

31½

THE WILSONIAN SAILING CLUB MAGAZINE

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WILSONIAN SAILING CLUB
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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.

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

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All Change, Again

Due in part to the dearth of magazine contributions and partly to the time it takes to produce a "quality" magazine, it has been decided to recombine the two parts of 31½. The single magazine will now be duplicated in the present format, rather than printed. The advantage of this quick method of copying is obvious. One disadvantage is also obvious: it does not look so attractive. Another drawback is that photographs do not copy well. It is therefore proposed that we have one special issue a year (probably during the winter), which could include photographs along with some interesting articles. As always, your ideas (and contributions!) will be welcomed.

Does any Club member feel able to undertake the servicing of our electric typewriter, an IBM "Executive"? It is basically sound, but has recently been getting rather arthritic. Please contact me or any Committee member if you can help.

Finally, by the time your postman delivers this, my postman will no longer be delivering redirected mail. Those who have not done so (at least one Class Captain!), please note my not-so-new address which is given in the left-hand column.

Hedda Johnston

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Medway Centenary Regatta

A Miscellany of
Wilsonian authors

W.S.C. GP's enjoyed probably our best success ever at the regatta, though this was due in part to the absence of some of the best GP's. Wilsonian boats dominated the racing on the first two days, Bob Dutton winning on Thursday, and Robert Skene winning both races on Friday (though one was outside the time limit). By this time Bob Dutton led narrowly on points.

The social side was also going well, despite the fact that the scow broke down in front of the Medway Y.C. on Friday night, with the captain of Regatta rescue boats aboard; the Medway then refused to rescue us! The messenger who suggested that we should put our arms in the water and paddle was greeted with derisory laughter!

Some good boats turned up on the Saturday, but Robert Skene led the race by a hairsbreadth for all bar the last hundred yards. Bob Dutton saw his chances evaporate with a 5th. Robert Skene clinched the series with a 3rd in the last race.

1st. Robert Skene and David Andrews	8 $\frac{3}{4}$ pts
2nd. Bob Dutton and Richard Jermyn	12 $\frac{3}{4}$ pts
3rd. David Blyth and Keith Lennox	17pts

The regatta started very frustratingly for the Wilsonian Enterprises. Dave Vettergreen led for most of the first race but dropped to fifth place in the fickle winds and adverse tide between Wilsonian and the Medway Y.C. R. Tant, Q.M.S.C., won with a minute crew hanging on to the shrouds for dear life.

On Friday Gordon Belcher forgot his sails and his crew Peter ran from the Wilsonian to the Medway and back to borrow a set from another competitor. Peter then towed the boat back up to the start line at M.Y.C. whilst Gordon rigged the sails. By this time Peter had insufficient strength to crew, so he helmed and used the fullness in the old sails to pull away in the light winds to win. R. Tant was second.

The third race started with a tacking battle up the Dockyard shore. Ray Hursell, Maidstone S.C., won this battle but lost the race to Tant in the last few yards as the lighter crew drifted past him on the final run.

On Saturday the wind strength increased and the fleet started to cover Tant, allowing Dave Vettergreen's beating to show to advantage and he won with Ray Hursell second.

The final race was hard with a beat from M.Y.C. to buoy 18. Ray Hursell got away at the start but Peter Belcher almost caught him near 23 only to lose the race because his crew (no names - the pack drill has been done already) had read the wrong course; and as Peter went down tide and down wind, Ray pulled away to win the race and the regatta. Peter was second in the race and the regatta, whilst Tant lost his chance with two disastrous Saturday results.

The Centenary race started with offwind legs down to 23. The Enterprises raced with GP14's and Ray Hursell again showed us how to beat by pulling away on the return trip up river. Only Bob Skene caused him any problems but once on the wind the Enterprise pulled away easily.

Sunday afternoon's RNLI race was treated by Wilsonian boats as a "swim for charity". Molly and Ray Fryatt went swimming in some very fresh winds while Carol Palmer showed Mike Blake that crews have to react quickly if they want to stay dry.

(cont.)

MEDWAY CENTENARY REGATTA (cont.)

Overall a good regatta with better than normal winds, but Wilsonian Enterprises not quite achieving the results of which they are capable.

1st.	R. Hursell	(Maidstone)
2nd.	G/P. Belcher	(Wilsonian)
3rd.	R. Tant	(Q. M. S. C.)
4th.	D. Vettergreen	(Wilsonian)
5th.	R. Fryatt	"
6th.	M. Smith	"
7th.	H. Kinder	"
8th.	C. Brewer	"
9th.	R. Tarry/P. Abbott	(Maidstone)

In the Fireball class Len Jones and John Clementson from Medway and Bough Beech in More Penetration dominated, hotly pursued by Geoff Maskall, sailing his new boat Panik, and Honourback. The Commodore with young Richard Jordan in Fun tried to put an occasional bit of panic into Panik and by so doing managed a second on the Saturday morning. The courses were quite long - twice down to 20 on the Thursday afternoon, for instance - if somewhat unimaginative. Starting on the Medway Y.C. line put a premium on bold and skillful starting in best wind and tide, especially wind. The weather was superb; only on Friday morning was the wind slow to fill in, giving rise to anxiety as to whether we would finish before the 1330 time limit. Trapezes were in more or less constant use, but the wind only showed its teeth blowing straight down Chatham Reach during the final afternoon's RNLI Race, run as usual by the Club.

1st.	Len Jones & John Clementson	0pts
2nd.	Geoff Maskall & George	9pts
3rd.	Robin Musters & Richard Jordan	16pts
8th.	Tim & Peter Bolton	27pts
9th.	Martin Jones & Herman	34pts
= 10th.	Tom Keenan	42pts
= 10th.	Max Carnegie Jones	42pts
12th.	George Hill	47pts

Twelve members took part in the Handicap class as well as the Rear-Commodore in the Lasers.

On Friday evening the Commodore was invited to cocktails aboard the guardship HMS Enterprise, a survey vessel employed largely on the East Coast. Her lifebuoys are painted Star Ship Enterprise and her engine room telegraph really does have Warp 2 instead of Half Ahead! Afterwards a Victorian Sing Song was held at the Medway; it seemed their Hornet sailors made more noise than our contingent. On Saturday evening the Royal Engineer Sailing Association held a curry supper at the RE Hard for those who got their tickets in time. Several members were warmed by the experience, especially those who chose the beef curry.

Rochester Cruising Club, whose Commodore traditionally takes charge of all the rescue boats from his own boat alongside the Barge, invited the Admiral of the river for lunch on Saturday and the weather was so cooperative that the lunch party moved onto the deck of the Wilsonian. Both our rescue boats were manned by members throughout the Regatta and the bosuns Ken Flowerday and Tom Sims, who nobly supported by his family was also Chief Officer throughout the Regatta, were presented with commemorative plaques by the Medway Y.C. Every competitor got a commemorative ash tray, as well as prizes for the first three in each race.

CLASS NEWS

Enterprise

Gordon Belcher

OPEN MEETING

The Enterprise Open Meeting was run very successfully by the Mirrors and Miracles; 27 boats, including 13 visitors, sailed in force 4 winds with several heavy squalls. The conditions dominated the first race which was won by Clive Norris of Arun.

At lunchtime the steaming warmth of the barge was preferred to the cold rain on shore and this led to several boats being late for the start of the second race. Colin Prince of Lensbury led throughout but had forgotten to sign on, whilst Chris Devitt of Chipstead who was second was still on shore at the five minute gun. This left Clive Norris the winner.

In the third race a hard squall hit the fleet as they rounded the windward mark and gave some very hairy reaches. Tim Barr of Whitstable won.

Overall results:-

- 1st. Clive Norris (Arun)
- 2nd. Tim Barr (Whitstable)
- 3rd. Dave Vettergreen (Wilsonian)
- 4th. Dave Robinson (Arun)
- 5th. Terry Richardson (Whitstable)
- 6th. Chris Devitt (Chipstead)

MORNING POINTS

Nineteen boats took part in this series. Ray Fryatt, Dave Vettergreen, Derek Laverick and Martin Smith contested it, with rather intermittent competition from the rest of us. The result was open until the last race, when Colin Vane crewed by Ray Fryatt's son just failed to beat Ray by a large enough margin to overtake him in the series. An encouraging feature was the number of new helms taking part.

- 1st. Ray and Molly Fryatt
- 2nd. Dave Vettergreen and Colin Vane
- 3rd. Derek and Valerie Laverick

SUMMER POINTS

Derek Laverick dominated the summer points with four wins in four appearances. Again an encouragingly high number of new helms took part.

- 1st. Derek and Valerie Laverick
- 2nd. Dave Vettergreen and Colin Vane
- 3rd. Ray and Molly Fryatt

Enterprise (cont.)

The results of the morning and summer points show that most boats do not sail sufficient races to have any chance of winning the series. Perhaps two shorter series with two races to count each day would lead to a stronger competition. Your views on such a change will be welcomed.

AUGUST CUP

The August Cup was sailed in winds varying from nil to force 3. Derek Laverick again showed his mastery of the river by winning all 4 races. In the second race he was 50 yards from the finishing line for almost an hour before the wind finally picked up to allow him to be the only finisher - in any class - that afternoon.

- 1st. Derek and Valerie Laverick
- 2nd. Dave Vettergreen and Colin Vane
- 3rd. Gordon Belcher and David Andrews

I look forward to a good autumn series. Those who started tentatively at the beginning of the season have a chance to show how they have progressed, whilst the more experienced have their last chance to beat Derek. Rumour has it that he has a lot of holiday to come, so we all have a chance to win the last bit of silver.

Finally, I am trying to get two teams to race in the Southern Area team racing championships at Bough Beech on October 25th. We are one of the largest fleets in the South and should have a good chance of making the final.

Fireball

Bob Jones

Our numbers on paper are slowly increasing and, with applications now being processed, now stand at 20 - wouldn't it be nice if they all turned out one week! It would put the total of 12 in the Medway regatta to shame (pity so few turned out for that event).

The Summer Points series had 13 entrants:-

- 1st. David Scott Ball Lightning, 27pts
- 2nd. Bob Jones Pipedream, 33.4pts
- 3rd. Chris Gregson Chrysophylax, 47pts

(cont.)

CLASS NEWS/Fireball (cont.)

4th. Tony Mason 12636, 59.7pts

5th. Max Carnegie-Jones

Soulmate, 64.4pts

Besides the Summer Points series there was a Fleet Day on June 29, when in good conditions Robin Musters showed how the various controls affect the boat, and then practice starts until lunch. After lunch, on the high tide, we started with gybe runs through a slalom and finished with races around a short triangular course, using the white boat and a club buoy as the starting line; the flag holders were aged 3 & 7. Fireballs did well in both the Pursuit Race and the South Kent Race.

The August Cup was contested by a total of only four boats. Some sailors were presumably on holiday. Others were perhaps discouraged by the lack of wind; those who persevered, however, were rewarded with good winds at the end of the weekend. The short series was won decisively by David and Pat Scott in Ball Lightning, although Geoff Maskall turned up on the second day to give them some close, if rather noisy, competition!

Finally, thank you to all those who helped run the GP Open.

GPI4

Robert Skene

I don't seem to have written for quite some time what with one thing and another. However, it is pleasing to report that thus far the season has been going fine. I would particularly like to welcome those new members who are sailing with us. It is also pleasing to report that just about every GP in the dinghy park seems to be sailing regularly. I am amazed that the standard of sailing at the front of the fleet continues to increase, making races a very hard struggle; this tightness has resulted in the morning points series being won by the margin of 0.3 points and the summer points by 1.7 points. I am happy to note that at the time of writing the first three boats overall in the Commodore's are all GP's. Have you heard the one about the two GP sailors who borrowed a Tasar for the invitation races, one of whom had never sailed one before, and won? Congratul-

GP (cont.)

ations to Bob Dutton and Keith Lennox, and I am told that the fleet included the sailor who came sixth in the Tasar Nationals.

SPRING POINTS SERIES

1st. D.Blyth After Ours, 3pts

2nd. M.Doherty Bin, 6pts

3rd. D.Cummings Dede, 22.4pts

SUMMER POINTS SERIES

1st. D.Blyth After Ours, 10pts

2nd. M.Doherty Bin, 11.7pts

3rd. R.Skene Su e giu, 14.4pts

MORNING POINTS SERIES

1st. D.Blyth After Ours, 11.7pts

2nd. M.Doherty Bin, 12pts

3rd. R.Skene Su e giu, 25.4pts

EASTER CUP

1st. D.Cummings Dede, 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ pts

2nd. D.Blyth After Ours, 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ pts

3rd. P.Holmes Joybell, 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ pts

WHITSUN CUP

1st. M.Doherty Bin, 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ pts

2nd. D.Blyth After Ours, 5pts

3rd. P.Holmes Joybell, 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ pts

AUGUST CUP

1st. D.Blyth After Ours, 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ pts

2nd. R.Skene Su e giu, 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ pts

3rd. M.Doherty Bin, 10pts

Tasar

Barry Cann

INVITATION DAY

The first Tasar Invitation Day was held at the Club on Sunday, August 10th. The four Wilsonian Tasars were delighted to welcome seven visiting boats to Hoo from as far afield as Wraysbury Lake, Bucks., Queen Mary, Middlesex, and Sussex Y.C. at Shoreham.

With eleven boats racing, keen competition was enjoyed along with the idyllic sunshine which prevailed for the entire day. Winds were generally light, although they freshened to Southerly Force 3 during the afternoon race. Two races were held starting at 11:20 and 14:20, with high tide predicted for 13:33. Both courses were set downstream and were about eight miles long.

No doubt local knowledge of tidal currents aided Keith Lennox and Bob Dutton to win the morning race. Oliver Benn from Sussex Y.C., crewed by Wilsonian David Blyth, triumphed in to take the gun in the afternoon despite close challenges from Bob Dutton and John Evans (Wraysbury Lake S.C.). John's consistent two thirds earned him second place overall. (cont.)

CLASS NEWS/Tasar (cont.)

- 1st. 731, Keith Lennox & Bob Dutton
- Wilsonian S.C., 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ pts
- 2nd. 1272, John Evans & Roger Gates
- Wraysbury Lake S.C., 6pts
- 3rd. 742, Derek McAuley &
Bill Appleyard
- Wilsonian S.C., 9pts
- =4th. 1309, John & Peter Bates
- Queen Mary S.C., 10pts
- =5th. 281, Brian & Sue Hopper
- Whitstable S.C., 10pts
- 6th. 1283, Oliver Benn & David Blyth
- Sussex Y.C., 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ pts
- 7th. 1267, Stephen Axion & Son
- Queen Mary S.C., 15pts
- 8th. 716, Barry Cann & Mike Christmas
- Wilsonian S.C., 16pts
- 9th. 288, Tony & Ann Lyles
- Queen Mary S.C., 17pts
- 10th. 988, Peter Sutherland & Bob Callow
- Wilsonian S.C., 18pts
- 11th. 273, John Carney
- Queen Mary S.C., 20pts

Tasar (cont.)

As the event was by special invitation of the WSC Committee no entry fees were charged, although they kindly arranged for pottery prizes for the first three places. Friendly hospitality from all the Wilsonians and our visitors' enthusiasm made it a truly enjoyable meeting and, we hope, the first of many. Special thanks go to our ladies, Linda Cann, Margaret McAuley and Shiela Sutherland, who plied everyone with ploughman's lunches and delicious cakes.

Postscript

As you probably know, we are very keen to promote the growth of our embryo Tasar fleet. We are heartened to say that Oliver Benn of Sussex has expressed interest in joining us for next season, as has Wynn Evans of Medway Cruising Club, whose holiday prevented him from taking part this time. We do know of two or three secondhand Tasars for sale at around £800, and ask that anyone interested contact Derek McAuley (Maidstone (0622) 77580) or Barry Cann (0622:812134).

CLUB HANDICAP RACE RESULTS

LADIES' CUP - June 15

(9 competitors)

- 1st. Graduate 2650, Lancer
2nd. Enterprise 16166, Con Brio
3rd. Laser 15231, More Fun

NOVICES HANDICAP - June 15

(5 competitors)

- 1st. Mirror 61880
2nd. Mirror 6623, Pointless
3rd. Enterprise 15255, Teagle

SOUTH KENT RACE - July 20

(40 competitors)

- 1st. Fireball 9117, Honourback
2nd. Laser 68929
3rd. Fireball 8517, Fun

PURSUIT RACE - July 6

(39 competitors)

- 1st. Fireball 9117, Honourback
2nd. Fireball 12722, Panik
3rd. Enterprise 16166, Con Brio

JUNIOR HANDICAP - July 27

(11 competitors)

- 1st. GP14 10957, After Ours
2nd. Enterprise 16166, Con Brio
3rd. Enterprise 4929, Eyes Pye

The Island Race

Hedda Johnston
Fireball 11673, "Waeg-Bora"

The annual race round the Isle of Sheppey, run by the Sheppey Y.C., was held on August 17th. Two Wilsonian boats, Derek McAuley in Tasar "Taisevous" and Roger and Hedda Johnston in Fireball "Waeg-Bora", joined the fleet of 53 dinghies and 14 catamarans. The cats started first, as the Kingsferry bridge would be opened for them and they were racing for their own prizes. The dinghies followed with three starts at half-hourly intervals. Both the W.S.C. boats were in the last start, for the fastest dinghies. They were supported from the shore by Bob Fitzpatrick: he was keeping his feet dry that day.

The wind was southerly, gusting around Force 5, and gave a hairy reach along the north shore of the island; we were continually bouncing on the sandy bottom in the shallow and rough water. The fast boats caught up with the fleet off Leysdown, at the east end of the island. A short beat around sandbanks into the Swale; a long reach along the south side; a race for the bridge which closed at the last minute; an awkward tussle to get through horizontally; a brief tangle with a power boat and skier; a run through Queenborough and out - past the South Kent buoy - into the Thames; and a short reach back to S.Y.C. All this (30-odd miles) in about 3½ hours!

The winners overall were Len Jones and John Clementson in their Fireball, but the Wilsonian boats showed well in the results: the Johnstons came third and Derek McAuley was fifth. The Island Race can be very enjoyable, especially when the wind blows hard as it did on this occasion. How about a larger Wilsonian contingent next year?

And Now, For Something Completely Different.....

David Scott
Fireball 12186, "Ball Lightning"

It has probably not escaped people's notice at WSC that Patricia and I have changed classes a number of times during our membership. This is not to satisfy a masochistic desire to maximize expenditure, but rather in the hope of finding the "perfect boat" to match our weight, temperament, abilities, etc. Thus, while our Mirror was great fun, it was too slow for the tidal waters of the Medway, excruciating to sit out and highly claustrophobic for two adults. The Enterprise was much quicker, making for exciting planing, but we never really got used to its idiosyncrasies downwind. The extremely rigid rules covering boat and rig limit individuality, but I must admit to a liking for the boat; it is probably only a stubborn determination not to go back to a class that prevents us from buying another. The Fireball has provided us with the most exciting racing. A three sail reach in a Force 4 and waves has to be the nearest thing to perfection in sailing. However, there are difficulties with the Fireball:-

- (i) it has a complex rig which is difficult to set-up and time accurately,
- (ii) we have the wrong weight distribution in anything over a Force 3,
- (iii) at national level the opposition is far too good,
- (iv) it is expensive at £2000 and frequent changes of boat are necessary to stay competitive,
- (v) new boats suffer depreciation akin to cars; while this is good news for the newcomer who wants a second-hand boat, it is tough on anyone wanting to trade in his old boat for a new one,
- (vi) it completely fills my garage.

Last winter we took a careful look at other classes; nothing at the club had much appeal so we looked further afield. We came very close to buying a 470 but steered clear at the last minute when it became apparent that there were very few open meetings, we would have to travel to Queen Mary S.C. for class racing, and the whole business was rather serious (Pat didn't fancy the weight-lifting and circuit training).

(cont.)

AND NOW. FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT. . . . (cont.)

We have now come back to earth and after much searching, culminating at the London Dinghy Exhibition, we have settled on our latest venture - a National Twelve! Before you give up this article in despair, let me point out some of the advantages:-

- (i) it is an extremely attractive boat, with a clean bow and fine entry to get through waves (cf Fireballs),
- (ii) while it is a development class, progress is measured and designs remain competitive for many years,
- (iii) optimum crew weight is around 19-21 stones; girl crews are almost the norm,
- (iv) GRP fans should note that very competitive designs are available (cf Enterprises),
- (v) performance for a twelve-footer is very impressive: Portsmouth Yardstick is 118 (same as the Enterprise), and this without a spinnaker (cf Miracles),
- (vi) with low all-up weight (80kg) and powerful rig the boat planes very easily and therefore provides very lively sailing (cf GP14),
- (vii) it goes in my garage with length to spare (the beam at over 6 feet could be a bit embarrassing),
- (viii) above all, it has been our experience from Fireball open meetings coinciding with N12's that Twelve sailors are friendly.

Having at last sold Pallo Fuocco, regrettably outside the club, we have bought a second-hand Twelve for the remainder of this season to take to open meetings, in between sailing Ball Lightning, including Burton Week and the National Championships, which were this year at Whitstable. All being well we hope to have a new boat next year to campaign seriously.

In the meantime, what is the club philosophy on development classes? We once had Moths in the club, but I always felt they were a rather esoteric class. I believe the National Twelve could appeal to a number of Wilsonian members, drawn from a variety of the existing classes. If any people are interested perhaps they would make themselves known so that we can assess the feasibility of staging a coup in 1981.

It's the Experience that Counts

THE FIREBALL NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

Hedda Johnston

Fireball 11673, "Waeg-Bora"

When Roger and I mentioned at the Club that we were going to the Fireball National Championships, some surprise was expressed that we felt it was worth the effort. David and Pat Scott (Ball Lightning) also had plans to go, but I don't expect anyone questioned their motives! True, we very rarely win Club races (and then only if the boats who would normally win are away!); but there is more to sailing than winning races. We were not expecting to get mentioned in Yachts and Yachting, nor even end up in the top fifty. Our modest aim was to better our previous Nationals result of 120th - three-quarters of the way down the fleet - at Felixstowe in 1978. Perhaps this time we could get into double figures - as opposed to treble, that is, not single! We hoped to enjoy sailing on new waters and to learn something by racing against the top boats - not that we expected to see much of them.

This year's Nationals were at Penzance, which was a good excuse for a fortnight's holiday in Cornwall. We rented a cottage in the hills overlooking Mount's Bay and were able to get in the mood in the first week by watching the Osprey Nationals (at Mount's Bay S.C.) through binoculars from an upstairs window.

The efficient organization of Penzance S.C. was an event in itself. We had wondered all week how they were going to cope with an influx of 160 boats with apparently no spare ground. Then, just in time for the weekend, a quarter of the municipal car park was

(cont.)

IT'S THE EXPERIENCE THAT COUNTS (cont.)

fenced off, a marquee was erected, and the car spaces were numbered for boats. These numbers were to serve a more complex purpose than simply matching boats to spaces. Our trolley was labelled with the space number, which was also colour-coded to show which area of the park it was in! As we came in after each race we shouted out the number to the beachmaster as soon as we were within earshot; he in turn transmitted it through a loud-hailer to the willing party of beach-boys. We were caught in the water by the same wetsuited lads (always cheerful regardless of the weather) who had pushed us off in the morning. By the time we jumped ashore, the trolley would be ready and waiting. Only very rarely was there any kind of queue - when the race was relatively short and the boats closer together.

The sailing, of course, was what we really went for, and that certainly was superb. Mount's Bay is a beautiful spot and the experience of lying out on the trapeze watching the changing light on St. Michael's Mount and its castle (I mean, keeping a lookout for windshifts and starboard-tack boats!) was tremendous. The novelty of this never quite wore off, although on some days the wind was too strong to give time for such frivolities, and during one race the fog came down and we lost sight of land completely. On this occasion we were often out of sight of other boats, and there was even a fog horn sounded from the windward mark so we knew which way to go. This and the huge rolling waves, which were present for most of the week, made us wonder if we had gone the wrong way and were headed off round Land's End by mistake!

After a practice race on the first afternoon, six races were scheduled - one each day at noon. This meant leaving the harbour by 11 o'clock or so; we generally returned about 4 o'clock, although on one marathon day we didn't get back until nearly eight! The tensest part of each race was usually the period before the start. Gate starts were used and, although these are on the whole less chaotic than line starts, there is still the psychological build-up involved in gaining a good position for crossing the line; in addition, the sheer number of boats in the confined area demanded continual concentration simply to avoid a collision. It was pretty uncomfortable, too, reaching to and fro in the swell without much speed: I must admit to my large breakfast occasionally feeling somewhat insecure on these occasions! After the start we were normally some distance from other boats, although there were always a few brief encounters in which places were won or lost at close quarters.

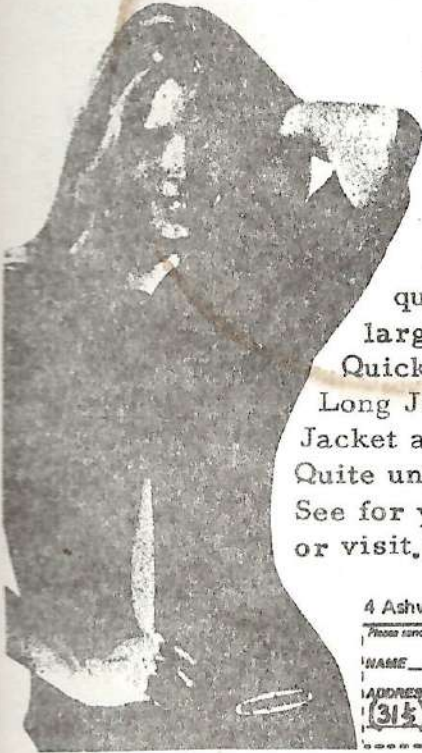
The wind for the practice race was moderate, but after that we were sailing in extremes: the first half of the week in gales, the last part in light wind which occasionally dropped completely. The weather forecast for the first few days became a standing joke: 4, 5 or whatever, increasing to 7, occasionally gale 8; every morning there was a silent circle of Fireballers grouped round the noticeboard! I don't think the Force 8 ever materialized (although one race was cancelled - after we had all sailed out into the bay and got wet), but the Force 7 certainly did. Discovering that sailing in a gale can be enjoyable was quite a revelation. On the runs we surfed down the waves, spinnaker up, at times almost leaving the water completely (and at times disappearing beneath it, bow first!).

The dying of the wind at the end of the week was rather an anti-climax after such exhilarating sailing. At one point we were overtaken by a Mars bar wrapper, but we luffed it with the next puff and managed to regain the lead. The Scotts, having an ability to move without wind, did very well in the final race and came 31st; it was our best result, too, 62nd. The worst results for both of us were on the windiest day but I, for one, would rather have a bit of excitement than a string of good results.

Overall, the Scotts surprised themselves by ending up 58th. Gerald Stock and John McKay, former Wilsonians and now of Bough Beech, were also there and came in the top 50 - just - at 48th. As for us, we were pleased with 79th - halfway down (or up) the fleet of 154. Not many people, perhaps, would think it worth going all that way for that sort of result. We certainly did: it's the experience that counts.

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PERSONAL TO "SHELLBACK"

Any more Salty Tales of Yesteryear? Suggest you send direct next time! - Ed.

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