

31 1/2

THE WILSONIAN SAILING CLUB MAGAZINE

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WILSONIAN SAILING CLUB
Hoo, Kent

Commodore:

Bob Jones
40 Stangate Road
Knights Place
Strood
KENT
Tel: Medway 719193

Secretary:

John Smith
554 Princes Road
Dartford
KENT
Tel: Dartford 78927

The Club magazine is called "31 1/2" because the name "Yachts & Yachting" is already copyright.

Editor:

David Brazier
31 Lambardes
New Ash Green
KENT
Tel: Ash Green 873857

MASTHEAD

Despite all the dire warnings from Terry Wright, there is a new editor for 31 1/2 and it is me (it is I). I have had all sorts of offers of help and I have contacted some of the people who offered. If you offered to help with 31 1/2 then I have not forgotten you, and will be in touch.

When I took the task on, I had several ideas about how it might be changed for the better; I thought a new name would be attractive, a different front page and a few photographs in each issue an improvement, but I fear that claims on my time coupled with the technical restraints imposed by having to produce the thing at a total cost of fourpence make any great alterations slow to arrive, if ever. Notwithstanding, I am always ready to listen to polite suggestions.

There is one thing that you are going to have to bear in mind. The more copy I have, the more often I can bring the magazine out. Ideally I would like to publish three times a year. Flag Officers are always good for a paragraph or three and fleet captains should be, but really I would like to hear from you. I don't mean that I want you to beard me in the dinghy park when I'm looking for a shackle that has fallen down a hole in the ground to tell me

what a **** I am but let me have your views on any topic relating to the club or sailing in general. Otherwise, and heed these words, the magazine will contain long, uninformed editorials from me. My opinions on sailing are about as useful as my practical ability and several GP sailors could tell you about that. So drop me a line and send it to me at home (address on the front page) or find me amongst the Solos making up excuses for not going out ("I don't like sailing in light airs, moderate winds, heavy weather, on Sundays, when it's hot, cold etc., etc.,....."). Don't worry if your illiterate so am i and woant notice nor will noone else.

COMMODORE'S LETTER

1985 has really started with a bang! The first Sunday lulled people into thinking that winter had finished but since then the gales which seem to wait for the weekend have given some very exciting sailing.

During the winter Leander (the GRP safety boat) had its hull overhauled, stiffened and much improved by Tom Simms and the start of the season saw us with two safety boats and the scow available! This, however, did not last as the oil rings in Leander's engine stuck, she burnt her sump oil and at the time of writing new oil rings and a big end are being replaced. With only one safety boat (the wind was too strong to use the scow) courses tended to be short, lapping ones.

We have bought a new safety boat and hope that it will be usable in June.

During the winter our training committee decided to set their own objectives and these are reproduced elsewhere in this edition of 31 1/2. These objectives were endorsed by the general committee.

We have several major events this year. The Medway Regatta this year has three starting lines - Gillingham, Wilsonian and Medway Yacht Club. We will be starting Tasars, Fast Handicap, Lasers, GP14s, Enterprises, Solos, Miracles and Mirrors (single-handed and crewed). Beverly Brown has volunteered to act as Regatta Secretary for the fleets starting from Wilsonian for the two days.

If you were at the AGM, or have talked to your fleet captain you will already know that suggestions for a "Winter Series" have been received. These have evolved into a proposal that a six week series be organised after the Autumn Points Series. In order to test its viability it has been suggested that there are no extra fees but if you sign for the series you may race five days, but have to take a duty on the sixth weekend. This gives a series that ends mid-December. If you are for or against please tell your fleet captain so that we can get plenty of representative feedback.

When we looked at the idea of winter sailing, the duties as well as reductions in winter workparties were considered. The 1985 year supplement which included the sailing programme and the

duty list was late being circulated, not because there was lack of effort in preparing it but due to the increasing number of late renewals. Under the club rules renewals are due at the beginning of January, although members have a month to pay. If they have not renewed by the end of February they are no longer members. After the beginning of March they may renew at the General Committee's discretion. Next year there will be an additional payment to renew if members have not paid by the beginning of March.

The General Committee is trying to run the club to give you what we think you want. What we need to know is whether you are getting what you want from the club - does the programme meet your needs? If not, please tell the Committee what you would like to see the club doing!

Finally, back to where I started. The 1985 season is well under way - come along and sail. I doubt that I shall ever see every boat afloat at once but I do enjoy seeing as many members afloat as possible. So, come along and enjoy your sailing, for, in the end, that's what the club is for.

Bob Jones

SAILING SECRETARY'S NOTES

The only outstanding matter from the 1984 season is the result of the Commodore's Trophy Series which was as follows:-

1. Ray Fryatt - Enterprise
2. John Bradley - Enterprise
3. (jointly) John Parsons - Solo
 - David Blyth - GP14
 - Ian Parris - GP14
 - Alan Smith - GP14

A total of 74 boats took part in the series.

During the winter break a number of matters have been weighed by the Sailing and General Committees. Of these probably the most discussed has been the re-statement of the Club's sponsored classes. These are now Enterprise, Laser, Miracle, GP14, Solo, Topper, Graduate, Fireball and Mirror. New members joining the Club will normally only be able to bring these boats into the club. Existing members wishing to change classes will normally only be allowed to bring a boat from these classes into the dinghy park. Members who already have boats other than these classes in the dinghy park are not affected but are reminded that they must have the permission of the Sailing Committee before changing their boat, even to one of the same class as their present boat.

It is perhaps worth mentioning that the above is not a change in the club rules but an affirmation of existing rules and the Committees' desire that members should remember them.

The other sailing matter to receive particular attention was sailing instruction 17, which is the requirement to carry an anchor, a paddle and a length of line for towing purposes.

Following a proposal of the AGM that the sailing Committee should review this rule, it has been discussed by the Committee at length and remains unaltered for 1985.. This was not a unanimous decision and members are referred to the Committee minutes for details.

During 1985 we shall be using Committee boat starts for some races; details of those races concerned are shown in the Sailing Programme. Also an inner limit mark will be used on the club start line. An amendment to the sailing instructions will be posted on the racebox noticeboard as soon as this limit mark has been clearly marked and is readily identifiable.

The sailing Committee is looking for volunteers from members to act as club measurers. Please don't blame us if you can't find somebody to carry out a buoyancy test or measure your sails! If you would like to help please have a word with your fleet captain.

Finally I would mention that that the minutes of Sailing Committee meetings will be displayed in the Clubhouse; please make an opportunity to read them. You will find that the Committee gives a lot of thought to sailing matters and welcomes the view of the membership. If there is a particular point that you would like considered then please bring it to our attention by way of your fleet captain. He is, after all, your representative.

Alan Smith

HOUSE SECRETARY'S REPORT

Pam Smith

I have now been house secretary for one year and must say how much I have enjoyed it, firstly as it has enabled me to become so much more involved in the club and, secondly, because I have met on intimate terms so many people who previously I had known just as another face.

I would like to express my thanks to the House Committee and everyone who assisted me over the last season and a special thank you to all the ladies who helped out to great effect in the kitchen, as it can be a very long day and much busier than on the barge.

In the 1985 season there will always be a House Committee member assisting in the kitchen, thus enabling the ladies on duty rota to have a well earned rest getting to know the members intimately, and to ease the the pressure during the busy periods.

I shall be starting a rota this year for all you cake makers to volunteer for Sunday cakes; I shall put up a piece of paper in the kitchen area and to which I would like you to add your names if you can help out.

Judy Vinson and Brian Ward have stepped down from the House Committee and two new members have been co-opted. My sincere thanks to Judy and Brian.

We are already organizing social functions for the new season; here are some for your diary:-

- (1) We start off with a Bar-B-Q Whit Sunday, the 26th May.

(ii) To coincide with the Enterprise Championships on Saturday the 22nd June there will be a Barn Dance and as the numbers are limited it will be a case of first come, first served.

(iii) Do you remember the terrifically successful Bar-B-Q that we held for the Medway Regatta last year? Well, we're going to do it again for the 1985 event, on the 27th July.

(iv) A firework display and laying-up supper will be held on Saturday the 23rd November.

(v) Lastly, but not, of course, least, the Annual Dinner & Dance which is to be held at St George's Church Hall, Gravesend and we hope that it can be more reasonably priced than last year.

I very much look forward to this coming season and hope it will be an enjoyable one for us all.

GP NEWS

Alan Tibbs

The season got off to a good start with David & Ray Blyth winning three races in a row to seize the Easter Egg Cup.

Ian Parris was soon back in form to win the ESP series and the Whitsun Trophy. Ian continues to represent the Club at the various open meetings.

The club welcomes two newcomers to the GP14 fleet; Chris Harris from Chase SC and D Prentis from Broxbourne SC.

HANDICAP 'B' FLEET NEWS

John Parsons

The weather this spring has not been such to encourage large numbers of boats out onto the water; even Ron Jordan relinquished his Streaker for a short while. However, the weather has now improved and so have the turnouts; competition amongst the Solos has been keen with Andrew in "TUGGLE" putting in some really quick races and new faces are appearing as boats receive their spring coat of varnish.

Start times in the Medway Regatta, Solos 10.20 and 14.20 from the Wilsonian Club line, Dinghy "B" 10.50 and 14.50 from Medway line. This an important event for Solos; I have promised M.C.C. good competition so if you can't be there think of lending your boat to someone else.

COMPLAINTS DEPT.....Firstly, please print your name clearly on the race sheet as it's a big help to me when I'm writing up the results. Secondly, anchors. If I have to carry several pounds of useless metal in my overweight boat powered by an underweight crew (sometimes known as matchstick man!) so should you.

Lastly, courses. If anyone has a specific course that they would like to sail, say, with more gybe marks (or fewer) or longer or shorter courses, come and have a word. See you all on the water!

MIRACLE FLEET NEWS

Paul Absolom

For the Miracle Fleet, 1984 was concluded by a well contested Autumn Points Series, deservedly won by Paul Cussen in "SHAZAM": a successful Fleet Evening, held at Mike Groom's house (thanks are due to Mike & Mary): and the promise of a good season's sailing ahead in 1985. Although we have had a slow start to the year in terms of numbers racing, probably due to the weather, things are now looking better with ten boats entering for the Whitsun Cup.

Bob Jones, now a Miracle sailor, was one who did brave the inclement conditions and by sailing fast and keeping his boat upright he has won the Spring Points series and the Easter Cup. The latter was beset by strong winds, and we had not one, but two Miracles losing their masts..... a rare occurrence for Miracle sailors.

The Whitsun Cup was keenly contested, but in the end there was no stopping Martin Jessop in "MERLIN". Ken Wade was a close second, and your fleet captain was in the doghouse for setting a course with two loops in it.....

Here are the results so far this season:

SPRING POINTS

1st Bob Jones 1958 "GERONIMO" 7pts
2nd John Cassell 1329 "FIPENANNA" 12.75pts
3rd Ken Wade 66 "CARIAD" 18pts

EASTER CUP

1st Bob Jones 1958 "GERONIMO" 6.5pts
2nd Ken Flowerday 36 "NICK NACK" 9pts
3rd Ken Wade 66 "CARIAD" 9.75pts

WHITSUN CUP

1st Martin Jessop 2110 "MERLIN"
2nd Ken Wade 66 "CARIAD"
3rd Paul Absolom 2180 "RONDO"

There are now 20 Miracles in the club fleet, and it would be nice to see every one having a go at club racing. I am sometimes asked if there are a lot of "extras" needed before going racing. Well, the Miracle is a very strict One Design, and the few permitted alterations to the kit boat I have detailed in the following diagram. Most of these are really a matter of personal preference. However, the one alteration I would strongly advocate is the fitting of a wire jib halliard and a "highfield" lever. This can make quite a difference going upwind in a breeze. It is also an idea to make the centreboard as snug a fit as possible in its case, by applying formica or similar to the board. In all cases, check the rules in the Miracle Year Book first!

LASER FLEET NEWS

The LASER fleet is now larger and more active than it has ever been. 1985 has seen the return of the majority of the helms from last season as well as many new faces. Some of the new LASER helms have just joined the club and others have 'seen the light' and transferred to the LASER fleet from less interesting ways of wasting Sundays. In particular we are very pleased to welcome Beverly Brown as our first lady LASER sailor

Over the first few months of the 1985 season the LASER fleet was the most active fleet within the club. Considering the cold and the predominance of strong winds the turn out for the spring points was excellent. The average number of starters per race was a little over 6. I believe this to be better than any other fleet within the club. The competition at the top end of the fleet has become fierce with several people contending for honours. Some of these are established WSC LASER sailors, others are either new to the class or new to the club.

Some interesting statistics are :-

Size of the fleet	26
Spring points - Number of competitors	12
Spring points - Average number of starters	6
Early Summer - Number of competitors to date	17
Early Summer - Average number of starters to date	7

1985 has also seen a growth in the RADIAL rigs in use. There are now 4 such rigs in the fleet. The club now has over a years experience of this rig which is both slightly smaller and more convenient than the full rig. Experience would appear to show the following :-

- The Radial is suited to lighter helms.
- In light winds it is not as competitive as the full rig. This is especially true when reaching and running.
- In strong winds the advantage enjoyed by the full rig is reduced, possibly to zero.
- The cut of the RADIAL sail is different to that of the full rig. Its shape is much more controllable than that of the full rig but it would appear to be much more sensitive to adjustment than the full rig.
- The overall performance of a boat using a RADIAL rig within any series would appear to be directly related to the prevailing wind strength for the series. The rules do not allow a boat to change its rig during a series.
- To sail a RADIAL fast in moderate to strong winds requires just as much effort as sailing a full rig. It is also just as much fun.
- The major advantage is that it requires a stronger wind to overpower the rig and make the boat uncontrollable.

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OBJECTIVES OF THE TRAINING COMMITTEE

1. To provide a training facility for club members to enable themselves to progress, within their ability, from most basic elementary to as far as they wish to progress.
2. As far as practical, to give this training within the club and where not practical, to guide the members to where it is available
3. To encourage sufficient club members to become instructors to maintain this facility within the club.
4. The club's training courses should be based on appropriate R.Y.A. training syllabuses.
5. To charge sufficient fees for courses such that the income covers all outgoing, including food and consumables for training of club members.

A WEEK ON THE HARD STUFF

David Brazier

During the closed season (not being over-fond of the idea of freezers or icicle series) I took the RYA theoretical course for the Day Skipper ticket. The course was a mixture of fascinating stuff like chartwork, tide interpolation and passage planning and plain graft which had to be committed to memory, such as ships' lights and shapes. In my view, the Collision Regulations come somewhere in between! Having completed the course and passed a couple of not really very taxing exams I discovered that the Merchant Navy College, where I had been studying was holding a series of six-day practical courses on a cruiser. This appealed to me considerably as I am interested in handling larger boats and like the sense of "going somewhere" that is often missing in dinghy sailing, at least for me. The course was available from the end of April through to July and because of other commitments I enrolled for the first week, in April.

The boat was "TORRES", a GRP Trident of uncertain vintage and there was a crew of three students and an instructor, Captain Ron. Ron was a Scotsman of interminable patience with a liking for roll-ups and ale, indulgences which were, under the circumstances, entirely understandable. The crew consisted of the author, an "experienced novice"; a barrister who was, at sailing, a complete beginner but one of the most amusing people I have ever met, and a chap of uncertain roots who could do everything backwards and sideways and was there to get his ticket. It was clear from the outset that apart from being a course in practical sailing, the week was going to be an exercise in getting on with folk in very

confined conditions. The boat was 23' LOA and while Captain Ron had had the boat built round him, the rest of us were all well over 6' tall. The berths in the saloon were what you might call snug, those in the forepeak crippling. There was a sea toilet which nobody ever used for fear that if you did, you might never get off it again.

We started out with the ebb on Monday afternoon and tacked with a gentle breeze from Greenhithe to Gravesend and anchored in sheltered water behind the deep water jetty of Denton Wharf. Rowing ashore (Captain Ron didn't hold with outboards) we found on the other side of the sea defences, the "Ship & Lobster". The next day offered a dull sky and a pleasant wind force 2/3, which got us reaching down to Holehaven and another pub. By mid-afternoon we were in the Thames estuary taking bearings on anything that would stand still and by mid-afternoon were anchored on Jacob's Bank, off Sheerness. After rowing ashore in the dinghy for provisions we were away into the Medway on a broad reach, helmed by my barrister friend Clive and whose face already carried that familiar look of ecstatic misery common to people who know they have entered the first phase of an addiction. We lined up to enter the Swale at Queenborough and put in a some useful practice thereafter at picking up buoys (if you follow my drift) by a method devised by Ron which eschews mucking about in the pulpit with a boat hook and relies instead on coming alongside the thing level with the cockpit and having passed a line through it, then going forward to make fast. When we got good at that, Ron turned the motor off and made us do it under sail.

The tides generally permitted us to get alongside in Queenborough Creek, the ultimate backwater. This allowed access to shops, pubs and most importantly, the showers in the Yacht Club. We took turns to cook and no hidden talents were revealed.

The days were spent in hard labour with the accent on boat handling and understanding the effects of the tides. We were working up to our compulsory night passage and eventually we left at midnight with the last of the ebb to go round the Isle of Sheppy. The wind had been blowing 5/6 all day but dropped for us that evening as we picked up the channel off Garrison Point. Very soon we were at no. 6 and steering away towards Minster and the Spile. There is a distinct lack of buoys along the north of Sheppey and after Spile you have a choice of looking out for Whitstable Street, a cardinal buoy a very long way off even with bins and carefully concealed against the lights on the mainland or finding Spaniard to the north, taking a bearing, and steering away. Therewas, according to the chart, a sectored light at Whitstable but either the shilling had run out or we just couldn't find it. To find the buoy at the mouth of the Swale, one is required to find the Columbine buoy about five miles off Whitstable and steer to starboard; the amusing thing is that it is unlit and painted black and at night you can either fail to see it at all or you can hit it!

It was the coldest day since the creation of the world and the thermal underwear, six jumpers, spray suit, hat and boots were more or less useless. We took 45-minute watches and then went below to try to warm up and although it was as cold as an old maid's kiss in the saloon you got out of the wind and did stop shivering, eventually.

We spotted the leading mark for the East Swale at dawn by which time we were not far off low water. Obviously we had to motor, and watch the depth-sounder very carefully indeed. The chart showed all manner of unbuoyed shallows and in one place, at the mouth of Faversham Creek, a cardinal buoy laid by request of anguished yachtsmen was dry! The Swale has a lot of greedy-looking mudbanks and seems to be a graveyard for sailing barges and other craft, dumped years ago by uncaring owners with other fish to fry. There is a enormous variety of birdlife and whilst the Swale is not conventionally beautiful, it has a remoteness and timelessness about it which is absolutely fascinating even at minus 30. Passing an empty and cavernous Ridham Dock we stood off for 20 minutes until the Kingsferry Bridgemaster thought the time propitious for the Isle of Sheppey to be cut off to allow one small boat through. It was nice to be holding the other end of the stick for a change.

The rest of the day was spent practicing reefing under way; this was done in a force 6/7 and my teethmarks are probably still visible on the mast.

Our final day was to be spent sailing back to Greenhithe. We left at 0600 in a dense sea-fog and rediscovered what useful chappies charts and compasses can be. There wasn't a breath of wind and we flew the iron sail all the way back, which was a bit of an anti-climax.

The week improved my sailing quite considerably and was well worthwhile. I also met some grand folk, and will do a further course next year. But not, not, in April!

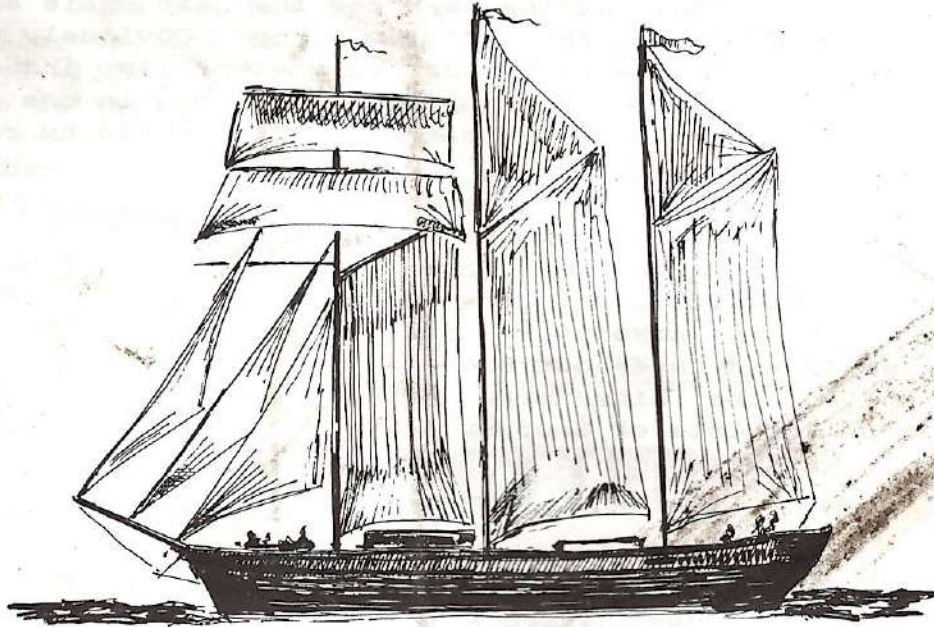
STOP PRESS - ENTERPRISE FLEET NEWS

As it's been so long since the last 31 1/2 readers may not realise that at the end of last season the WSC Enterprises once again reached the final of the Southern Area Team Racing at Bewl Valley. This was the fourth time in the last five years but alas we lost again, this time due to a broken rudder pintle just before the start.

The sailing this season has been marred by injury with both the previous Class Captains - Keith Jeremiah and Dave Vettergreen - being prevented from sailing. Dave hopes to start late in the season but Keith has decided not to sail for a while and has now sold his boat. I am sure that the whole fleet would like to thank Keith for his contribution last year and hope he and Christina get back on the water soon.

Despite these initial setbacks, turnout is now beginning to pick up. There has been some good competition in the middle of the fleet from Steve Aris, the DeWynters and John Talbot; the Russells and the Ramsdens have all sailed regularly. With Ray Fryatt trying to get to grips with his Tasar the way has become clear for Martin Smith and myself to fight it out for the pottery.

John Bradley



DON'T MISS THE LARGEST PARADE OF SAIL EVER TO BE SEEN ON THE MEDWAY

The 20th to the 24th of July sees the 1985 Cutty Sark Tall Ships Race assembling at Chatham. On the 24th there will be a "Parade of Sail" when all ships taking part in the race will lock out from the Dockyard and turn in Limehouse Reach before passing the saluting base opposite Medway House, thereafter proceeding downstream and out of the river.

An international fleet of more than sixty vessels from Britain, West Germany, Holland, France, Belgium, Norway, Eire, Poland and Russia will be taking part in a 210 mile course across the North Sea from the Thames Estuary to Zeebrugge. By Sail Training rules, more than half of their crew members - probably totalling nearly 800 - will be made up of young people between 16 and 25 years of age.

The Tall Ships fleet will assemble before the race in the former Naval Dockyard at Chatham, where most will assemble in the no.2 basin on Saturday, the 20th July.

Sightseers will have four days to view the vessels in dock as their crews make ready for sea and on three of them (the Sunday, Monday and Tuesday) there will be opportunities to go on board some of the larger ships.

A special "Open Day" is being staged on Sunday the 21st July in no.2 basin when there will be "something for all the family" in a day-long full programme of attractions ashore and afloat, including an inshore regatta in the basin, maritime demonstrations, sales stalls and displays. Buses and also trains operated by the North Downs Steam Railway, custodians of the old dockyard's vintage rolling stock, will link the area where the Tall Ships are berthed with the additional attractions to be found in that part of the former Naval Base preserved by the Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust.

Admission charges vary from day to day but will be very modest. Our Club will be open to enable members to have a superb view on the day of the "Parade of Sail".