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The Wilsonian Sailing Club magazine is called 31½ because the club is halfway between buoys 31 & 32

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# 31½

*New Year 2000*

issue 67

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**FROSTBITE  
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## From the Commodore

The start of a new year is a time to reflect on the previous year and the year to come. For Wilsonian Sailing Club 2000 will be an interesting year when we build on the activities that have started in 1999.

The extension to the clubhouse has been started with the foundations completed. The club has accepted a grant from the Foundation for Sports and the Arts for £20,000 which is a third of the money we will need to complete the extension and other improvements to the club. Ian Wyatt is doing an excellent job of coordinating the building works.

The sailing season starts on the 25th March. Brian and the Sailing Committee are completing the programme. One new aspect for 2000 will be the new starting sequence which those of you who competed in the Frostbite will have had a preview of.

In August 1998 we were given Volvo Champion Club Status by the RYA in recognition of the activities in the club developing junior sailing. We have been linked to a Volvo dealer in the Medway towns and during 2000 there will be a presentation of the award by the dealer. This should result in the club receiving sponsorship for some of its activities for juniors. Our first open event of the year is on the 15th April when WSC will be organising the Opening Splash for Kent Schools.

The club's AGM is on the 25th February when there will be a review of some of these activities.

*Ann Heather*

<b>WILSONIAN SAILING CLUB</b> <i>Hoo, Kent</i>	<b>01634 250318</b>
<b>COMMODORE</b> Ann Heather 6 Leyton Cross Road, Wilmington, Kent DA2 7AP	01322 228251
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term rounding mark. Therefore I can only conclude that all marks are rounding marks unless the sailing instructions state otherwise. If we looked at the course section in the sailing instructions for offshore long distance races they use waypoints and give a tolerance in distance from it. Competitors cannot choose for themselves otherwise there is bound to be a difference of opinion and it is also feasible for a mark to change its status as the tide rises and falls.

Unfortunately I think this means that we would have to do a 360 round 30 in your above scenario, thus the boats wake touching the rounding mark. In order to avoid confusion could Race Officers, Fleet Captains or course Setters please bear these differences in mind when setting the course so we can all enjoy our selves with out an animosity, or the dreaded loss of a race because of an invalid Course.

Who ever sets the course is taking on the role of the "race committee", no race committee tries to confuse or deceive competitors (I will check that with Brian) they are doing their best. I have little time for people who protest club races over such innocent errors.

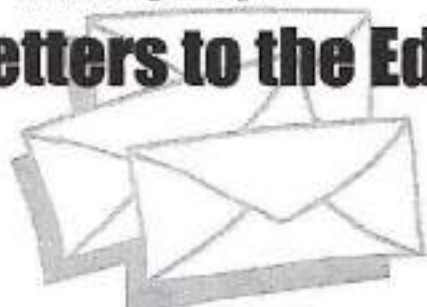
If any one has any other opinions on this rule and the way it is written I will be glad to discuss them over a pint in the Bar (Passed to Port of course!!). As I am right handed you had better pass my pint to Starboard; I don't want to spill any.

*Regards, Ian*

E-mail: i.parris@virgin.net Tel 01474-746086



## Letters to the Editor



From: Mr & Mrs I Parris  
16 Leander Drive  
Riverview Park  
Gravesend  
Kent DA12 4NE

Dear Andy, Wendy

Would the real rounding mark please step forward?

The following is my point of view on this subject and may not be used as evidence for any protest or request for redress. Having retired from races and been forced to convene protest committees, you have empathy from me on this subject, however, I don't agree with your conclusions.

Mark - An object the sailing instructions require a boat to pass on a specified side, excluding its anchor line and objects attached temporarily or accidentally.

### 28 SAILING THE COURSE

28.1 A boat shall start, pass each mark on the required side, in the correct order, and finish, so that a string representing her wake after starting and until finishing would, when drawn taut, lie on the, required side of each mark and touch each rounding mark. She may correct any errors to comply with this rule, provided she has not already finished. After finishing, a boat need not cross the finishing line completely.

The definition clearly states a boat should pass the mark on the required side. If 30 is to Port, when proceeding from 28 to 30a you can safely do this by going down the Centre of the river (you do not need do a 360 degree turn around it), as it is not a ROUNDING mark. However, if the course was 28 Port, 23 Starboard (or Port for arguments sake), 24 Starboard, you would clearly need to go to 23 as it is a ROUNDING mark.

I have to disagree with the conclusion from your point. There is no distinction in the definition between a rounding mark or any other mark, however, all references to marks in the rule book (shortening or changing the course can only be done at a rounding mark) use the

## Clubhouse News

Anyone who has been to the club since Christmas will have seen that the piled foundations with the floor slab and drains have been constructed. We hope that in January and February the walls and roof will be built and the roller shutters fixed over the front patio doors. We also hope to purchase the new "stand alone" diesel generator that will be positioned by the side boundary where our trailers are parked. We can then clean up and paint the old generator room and use it for storage.

As you can imagine, money is needed now - any donations, or more reasonably, loans - will be gratefully received. Confidentiality can be guaranteed if you wish - contact the Commodore direct and only the Commodore and Treasurer will be aware of your details.

Due to the long wait for the grant decision from the Foundation for Sport and the Arts (although we are very grateful for the grant) we are well behind programme. We had hoped to start in late July or August. Then when we did start, we encountered a problem with the piled foundations and the subsoil conditions that caused us to stop work for three weeks and have more tests carried out.

Your patience and forbearance will be required this year. There will be times when the changing rooms will not be available, or the showers and toilets not all working. We will do our best to minimise disruption.

*Ian Wyatt*

The year 2000 has brought for us another example of the way daily life is changing. It was noticeable that for this issue most of the articles were sent by email. This trend is welcome as it makes the editor's job easy! I would like to start including email addresses - please say if you would like yours given with your name at the end of your article.

*Paul Absolon*

199 Church Street Cliffe Rochester Kent ME3 7QE  
tel 01634 221032 email [paul.absolon@lineone.net](mailto:paul.absolon@lineone.net)  
(please note new email address) **Deadline for next issue is 7 May!**

**Editorial**

## What's Going On!

The four months since the last 31 1/2 have been very busy, and tremendous progress has been made in many areas.

First we heard that the Foundation for Sports and the Arts had awarded us a £20,000 grant. We have accepted this grant and are just about to complete the legal aspects of the agreed club's lease extension. The payments are conditional upon us raising similar amount, payment against invoiced work, and would only need repayment if club ceased to be within a short time span.

As you can imagine this has, with the accumulated fund and a record 1999 financial year, gone a long way towards funding the work we are trying to do. You may have noticed with your renewals a letter from the Commodore inviting further loans to the club - this would be to fund the final fitting out and other jobs, such as the track near the farm, where the heavy vehicles being used for the construction have created big ruts in the already poor surface.

The physical work on the extension has started and the foundation piles, support beams, drains and the base slab were all finished by Christmas. Ian Wyatt is finalising the new security shutters for the upstairs double windows, and the bricklayers. The target of shell complete for the AGM is still possible if the weather is not too bad. - so that is yet another reason / excuse to come to the AGM!

There have been several great socials including Fireworks night, Children's Christmas Party, an unbelievably great New Year's Eve Party, and a good Annual Prizegiving Dinner and Dance - the house committee have done wonders again.

Another area where we are very pleased is the club has been granted, by the RYA, "Volvo Championship Club" status, one of only seventeen in the country. There will be a presentation at the club soon and we will also be acting as hosts to RYA SE Junior Race Training - White and Blue badges on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> April

Brian Lamb has been balancing all the variables, including an increasing number of external events, and the sailing programme is now nearly finished, with the season starting on 26<sup>th</sup> March this year.

As usual this time of year you will be receiving reminders of the AGM



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Mon - Fri 9am - 5pm  
Saturday 9am - 5pm  
Sun 9.30am - 4.30pm

**Winter**

Mon - Sat 9am - 5pm  
Sun 9.30am - 1.30pm

**Discounts for Wilsonian Members!**

### Safety

The safety equipment (radios and boats) have proved more reliable than in previous years. The standard of competence of our safety crews is improving, thanks to continuous training and the many regular coxes who have been 'passing-on' useful information and tips to their crews. Special mention is due to Mark Smith who is, although the youngest, one of the most experienced coxes in the club!

Once the new extension is paid for, I aim to push for the purchase of a second RIB for safety duties, hopefully before the end of the season.

### Frostbite Series

We had 28 registered competitors with an additional 6 'one-off' boats which raced but were not included in the results. Race management and safety cover were better than in previous years and all the competitors seemed to enjoy the varied courses and weather conditions. Despite all the improvements, we only attracted 2 visitors - let's hope we get more next year!

### Junior Training and Racing

A great deal of discussion and planning is taking place about the many activities we are going to lay on for our Juniors. I'm pleased to note the strengthening links with the KSSA and the increasing co-operation between us and the Medway YC Juniors.

### New Members

We hope to see a lot more new members this year, many of whom are going to need training and support. If you have problems finding regular crews, keep your eyes and ears open and I'm sure you'll find plenty! Many of these new members will be seeking advice about which boat to sail, so take the opportunity to 'sell' your class to them.

Finally, may I once again thank all those of you who have done so much to keep the club running smoothly and have ensured good competitive racing in a friendly atmosphere - I look forward to seeing you all out on the water in the new season.

*Brian Lamb*

(the Agenda should be with this 31 1/2) and this is your chance to have your say in the running of the club. The Officers and Committee welcome all the views expressed, especially when there are constructive suggestions. Come along on 25<sup>th</sup> February, have a look at the extension, listen to the presentations, have your say and enjoy the atmosphere.

*Bob Jones*

## WWW.btchallenge.com

Ex Wilsonian member and Miracle sailor Liz Hurst has written to tell us that she will be sailing round the world in the BT Global Challenge which departs this Autumn. She is already in training (see the article in the mid January Yachts and Yachting). We will endeavour to report on Liz's progress in forthcoming editions of 31½. Meanwhile check out the website (above) which has full details of the race and the crew.



In June 199 four WSC members; Bob Dutton, Christine Godber, Patricia Moncreiffe and David Vettergreen took part in the Annual North Downs Charity Walk.

A total of 750 walkers raised £32,000 for charity, half for cancer research and half to a charity or organisation of the walker's choice.

Wilsonian gained by more than £300 for the development fund.

*David Vettergreen*

**WSC on the North Downs**

**MORE NEWS.....**

# OPEN FROSTBITE SERIES

## Long Course

Class	Sail No	Helm	Crew	Pos.
Canoe	278	Simon Allen		1
Osprey	555	John Shenton	Tim Kift/Steve Offer	2
Phantom	985	Neil Lamprell		3
GP 14	13603	David Fry	Derek Cummings	4
Wayfarer	84	Bob Dutton	M Wynn/Others	5
Scorpion	1618	Sonia Riley	Peter Curl	=6
Phantom	960	Mark Bew		=6
Wayfare	9700	Brian Lamb	Alan Bailey	8
Laser	143525	Gordon Belcher		9
RS 400	964	Chris Ashby	Mike Smith	10
Wayfarer	1116	Brian Ward	John Gurney	11
Phantom	1014	Malcolm Levey		12
Wayfarer	10003	N Fenton-Smith	Paul Tyler	13
Wayfarer	8765	Matthew Wynn	Alan Wynn	14
Laser EPS	133	Cohn Coard		15
Fireball	14175	David Tozer	Wendy Johnson	16

## Short Course

RS 200	465	Ian Parris	Katie Parris	1
Laser	144912	Andy Gibbs		2
GP 14	13265	Brian Warwick	Pam Smith	3
Miracle	3805	Peter Homer	Adam Smith	4
Miracle	1178	Colin Treadwell	Lauren Treadwell	5
Miracle	3795	David Hudson	Jackie Hudson	=6
Laser Radial	160330	Justin Sluce		=6
Tasar	285	Ken Crundwell	Lucy Heather	8
Miracle	3620	Sue Smith	Lesley O'Rourke	9
RS 200	228	Andrew Smith	Suzanne Hall	10
Laser	157392	Luke Tharp		11
Topper	29066	J Tharp		12

10.54 - Fast Handicap board 'K' is displayed - start of sequence

10.55 - 'P' board displayed under 'K' board

10.59 - 'P' board removed

11.00 - 'K' board removed - Medium Handicap & 'P' board displayed

11.04 - 'P' board removed

11.05 - Medium H'cap board removed - Wayfarer & 'P' board displayed

11.09 - 'P' board removed

11.10 - Wayfarer board removed - Miracle board & 'P' board displayed

11.14 - 'P' board removed

11.15 - Miracle board removed - end of sequence.

Race Officers, for whom this new system may be more of a problem than for competitors, will receive a (hopefully) foolproof set of notes describing the new start sequence before their duties.

## Three Creeks Open

We want to make this an Open race for 2000, to take place during June/July. I am hoping it will become the WSC prestige event, as is the Hoo Freezer for Hoo Ness, with loads of visitors - the whole club can get involved by competing or in helping to organise the event.

## Prizes

Although Tim Huckel was off sailing elsewhere for most of the season, he agreed to carry on the job of Trophies Secretary. Thanks to his efficiency, all the trophies and glassware have been completed correctly and on time. The new 'square root' policy should mean that more members will receive glassware for 1999 - for 2000 there should be even more recipients, especially among our youngsters.

## Duties

The new system of duties seems to have worked well with fewer people having a kitchen duty and several regular coxes for the safety boats. We need volunteers to be regular Race Officers for the new season, so please get in touch if you're interested. I hope we can continue the system for 2000, including covering the duties for the Winter Series. Once again, my grateful thanks to all those of you who volunteered or filled in when a vacancy arose at the last minute.

## From The Sailing Secretary

With a premium on space, you'll have to get all the results either by looking at the notice board in the clubhouse or by visiting our web-site. Peter Homer is our web-master and is doing a terrific job keeping the information up-to-date. (See article in this issue)

### Proposals for changes in 2000

I hope to be able to arrange more committee boat starts for this season, especially for the major handicap races. I don't think our club line starts are very challenging and we could all do with practising the kind of starts we normally experience when racing in Opens.

After a continuing low turnout for the 1999 season, the GP14s will no longer have fleet status for 2000. It is regrettable that a fleet with such a long history at Wilsonian should have to go, but things change and we as a sailing club need to develop as well, and I anticipate new fleets soon filling the space.

As the combined Slow and Junior Handicap turnout was still disappointing during 1999, it has been agreed that they should now start with the Miracles so that, even when only one or two are signed on, there will always be other boats to sail against.

The new start sequence for 2000 will now be:

- 11.00/14.00 - Fast Handicap
- 11.05/14.05 - Medium Handicap
- 11.10/14.10 - Wayfarer
- 11.15/14.15 - Miracle/Slow/Junior Handicap

### New Start Sequence for 2000

Those of you who took part in the Winter Series will already be familiar with the new start sequence which the RYA are encouraging all clubs to adopt. Basically, it's a five-minute sequence for all starts with a one-minute warning before the sequence begins. At any time during the sequence, only one class/fleet flag will be displayed, either on its own or with a preparatory flag. In addition to the five-minute warning, each class/fleet also has a one-minute warning which is very useful if, like me, your watch keeps stopping!

Let's take a typical Series start sequence at Wilsonian:

There were 26 entries for the series, 16 choosing the long course and 12 the short course. There were only two visitors but the weather conditions, with winds varying from near gale force to light breezes and near freezing temperatures probably contributed in keeping visitors away. 13 races were scheduled but race 7 had to be abandoned before the start, for safety reasons, when the RIB had engine trouble, wind gusting to over 25 knots and several dinghies bottom side up.

Simon Allen (International Canoe) repeated last year's dominance of the long course fleet by gaining nine victories from nine completed races, Allen's only misfortune was having to retire after breaking his boom in the tenth. A team effort by John Shenton, Tim Kift and Steve Offer in Tim's Osprey once again secured second place with a first and six seconds. Neil Lamprell (Phantom) was a close third from two seconds, three thirds and a fourth. Another repeat success was fourth place, again picked-up by David Fry/Derek Cummings (GP14).

Bob Dutton with assistance from Derek Cummings, Derek Limer, Alan Bailey, Alan Wynn and Matthew Wynn secured fifth place overall and also lifted the prize for first Wayfarer. Sonia Riley/Peter Curl (Scorpion) from Chipstead S.C. in sixth were the first placed visitor.

There was a similar story in the short course fleet for top spot. Ian Parris (R5200) with daughter Katie dominated the event, taking seven firsts. Second place was secured by Andy Gibbs (Laser) with seven seconds. Brian Warwick and Pam Smith came up trumps in the GP14 for third slot, though Ian Parris did have a hand in their success, as Ian crewed for Brian on the very windy days for two firsts and a third.

Peter Homer/Adam Treadwell came out top Miracle for fourth place overall. The fifth position was decided on the last race, which was won by Colin and Laura Treadwell (Miracle); so that the other contenders, David/Jackie Hudson (Miracle) and Justin Stulce (Laser Radial), had to settle for equal sixth, although at the prize giving, the Hudson duo had been presented with the fifth place trophy. Unfortunately this was a mistake, as a retirement of 4 points for the Treadwells had incorrectly been discarded.

*Roy Winnett*

## FAST HANDICAP FLEET

Just a quick note of thanks to all of you who participated in last year's sailing for the fast handicap fleet. I would also like to thank Chris Pygall for all his work as fleet captain and his crew, Tim Huckell, who kindly sorted out the trophies and glassware before they departed to Whitstable. For those of you who don't know, the results were as follows:

### SPRING POINTS (17 Entries)

R Alexander / S Hilton (ISO)  
T Huckell / C Pygall (Boss)  
C Mason / R Brewster (RS400)  
N Ashby / S Dodds (49er)

### EARLY SUMMER POINTS (19 Entries)

N Ashby / S Dodds (49er)  
C Mason / R Brewster (RS400)  
R Langton / S Hadley (ISO)  
C Ashby / M Smith

### LATE SUMMER POINTS (20 Entries)

C Mason / R Brewster (RS400)  
N Ashby / S Dodds  
R Langton / S Hadley  
C Ashby / M Smith

### AUTUMN POINTS (16 Entries)

J Tinnams / S Tinnams  
R Langton / S Hadley  
R Winnett / C Swift  
C Mason / R Brewster

The FEMCO Shield for Best Overall Points was awarded to C. Mason and R Brewster (RS400).

With the departure of a number of the asymmetric boats it is anticipated that there will be greater opportunity for closer handicap racing and I look forward to joining you at the icebreaker in March. All the best for the New Year and good sailing in the new century

*John Shenton*

Vice-Captain, Fast Handicap Fleet.

<http://wilsonian.mariner.co.uk>

and Training Courses. Also, when possible, I provide links to download entry forms and notices of race for open meetings. For example these were available for our recent Winter Series and New Years Day race.

**News & Links Page:** I could not see any use of the Boat Directory service for a dinghy club and so removed the link and replaced the button with one linking to a news page. This I try to keep up to date with news items such as status of the club extension and information on imminent social events. I have also put here information and links to several other sailing related web sites that members may be interested in. All the sites currently listed also have links back to our site.

**The Bulletin Board:** I am thinking of changing the menu button to say "Forum" rather than "BBS" to convey a better idea of what it is. A few members as well as several non-member site visitors have added items. Use it as you wish - post greetings or comments, ask questions, answer questions posted by others. I only ask that you keep it clean (language that is) and preferably sailing and club related.

**Photos Page:** I have not added any photographs since last January. If you have some good photographs, I can scan them in and return them to you very quickly. It would like to have pictures of most of the different boats sailed at our club.

Now, two requests. Firstly, to all fleet captains - Would you please ensure that end of series results are pinned on the race results board in the clubhouse, as that is where I copy them from.

Secondly, to everyone - The web site is the club's site, not mine. So please do look at it occasionally and check there are not any errors in the information. All comments or suggestions for improvement are very welcome and please make me aware of any interesting items to add, particularly open meeting results at other venues. You can do this directly to me at the club or via the club e-mail address ([info@wilsonian.mariner.co.uk](mailto:info@wilsonian.mariner.co.uk)).

*Peter Horner*

## The Wilsonian Web Site

Our web site is now one year old and it has developed quite a bit since this time last year when our site, built by Mariner.co.uk, first went live.

It was in late January 1999 when Peter Booth of Mariner.co.uk telephoned me to ask if I minded our site being demonstrated at the forthcoming Sailboat and Windsurf Show at Alexandra Palace. He wanted to show visitors to his stand what the company can do for a club with no web site experience.

I said OK but then had a panic thought: we had a very nice home page and a few photographs but there were menu buttons linking to other pages which were blank at the time and Mariner only do the initial site set up. So a quick delve through "how to build a web page" magazine articles and books and a newly purchased html programming manual to work out how to get something into the other pages before the show in March.

Two of the links were to the *Bulletin Board* and a *Boat Directory* which were standard Mariner services and so were no problem. The *Results* button was intended to link to a Race Results package provided by Mariner but which was not available at the time. So I created a page with the results of the 1998 Winter Series and 1999 New Years Day race and Hoo Freezer.

There was an *Events* button but we had not subscribed to the Mariner Events package, so I created a page with our 1999 sailing programme. The result was a success for both Mariner and ourselves as it appears, from what I heard from WSC members who went to the show, that our site was shown at very regular intervals during the show and was thus also good free publicity for the club.

Over the year I have developed the site such that now it has the following pages:

**Home Page:** This is pretty much as first created but with a few amendments following comments and suggestions from other WSC members. Also I added the facility to download a membership form.

**Results Page:** I have developed what I initially created and there are now three sub-pages for Club Races, Open Meetings and Juniors.

**Events Page:** This now has the Sailing Programme, Social Events

## GP14 Fleet news

You are now reading the last ever GP 14 fleet report. Time, tide and dwindling numbers have finally caught up with us. The new millennium season will start without an A flag in the sequence.

I knew when I took over the fleet captaincy 4 years ago that we were already on the slippery slope to Handicap racing and was determined to stem the tide. King Canute couldn't do it, unfortunately neither could I and sadly have had to bow to the inevitable.

It has been a double edged sword for me. On one hand I am proud to have been one of a long and illustrious line of fleet captains. On the other I am the Fleet captain that led the GP14 fleet into oblivion. I have always during my captaincy fought our corner as vigorously as possible which has always been easy. I've usually known how the guys & gals feel about sailing issues and have always enjoyed their full support. It has been a privilege to represent them.

The old bath tub as the GP is often called, has by and large given a good account of itself over the years as the club trophies will testify. To be called a bath tub by a competitor you have beaten in the winter series is something to savour. So where do we go from here. Mike and Keith are off to campaign a Sonata at the Medway club, signing on David Fry as Bowman (hope your waterproofs are waterproof David!) If they sail as well as they did with the GP the Medway guys are in for a surprise!! Derek will Saturday crew the Sonata and sail at Willies on Sunday. Dave and Roy will, I assume continue with the GP. What about you and Ray I hear you ask.

We plan to sell our pride and joy +VAT. Ray will be happy to crew for anyone who requires his services, preferably a helm who will pay start money, unlike the win only bonus he enjoyed with me. I plan to - well I haven't decided yet. Lots of boat to try, too little time, know what I mean. It was great while it lasted, I am sure we all had a ball.

But I have to move on. I am sure of one thing though, as I consign the GP fleet to History - YOU WILL MISS US.

Brian Warwick



## Wayfarer Report

'They' said, "the winds are generally gentler and steadier in November". 'They' said, "it doesn't usually get too cold until after Christmas". 'They' said, "if you put the right clothing on, it's O.K." Thus was the general tone of the conversation on that warm September afternoon that enticed me to enter a Winter Series for the first time in some years.

The reality: a December morning on the Medway: a howling and freezing North Easterly beating the tide into 3 foot standing white caps off the club: my hung-over crew gripping the sides of the boat-knuckles showing through his gloves: me, feigning bravado, saying calmly through gritted teeth, as I dump the mainsail yet again - 'let's start'-if we don't like it we can come back' (withering look from crew) praying to God that he would suggest going ashore. Such was the conclusion of the 1999 season. Why do we do it? Because it's fun, and without it, life could get a bit boring (this said from the warmth and stability of the clubhouse, armed with hot tea). However, I must admit, Winter sailing can be an acquired taste, like many other deviations. On the right day, and in the right conditions, it can be as good as any other day, but I must confess a growing aversion to the distinct potential of being dumped in the Medway at this time of the year.

To more pressing things. The Autumn Series concluded, with nobody able to prevent Brian Lamb & Matthew Wynn making a clean sweep of the class series. Matthew has certainly earned his money this year, and I trust that Brian will suitably recompense him for his services! Paul and I are left very much the runners up with three second places, and a third, while Len Ayris (2nd, Spring Pts) and Brian Ward (3rd, Late Summer & Autumn pts) share the remaining places between them.

Brian (Ward) at last seems to have found a regular crew in John Gurnard, and could well be 'the man to watch' next season, if rumours of 'trade ins' and 'new boats' are true. Similarly, Bob Dutton is going from strength to strength as the season closes, and I think once he's removed the scrap iron from his boot, he should really fly next year.

It was with some sadness that we witnessed the passing of the GP14 fleet at the end of this season, having always enjoyed close rivalry (an ribaldry) with them. I can only reiterate that unless we are able to jus-

## .....Youth and Junior reports

ear plugs. At last lunchtime arrived, others helped us get the boat out of the water, dad cursed at the weight and the nice instructor suggested we put the bung in the rear buoyancy tank for the afternoon. Dad cursed, I said the rear end with the waggle thing was his end and decided it was good time to find some food, the ladies' for sensible conversation and a cup of tea for dad.

Our first sail at WSC was the Ice Breaker, it was a nice warm spring day and we got round as first RS 200. However, during the race the spinnaker sheets came undone and disappeared through the blocks, dad cursed and shouted it was my end, I learnt to curse back and dad was speechless. The next few weekends the wind was too strong for me, and I am very grateful to David Bourne and Suzanne Hall who sailed/suffered with dad but I always greeted them with a knowing smile and a cup of tea.

The next time I sailed was in very light winds; we tried the square running system for the first time. I cursed the system, dad cursed me and eventually we got the spinnaker halyard caught under the bowsprit. I laid on the foredeck to try and free the halyard, dad shouted encouragement, this was a shock, but I could not free it. I took the helm and dad laid on the foredeck, I screamed at dad, he cursed and we capsized (must have been too much weight/tea forward).

We spent several Saturday afternoons practising, I lost count how many times we put the spinnaker up and down, tacked, gybed, cursed and dad altered the mast and stuck bits of wool on the sails. I do know the kettle was always boiling when we came ashore and the CDO smiled and sympathised with me as I made tea for dad.

I have learnt to tell dad exactly what I think, although this is only allowed on a Sunday with lots of tea. Mum is grateful for the peace without us, but is not so keen on two lots of wet sailing gear to sort out each weekend.

### *Katie Parris*

Excellent tea maker and trolley dolly for dishy boys

*PS - likely to be dead before the season! Ian*

## Sailing with my father; or, don't mention light winds and give him another cup of tea.

Late in 1998 I gave my dad a cup of tea and asked if we could sail together, the following is an account of our year, the tea I have made and the new words I have learnt.

For those that don't know us, my sailing experience is very limited and dads' previous crews, have gone in to caravans, started a family, gone round the world, had major heart surgery or just done anything short of suicide, to get away from him! Not that I am suggesting he can be argumentative or just plain awkward, but others who have sailed/ suffered with him know the truth!

We did not argue over the type of boat to sail, dad said the RS 200 is the best on the market for our abilities. However, we did argue on the colour, I did not want Blue he did not want Pink (I can't think why, he did mutter something about Colin, "Pink Pooch" and not being seen dead) so we agreed on purple. We had a similar argument on the spinnaker colour, but settled on the lilac. Next argument was our boat's name, dad wanted "Ratbags Chariot" mum wanted "Havoc", I don't now if I caused the havoc or dad, either way, I put the kettle on and it is called "Havoc".

Late January 1999 we collected our boat, after having got out of bed at some unearthly hour to be at Speed Sails in Birmingham for 10:00, I slept in the car, dad drove, cursed and wanted a cup of tea. We put our boat together in the back garden and dad showed me how to hoist and drop the spinnaker. By tying both ends of the halyard together, I could practice pulling it up and down. This was good, until dad found the halyard had cut a groove in the spinnaker shoot, obviously designed for a big spinnaker and not a thin rope. Dad cursed I said ops and made yet another cup of tea.

For our first sail we went to Bough Beach for an RS training day. We were all asked to give our experience with the boat, dad said it has not yet been in the water, the others on the course laughed and I hid. We launched the boat and it got slower and slower, dad cursed more and more and I found that sailing required full finger gloves and possibly

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tify our fleet status next year, we will go the same way. That means turning up and getting boats on the water-we need to average at least 4 -5 boats per start next year if are to make our case for the season 2000-2001. Which brings me neatly on to the next point.

Next year (2000) is a qualifying year for the Wayfarer Internationals, (World Championships) to be held in Ireland, in 2001. The format for qualifying has changed-there is now no cut-off point, and presumably no limit on entries. To qualify, you are required to compete at one 'qualifier' plus the Nationals (August at Falmouth), or alternatively, attending and competing at any three of the following 'qualifiers' will get you a place: 13th/14th May-Oxford SC, 3rd/4th June - Shoreham SC, 1st/2nd July - Waldringfield SC, 6th/12th August - Restronguet SC, 16th/17th September - Parkstone SC, 11th/12th November - Bough Beech SC. Brian Lamb and myself intend to meet with Richard Stone from Medway SC, early in the New Year, in order to discuss a 'joint effort' from Wayfarers sailing on the Medway. So, if you think you might like to sample some home grown Guinness in 2001, or would like to try a couple of open meetings next season, let me know.

*Nick Fenton-Smith*

## Miracle Fleet News

Happy New Year. What on earth was all the fuss about regarding this 'bug' phenomenon? It must've been the biggest non-event of the Millennium. I guess everyone's in the process of getting their boat ready for the start of the new season and, if anything like me, trying hard to trim off the excesses of the seasonal festivities.

Welcome to Chris Vincent-Bennett and his family, who have recently bought a Miracle and joined our Fleet. I look forward to seeing you out on the water Chris, and hope you get as much enjoyment out of your Miracle sailing at the Club as the rest of us.

The school being very unhelpful locked the gates and said with a gallic logic we couldn't argue with, that as we shouldn't have been there anyway they wouldn't let us out. Undaunted we lifted the boats over a 6 foot fence and dashed off to get to the chandlers before they closed.

My new sail and mast were greeted with envy from my team mates on the Wednesday. Dad seemed a little less enthusiastic and kept murmuring something about Visa bills. Now I was really going to go fast. The only trouble was I was very slow and right at the back of fleet.

The sail looked fine so it must have been my sailing. By the end of the week I was back up to speed and the fleets having been split into abilities I found myself at the front end of an eighty boat fleet. This was quite an experience and it helped me to recover my position a little to finish the week in 220<sup>th</sup> place.

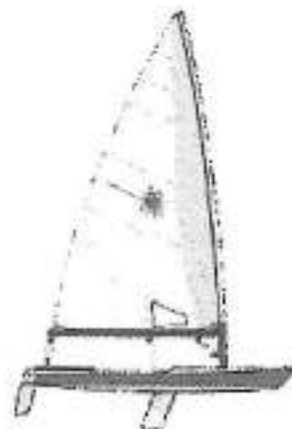
It was a great week with some funny stories like the Japanese ladies team who left their trolleys below the high water level. The trolleys were lost so the English team had to carry their boats for them.

The Americans are convinced English sails are superior to American ones, so their coach forced them after a long day's sailing (9 hours) to sit through a boring meeting, in the hope they would win a sail in the prize draw afterwards. (The English team turned up at the end of the meeting to enter the draw). The worst team uniform was the Americans who brought theirs in Hawaii, enough said.

Would I go again? The answer to that is "like a shot".

*Andrew Smith*

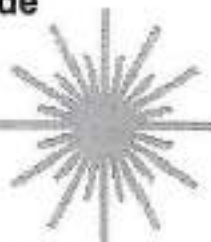
Laser Radial 117189



# Youth and Junior reports .....

## Laser Radial Championship du Monde

### 1999 La Rochelle



Dad didn't take much persuading to spend a week in France in July so we filled in the forms, booked some accommodation and off we went. We packed Nan and Grandad into the back of the car Nan paid for her passage by baking some delicious cakes, and providing me with plenty of food during the week.

A day's driving and we were there. We passed measurement with flying colours and were ready for the practice race. Our coaches advised us to go out and learn the course but not to worry about finishing. Everyone had new sails and no one wanted to wear their sails out.

The coaches warned us not to cheat, this turned out to be good advice because at the end of the race a list of cheats was posted in the clubhouse and these people were watched very closely during the week. Cheats are obviously not welcome in the Laser fleet.

The fleet of 305 boats was split into four fleets and we were off for the first race. My boat wasn't the oldest in the race but it wasn't far off it. Straight away I realised all the boats were very equal in speed and it was skill that was going to win this race.

I finished the day in 177<sup>th</sup> place I was very pleased with this, 128 boats were behind me. The only bad news was whilst clearing up after the race an impatient French van driver ran over my mast. It looked ok so I put the incident behind me, but what happened the next day may have been as a result of it.

The second day found very strong winds and me slipping slightly down the fleet. Coming in after the race, disaster struck and my mast snapped ripping my sail. I got washed up at a sailing school with some other casualties.

### 1999 Prize-Winners

#### Spring Series:

Gold Fleet	2964	Ian Kelly & Tom Pygall
Silver Fleet	3620	John & Sue Smith
Bronze Fleet	379	Archie Campbell

#### Summer am Series:

Gold Fleet	2964	Ian Kelly & Tom Pygall
Silver Fleet	1502	Chris & David Cherriman
Bronze Fleet	379	Archie Campbell

#### Summer pm Series

Gold Fleet	2964	Ian Kelly & Tom Pygall
Silver Fleet	1502	Chris & David Cherriman
Bronze Fleet	379	Archie Campbell

#### Autumn Series

Gold Fleet	3722	Colin & Lauren Treadwell
Silver Fleet	1502	Chris & David Cherriman
Bronze Fleet	379	Archie Campbell

**Steadfast Trophy 1808** Martin Smith & Mike Groom

**Best Improver** 379 Archie Campbell

Well done to all who entered each series and particularly the above winners. Of particular interest is Archie's "clean-sweep" in the Bronze Fleet, and Chris Cherriman's wins in the Silver Fleet, having won Bronze Fleet prizes last year.

### Year 2000 Sailing Regatta

In the last edition of this magazine I stated that 4 venues were being explored in lieu of the Nationals at South Shields. After further deliberations the decision has finally been reached. We have decided on Chichester Federation Week on the South coast (in Chichester harbour) between 14th and 18th August. This is an organised regatta, to which we simply tag along. They have agreed, subject to numbers,



to allocate separate prizes for a Miracle Fleet. As this is not specifically a Miracle event I have extended an invitation to other fleets within the Club. The more the merrier as far I can see.

This event clashes with the date of the Nationals, and could even be perceived by some as a deliberate snub to the Association. I can assure you that this is most definitely not the case. In fact, we were positively seeking to avoid such a clash, but found that all events seemed to clash with one thing or another.

In view of this I think it right to explain our plans to the Association. I have already discussed the matter with the Association's Racing Secretary, David Southwell, who understands our intentions. I will also discuss the matter with the Chairman. In the circumstances it might be prudent for us to support the Association in some other way, such as the Inland Championships at Draycote in September, which is second in size and importance only to the Nationals. I would encourage as many of our fleet to go to the Inlands as possible.

Details of local accommodation around the Chichester area are displayed on the notice board at the Club. I also have a copy at home. Please phone me if you require any further information. My thanks go to Mark and Karen Steadman for acquiring all the information to enable the decision to be made.

### Communications

I am keen to make greater use of e-mail on those occasions where I would normally have phoned or written (such as the recent invitation to the Fleet Evening). I would treat all e-mail addresses with confidence. The addresses would be for my sole purpose only. If you are happy to receive my communications via e-mail would you please drop me a quick e-mail at the address below so that I can capture your own address. No actual message as such need be sent, though it would be nice to hear from you!

### Other Matters

Paul Absolon has been in touch with Weirwood Sailing Club, who have a number of Miracles few if any of which race competitively. He discussed the possibility of WSC taking along a few boats to their

providing access to the pub car park, which requires a special key to operate but with 1.1 m headroom there is no problem for a dinghy.

I reached Tonbridge in the evening. I moored on the south side of the river and chatted with the occupants of the neighbouring boat, I persuaded them to go for a drink and walked to the nearest pub. We were waiting for a refill after the first round and eventually I had to call to the barmaid. As she was pulling them I commented that we had patiently waited while she served other customers who had been waiting for a shorter time. She suddenly lost her temper and told us we could leave after the drink. I should have refused that drink! Especially as the pub on the other bank has better beer.

In the morning I investigated Tonbridge slip. It is at the back of a car park with a notice forbidding trailers and a height restriction! I sought out the council offices to find out about allowing trailers. They agreed that my request was reasonable but clearly nothing would actually be done. I took the train to Strood and the bus to Hoo Marina. I drove the car to Tonbridge, removed the mast support to get under the barrier and parked by the slip.

The Medway is supposedly navigable for two miles beyond Tonbridge. It splits just above the Town Bridge although the two branches rejoin about half a mile further up. I went round this loop and through the railway bridge beyond. However here the trees were nearly continuous and the wind was too strong for easy paddling. Eventually I slipped the boat and went home.

Conclusion - The river is attractive and varied, winding its way up through the Medway valley. There is a railway parallel all the way with stations close to the river, so it is easy to take it in stages although there are not many slips for a dinghy. In future when going up to Allington I will make sure that I start at the bottom of the tide so that the flow gives a lift all the way. This also helps with Rochester Bridge, which can clear any dinghy at half tide.

For further details of the navigation try the Environment Agency 0645 333 111. The number for Allington Lock is 01622752864.

*Archie Campbell*

available between 3 hrs before to 2 hrs after high water and I would not like to have spent the day sitting on the mud.

The lock keeper took a fee for the use of the river and gave me a small map but there were no lock windlasses available. Once past the lock I stopped for some shuteye at the earliest opportunity, which was by Allington Marina. The proprietor appeared at about 7.30am and was extremely rude; which I later gathered was typical of him, so I was on my way again.

I reached Maidstone at about 9am and went shopping for a lock windlass. I asked if there was a chandler and was directed to the ironmongers where I obtained a mole-wrench, which worked well enough. The sluices need a 1" Square socket or 1 '4' or 32mm ring spanners which are difficult to obtain and pricey. A mole-wrench is the best universal tool and is cheap.

The first unmanned lock is above Maidstone. At each lock I had to land, drain the lock, open the downstream gate, guide the boat in with long ropes, close the gate, open the upstream sluices, open the upstream gate, haul the boat out, close the gate and all sluices. The boat tends to be tossed around on a long painter and could bang into the walls in the swirling waters. I raised the centreboard and had a second line attached to the shrouds so that the boat would tend to angle out into the middle of the lock. I also carry two large fenders and I had one slung over the side.

By now the breeze was ample and was still northerly so that tacking was only required over short reaches and I was going noticeably faster than the motor boats. Power gives way to sail does not apply when the sailing boat is doing the overtaking. However the other users of the river were universally charming and gave me the benefit of the doubt.

I stopped for the night at Wateringbury, which, incidentally, is marked as one of the few available slipping points and has pubs and a station and, in fact, everything that the dry (internally, wet externally) or anxious sailor could want.

The next day I was on my way again. In some places trees and buildings sheltered the river and progress was slow so I was only at Yalding for an early lunch. There is a very low lifting bridge there

Club, talking through some tuning, boat set-up and racing matters and then having an informal race. By helping them to race we can build up a good relationship with them and increase the number of active Miracles on the Southern circuit. Paul and I are planning to progress this matter further and will keep you up-to-date.

### Association membership

We seem to have a lot of boats in the dinghy park, but only 19 of them were members of the Miracle Class Association as at August last year. There are several benefits in being a member and fees are so low that it makes membership extremely good value for money. I would urge any Miracle owners who are not members of the Association to join and benefit from doing so.

### Chinese meal.

I am proposing to arrange a meal at a Chinese restaurant in Chatham on Saturday 18th March, so that we all get together to have a chat prior to the start of the season. What I have in mind is a restaurant where the food is laid out in warming dishes in the centre of the room. Each dish is clearly labelled so that you know what you're eating, and whether it's a starter or a main course. Once directed to a table you spend the evening as you wish, helping yourself to your own food, taking as much as you like, as often as you like.

The restaurant charges a flat sum of £9.50 (half price for children under 10) per person and you eat as much and as often as you like. If you are interested please let me know before 11th March, and I'll arrange to book an appropriate number of tables.

It just remains for me to wish you a very enjoyable Millennium season, and I look forward to seeing you at the Club, particularly out on the water. Let us all get our boats ready, and get the most out of them, as well as our Club membership fees by making good use of them. Long may our Miracle Fleet go from strength to strength!

*Colin Treadwell*

email: [colin@treadwellr.freemove.co.uk](mailto:colin@treadwellr.freemove.co.uk)

## A TRIP UPRIVER

I had a week vacant in June '96 just before I moved to Rochester. I wanted to explore the sailing in Kent and in particular the Medway. I decided to launch in the tidal part of the river and sail up, hopefully to Tonbridge and beyond.

It is 13.5 miles from Hoo to Allington and 17.5 miles on from there to Tonbridge. There are 23 bridges, counting the triple bridge at Rochester as one, and 10 locks.

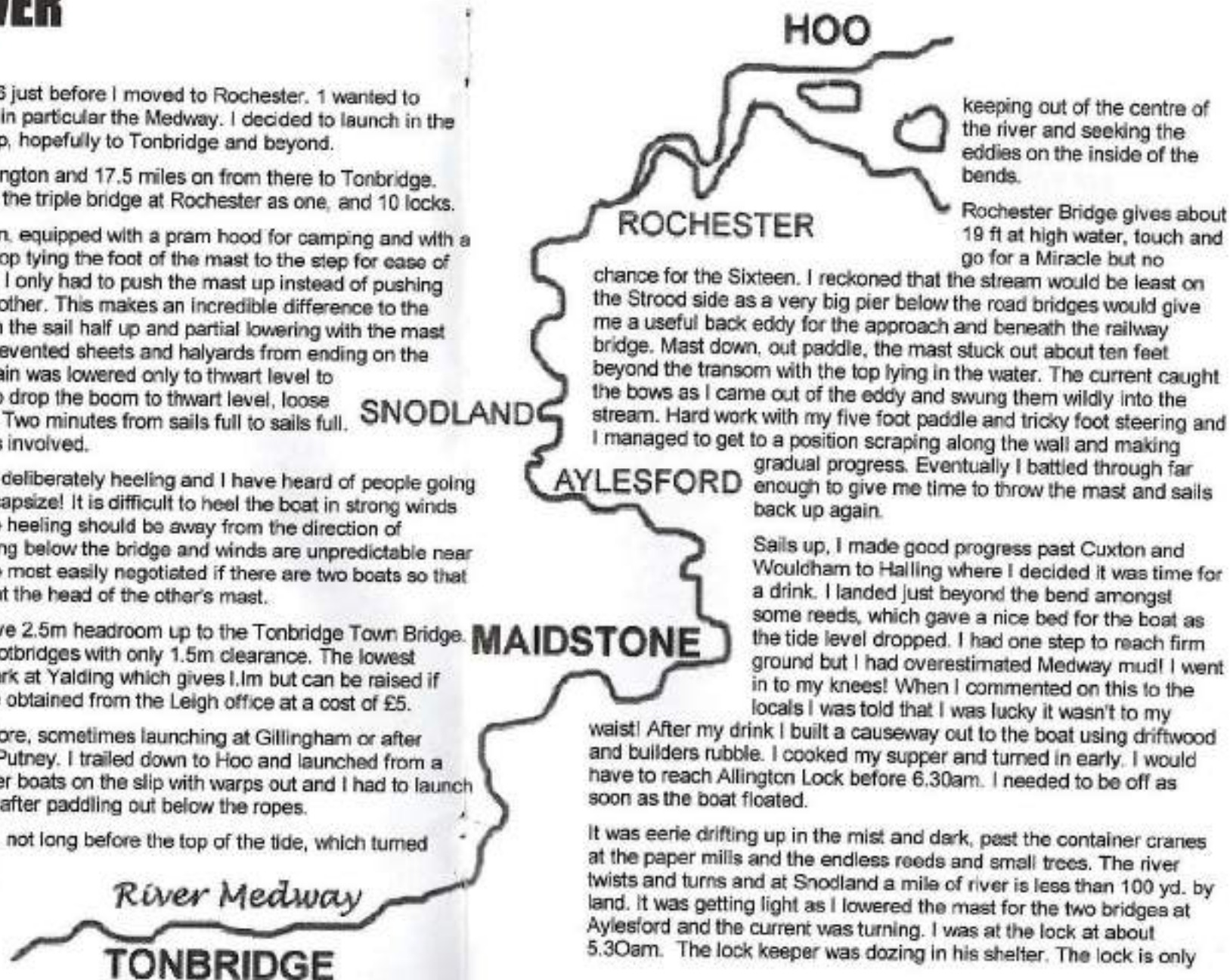
The boat was my Mirror Sixteen, equipped with a pram hood for camping and with a tackle on the forestay and a strop tying the foot of the mast to the step for ease of lowering. The strop means that I only had to push the mast up instead of pushing with one hand and pulling with other. This makes an incredible difference to the effort and allowed lowering with the sail half up and partial lowering with the mast resting on a shoulder. It also prevented sheets and halyards from ending on the wrong side of the mast. The main was lowered only to thwart level to save time. My technique was to drop the boom to thwart level, loose the forestay lanyard and lower. Two minutes from sails full to sails full. A little longer if the spinnaker is involved.

Mast height can be reduced by deliberately heeling and I have heard of people going to the extreme of a deliberate capsized! It is difficult to heel the boat in strong winds except on the beat because the heeling should be away from the direction of progress to avoid risk of jamming below the bridge and winds are unpredictable near structures. Tight clearances are most easily negotiated if there are two boats so that each can watch the clearance at the head of the other's mast.

Above Allington the bridges have 2.5m headroom up to the Tonbridge Town Bridge. Above that there are several footbridges with only 1.5m clearance. The lowest bridge of all is to the pub car park at Yalding which gives 1.1m but can be raised if you have the key, which can be obtained from the Leigh office at a cost of £5.

I had sailed on the Medway before, sometimes launching at Gillingham or after sailing down the Thames from Putney. I trailed down to Hoo and launched from a boatyard there. There were other boats on the slip with warps out and I had to launch with the mast down and raise it after paddling out below the ropes.

I was rather later than intended, not long before the top of the tide, which turned against me before I sailed into Bridge Reach. However it was a good northerly sailing breeze and I continued to make reasonable progress by



keeping out of the centre of the river and seeking the eddies on the inside of the bends.

Rochester Bridge gives about 19 ft at high water, touch and go for a Miracle but no

chance for the Sixteen. I reckoned that the stream would be least on the Strood side as a very big pier below the road bridges would give me a useful back eddy for the approach and beneath the railway bridge. Mast down, out paddle, the mast stuck out about ten feet beyond the transom with the top lying in the water. The current caught the bows as I came out of the eddy and swung them wildly into the stream. Hard work with my five foot paddle and tricky foot steering and I managed to get to a position scraping along the wall and making gradual progress. Eventually I battled through far enough to give me time to throw the mast and sails back up again.

Sails up, I made good progress past Cuxton and Wouldham to Halling where I decided it was time for a drink. I landed just beyond the bend amongst some reeds, which gave a nice bed for the boat as the tide level dropped. I had one step to reach firm ground but I had overestimated Medway mud! I went in to my knees! When I commented on this to the locals I was told that I was lucky it wasn't to my

waist! After my drink I built a causeway out to the boat using driftwood and builders rubble. I cooked my supper and turned in early. I would have to reach Allington Lock before 6.30am. I needed to be off as soon as the boat floated.

It was eerie drifting up in the mist and dark, past the container cranes at the paper mills and the endless reeds and small trees. The river twists and turns and at Snodland a mile of river is less than 100 yd. by land. It was getting light as I lowered the mast for the two bridges at Aylesford and the current was turning. I was at the lock at about 5.30am. The lock keeper was dozing in his shelter. The lock is only