MEETINGS

I hope you've all made a note of the dates of our Open Meetings for this season:-

MIRRORS (counting for Kent Travellers)	Sun. 3 June
MIRACLES	Sun. 3 June
ENTERPRISE (Blue Jib)	Sun. 8 July
GPI4	Sat/Sun. 18/19 August
FIREBALL	Sat/Sun. 29/30 September

A good turn-out from the home Club always goes a long way to make a success of an Open so please enter; if you're a bit diffident about the competition how about asking someone from one of the other classes to sail with you for the day?

We are running club racing for those not involved in the Open on these days, but do please check for special sailing instructions, and also try to keep clear of those taking part in the Open both on the water and ashore.

Class Captains will be posting lists of neighbouring Opens; try and get to one or two - it's the best way of getting people to come to ours.

RACE BOX DUTIES

If you are down for duty as Race Officer do borrow a copy of the handbook (which you'll find on the shelves at the back of the box) giving a note of all the procedures, and read it through beforehand. There are a couple of mornings set aside for Race Box practice on 29th April and 1st July, when there'll be a chance to run through the drills. If you can't manage either of those mornings let me know and we'll try to fit in another day as well.

Three good rules for Race Box staff: get there in plenty of time; check out what has to be done beforehand; and make sure each person in the box has a specific job to do. If you have a small cassette recorder, I suggest you bring it along; a recording of the sail numbers as they are called out at the finish can be a great help in logging the results.

Don't forget to post the results as quickly as possible!

RESCUE BOAT

There will be an opportunity for Rescue Boat crews to get some practice as well on 29th April and 1st July, and the Club will be running an RYA Coxwains course on 9th June (applications to the Training Secretary, Simon Shaw).

If you are down for Rescue Boat duty do make sure you know how to handle the boat beforehand and read through the YRA booklet on Rescue Boat Handling (G16/79); copies will be available on the Barge or to borrow from the Race Box.

Please be sure to be down in good time - at least one hour before the first start. Make sure you have your own buoyancy aid with you and that you have proper clothing (the weather can be very different on the water to what it is at home at breakfast time); bring a wet suit, as one of the crew of each boat must be dressed to go into the water if needed.

OUR FIRST RACE

John and Susan Smith
Graduate "LANCER"

We floated our Mirror with mixed feelings of fear and excitement. For this was to be our first race. We set off for the start line, but finding it very congested we moved to the back, frightened of getting in the way of other boats. After what seemed a long wait, the starting hooter sounded and off we went to the first buoy on a dead run. Much to our surprise we caught up the fleet, as the boats ahead got into each other's dirty wind, while we at the back had clear air. This is easy, we thought. Before we knew it, everyone was calling for water at the mark and we rounded it next to last.

It was now a beat and the boat which was last soon overtook us, as if we were standing still. We had never realized how hard sailing could be, tacking to windward. With dismay we considered that while pottering around the club we had never really sailed to windward before and had only hazy ideas how to do so. From buoy to buoy the fleet moved further ahead. Finding the buoys could become difficult if we lost sight of the fleet.

"Have you retired?", asked a passing boat.

"No we haven't!", we retorted.

The fleet passed the finishing line and much later so did we.

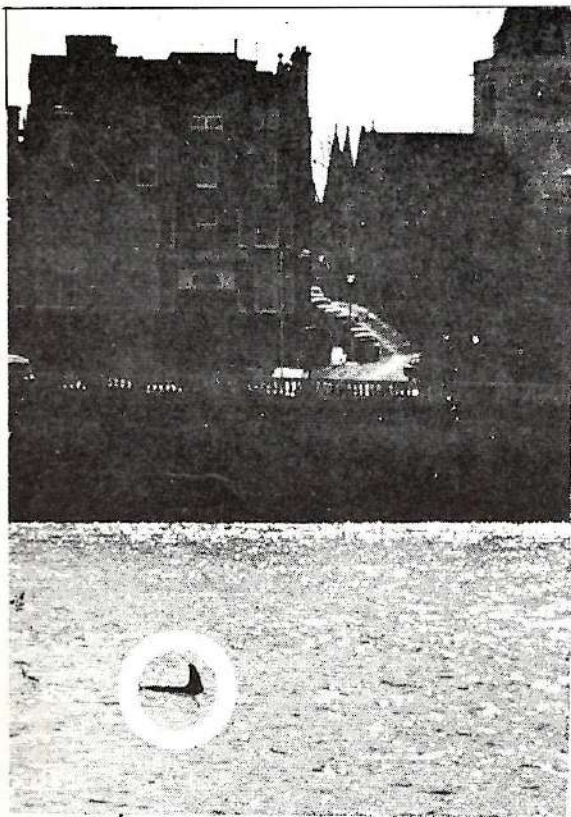
People kindly asked, "Are you alright?", and much to our surprise congratulated us on finishing.

"Racing next week?", they inquired. We looked at each other.

"Yes", was the answer - and next time we were determined not to be so far behind.

Editor's Note - By way of encouragement to new sailors who have not raced and are nervous about taking the plunge (perhaps literally!), it is worth mentioning that since this "First Race" the Smiths have taken part in competitive sailing with greater success. In Graduate "Lancer" (2650) they won the Handicap B prize in last year's Medway Regatta and are pictured on the cover on their way to victory in the Club's South Kent Race.

JAWS ?



The River Medway "monster" (circled) at Rochester.

The following report appeared in the Chatham News on March 9th, 1979. So, if you capsizes and see a pointed fin heading towards you through the water, don't panic - it might not be a shark!

TRAFFIC WARDEN "BOOKS" NESSIE

The River Medway's own version of the Loch Ness monster has caused a stir this week.

It was first spotted swimming off Kingsnorth Power Station. And since then police and the Medway Ports Authority have received various reports.

The monster has variously been described as a whale, a shark and a dolphin and there have been even more colourful descriptions.

But yesterday morning the mystery was solved after a traffic warden spotted what she thought was a pilot whale swimming under Rochester Bridge.

The monster turned out to be a 10ft porpoise. It had apparently lost its way and was going further and further up the river.

A Medway Ports Authority spokesman said he did not think there was much danger of it getting trapped.

"These are intelligent creatures", he said. "The only time he might find himself running into difficulties is if he goes too far up the river on an ebb tide.

"Nearly everyone on the river knows about it or has seen it. It is more of a curiosity than anything else."

(Article and photograph reprinted by kind permission of The Chatham, Rochester and Gillingham News.)

The Dinghy Exhibition

John Smith

The members who made the annual pilgrimage to the London Dinghy Exhibition must have noticed a lot of activity up in the gallery. A struggle through the crowds would have revealed the Wilsonian stand.

To get the stand to the exhibition had proved a lot harder than we had ever imagined. Our first problem was snow - buckets of it - and Friday morning was spent coaxing the car to start.

The stand was eventually collected from Dave Sutton's shop around lunch time. The stand was wrapped in polythene and loaded onto the roof rack. The drive to Picketts Lock was a matter of searching for signposts through the blizzard. After the occasional wrong turn we arrived and with great relief found the stand dry and undamaged.

Ken Hewett, creator of the stand, using us as labourers, assembled it with amazing dexterity. Sue soon learned the difference between a bolt, a nut and a washer. The stand certainly looked good when assembled.

Honours must go to Ken Hewett for building the stand, to Peter Bolton who put in marathon sessions, and to the many members who contributed to the stand and helped to man it during the weekend.

The success of the stand is difficult to measure but we had many people interested in joining and perhaps even more in our open meetings. So perhaps that new member you are racing against first heard of our Club through Picketts Lock.

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PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

Mike Blake is arranging a photographic competition to take place after the end of the 1979 Sailing Season, at a venue and date to be notified later. Subjects:-

- 1) Sailing - An Action Sport
- 2) The Medway - A Place for
Enjoying Sailing

The first section is designed to reflect all the action and excitement of our sport, whilst the second is intended to be a wide open subject which will include all your snaps with the Box Brownie! Print size:- Max. -postcard;Min. -10"x8". Please let Mike Blake know now if you would like to join in; if a £1 entry fee is charged we will be able to have prizes. Phone: Farningham 863595.

EDITOR'S REQUEST - Please try and get copy for "31 $\frac{1}{2}$ " to me by the date specified on the cover, or within a week if I know it is on its way. The delay with publication of this issue is not entirely Lucy's fault!

SMALL ADS

(Free to Club Members)

FOR SALE

FIREBALL 2911 "Miss Piggy" - GRP hull, wooden decks. £350 o.n.o.
Peter Bolton: Meopham 813029.

MIRROR 6245 - Good Condition. Main & Jib. Launching Trolley.
Mr. Dudman: Meopham 813627.

FIREBALL 10394 "Palla Fuocco" - Very good condition. £800.
David Scott: Sevenoaks 884781.

MOUNTIFIELD Fireball Sails - Main & Jib. Only one full season's use. Offers to Tony Mason: Gravesend 59991.

LAUNCHING TROLLEY - Pneumatic tyres, full width fully adjustable padded cradle; suit boat 12-14ft. £25.
Christopher Stevens: 01-852-2958.

JACK HOLT Buoyancy Aids - Two Medium, one Extra Large.
Peter Bolton: Meopham 813029.

 **London Dinghy Centre**
HAS COME TO MAIDSTONE!

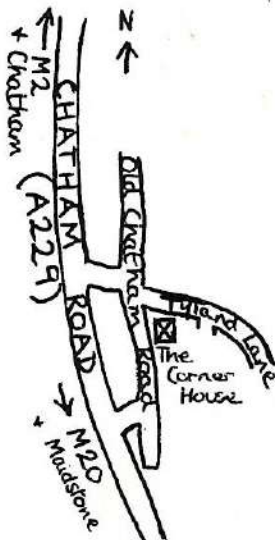
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