

Calendar

Date	Time	Event	Contact/Notes
25 June	11:30	WILSONIAN GRAND PRIX*	Our Premier Event
01 July	13:00 16:30	Club Open Day Evening Race & Evening Meal	
02 July		MYC Medway Marathon* www.medwayyachtclub.com	No club racing
8 July 9 July	11:00 10:00	Medway Dinghy Regatta	Steve James
22-26 Aug		Junior Training Week	Anne Heather
27 Aug	14:00	Three Race Regatta	Allow time to sail to start nr. Folly
Mon 28 Aug	14:00	Pursuit Race 2 (Bank Holiday) Scratch Race a.m.	Tony Hunt
30 Aug	18:30	Last Wednesday Evening Race	
10 Sept	11:00/ 05 14:00	Crews' Race/Singlehanded Race Leigh Trophy	
Sat 16 Sep		WSC - MYC Inter-Club Challenge Finale*	+ evening social
21st Oct		Children in Need Sail	Tom Lambert
29 Oct	13:30	Laying-Up Cup	
05 Nov	10:30	Winter Series Starts	
17 Dec	10:30	Last Winter Series Race Prizegiving & Children's Party p.m.	
01 Jan 07	12:00	Chilly Willies Open Handicap Race	

* Counts toward Inter-Club Challenge

Summer 2006
Issue 85

31½

The Wilsonian Sailing Club Magazine



On the cover: A well-earned spotlight on Peter Horner, sail training and website supramo, to whom we all owe thanks for his services to the club. Photo: Andrew Clark

Editorial **Tony Hunt**

We're starting to get a stream of articles about dinghy sailing submitted (see those of Stewart Robertson and Doug Horner in this issue), which is something that has raised a lot of positive comment. So if any of you have sailing thoughts, memories or views you'd like to express, please fire away. You don't even have to be right - if you stimulate a debate 'you will also have served...'

Photos have not been forthcoming recently, but that's hardly surprising - light airs or rainy blustery days don't make for the best of subjects or easiest of photo shoots. Do think about your camera though please, if you're about to do a rescue boat duty and it's a nice sunny F3-4 day.

Can you let me have any copy by 15th November, please?

Copy to: 2, Brissenden Close, Upnor, Rochester, ME2 4XW

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Or use 'the box at the top of the stairs'



What the Editor does have a lot of is shots of 3000's! This one by Peter Horner, from the freezer.

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Pursuit Race 1

A forecast of rain and thunder, plus warnings of strong winds, translating into the passage of a couple of cold fronts, all on a Bank Holiday Monday meant that starters for this event were a mere seven of those who nevertheless decided to come to the club, after several prospective racers decided to go home rather than venture forth.

Moreover, those that did sail experienced very variable winds. Some competitors took 10 minutes to clear the windward shore of the club while at the same time earlier starters were already planing wildly in Pinup Reach. As a result, the handicaps were to pot, and the closely-bunched finish to which we've become accustomed in Pursuit Races was not in evidence.

Stephanie Wicken in her Topper, fresh from a sixth place in the club open the previous Saturday, led for the bulk of the race before being overhauled by Doug Horner, single-handing his dad's Miracle, as they came back in sight of the club. Stephanie then reclaimed her lead on the beat where Doug found himself overpowered, but then failed to capitalise on her advantage by not covering and getting the wrong side of a windshift.

Doug then steamed away to win (the Miracle performs very well downwind without crew-weight!), giving a short demonstration of single-handed three-sailing until he felt his luck might run out. Stephanie secured her second place to leave a long gap before Phil Harris, who had spent a long time before the race deciding between his Vortex and Vareo (and probably making the wrong choice as luck had it), crossed the finish in the Vortex.

Thanks to a not unfamiliar late start, John Goudie's Wayfarer, crewed by Geoff Lambert, was not a front runner and had to settle for fourth, while Steve Tinnams and Jason Ramsden brought up the rear on this occasion. That said, both were relatively new to their machines and appeared to show noticeable improvement even over the course of the day, so they shouldn't expect a much easier handicap next time!

1	Doug Horner	Miracle
2	Stephanie Wicken	Topper
3	Phil Harris	Vortex A
4	John Goudie/Geoff Lambert	Wayfarer
5	Steve Tinnams	RS 600
6	Jason Ramsden	Contender
DNF	Simon Conway/Ian Parris	RS 800

Topper & Laser Radial/4.7 Open by Roy Winnett

An encouraging 18 visitors joined four home boats for the Topper Open, while just four visitors contested the Laser Radial Open with our own boats disappointingly absent. There were no Laser 4.7's.

The steady light to moderate southwesterly compensated for the overcast skies and occasional light showers to give good manageable conditions.

Martin Evans led the Laser Radials all the way around the trapezoid course over the four laps for a comfortable win in the first race. After lunch the high tide allowed the course to be set in Hoo Bay, out of the main shipping channel, for the two back-to-back races. Another commanding win for Evans ensured top spot while Wes Absolom was second again. Absolom then beat Evans to the line in the final race to secure runners-up prize.

The Toppers were too keen to start the first race and had to suffer a general recall. They all kept clear of the line the second time and Freddie Connor got off to an excellent start to take an early lead but then allowed the chasing pack through when he discovered late that he was missing out the last mark of the course. However, he recovered his leading position over the next two laps to take line honours, with Ben Palmer second and Ben Slater third. In race 2 Max Richardson kept off the challenge from Julia Beck to win, making up for a poor fifth in race one, while Connor came from behind for third. With two races to count, a good result in the third race was crucial to lift the top prizes. Connor did just that he won by a comfortable margin for overall victory and Richardson followed Connor home to guarantee second on aggregate. A fourth for Palmer allowed him to discard a 10th place to claim third prize, while Beck had done enough previously for fourth and later added another third for fifth overall.

Stephanie Wicken, the highest placed Wilsonian entry, was unfortunate to miss out on the prizes, with consistent 6th, 7th and 8th places she ended up sixth on aggregate.

Topper Results

1st	45152	Freddie Connor Bexhill SC	1 3 1 2
2nd	45373	Max Richardson Hastings	5 1 2 3
3rd	44584	Ben Palmer Island Barn Reservoir SC	2 10 4 6
4th	40877	Julia Beck Papercourt SC	4 2 5 6
5th	45155	Ben Slater Bexhill SC	3 4 3 6
6th	44304	Stephanie Wicken Wilsonian SC	7 8 6 13

From the Commodore Colin Treadwell

Whilst the season may now be well underway, our summer weather seems to have eluded us so far. Still, it hasn't stopped us being as active as ever, judging by the number of cars in the car park and the number of boats out on the water each Sunday. It's great to see.

As usual, a lot of work continues behind the scenes. Examples include the building of a new launching trolley for the Jeanneau, the installation of new risers on our mooring buoys, the re-tubing of Bluebird, the laying of a new flooring on the landing and the development of a management plan to improve and develop our fleet of club boats for use by members, to name but a few. My thanks go to everyone involved not just with these jobs, but also all the other excellent behind-the-scenes work.

Referring back briefly to our Club Boat Development Plan, I should also point out that we have been successful in acquiring a £850 grant from Medway Council to put towards the purchase of another Club boat.

We have struck a deal with Medway Outdoor Education Centre at Gillingham, in which our trusted old friend Wilsonian will be exchanged for two Topper dinghies to add to our fleet of club boats. It's great to know that she is going to a good home, and that we will continue to see her out on the river.

We will shortly be replacing the large, sliding window shutters at the east and west ends of the Clubhouse with new metal roller shutters, easily operated by an internal winding handle. This should make life easier for CDOs in the future.

Just a quick reminder for those of you with a boat parking space on the newly surfaced areas – please ensure that you use the tyres filled with concrete to restrain your boat, and do NOT attempt to drive anything into the ground thereby puncturing the membrane beneath the surface and losing its integrity.

The deployment of assistant CDOs has received some very positive feedback, making the life of some of our CDOs a little easier and helping to train future CDOs. If anyone has any comment to make in this regard, please talk to Brian Lamb or any flag officer. Whilst on the subject of CDOs, we have produced a CDO checklist to assist as a quick-reference guide to the opening, running and closing of the Club. These are not intended to replace the detailed "instructions", which them-

selves are being updated, but rather to supplement them. They should be available very shortly.

You may soon notice a few "strange" boats being stored in our chicken shed facility. If so, they are club boats belonging to Maidstone Sailing Club, who will shortly be losing their local Clubhouse and boat storage facilities. They are not privately-owned boats, and they will number only a few. We have agreed to assist them by providing a temporary storage facility, at the normal rate, while they consider their options. We will require removal of their boats before November, in order to make the facility fully available to our own members.

Whilst the matter of Avian Influenza (bird flu) may have escaped recent news reports, it still remains a real threat. We should remain alert to the risk, particularly in view of our location in the estuary. The current DEFRA reporting guidelines are as follows:

- i) one or more dead swans or wild fowl (ducks and geese)
 - ii) more than 3 dead birds of the same species
 - iii) more than 5 dead birds of different species in the same place
- If you do come across any of the above situations, you should inform the CDO or a Flag Officer immediately, who should then contact the DEFRA helpline on 08459 33 55 77 between 6.00am and 10.00pm (including Sundays)

Our Medway Regatta is fast approaching. Please keep the weekend free in your diaries and join in if you possibly can. It is always a very enjoyable occasion, both on and off the water, and the more who take part the better the event for all concerned. I am hoping for a bumper entry this year. We have secured a good sponsorship deal, and it is likely that all competitors will receive a free t-shirt upon entry.

Finally, you may be aware that our Medway Regatta has been very well supported over the last few years by members of Broxbourne Sailing Club. This year Broxbourne will be holding their own two-day regatta over the first weekend of September, and would be very pleased to see and welcome boats from our club for their event. Personally speaking, given how friendly they all seem to be, I think it is likely to make for a very enjoyable weekend. I am thinking of going along, and would hate to go alone. If anyone is interested in coming along, please let me know.

Happy sailing.

Colin Treadwell

Slow H'cap Fleet

1st	RS Feva	Jim Tyler	Anna Tyler	13
2nd	RS Feva	J Hill	R Birmingham	23
3rd	Cornet	A Collins		28
4th	RS Feva	R Malay		30

Miracle a.m. Fleet

1st	3737	Martin Smith	Mike Groom	4
2nd	3795	David Hudson	Jackie Hudson	7
3rd	3805	Peter Homer	David Brooker	11
4th	1808	Paul Nudds		15
5th	3722	Lesley O'Rourke	Angie Clemence/Chris W	15
6th	206	Colin Low	Martin Low	22
7th	1502	Chris Cheriman	Terry Lovegrove	25
8th	3536	Ben Brooks	Tom Brooks	31
9th	2955	Gordon Wallace	Leah Johnson	32
10th	3718	Chris Wallis/Nicola Brant	Chris Wallis	32
11th	3638	Neil Lamprell	Jack Lamprell	33
12th	38	Nina Wallis	Sue Hannant	34
13th	1506	Steve Petifer	Sarah Cotton	34

Miracle p.m. Fleet

1st	206	Colin Low	Peter Homer/Maureen Low	6
2nd	3795	David Hudson	Jackie Hudson	9
3rd	3722	Lesley O'Rourke	John Elliott	15
4th	3737	Martin Smith	Mike Groom	17
5th	3805	Peter/Doug Homer	David Brooker/Ian Paris	21
6th	1808	Paul Nudds		22
7th	1502	Chris Cheriman	Terry Lovegrove	25
8th	3638	Neil Lamprell	Jack Lamprell	30
9th	210	Andrew Clarke		31
10th	2955	Gordon Wallace	Leah Johnson	31
11th	3718	Chris Wallis	Nick Brant	33
12th	3536	Tom Brooks	Ben Brooks	37
13th	38	Nina Wallis	Sue Hannant	38

Spring Points Results

Fast H'cap Fleet - 21 entries

1st	RS 400	Chris Ashby	Mike Smith	14
2nd	Laser 4000	David Mason	Stuart Mason	41
3rd	Laser 4000	Stewart Robertson	Matthew Robertson/R Metcalfe	43
4th	Contender	Martin Jones		47
5th	Oprey	Paul Heather	Jonatham Osgood	59
6th	Oprey	Tim Kilt	Paul Rodgers	68
7th	RS 800	Simon Conway	Sam Proctor/Nicola Smith	78
8th	RS 300	Matthew Wynn		79
9th	Muslo Skill	Grahamie Smith		85
10th	Laser 5000	John Tinnams	Steve Tinnams	93
11th	Vortex	Simon Middleton		95
12th	Contender	Matthew Love		98

Medium H'cap Fleet - 36 entries

1st	Laser	Gordon Belcher		23
2nd	Kestrel	Bob Dutton	Peter Good/John Gurnett	30
3rd	420	Alec Rodgers	Aaron Smith	48
4th	Laser 2000	Nik Antoniadou	Andy Hoskey/Cathy Evans	50
5th	Laser	Graham Jenkinson		53
6th	Laser 2000	Jayne Lambert	Paul Thorpe	53
7th	Laser 2000	Roy Winnett/Geoff Lambert	Geoff Lambert/Steve Bridges	57
8th	Laser 3000	Tom Lambert/Nicola Smith/Tony Hunt	Nicola Smith/Tom Lambert/Tony Hunt	69
9th	Phantom	Brian Reeve		69
10th	Laser 3000	Tony Hunt	Suzanne Hall	87
11th	Wayfarer	Brian Lamb	Brian Warwick	93
12th	Laser Radial	Steve Drain		109
13th	Laser 2000	David Vettergreen	Janice Smith	110
14th	Laser II	David Finch	Ailson Williams	117
15th	Phantom	Nick Fenton-Smith		137
16th	Buzz	Marth Brown	Amadea Randall	142
17th	Buzz	Adam Treadwell	Tina Wallis	142
18th	Kestrel	George Rogers	Andrew Rogers	145

On The House

I'm sure most of you will by now be aware of our new system of clearing away soiled crockery and cutlery etc during lunch periods, making it easier for those who sit down after others have finished their lunch, and making it easier for the kitchen crew during a very busy period in a very restricted area. I would like to thank everyone for their co-operation so far with the new arrangements. I have also received some very positive feedback. If you haven't yet been to the club this year, we are asking if you would kindly clear your table at the end of your lunch, placing the plates, cups and cutlery in the appropriate receptacles provided and clearly labelled.

A couple of reminders:

July 1 Evening race followed by an evening meal (Club open day)

July 8/9 Medway Regatta, with breakfast available each morning and Saturday evening BBQ and disco

If you will not be taking part in either of these events but nevertheless intend to come along during the evening and wish to eat, please add your name to the lists which will be displayed on the notice board on the stairs landing.

Thank you

Jane Treadwell

The Trinity and The Challenge

Both Mr & Mrs Commodore have mentioned the **Medway Regatta**, and quite right too. This should be a must-do part of every member's year.

But don't forget the other two big events that come but once a year, all in a row, our **Grand Prix** and the **Medway Marathon**. Both of these are great events which provide distinct memories that last while series races fade into an amorphous heap.

Please make an effort to do all three - we need a good turnout to boost our score in the Inter-Club Challenge. And don't be put off from any of these events if you're a novice - everyone is welcome and they make for both interesting and useful experiences.

Sailing Secretary's Report

So, the South Kent was a bit of a windless disappointment this year. Never mind, you've a chance to have another go at the territory in the MYC's **Medway Marathon** on 2nd July. This takes place the day after our **Open Day and Evening Race**.

The week after the Marathon comes the **Medway Dinghy Regatta**. This is a chance for people of all skill levels to enjoy a whole weekend's racing and socialising, a proper open event, without having to leave the comfort of your own club. There two races each day, the first on Saturday at 11:00, on Sunday at 10:00. Three to count if four are run. We're expecting starts for Fast, Medium and Slow handicaps, plus Wayfarers and, if 12 pre-entries are received 48 hours in advance, Vortices. Also the Miracles are hoping to muster enough pre-entries for their own start. We usually get as lot of visitors including a large contingent from Broxbourne; please make them feel at home.

Moving on to 27th August, we have the **Three Race Regatta**. This event was conceived to give all boats, fast and slow alike, an equal chance of winning, and involves taking average times around a lapping course, thus avoiding the slow boats sailing long before or after the others when the wind inevitably dies. Again, something for everyone, then.

Next day, Bank Holiday Monday, we have a scratch race in the morning, then the second **Pursuit Race**. Usual format: individual starts from just off the shore (the RO will hold your boat if you're nice to him) according to personal handicaps. First over the finish line wins.

On 10th September, we have the **Leigh Trophy** - a long distance race for connoisseurs of of obscure parts of the river, thanks to a very high tide. In the morning we have the **Crew's Race**, a chance for all you unsung heroes to strut your stuff on an easy course, while for those without a crew we're organising a **Singlehanded Race** for the first time (in a long while, anyway). Use any boat, from a Topper to a 49'er (if you're 'ard enough).

The following Saturday, 16th September, we have the **Inter-Club Challenge Finale** against MYC, complete with evening bash open to all, sailors and non-sailors alike. We're organising this year, and we desperately need support from all of you - last year we lost the challenge through pure lack of WSC boats. Nice format: a race downstream, re-start downriver and a race back to the club.

rule which enables you to calculate tide height for any hour in between the HW and LW figures given. Basically the tide does not go out and come in at an even rate, but starts slowly and increases to its highest rate at the 3rd and 4th hours then decreases. The Twelfths rule works by splitting the range of tide height between LW and HW and dividing it by twelve. In the first hour 1/12 will go out or in, in the 2nd hour 2/12 and the 3rd & 4th hours 3/12 each, in the 5th hour 2/12 and 6th hour 1/12. On our date of April 1st HW is 5.3m and LW is 1.1m so the range is 4.2m divided by 12 = 0.35m. So if LW is 1.1m and we need the tide height for 2 hours after LW we take LW 1.1m + 1/12 for hour 1 and 2/12 for hour 2 = 3/12 (3 x .35m) = 1.05m total 2.15m. Just to complicate matters more on the Medway from Sheerness to Saltpan Reach and at Kingsnorth the Ebb is stronger than the Flood and in Kethole and Long Reach's the flood is stronger than the ebb.

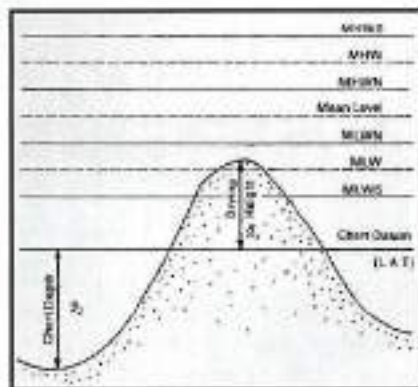
You don't need all this to race at Wilsonian but a good knowledge of the tides is definite asset and good tactical tool and a definite if you want to go cruising the creeks always remember 'knowledge is power'.



Tom Lambert and Nicola Smith enjoy the relatively pleasant weather of the Freezer practice race, while John Gore and Terry Eaglestone maintain their usual vigil. Photo: Peter Horner

ter HW at 0.9 knots or at MHWS 1.4 knots. And the minimum rate at MHWN and MHWS is 5 hours before HW when the rate is slack, the narrowing of the river at Upnor should produce higher rate than these at Kingsnorth.

We now have the time, height and rate of the tide at HW at Upnor, all straight forward except



the height of the tide is not the depth of water you will encounter. This height quoted is 'Above Chart Datum'. Owing to the vast range of tide flows and heights around the country the only way to get an accurate form of notation for tidal height is to have a fixed point. This was fixed at Newlyn in Cornwall at its LAT (lowest astronomical tide) and all heights quoted on charts are above or below this height. So at Upnor the deep water channel on the chart shows a depth of 5.1 m which is chart datum figure, the true depth is this figure plus the tidal height figure we have just worked out, so chart datum 5.1m + tide height 5m = 10.1m.

Many areas on the chart are coloured yellow which at first glance would seem to indicate they would dry out at low water, indeed the heights shown are underlined which mean they are drying heights above chart datum. However we have to add the height of low water to this figure to see if they do dry out. At MLWS tide height at Upnor is 0.5m. The mud adjacent to Hoo Island shows a drying height of 0.9m so the drying height exceeds the tide height by 0.4m so it does dry out. However it had been MLWN the tide height would have been 1.4m and would exceed the drying height by 0.5 m and so would be underwater (just!!).

There is a rule called the twelfths

Hours before HW	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Direction	270	267	264	261	258	255	252	249	246	243	240	237	234	231	228	225
Rate in Knots	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6
Hours after HW	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32
Direction	222	225	228	231	234	237	240	243	246	249	252	255	258	261	264	267
Rate in Knots	1.6	1.5	1.4	1.3	1.2	1.1	1.0	0.9	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.1

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So much for coming events. Now for news from the Sailing Committee.

We recently aired the old chestnut of the effect of Folly and Darnett beacons on the course you've to sail. This rule (club SI 9.1) was amended for good reasons in 2002, and it is interpreted such that boats are merely forbidden from passing between the beacons and adjacent land (a passage which might be dangerous). Course setters must remember to include appropriate marks (including such as Folly & Darnett beacons) in courses that are intended to exclude passage through e.g. Hoo and South Yantlett Creeks.

Another club SI that was looked at was the finishing time limit. We seemed to be getting the situation arising more than we wanted of the fastest boat in a fleet finishing just within the time limit, while other boats that might have been handicapped lower, and might even have been winning, were excluded for being too late. To make things fairer, and to ensure course setters give due regard to the slower boats in their fleet, SI 13.1 has been amended to read:

The time limit in class and club series events will be 13:00 for a.m. races and 17:30 for p.m. races for the first boat; other boats not finishing by 13:30 or 18:00 respectively shall be scored DNF.
This will be implemented from the Late Summer points series, i.e. 23rd July, onwards.

So you have at least 30 minutes to finish after the first boat. In principle, this should not on average lead to shorter courses, it should just exclude the extreme ones. Indeed, with the right interplay between course setters, safety boats and race officers, it should be possible to set interesting courses and have them shortened at the appropriate times. Course setters need to include enough marks in the second half of the course so that it can be shortened, preferably by flying flags S over C at a mark to return the fleet directly to the club line. Safety boat crews need to ensure that they have the flags and writing materials, and that they keep the RO informed of progress, and the RO needs to monitor the likely finish times of fleets and order a timely shortening as appropriate. We won't always get it right, but if we're all pulling in the same direction, things can improve.

On the subject of number of crew, e.g. singlehanding a two-man boat, we agreed a couple of years ago to allow deviation from the class rules in series races only, provided no great problems or objections arose. We're looking at that again; if you have any strong views, please let your fleet captain, the Sailing Secretary or a flag officer know. We won't be able to please everyone but hopefully the majority.

There is however a big danger of it sailing away – so hang on to something.

Right Line

Righting the boat is straightforward provided you have tied a righting line to the base of the mast. The line is then thrown over the top hull and twisted around the your trapeze hook. Trapezing from the lower hull soon rights the boat. If you're not heavy enough for this your compatriot stands on your chest! It sounds dramatic but it works surprisingly well.

Enough of this. I really want to talk about racing boats, so I'll see what reaction I get to this article before I decide the content of the next. It could be about racing a Hobie cat, or about the Laser 4000 which some of you will have noticed I sail or it could be about some other class which some kind club member has given me the opportunity to try (I'd love to try a Miracle).



Coming up : the Laser 4000 - here Mark Heather and Doug Horner on their way to 8th in the Hoo Freezer. Photo Peter Horner

Medium Fleet Message

To date the wind has not really played its part, with mainly very light wind races. The dilemma when setting the course is, do we try going down river looking/hoping the wind will fill in or keep the course close to the club so at least we can all get back in. Having tried both the answer is: whatever one does is wrong. Nevertheless, the number of boats signing on is still very healthy.

The Phantoms are now up to nine boats but attendance is thin and patchy. The L2000's are perhaps the best attendees but numbers are static and the Wayfarers are not exactly numerous thus far. The Laser singlehanders in their various guises, like the Phantoms look strong on paper but need to get far more on the water. Maybe the Kestrels can turn on the charm and make the break through. An outsider for growing numbers could be the 3000 fleet. Suitable for all lightweight sailors, new boats at good prices and good quality second-hand boats at even cheaper prices. Rumour has it 2 or 3 are thinking of swapping over to them *[time I changed class, before the competition gets too hot. Ed.]*

As some of you will know, I have asked various groupings within in the Medium fleet to nominate someone to come to the occasional Sailing Committee meeting, this is just to allow more people to have a better idea of what we are trying to achieve. They are under no other obligation so don't try and put them under pressure to do anything else.

The Pursuit Races are coming up on the Bank Holiday Mondays a chance for all to get a good result. Do try and do the Grand Prix, a small slice of adventure in normally uncharted water and the Medway Regatta the best Open Meeting training/simulation without having to travel. *[And if you do the Marathon too, you've got the set. Ed.]*

Brian Reeve
Phantom 1145



Martin Brown and Amanda Randall's Buzz comes under pressure from Rebecca Jones' Laser. Photo David Hudson



The Medway as it was and as it is now. It seems we have more sailing water than in the past. North Marsh has shrunk into Nor Marsh, several Hoo Islands have become one, and the Upnors were not noteworthy.



There's no date on the old map, but as it features Cockham Woods and Gillingham Forts but not 'our' forts, Folly and Darnett, it's likely to be 17th or 18th century. The Editor will be happy to e-mail anybody a copy if they would like one.

Whatever, the large expanse of water and creeks is a real appetiser for both the 'Round the Creeks Cruise' advertised opposite and the Grand Prix, both of which aim to make best use of a high tide.



Photo David Hudson

way and it goes down. It does require a real burst of energy though because the spinnakers are big and easily go into the water, so both hoisting and dropping must be done as fast as possible.

These are beautiful boats to sail, so exhilarating they give tremendous pleasure when you get things right. They bite when you get things wrong, but then they wouldn't be quite so exhilarating if it was easy. I count myself lucky to have sailed them and hope I will again.

Short, Fast & Hairy

Meanwhile I've been sailing some other exciting machines, one is only 16 foot long and is faster than a 49er on a beam reach. Its a Hobie 16 - a twin trapeze cat. The Portsmouth Yardstick suggests extremely fast compared to the 49er - but I have to say I don't believe it - in lighter winds and beating or sailing deep downwind they are not so fast. They are quite amazing machines, bags of power and stability heeling wise. But fore and aft they are something the monohull sailor would not anticipate. The hulls have very little buoyancy so above a force 4 you have to be really careful not to put a bow into the back of a wave. If you do the hull drives deeper and deeper, and stops. The rest of the boat and the two crew on the wire continue forward at speed resulting in a huge cartwheel of crew, helm and hull. When it happened to me I just curled up into a ball and prayed I didn't hit anything. Sure enough I miraculously became unhooked and ended up in the water not too far in front of where the boat had come to rest. Avoiding this "pitch pole" is a major preoccupation in waves and strong winds which means the crew spend a lot of time running backwards and forwards along the outside of the gunwale with the helm easing and trimming the mainsheet. If the helm is quick he can often save a pitch pole and just turn it into a mere capsized.

I say a mere capsized because I was of the view that a capsized with a cat is a big production - its not. I was surprised to find that righting the boat is quite easy and there is very little danger of it capsizing again.

sonable reach into the mark. The alternative view is to bang out to the favoured side and gybe when you reach the layline. This cuts down the gybes but it's very difficult to judge the layline at long range.

Well our scenario has taken us down towards the leeward mark and now we have to drop the kite. As you know the way to remove the power is to bear away and so hopefully we've judged our approach so there is room for this. Experience in slower boats would suggest a drop and then a gybe, if a gybe is required. A better way for these boats a gybe/drop. My reasoning being that the speed lost by lowering the spinnaker would mean a low speed gybe. Now these are tippy boats and have large sails and as I've explained before they are easy to gybe when the apparent wind is light, i.e. the boat is going fast.

Gybe/Drop Gorgeous

So I would go for a gybe and follow the exact procedure up to the point where the crew would start trapezing. At that point the helm would counter the heel as the crew uncleats and starts pulling on the retrieval line. Once uncleated the spinnaker has to be retrieved rapidly but the crew does have enough mobility to assist in keeping the boat upright, he daren't pause to hook on though, so the boat should be on a broad reach unless the wind is pretty light. If the timing is right the crew should be ready to hook on and move out as the helm heads up close to the mark.

Here are some little technical points you may not have realised.

Both these boats have self tacking jibs - they don't need tending between gybes. You ease but don't release at the windward mark and forget about it until you reach the leeward mark.

Both these boats have a single spinnaker halyard/retrieval line which also deploys the pole.

There is not a separate rope for the pole as on the RS400 and there are no pole tweakers (which angle the pole) as on the RS400 and Laser 4000. It's all quite simple, you pull the halyard one way and the kite goes up, you uncleat and pull the same rope the other



Photo David Hudson

MIRACLE FLEET SUMMER CRUISES

*The Miracle Fleet are organising three this Year.
Other suitable boats are welcome to join us .
Club boats are available*

QUEENBOROUGH CRUISE SATURDAY AUGUST 16th

*A repeat of last years successful cruise...
9 miles, 2-2.5 hours duration each way,
briefing 10.00 hrs finish approx 17-30 hrs.
Pub lunch at The Old House at Home, Queenborough*

AYLESFORD CRUISE SATURDAY SEPT 9th

*13 miles, approx duration 3 hours each way.
An interesting sail in conditions not usually encountered,
with a pub lunch as usual
(thanks to Peter Hampson for guidance)*

ROUND THE CREEKS CRUISE

*A cruise at the top of tide around the creeks and islands not normally visited
with a possible landing for picnic lunch.
date not yet fixed depending on tides and club events*

*If Interested contact Paul Nudds Miracle 1808 on
paulethill@btinternet.com, or 020 8859 1255*

Make Your Crews Life Easier!!

How many of you helms at some point have thought, "I wish my crew was quicker" or "I wish they would get these tacks/gybes right"? Well the simple truth is that a crew's ability to perform manoeuvres is based on three key factors: Practice, Good Communication and GOOD HELMING!!

Having crewed in various types of boats over the years, I've taken my fair share of ear bashing for not doing my job properly! However it wasn't until recently that I did some helming in two-man boats that I realised how many of my mistakes could have easily been avoided through the helms end of the boat.

Allow Your Crew Time!

I believe too many helm/crew teams are in this habit of sailing along and following this sequence of - HELM: Ready to gybe? CREW: Ready! HELM: Goh! (All from the days of when we first learnt to sail.) In all boats, unless you've sailed with each other for a long period of time or can read each other's minds, this just isn't enough. Gybing ESPECIALLY!! Helms, tell your crews what you plan to do LONG before it happens. This gives the crew time to check their area of the boat (and if need be, sort things out). Are the sheets lying in the right place? Are they knotted up? Is anything obstructing the kite halyard for hoisting/dropping? These are all things that need to be considered long before each manoeuvre but how many honestly give your crews that much time?

Consider this new sequence of communication as an example for gybing.

HELM: Right, I want to gybe over there just before that buoy. CREW: Ok, let me just check the boat..... Ok I'm clear. **15 seconds later** HELM: Are you ready for that gybe? CREW: Yeah I'm ready. HELM: And... 2... 1... GO!!

Not only does this allow for perfect preparation of the gybe but also (equally importantly), keeps your crew informed and very calm through the whole manoeuvre. There's nothing worse than a high-speed gybe and the crew having a last minute adrenaline rush and getting all flustered in the middle of the boat, it's just not quick.

Steer Smoothly!

Every part of sailing requires smooth, sensitive steering. It's often very well done on straight lines by all, though seems to be completely lost

- for the helmsperson to head up in a progressive manner considering only the power generated by the rig and not be influenced by the direction of the next mark.

It would be great if the helmsperson were able to follow a constant radius curve painted on the water's surface. You might be wondering what radius and through what angle? These parameters are effected by wind speed but a 2 boat length radius, and a 90 degree turn is a good starting point. The pause would be after about 60 degrees of turn.

Again you find yourself out on the wire and the power controlled by the heading of the boat. Head up and there's more power, head down and you are sailing more in the direction of the mark, but losing speed. The challenge is finding the right compromise. On the Medway quite large changes of course are required to counter quite large changes of wind speed and the most difficult judgement is how to come into the leeward mark with speed.

Deep trouble

Next time you are watching asymmetrics follow their course's into the leeward mark - you'll often see them cruising into the mark on a run with spinnakers empty because they didn't get downwind enough. Alternatively you'll see them having to put in two gybes close to the mark to achieve that bit more depth.

Such mistakes are bad in 49ers and 600s because these boats lose such a lot of speed by going too deep or gybing too often. My feelings are that you should aim to go out to the favoured side of the course then gybe so as to meet the other layline far enough out to leave a rea-



Photo David Hudson

keep planing however high it takes you, unlike say a RS400 or 4000 which in light winds would probably get to leeward fast by displacement sailing and going as deep as it can commensurate with keeping the spinnaker full.

Gybe!

The helmsman bears away so there is less pressure on the rig, the crew and helm therefore move in off the trapeze. The bear-away continues and helm and crew find themselves standing alongside the boom in the middle of the boat with negligible apparent wind. For a moment the crew keeps the spinnaker sheeted on what will be the new windward side. Somewhere during the bear-away the helmsman will have eased the main a bit. By standing both helm and crew will have become unhooked and the boat will begin to lean over towards them. They duck under the boom, much like a tack, the helmsman continues the turn at this slow rate (which is a fiddle in the 800 because he has to pass the long tiller extension right round the back and keep his balance). Its easier in the 49er because the boat is more stable and, he can drop one tiller extension and pick up the other one on the new windward side.

And here is a key moment in the gybe - the turn must be stopped. The length of this pause is dependent on the skill of the crews but you'll recall I said power is dependent on angle. There must be a pause or the boat will power up before the crew and the helm get their weight out on the racks. So the boat is now running very broad on the new gybe and as the crew and helm move outwards the helm is gradually heading up which applies more and more power. I notice that Olympic crews pause barely at all - with club sailors a pause is noticeable, and with novices - well they don't pause at all!

The crew will have dropped the windward sheet which allows the spinnaker almost by magic to blow around the jib luff. He hooks on and goes out as he sheets in. By now the apparent wind will be having an affect so the helm can start easing his weight out on the trapeze as he sheets in.

I reckon the important things are

- to turn the boat at a steady rate through the gybe,
- stop the turn just after gybe is complete
- the crew to be ready to handle the small heeling force immediately after the boom has gone across,

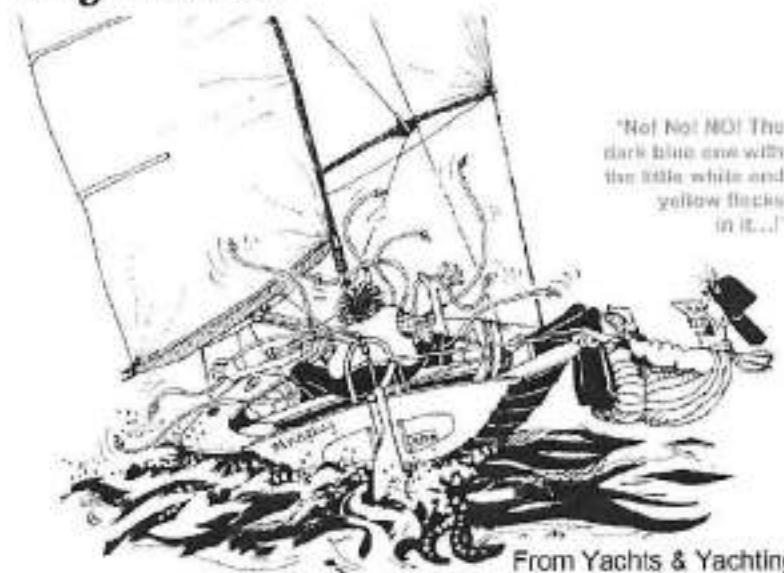
when it comes to manoeuvres. Too many times are crews on the receiving end of a boat being thrown through a tack or gybe and being expected to clean up the mess. Every now and then there's a crew who seems to be able to dance across a boat with perfect balance like a 'boat ninja'. But I challenge that crew to be able to be so light footed with a different helm to their usual. A helm who steers smoothly through tacks and gybes and keeps the boat flat, makes their crews work substantially easier! And these are the helms who seem to have these light footed crews we all wonder about.

And last but certainly not least, PRACTICE!

Every Sunday we get long blasting courses with few tacks or gybes (which in a RS600, I'm certainly not complaining about) which can be quite fun. But you're not going to be improving manoeuvres very quickly on these style courses. The odd Saturday here and there (if not all!) spent tacking and gybing will reap sizeable benefits, which I assure you will not go unnoticed.

Lastly to all you helms, I'll say this: indeed quick hoists/drops/gybes can be worth serious boat lengths over a race course but a rushed crew, tangled up in the middle of the boat, often leads to a race-costing capsize!

Doug Horner



"No! No! NO! The dark blue one with the little white and yellow flecks in it..."

From Yachts & Yachting

Saturday Racing

Wayfarers have been at it for years, and MYC boats have been reciprocating with us on Sundays occasionally, but not many WSC members are aware that also non-Wayfarers are welcome to join in racing at MYC on Saturdays. The start is at 14:10. If you want to be included in safety procedures, you may sign on at the bottom of the appropriate MYC signing on sheet (Wayfarers or Dinghy Handicap), inserting (WSC) by your details.

So, if you can't make Sunday racing, or if you just want more, sail upstream on a Saturday. Remember to allow enough time to get the course off any of the MYC dinghy sailors (they use pre-set, numbered courses; if you race regularly, you can get a copy of the course sheet).

Duty Headaches

Race officers and boat crews have encountered problems recently when they arrived at the club and found vital equipment missing or hidden away somewhere unexpected, be it ground tackle for buoys, flags, clip boards or even just useable pencils.

Please then, when on duty, return things to where they belong, and if you notice something is incomplete or missing, whether it's your fault or not, ensure that the CDO enters it in his book; there will be no witch-hunt and you will not be billed!

Club Open Day

This is once again being held on the Saturday before the Medway Marathon Sunday, and thus this year on 1st July.

Have you promised to give a friend, colleague or relative a sail? (and if not, why not?!). If so, this is the time to do it; depending upon their competence and the weather, they might even like to go on to join in the Evening Race at 16:30.

Alternatively, they might prefer to stay ashore and watch your genius in action while anticipating the evening meal being organised by the heroes of the House Committee.

While you're obviously free to arrive at any time, to give a focus this year an official start time for activity has been set at 13:00.

What's it like....

Sailing the RS 800 and the 49er?

Part 3

by Stewart Robertson

In the previous newsletter I was taking you downwind in one of these exciting boats and you'll recall we bore away at the windward mark and were flying at speed off to one side of the course. Power as you know comes from the wind but in these boats, wind comes from speed (apparent wind).

These boats are unlike other boats where wind develops power and the speed comes from power. It's a cumulative effect in these boats - the faster you go the more wind you get the faster you go. But you've guessed it, it's never that simple because your angle is critical, head too high and you are simply overpowered (you can't argue with 20 plus square metres of spinnaker), head too low and the apparent wind goes suddenly in front and the spinnaker collapses. Yes I'll repeat that last statement because it sounds so improbable. Head too low and the spinnaker collapses because the wind is coming from in front! Now you know why these boats are particularly difficult to sail on the Medway. A steady wind would make this critical navigation easier. So where were we - about to gybe?

Back Wind

Gybing these boats is easier than you think. I know it looks unpromising, large sails and tippy hull but as you've seen these boats can quite easily exceed wind speed in medium breezes. Consider this, a 10 knot breeze gives you at least 12 knots of speed provided you are sailing on some sort of reach. At that speed when you turn downwind you are actually going faster than the wind and the apparent wind is dead ahead. There is no pressure in the sails.

Hopefully you'll gybe when you're lifted so that you are on the favoured tack once it is completed. You'd actually be lucky to achieve this on the Medway because most of the time you gybe to avoid the bank. Conversely in steady winds you'd be looking to gybe when you're about square to the mark. In lighter winds a little later and in stronger stuff a little earlier because you can run deeper. With these boats you have to

Centrefold: please pull out, fill in your contact details and put up poster at work, your tiddlywinks club or wherever.

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Discounts for Wilsonian Members!*
10% for cash or cheque, 5% for credit cards
(* does not include already discounted products)

Tired of Sunday Shopping?

Then try dinghy sailing and enjoy a great social life at Wilsonian Sailing Club (www.WilsonianSC.org.uk).

A family-friendly club located on the north bank of the Medway near Hoo, opposite St Mary's Island, Wilsonian S.C. offers excellent sailing between Aylesford and Queenborough.

Members race every Sunday from February to the New Year, and many cruise too, usually at weekends, though launching is possible at any time.

If you sail already, we can offer you space for your boat and/or possibilities to crew. If not, we offer training to RYA standards to get you started, with continuing support thereafter. Club boats can be hired at very reasonable rates, though most people soon choose to buy their own.

We also have a well-equipped clubhouse, with changing rooms, showers and bar, and we run a programme of social events throughout the year.

Sound interesting? Then call our membership secretary Jo Wicken, on 01474 822844 or send an e-mail to tjwicken@btinternet.com

Alternatively, contact

tel.

who will be happy to introduce you to the club.

