



31 1/2

THE WILSONIAN SAILING CLUB MAGAZINE

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WILSONIAN SAILING CLUB
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Richard and June Jordan, Karen Fitzpatrick, Mary Bilcock
and Brian Ecclestone photographed by Bob Fitzpatrick aboard
"Cassina" at Walton-on-Naze.
For the story of their East Coast holiday see page 6.

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

BITS AND PIECES



GRAND BUFFET DANCE AND PRIZEGIVING, Saturday 10th November

By the time Club members receive this issue of "31½" it is probable that, due to overwhelming demand, all tickets to the above event will have been sold! However, last minute ditherers might be lucky, and should contact Pat Scott, telephone Sevenoaks 884781, for the latest information.

BANK HOLIDAY BARBEQUE

More than 50 people attended the Bank Holiday Barbeque, held on the Sunday evening of the holiday weekend. An excellent meal was provided (chicken, sausages, hamburgers, barbecue sauce, baked potatoes and salad, followed by hot fruit), along with a glass of wine. The rest of a very enjoyable evening was spent buying refreshment from a specially set-up bar, and sitting round a large bonfire on the beach.

JUNIOR TEAM WIN

Congratulations to the W.S.C. Junior Team for winning the team-racing event at the M.Y.C. on September 8th. The team consisted of Keith Lennox and Candy Skene, Richard Jordan and Andy De'Ath, and Max Carnegie-Jones and David Andrews. For a report of the event see page 6.

SAILBOARDS

Along with the growing popularity of sailboards, some concern has been expressed regarding control of their use at the Club. The dangers of capsizing in the shipping lane are obvious, not to mention the nuisance of obstructing the scow, or dinghies which are racing. Another problem is that lifejackets are not compulsory for boats not racing. On the other hand, sailboards are obviously great fun! Comments either direct to Committee members or in the form of letters to "31½" will be gratefully received and the matter may possibly be given an airing at the AGM.

LEIGH TROPHY

There were 31 entries for the Leigh Trophy on Sunday, September 23rd. An interesting course was set, with several loops - ideal for a long handicap race, as it kept the two ends of the fleet in touch with each other. David and Pat Scott were first over the line, and for once their huge lead (13 minutes over the following Fireball) paid off and they won the Trophy on corrected time. (The next Fireballs didn't quite make the prize list!):-

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. David Scott, Fireball, "Ball Lightning" | 4. Bob Skene, GP14, "Su-E-Giu" |
| 2. Ray Blyth, GP14, "After Ours" | 5. Bob Dutton, GP14, "Bobcat" |
| 3. Derek Laverick, Enterprise, "Kinderbox" | 6. Martin Smith, Enterprise, "Clementine II" |

MAKING A WET SUIT

Terry Wright

Novices hovering between kits or ready-made wet suits may be interested in my point of view, resulting from my experience of making up a wet suit last summer.

All the wet suit manufacturers describe their products as being easy to assemble, with no previous experience necessary, etc. This is indeed the case providing, that is, that you are possessed of a third hand, preferably double-jointed, and have the patience of Job! So, to begin with, try and persuade a friend to buy a kit as well; then offer to help him make up his kit first. In this way you automatically ensure that your suit will be a success, since you will avoid all the mistakes and pitfalls that occur during the making of your ex-friend's suit! Seriously, though, for some of the more tricky operations an extra pair of hands is a great asset, if not absolutely essential.

With my kit the assembly instructions of the trousers were dismissed in a mere three lines. I could not make head nor tail of the two halves of the trousers when it came to sticking them together. It appeared that the edges of two convex shapes had to be glued together. Impossible, I thought; but a telephone call to the makers confirmed that this was indeed the case. (The manufacturers, incidentally, were exceedingly helpful in sorting out all the problems that I encountered making up the kit.) The neoprene material of the suit is flexible and stretchy, but the edges must be kept flat on a table whilst performing the sticking operation, otherwise you end up with a stepped seam edge instead of a flush one. This is why the extra pair of hands is a useful addition, to hold everything down.

It is claimed that a well-made glued seam lasts for years, and that sewing the seams (the lining only, of course) is only necessary at the points of strain. Frankly, I defy anyone to show me the parts of a wet suit which are not under strain! Therefore I advise oversewing all the seams, even though this is a long, tedious and finger-cramping job.

I would heartily recommend the fitting of ankle zips. I did not fit them initially, but after splitting a seam struggling to get the trousers off the first time I wore them, a pair were fitted double quick.

Considering all the foregoing and bearing in mind that in 1978 a two-piece suit kit cost only £5 more than the ready-made suit, you may well be wondering why I bothered to make a kit. So am I!

MEDWAY DEFENCES

IN THE VICINITY OF THE WILSONIAN S. C.

Hedda Johnston

The sight of the various fortifications in the neighbourhood of the Club is familiar to us all, but their historical background is perhaps not so well-known. What follows is an attempt to put them, briefly, into their chronological context. Many defences have been built over the years in the lower Thames and Medway for the protection of the land and river approaches to the dockyards at Sheerness and Chatham. Those surviving in the vicinity of the Wilsonian, namely Upnor Castle, Cockham Wood Fort and the twin river forts of Hoo and Darnet, were intended to prevent attacks from the river on Chatham dockyard.

Upnor Castle is the oldest of the Medway defences, having been built around 1560, during the reign of Elizabeth I. The dockyard was then in its infancy. It did not occupy the area opposite the Wilsonian, but was simply an anchorage in Chatham Reach. The castle was built downstream of the anchorage, at the bend in the river, to protect the Queen's fleet from attack from the sea. The lack of the modern dockyard buildings on the inside of the bend allowed a clear view from the castle down the river.

Although the castle was enlarged and somewhat rebuilt in 1600, the original form was much as we see it from the river today: a main residential building, towers at the north and south, and a triangular bastion jutting out into the river.

During the Civil War in the mid-17th century the castle was taken over by Parliamentary forces and used as a prison for Royalist officers. It was seized briefly in the Kent uprising by workers from the dockyard who freed the prisoners, but the Parliamentary soldiers soon regained control.

It was not until 1667, one hundred years after it was built, that the castle actually saw action - for the first and only time. During the Second Dutch War the English fleet was laid up in the Medway following a victorious sea battle, on the assumption that the defeated Dutch would remain in harbour. The Dutch fleet, however, put out to sea and began their unexpected attack by burning the new fort that was being built at Sheerness. They then sailed on up the Medway and raided the English fleet, burning many ships and capturing the flagship, the Royal Charles. The English defences were immediately organized and when the Dutch attacked the next day they were repulsed by fire from the castle and forced to retire.

Although this attack on the English fleet resulted from the unprepared state of the defences and not from any short-comings in the castle itself, it was decided that Upnor Castle offered inadequate protection. Additional fortifications were therefore built downstream, reducing Upnor's importance. The castle became redundant and was converted into a supply base for the Navy.

The largest of these defences built after the humiliating Medway Raid was Cockham Wood Fort. It is situated high on the beach between the Club and Hoo Marina. It was built in 1670 by Sir Bernard de Gomme, the foremost military engineer of the 17th century. At the same time he built Gillingham Fort which used to stand on the other side of the river, near the present dockyard entrance. (De Gomme also designed bastions and a new fort at Sheerness to replace that burned by the Dutch.)

The batteries and ramparts of Cockham Wood Fort were built of brick, much of which is still clearly visible. It was surrounded by a ditch on three sides with an outer wall of earth. A square tower guarded the entrance which was at the back and reached by a drawbridge over the ditch. Forty-eight guns were mounted, originally in open batteries but later in brick casemates. Four of these arches remain, three of them complete.

During the 18th century there was a general strengthening of defences, and the land approach to Chatham dockyard was secured by the Lines, a series of forts and bastions. The next phase came early in the 19th century with the threat of invasion by Napoleon Bonaparte, when some new building, and also rebuilding of existing forts, was undertaken. (The Martello Towers of the S.E. Coast belong to this period.) In the mid-19th century there was an imagined invasion plan by Napoleon III of France and in 1860 the Royal Commission for the Defence of the United Kingdom was set up.

Hoo and Darnet Forts were built during the latter period, around 1870, not, as is often supposed, in the earlier Napoleonic era. The original intention was that the two forts should be built on Oakham and Burnt-wood Islands (on either side of buoy 14; Oakham I. now has a jetty extending from it), but the ground there was found to be unable to bear the weight of the forts and their heavy guns, only one of which might weigh seven tons or more. The present sites were therefore chosen, although even here the ground was marshy enough to necessitate the mounting of fewer guns than had originally been planned.

Each fort is circular in plan, with casemates for eleven guns, and each is surrounded by a ditch. Both structures are still in good condition. Hoo Island (upstream) is still operational Ministry of Defence property, but it is possible to land on Darnet Island and examine the fort.

The most recent additions to the Medway defences are the World War II pill boxes, one of which is enclosed by our dinghy park fence. What, I wonder, will future ages make of our fortified Race Box?!

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CLASS NEWS

ENTERPRISE

Mike Blake
Class Captain

In the last magazine I wrote about the general raising of the level of ability in the class this year. Since then I have improved my own results, but I don't think that just writing about it did the trick!

The results of the recently concluded series are as follows:-

Morning Points Series

1. Mike Blake & Peter Henderson - 0 points
2. Derek & Valerie Laverick - 6 points
3. Martin Smith & Martin Cuming - 16.7 points

Summer Points Series

1. Dave Vettergreen & Colin Vane - 3 points
2. Derek & Valerie Laverick - 24 points
3. Martin Smith & Martin Cuming - 28 points

August Cup

1. Mike Blake & Peter Henderson - $2\frac{1}{4}$ points
2. Derek & Valerie Laverick - $5\frac{3}{4}$ points
3. Dave Vettergreen & Colin Vane - 9 points

After seven series so far, it is interesting to note that six different boats have taken the honours, which is a nice even distribution of the silverware (less of an insurance risk!). The Autumn Points Series began on September 2nd and this is the final class series of the year. There are six races to count out of the scheduled eleven, so let's have some big turnouts to make the racing really competitive.

P.S. I will be standing down as Class Captain at the end of this year so I would like you to give some thought to nominations for this esteemed position. (Remember to get the approval of the person whom you wish to nominate.) I should mention that it is not that I don't like doing the job, but it is very demanding on time that I should be utilising for other things!

FIREBALL

David Scott
Class Captain

FIREBALLS AT THE MEDWAY REGATTA

Eight Wilsonian Fireballs competed in the Medway Regatta, July 12-15. The first race was sailed in conditions bearing a marked similarity to last year - a force 5+ north-easterly. In the only windward start of the series Gerald Stock opened out an early lead and was never seriously harassed by the chasing boats. Tony Mason was well-placed, finishing third, and Geoff Maskall came in fifth. David Scott was fourth after being somewhat delayed by a capsized boat which was only rectified when the boat drifted into knee-deep water off Long Reach. Many other boats with similar tales of woe were forced to retire in the worsening conditions.

The weather on Friday morning set the tone for the rest of the series: warm and sunny with a north-south-east-westerly wind, force 0-2. Occasional puffs from quite unexpected directions relieved the boredom but piled on the frustration as placings were sometimes completely reversed. David Scott drew well clear in the morning race and kept out of trouble to record a comfortable win, with a repeat performance in the afternoon, albeit by a distinctly less comfortable margin.

On Saturday those praying for a return to Thursday's conditions were unrewarded, as the fickle weather persisted with a wind from a vaguely westerly source. However, up front the morning race proved exciting with the lead constantly changing between Gerald Stock and David Scott. David snatched the lead in a tacking duel in the final hundred yards and held on to take the winning gun. Morale in the Scott camp was so heightened by this that they went on to win the afternoon race and thus clinch the series with a race to spare.

On Sunday twenty-one Fireballs turned out for the final race, the biggest dinghy fleet in the Regatta. The start was a ragged affair, with some boats (well, at least me!) confused by the bizarre antics of the race-boat crew, apparently flying a postponement flag, then surreptitiously removing it without firing a signal. The net result was half the fleet charging off at the start with the remainder leisurely cruising up and down the line, until the awful truth dawned. Not surprisingly, the fleet was soon well spread out; at the considerable distance involved it was difficult for this observer to see who was leading, but Roly Spurgeon appeared to gain the best start and hold the lead to Darnet Fort, before places at the front started changing dramatically. By two thirds of the way through the race the Scotts had gained the lead, only to run into a dead calm and be passed by three boats. In the final beat they regained the lead and held on to win in a nail-biting finish.

Thus the Fireball Flagon was wrested from the hands of Medway Yacht Club and WSC gained a reasonable proportion of the prizes for individual races. All five Wilsonian boats who sailed the full series finished in the top half of the fleet overall:-

1. D. Scott, "Ball Lightning"
2. G. Stock, "Snatch 22"
7. T. Mason, "That's Life"
8. G. Maskall, "Jutland"
9. R. Spurgeon, "Soulmate"

CLUB RACING RESULTS

Summer Points Series

1. Mark Goodchild, "Goldie Fender"
2. Geoff Maskall, "Jutland"
3. Roly Spurgeon, "Soulmate"

August Cup

1. John McKay, "T.G.C.P."
2. Geoff Maskall, "Jutland"
3. Mark/Peter Goodchild, "Goldie Fender"

OPEN MEETING

The annual GP14 Open Meeting was held on August 18/19. The entry of eighteen boats was disappointing considering the Club turnouts this year. Unfortunately the weather was not kind either, there being a short-age of both wind and sun.

The first race was sailed in a steady force 2. David Kite (Segas S.C.) and M. Ramus (British Transport Y.C.) got clear of the fleet on the reach down to 18. Several collisions occurred at 28, the first mark, and the boats that finished 2nd, 3rd and 4th were among those rerounding marks and/or doing 720s at this stage. A group of boats broke away and began to close on the leaders on the beat back. Robert Skene and Simon Shaw gained places by being the only boats not to overstand 19. Peter Crisp (Medway Y.C.) took advantage of slack covering to move into second place. David Kite just held off the assault from the rapidly closing chasing group to take the winning gun.

The second race was lost due to over-running the time limit and the rescue boat misunderstanding instructions to finish the race at 28 in the dying wind.

The third race was held over a short course in little wind. The positions were decided after the first short beat against the tide, the finishing order being Philip Holmes, David Kite and Mike Doherty. Half the fleet failed to finish.

The final positions were:-

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. David & Jean Kite (Segas S.C.) -1, 2 | 4. Ray & David Blyth (W.S.C.) -4, 8 |
| 2. Philip Holmes & Bernard Smith (W.S.C) -7, 1 | 5. Robert Skene & Martin Jessup (W.S.C.) -3, Rtd |
| 3. Peter Crisp (Medway Y.C.) -2, 9 | 6. Mike Doherty & Keith Lennox (W.S.C.) -Dns, 3 |

CLUB RACING RESULTS

Morning Points

1. After Ours - 0 points
2. Bobcat - 11.7 points
3. Bin - 19.4 points

Summer Points

1. After Ours - 3 points
2. Bin - 8.7 points
3. Bobcat - 11.7 points

August Cup

1. After Ours - 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ points
2. Sue giu - 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ points
3. Bin - 7 points

MIRROR

Bob Jones
Class Captain

As is usually the case with the Summer Points Series, every one of the eleven competitors missed some races. The final race was spoilt by the wind dropping on a falling tide, which resulted in paddles and then painters being tested. Bob Jones in 33074, "Palm Patch", won the series.

Over the Bank Holiday weekend, Richard Jordan in 15329, "Pointless", showed just how good he can be by winning the August Cup in the first three races.

The Autumn Series is wide open with three of the previous winning helm/crew teams practising swimming after getting either a Fireball or a Marauder. The Mirror turnout has been increasing again over the last few weeks, so now is an excellent time to join in the racing as the more the merrier!

MIRACLE Spring Points

1. 1043, "Watname"
2. 1329, "Moody Blue"
3. 2110, "Merlin"

MIRACLE Summer Points

1. 2110, "Merlin"
 2. 1043, "Watname"
- No other boat sailed 5 races

H/CAP B Spring Points

1. Solo 1726, "Widdershins"
2. Graduate 2650, "Lancer"
3. Graduate 471, "Kagi"

SOUTH KENT RACE

Bob Jones
Mirror Class Captain

The rerun of the South Kent Race was held on September 1st, perhaps the hottest Saturday of the year. The day started with clear skies and a force one breeze, and the twenty-eight competitors struggled out to the start line on a falling tide. Half a minute before the start the wind increased to push most of the fleet over the line for a General Recall. Twelve minutes later a good start was made for a fleet which ranged from Fireballs to a Topper.

Fortunately the wind increased, although its direction was variable; all the boats completed the course. Peter Bolton gave a new meaning to the term Rescue Boat when he took canned drinks with him and handed them out, much to the delight of the parched competitors.

David and Pat Scott demonstrated that a fast boat can finish twelve minutes ahead of the next competitor and still only just make the prize list. Ron Jordan in the Topper was not last after a 5hr 21min 25sec stint, and received a rousing cheer for his marathon endeavour!

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. GP14 11152, Bob Skene | 4. Enterprise 16684, Gordon Belcher |
| 2. Graduate 2650, Sue Smith | 5. Fireball 12186, David Scott |
| 3. Enterprise 16166, Ray Fryatt | |

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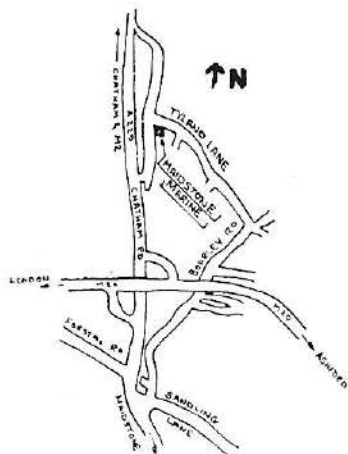
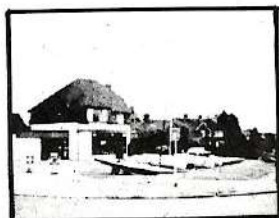
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