

Calendar

Date	Time	Event	Contact/Notes
10 June	12:25	South Kent Race	
17 June	13:55	Commodore's 3 (Ladies/Juniors a.m.)	
30 June		RIB Coxswain Refresher Day	John Gore
01 July	12:10	Wilsonian Grand Prix & Two-of-a-Kind	
07 July	13:00	Open Day. Evening Race (16:25)	
08 July		Medway Marathon	www.medwayyachtclub.com
14 July	10:55	Medway Dinghy Regatta & BBQ	
15 July	09:55		
28 July		RIB Coxswain Refresher Day	John Gore
04 Aug		SRC (VHF) Radio course	John Gore
21 Aug		Junior Training Week (till 25th)	Ann Heather
26 Aug	13:55	Three Race Regatta	
27 Aug	13:55	Pursuit Race	Tony Hunt
15 Sept		RIB Coxswain Refresher Day	John Gore
16 Sept	13:55	Commodore's 4 (Ladies/Juniors a.m.)	
22 Sept		WSC v MYC Interclub Challenge Finale	
29 Sept		RIB Coxswain Refresher Day	John Gore
30 Sept		Leigh Trophy (Crews' and Singlehanded Races a.m.)	
14 Oct	13:55	Commodore's 5 (Ladies/Juniors a.m.)	
20 Oct		Children in Need Sail	Tom Lambert
28 Oct	13:25	Laying-Up Cup (series race a.m.)	BST ended
04 Nov	10:25	Open Winter Series starts	

Summer 2007
Issue 88

31½

The Wilsonian Sailing Club Magazine



On the cover: Stephanie Wicken convincingly beat 14 other Toppers in the KSSA Opening Splash, to come 4th overall. Photo Jeremy Drummond

Editorial

Tony Hunt

As with all clubs, Wilsonian sees a stream of people joining and leaving, but more members mean better racing, less pressure to do duties and more chance of meeting people with whom you really click. So once again you'll find a poster in the centrespread, suitable for putting up on your workplace or social club noticeboard. Most people find the idea of going to a new club on their own quite intimidating, so if you could add your contact details and provide them with a 'safe' way into the club, so much the better.

The next issue will be the season's round up at the end of November, so if you've any observations to make on the way the season's gone, or the club is running, or indeed how your season has gone, please write in. Any length you like, any style you like (bearing in mind it's a family magazine...)

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

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

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MYC Easter Egg Race 2007 by Ian Foxwell

Almost perfect conditions greeted the competitors for the 2007 Medway Yacht Club Easter Egg Race, which was this year once again held on Easter Monday. Well, OK, so we could have done with a little more wind and a few less gusts; however, the warm temperatures, glorious sunshine and favourable tide more than made up for this.

The upwind start into the lee of Upnor Castle caused a few headaches right at the start, as did the large vessel that sliced through the fleet on this first beat, but once around this first mark the fleet settled down into a long run all the way down to 23 to be followed by a long beat all the way back.

First to return to the Medway Club Line at the head of the 22 boats was the RS800 of Ian Parris and Nicola Smith; however it was the V3000 of Tony Hunt, crewed on this occasion by fellow 3000 owner Peter Heyes, who took the win, and thus ownership of the biggest Easter egg. Ian Foxwell and Hannah Packman's 29er ended up claiming second, and Mark Heather and Doug Homer in their 4000 third.

Because of the light winds the Toppers had their own, slightly shorter course to tackle, and after a good battle it was Jonny Hewat that took the victory from M Bentley in second.

So after a great afternoon's sailing, and the packing away that results, all that remained for the competitors was the walk along the river to the Medway YC club house for a well-deserved drink and prize giving with eggs for all and stories a plenty to be told.

A big thank you to all concerned especially Stuart Bailey for all the preparation behind the scenes, Catherine Gore and her team in the race box, Steve Walder-Davis, John Gore, and associated crews (sorry I don't know your names) in the rescue boats and Brian Lamb for keeping us all in check at Willies.

1	V3000	Tony Hunt & Peter Heyes	01:22:05
2	29ER	Ian Foxwell & Hannah Packman	01:23:56
3	4000	Mark Heather & Doug Homer	01:24:47
4	Wayfarer	Roger Gibbs & ?	01:28:46
5	Wayfarer	J Goudie & ?	01:29:53
6	RS800	Ian Parris & Nicola Smith	01:32:02

Ice Breaker Race 2007

A Windy Start to the Season

Twenty-nine boats were readied for the main season opener, the Ice Breaker, on 25th March but nine decided not to race when they felt the full force of the wind at the water's edge. Of the rest, only ten finished the race. The race was won by Ian Foxwell/Hannah Packman in their 29er followed by Chris Ashby/Mick Smith (RS400) and John Shenton/Jonathan Osgood (Osprey).



Ice Breaker winners, Ian & Hannah
Photo: Peter Horner

1st	29er	Ian Foxwell	Hannah Packman	924	01:24:57
2nd	RS 400	Chris Ashby	Mike Smith	952	01:29:40
3rd	Osprey	John Shenton	Jonathan Osgood	940	01:29:57
4th	Wayfarer	Brian Lamb	Ian Watson	1099	01:31:00
5th	RS 200	Lucy Heather	Katie Parris	1059	01:31:57
6th	Tasar	Malcolm Levey	Neil Lamprell	1023	01:39:59
7th	Vortex A	Phil Harris		930	01:41:08
8th	Laser Radial	John Player		1101	01:43:37
9th	Laser 5000	John Tinnams	Steve Tinnams	846	01:49:19
10th	Laser EPS	Richard Metcalfe		1013	01:54:48

From the Commodore Colin Treadwell

Despite Jane and others often referring to me as a certain Mr Meldrew, I just cannot believe it. Here we are about half way through the season and I haven't yet started sailing with a vengeance. At this rate, I may as well lay the boat up and try again next year.

The General Committee continues in its relentless task of ensuring the club remains well organised and managed, the Sailing Committee continue to ensure we all enjoy our sailing activities and a considerable number of individuals continue their excellent hard work in supporting the Club in so many ways. I know I have mentioned this on numerous occasions, and at risk of repeating myself, for which I make no apologies, I am just amazed at the way certain people just get on and do things to help the Club thrive and progress. So many things get done behind the scenes that I feel sure we often take for granted, yet each requires the time and effort (sometimes quite considerable) of dedicated individuals or groups working out of sight and out of mind. Examples include the emptying of the cesspit, rubbish removal, bottle removal, re-stocking of fuel, gas, food and drink, maintenance and servicing of Club boats, general repairs, servicing of the electrics and general cleaning (including such charming places as the gents' urinals!!). All these things get done without most of us even giving a second thought to when they are done and by which fellow club member(s). I would like to sincerely congratulate all of them and indeed those responsible for all the other functions not listed above.

We have now purchased the last of our four boats under the Club Boat Development Plan, being another RS Vision and another RS Feva. Thanks to Paul Thorpe and Grahame Smith for collecting them.

On behalf of all Club members I would like to congratulate young Tom Lambert for the sterling work he did in securing funding from the local council to the tune of £8,000, sufficient to cover the cost of the two new boats. Tom put together and delivered an excellent presentation, on his own, to a group of council members. Well done and thanks to Tom.

I am also pleased to advise of the purchase of a third RIB, being a smaller 4.3m Humber with a 40hp engine. The General Committee have asked Tom Sims to name her in memory of Barbara. Thanks to Brian Lamb and Roy Winnett for driving all the way to Humber to collect and deliver her to the Club.

We have now passed the May deadline for unused dinghy park spaces, so any spaces not used so far this season will now be re-allocated to others requiring a space.

You will no doubt have noticed two further developments to the Club, namely the installation of new water heaters in the changing rooms and the new, brighter, flooring in the foyer. Thanks to Peter Hampson and Roy Winnett respectively.

Discipline and control have once again been brought to bear on the dinghy park, thanks to John and Janet Shenton.

We will shortly be installing a drinks cooler in the bar, and so should be able to once again serve cold drinks.

New smoking laws come into effect from 1 July, so smoking will not be permitted in the Clubhouse after this date and notices will be displayed accordingly at each exit. Since many people eat on the balcony, and given the close proximity to the internal Clubhouse, the General Committee have decided to ban smoking from the balcony as well as indoors. Your understanding in this regard would be most appreciated.

On a recommendation by the Sailing Committee, the Club have adopted the RYA Racing Charter, which reinforces good behaviour and sportsmanship with a view to attracting people, particularly youngsters, into the sport of sailing and thereafter retaining them. I believe further information will be provided elsewhere in this edition of the magazine, so I will say no more on this subject.

I would like to remind everyone that the use of hosepipes for the washing down of boats was recommended by the Sailing Committee, and endorsed by the General Committee, on the strict understanding that it be undertaken on the beach and not in the dinghy park. I understand that a number of boats have been hosed down in the dinghy park in recent weeks, so I would ask everyone to be clear on this point and to duly observe the Club's policy in this regard.

I sincerely hope that you are all enjoying your sailing this season and hope to see you all at the forthcoming Club Open Day, Grand Prix, Medway Marathon and Medway Regatta. On the subject of the Regatta, you will be pleased to hear that our sponsors will this year be donating good quality polo-neck shirts to all entrants, in lieu of the round-neck versions provided last year. It will be worth entering simply to get a good quality tee-shirt!

Hope to see you on the water very soon.

Colin Treadwell

Topper & Laser Open Report by Roy Winnett

Nineteen enthusiastic Topper sailors gathered at Wilsonian Sailing Club for their open meeting on 19th May. A steady F.3-4 south-westerly, plenty of sunshine and a sparkling sea gave excellent, though testing conditions. A lapping course, one race in the morning and two after lunch, with two count, was the format.

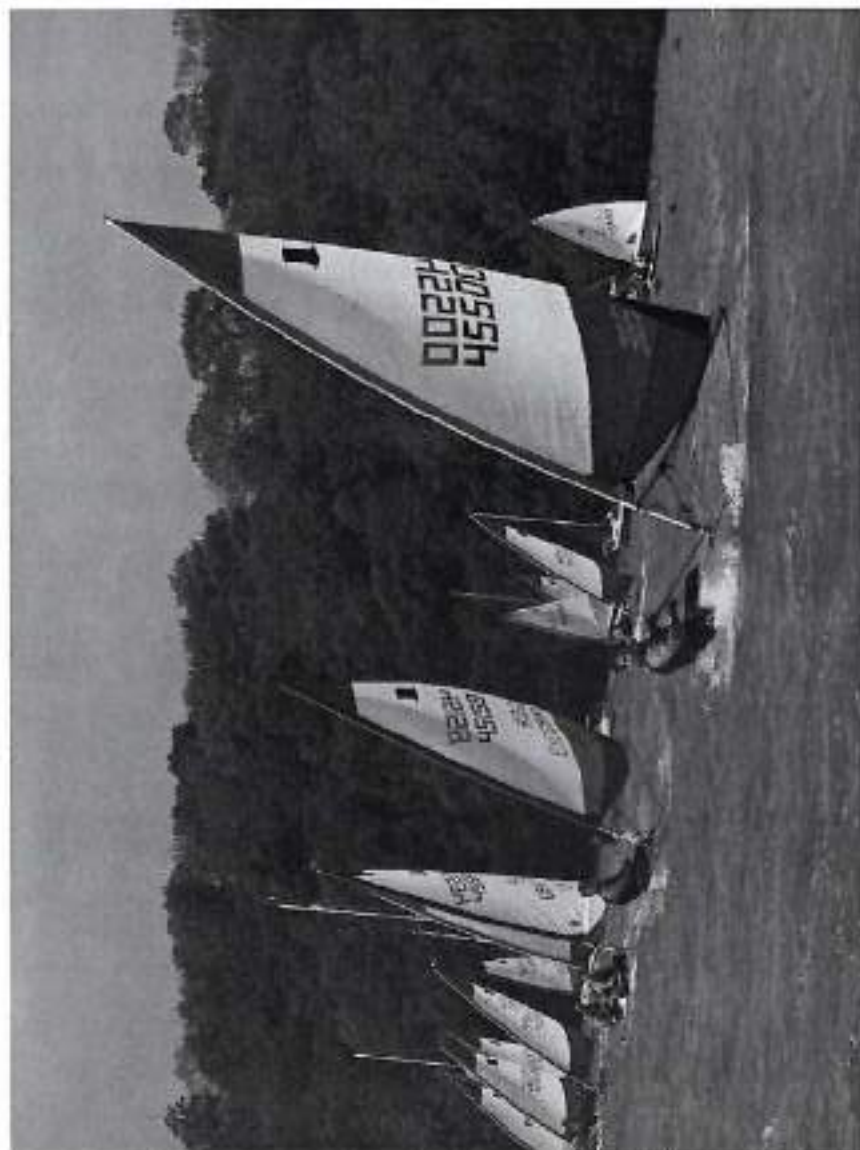
A general recall was required in the first race, but they got away clear on the second attempt. Jordan Taylor, Jonathan Hewat and Matt Thomas were soon in the leading pack with Stephanie Wicken chasing behind. On the final round Stephanie Wicken eased ahead to win with Hewat second and Taylor third.

In Race 2, Taylor suffered a broken boom, so was unfortunately out of the competition. Hewat, Wicken and George Spedding shared the lead, but a dip and 720 penalty for Wicken allowed Hewat to win with Spedding second and Wicken third.

Hewat was soon in front in Race 3 and led all the way with a comfortable win to lift the top prize; Wicken had a disappointing 7th but still held second overall. While another second for Spedding ensured third prize, a 3rd for Peter Grassick and 4th for Thomas secured fourth and fifth prizes respectively.

Despite opening entry to all rig types of Lasers this year, there was only one Laser entry. The 20-odd WSC Laser sailors might like to feed back to the Sailing Committee why they don't sail in their own open meeting.

1st	45509	Jonathan Hewat	Medway YC	2	1	1	2
2nd	44304	Stephanie Wicken	Wilsonian SC	1	3	7	4
3rd	45594	George Spedding	Queen Mary SC	6	2	2	4
4th	45159	Peter Grassick	Papercourt SC	9	4	3	7
5th	46015	Matt Thomas	Papercourt SC	4	6	4	8
6th	46618	Alexander LeGesick	Wilsonian SC	5	5	8	10
7th	44318	Josh McLynn	Wimbledon Park SC	8	8	5	13
8th	45228	Finn Calger-Smith	Wimbledon Park SC	13	7	9	16
9th	45367	Thomas Weekes	Maldenhead SC	7	9	12	16
10th	45916	Jonty Freeman	NSSC	12	10	10	20
11th	44869	Jordan Taylor	West Withering SC	3	DNF	DNF	23
12th	44516	William Bovington	NSSC	11	12	13	23



Cruising Secretary Wanted

To co-ordinate such as the Aylesford and Queenborough Cruises, plus further events according to demand.

The job entails selecting and advertising suitable dates, times and courses, acting as a contact person for participants and liaising with the Sailing Committee to ensure that such rescue boats as may be required will be available. A set of Cruising Guidelines is available.

Please contact Andy Pickrell or Tony Hunt (see inside front cover for details).

Death of Former Member Alan Dutton

It is with sadness that I report the death of Alan Dutton, cousin of our own Bob.

To newer members Alan will not be known, but with older members he will be remembered as a longstanding member of the GP 14 fleet and a prime mover in all the early construction work within the club.

Although he was involved in many projects the one he is most associated with will be the down-stream slipway.

As prime leader his knowledge, enthusiasm, and sheer determination resulted in a construction that has stood the test of time and tide, and has been an asset to the club over the years.

Even after emigrating to Canada the lure of our club was ever present to Alan, there were frequent holiday trips back to the UK to visit and of course Wilsonian, and he was often seen sporting a WSC tee-shirt.

It is therefore fitting that his family have offered a memorial trophy in recognition of his affection for WSC.

The committee have therefore accepted this kind gesture and allocated a prize for the winning Junior in the Commodore's Series.

Alan will forever be part of the camaraderie that is Wilsonian Sailing Club.

Brian Warwick May 2007

Sailing Secretary's Report

After a promising April, we've had a dire May, weather-wise. Either too much or too little wind, and at the time of writing, cold! But as ever, it has been impossible to predict what will happen until you arrive at the club, or sometimes, at the start of the race. Thus we've had instances of huge winds abating and drifters filling in to a nice F.3. So the motto remains, come down and be prepared to sail even when it looks unlikely at home.

Considering the weather, turnouts have been good, and with a few exceptions - notably the Bank Holiday Monday Mini Races and the following Bank Holiday Monday Pursuit Race (there's pattern there), the show has gone on. Still, statistically, it must now get better, and hopefully in time for our bigger events - the South Kent, the Grand Prix (and it's associated two-of-a-kind, whose fleets will start five minutes after the corresponding mass-start fleets), the Marathon and the Dinghy Regatta. I can't stress strongly enough to the newer members that these events are there for all to enjoy, not just the experts, and are usually more memorable than the common round of points racing.

Please study Alison Williams' article elsewhere in this issue, on the RYA Rules Disputes procedures, and give us your feedback as to whether you think they are a good idea for the club to adopt.

Otherwise, the sailing Committee has decided to allow the use of alternative-manufacturer sails for Laser 1's in racing, provided they are no bigger than official laser sails, except in open meetings where visitors have a right to expect boats will comply strictly with their class rules. As someone pointed out, however, unless you score well, it's unlikely anyone will protest you...

You'll also see elsewhere that we're seeking a Cruising Secretary to organise some club cruises. This job will be very much what the incumbent chooses to make of it. It might be merely suggesting times and dates for cruises in company, or it might entail detailed planning and liaising with the Sailing Committee to obtain the use of a rescue boat for the day.

Also we now have the opportunity to points/trophy race both days at the weekend now that MYC have invited us to participate fully in their Saturday activities, including handicap calculations and a trophy for the best five results from now till the end of the season. A great opportunity, and you don't need to have too many Saturdays free to get your score.

KSSA Opening Splash

The Kent Schools Sailing Association 'Opening Splash' Regatta took place under bright skies and in light winds which caused challenges for the student sailors and organisers alike.

24 boats entered the regatta and were disappointed to get no morning racing because of the very light winds and the strong spring tide. Over lunch the wind increased slightly and two races around a triangular course were possible.

The competitive start of the first race saw Chloe Martin (Bough Beech) over the start line early in her Laser Radial so despite her strong racing she was not placed in the overall results. This left the field in the first race open for Callum McKenzie (Bewl Valley) and Paul Turnill (Bewl Valley) to battle it out for first and second in their standard rig Lasers. In the Topper class Stephanie Wicken (Wilsonian) just managed to overcome the challenge of Jonathan Hewat (Medway) to be first home in this class.

Chloe Martin was well positioned at the start of the second race and stormed off the line. She kept up with the standard rig Lasers and claimed first place once allowance was made for handicaps. Callum McKenzie and Paul Turnill were again fighting it out at the front of the fleet and tied for second place on handicap. Again Stephanie Wicken dominated the Topper class fleet of 15 boats to be first home in the class and fourth overall.

As the afternoon wore on the wind dropped again so no more racing was possible. This meant that overall Callum McKenzie narrowly won the regatta from Paul Turnill. Jack Turnbull (Redoubt) was third in his Streaker. Stephanie Wicken was first in the Toppers and fourth overall. It was a tough day for the double handers and Alec Rogers and Arran Smith (Wilsonian) were first double hander home in their 29er and 16th overall.

Pos	Class	Sail No	Helm	Club
1st	Laser	181374	Callum McKenzie	Bewl Valley SC
2nd	Laser	165413	Paul Turnill	Bewl Valley SC
3rd	Streaker	1478	Jack Turnbull	Redoubt SC
4th	Topper	22418	Stephanie Wicken	Wilsonian SC
5th	Topper	43538	Richard Thomas	Broadstairs
6th	Topper	45500	Jonathan Hewat	Medway YC

South Kent Race

The 2007 edition of this event looked to be in some doubt, as a hazy start to the day with some forecasts of less than 3mph made it appear that we wouldn't make it round the course. But the sun came out and got the sea-breeze into full swing, so that by the time boats reached the South Kent buoy (*note to self: it's the red one. Ed*) after a square beat all the way down there, the wind was up to around 10 knots. This meant planing home down the square run for the racier asymmetrics, enabling them to counter the benefit enjoyed by those with symmetric spinnakers of being able to sail straight home. Not such good news for the heavier asymmetrics, who sailed a longer course with little to show in terms of speed gain. Despite the 'slow' wind direction, however, all the fleet was back at the club in good time.

1st	V 3000	3633	Tony Hunt	Suzanne Hall	1010
2nd	Wayfarer	10201	Brian Lamb	Bobbie Burnell	1059
3rd	Wayfarer	9812	John Goudie	Susan Raiser	1099
4th	RS 800	872	Ian Parris	Hannah Packman	822
5th	Musto Skiff	291	Grahame Smith		875
6th	Laser 4000	4358	Stewart Robertson	Sonja Riley	906
7th	RS 500	552	Andy Picardi	Caroline Alexander	960
8th	Osprey	1292	Martin Jones	Jonathan Osgood	940
9th	Laser 5000	5302	John Tinnams	Steve Tinnams	846
10th	59ER	111	Tim Kit	Paul Rodgers	900
11th	Laser 2000	21792	Roy Winnett	Geoff Lambert	1089
12th	Mirage	3737	Martin Smith	Mike Groom	1178
13th	Laser 2000	2305	Nik Antoniadis	Cathy Evans	1089
14th	Wayfarer	7508	Roy Laphom	Dave Burfoot	1099
15th	Laser	172348	Gordon Belcher		1078
16th	RS 400	1283	Chris Ashby	Mick Smith	952
17th	Kestrel	1816	Bob Dutton	Peter Good	1038
18th	Mirage	3638	Ben Brooks	Tom Brooks	1178
19th	Buzz	965	Peter Horner	David Brooker	1005
20th	RS Vision	807	Steve Drein	Richard Aylant	1079

Saturday Combined MYC-WSC Racing

Medway Yacht Club have invited us to join in their Saturday racing. We were, of course, always welcome informally, but for non-Wayfarers that meant simply sailing round a course without any consequences.

From now on, MYC will time each boat and give a handicap result, to be issued with Roy's results on Sunday. Moreover, those results will count in a trophy series, running from this Saturday to the end of the season, with your five best results to count.

Signing on/off is at WSC, the entry list being sent by radio to MYC, at which time the course will also be obtained for you all. You'll find a list of courses on the noticeboard by the bar, also the SI's and an MYC chart which is very familiar except for the welcome addition of a B.OOZE buoy (not as good as it sounds - it seems to be just another orange can like MYA1, but in a useful position - we may well use it ourselves at some stage).

Unless something changes (and it may well do later if the numbers grow), we start with the MYC Wayfarers at 14:10, and most likely sail the same course.

After racing and for the remainder of Saturday, MYC have kindly invited us to make use of their excellent bar and restaurant facilities (where you'll find a considerable number of WSC faces already!). The only requirement is that you sign yourself in (as a bona-fide visiting yachtsman) in the book in the MYC foyer.

All in all a good opportunity for more racing and an excellent initiative that can only strengthen dinghy racing on the Medway, making it more attractive to prospective new members of both clubs.

This initiative is completely separate from the Inter-Club Challenge, which is decided on the basis of the results of the Grand Prix, the Marathon and the Finale on Saturday 22nd September.

RIB Coxswain Refresher Days

A reminder for all those who complain that they do not get enough practice driving the RIB's: John Gore (j.r.gore@btinternet.com or 01634 271250) is organising refresher days on 30th June, 28th July, 15th September and 29th September.

Of course, there are vacancies for RIB drivers and crew in the Wednesday Series if you want to practice 'live'. Contact Tony Hunt to fix a date.

Summer Work Party – Friday 29th June

Volunteers are needed to join a summer work party on Friday 29th June, to get the club prepared for our open events; the Grand Prix Sunday 1st July, the Open Day Saturday 7th July and Medway Regatta 14th & 15th July.

The main jobs will include; thoroughly cleaning all areas of the Clubhouse, tidying Dinghy Park and cutting grass, sweeping track and trimming along edges.

The club will be open from 0900hrs

Please let me know if you can attend, email: roywinnett@care4free.net

Corrigenda

Last issue's explanation of Category prizes failed to specify that two prizes are awarded for two-man sitting out boats with spinnakers - there is one for symmetric spinnaker users and another for asymmetric.

So if it's another Wayfarer day, don't despair you Laser 2000's - there's a prize reserved for you - provided you can beat the RS200's!

More on Brian Ward

Brian informs us that he's settling in well, has RO'd for his local club and is looking forward to buying such as a Shrimper. His phone number is 01752 408291 if you want a chat, or else drop in for a cup of tea.

Junior week 21st to 25th August 2007

For more information contact Ann Heather on 01322 228251

Stephanie does well in the Eric Twiname

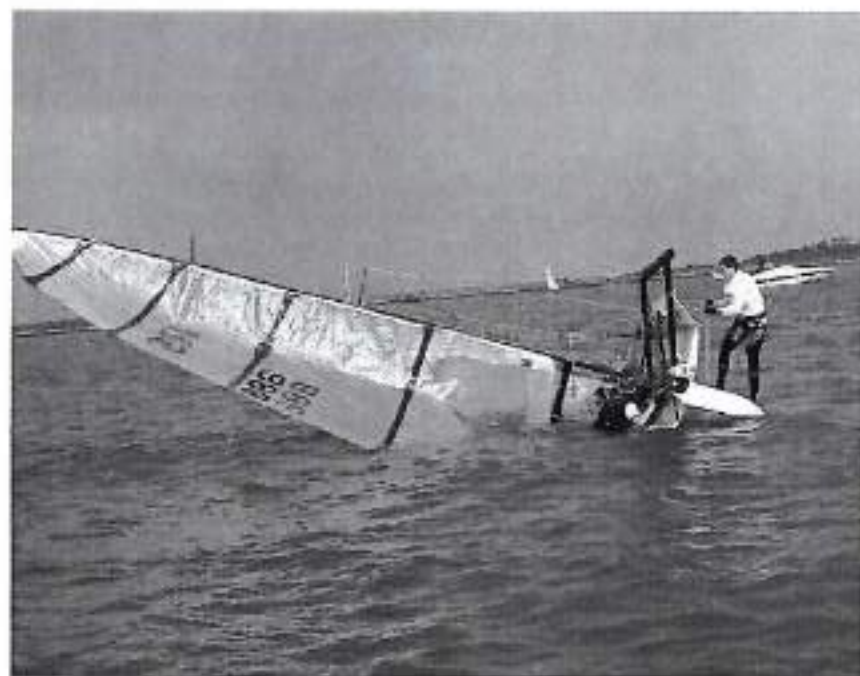
The RYA Eric Twiname Championships were held at Rutland SC over the weekend 12th/13th May. The event is for 8-15 year olds and competitors are selected from each of the RYA's six English Zone Squads, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Wilsonian's Stephanie Wicken was one of eight Topper sailors selected to represent the South-East Zone and had an excellent event finishing 2nd overall out of a total of 70 Toppers.

struct the crew on what to do next. At the bottom mark, the crew should nimbly leap into the boat and drop the kite, tidy the sheets and leap back out on the wire thus being in a position to help the poor, exhausted helmsman on the next beat.

After the Race

If all goes well you'll be the first back so rush around packing away as quickly as possible so that you're not around when the rescue boat needs dragging out. Be sure to leave at least one piece of clothing, trapeze harness is always a good one, on some one else's boat for easy recovery the following week. Oh, and always blame the crew when you realise that you forgot to sign off.

Finally, once home stash your gear and the spinni in a suitably obscure location so that it can be forgotten and will be found in a suitably damp and smelly state ready for the following week's sailing.



Skiff sailing on the Medway.

Photo David Hudson

more of the language learned above.

Tacking

There is a fundamental rule of skiff sailing: No tack ever feels like it works 100%. If you've just done a tack that worked, don't worry, the next one will be total sh*t.

Uncleat the main-sheet... it's easier left in the cleat for the beat and has the added benefit of giving the boat a comfortable amount of heel. Say "Tacking" sufficiently quietly that you can't be heard, and leap into the boat, put the helm down and get caught on the wrong side of the boom by your trapeze wire which failed to unhook as when you wanted it to. Meanwhile, the crew should be caught about half way over the centre case with feet tangled in the biggest knot of ropes... all skiffs are much more exciting with the spinnies and jibs sheets tangled up. The crew should also fail to get the jib released. When all this is sorted, the crew should yank the jib drum-tight on the next tack, forcing the boat to heel enormously so that the cockpit scoops up 200 litres of water, and go out on the wire, leaving the jib totally over-powering the rudder and the boat going sideways. Recommended communication during the tack goes like this: Skipper - "F\$%k F\$%k F\$%k F\$%k F\$%k F\$%k": Crew - (calmly from the wire as the skipper struggles in the centre of the cockpit) - "What the hell are you doing?". Such comments help a lot.

Bearing Away at the Top Mark

This is impossible. Don't bother trying.

Spinnaker Work

Kite work is easy if you remember a few simple rules. The crew should, as ever, obey the quiet orders of the Transom-Ballast regardless of whether their arms are about to pull out of their sockets. The real magic of course is to be performed by the skipper. When the boat starts to heel to starboard: steer right; heel to port: steer left; and down at the front: yell something incomprehensible and follow a parabolic trajectory over the cockpit and head-first through the fore-deck.

If you were twin trapezing up-hill, you should be twinning down-hill as well. This has the added benefit of providing a good excuse for the amount of money that you can then spend repairing or buying replacement bits for the boat.

At the gybe, the crew should balance the boat while not allowing the kite to collapse for more than half a second, regardless of the course steered by the skipper. As ever, the skipper will need to continually in-

Pat Yourself on the Back

Among the discussion on the Yachts & Yachting on-line forum came this posting, evidently from someone at a club less-friendly than our own:

"If the good sailors are prepared to get involved and help newbies then racing will thrive and everyone is a winner - bigger turnouts, new members improve and competition increases.

If the good guys stay in their own little clique then there is no incentive for new racers to stick with it as they'll never beat bloggs, and bloggs won't want them there as they don't know what they are doing, a bit catch 22 really. Turnouts drop and whilst club membership may be healthy, examination of the key indicator, actual numbers racing, will present a different picture.

There are some very simple checks you can do. Look at the number of new members who joined each year and see how many are still there in 3 years time. At our club we take on average 30 memberships in 'learn to sail' each year. Over 10 years that's 300 people, yet club membership is nowhere near that and on average the retention of a new member is less than 10% year on year, i.e. if 30 join this year, only 3 of those will renew next year, 2 of them will renew the following year and the year after it's down to one.

Seeing as we get an extra 30 members the following year though, the retention and drop out largely goes unnoticed as overall membership levels are generally static or show a slight increase, until you look at the on the water activity closely and realise how few are sailing and that the majority sailing are hard-core club members who have been there for some time."

By comparison with most clubs, Wilsonian is a friendly one, where the good guys do help the novices, which maybe explains why our turnouts as a percentage of membership are much higher than the UK average. So carry on the good work!

Sailing Accommodation Website

<http://www.sailingaccommodation.co.uk/> is a good web-site for those travelling to open events and looking for accommodation close to a given club. Unfortunately, the info for Wilsonian is sparse - not ideal if we want to attract visitors.

If you can recommend a B&B, hotel or camp-site (apart from our car park, which gets full), either contact the site direct or call 31½.



along as well. He should leap nimbly out of the shoulder-deep water over the high side of the already-heeling skiff, straight onto the wire and pull in the jib-sheet while ... NO, LET IT GO, f**! sh% @ f&^%, GET IT IN! ON THE WIRE ... Make for the start-line, ensuring you get there in time to create havoc for those foolish enough to be early.

Skiff language

It's worth deviating for a moment to discuss language, and its use on a skiff. All violent activity - tacking, gybing, starting, dropping the kite, should be punctuated by appropriate comment from both skipper and crew. It should go something like this: F#\$k F#\$k F#\$k F#\$k F#\$k Sh&& F#\$k Sh&& ... It must really help, because everyone seems to do it.

Starting

The correct approach for a good line start at Wilsonian is to move a suitable distance down river taking the wind strength and tide into consideration. With 20seconds to go make your final approach arriving at the line fully powered up twin wiring and in clean air.

As this is rather hard to do the alternative is to arrive at the line early with about 20 seconds to go and totally ignoring the effect of the tide (if you have been following this advice correctly this will be easy as you are probably just leaving the beach). Because you don't want to cross early simply bear away and accelerate along the line, pushing anyone in front to the side; this will no doubt result in you hearing some language like that described above.

The first beat

After the start, you should be neatly placed in some really bad air. Move well away from your crew and things might smell better. If you don't have a faster boat driving clean over the top of you, take at least 30 seconds to get settled down and twinning properly - there's sure to be someone going over the top of you by then. Everyone knows you have to tack to find clear air, so do this immediately, then tack back in front of a good knot of approaching boats so that they all have to go around your now-stationary boat.

This is normally the point at which the helm and crew can begin the customary skiff sailors conversation that begins with the words "I thought you were going to sign us on / write down the course..." delete as appropriate. Done properly this conversation can be made to last the entire race. If you find conversation slacking it can be re-stimulated by interspersing the normal criticisms of the helm/crew's ineptness with

A Beginner's Guide to Skiff Sailing on the Medway

(Unashamedly robbed from the R Class Association of New Zealand and adapted for sailing on the River Medway by Ian Foxwell)

The most important thing to remember is to allow no more than 25 minutes between arriving at the club and the starting gun. This keeps things interesting and adds to the general excitement of racing fast boats. Bring absolutely no tools, as these are much more conveniently borrowed from other club members.

Preparation for skiff sailing

The advantage of arriving just in time is immediately apparent when you rig the spinnaker, as when you need to borrow a roll of tape your fellow competitors will be just off heading for the water and thus their tools are unguarded and available in a bucket, under their boat cover. However hoist the jib first and take a good crack just under the right eye-brow from the flailing jib clew while you thread both jib sheets around the same side of the mast. Ensure that at least one kite sheet runs inside a side stay, and that the spinnaker halyard goes up the wrong side of the jib. These are all things that are easily sorted out by the crew once afloat.

Jump into your wet-suit, which should either be:

- Unwashed, wet and clammy from last week, smelling like the cat's been in it, or
- Neatly washed and dried so that you spend 10 minutes hopping about on one leg trying to get the other leg in - whoops, that was the arm hole, pull it all off, try again.

Pull on your trapeze harness and wind up the tension on the shoulder straps until you walk like E.T. (and speak like him too). Leave the centre-board securely hidden under the boat cover and head towards the water..

Launching a skiff

The boat should be held by the crew in such a way that his royal highness can step cleanly in without getting wet above the ankles. The crew should then proceed out into deep water, just a little bit further than the point at which all traction with the beach is lost. The skipper can then take his time to slot on the rudder, a process that will require plenty of instructions to be issued to the crew on just how to hold the boat steady. Having achieved this, you can pop the centre-board in the slot, grab the main-sheet and depart. The crew should preferably come

Warm-Up Medley

A selection of Peter Horner's shots from the Warm-Up Series. There are so many good ones we could fill a special edition, so expect to see photos of people in dry-suits in issues to come...



RYA Racing Best Practices - Rules Disputes Procedure. Should We Adopt It?

The RYA has introduced a new best practice for rules disputes, and its adoption will be considered by the Sailing Committee at the next meeting, but we would like your views. The RYA is introducing this because there is concern that there is reluctance for boats to raise protests and the rules are being more frequently disregarded. They say that protest hearings are less common and at the same time occasions are more frequent when a rule has been broken and nothing happens - no protest, no retirement. From my own point of view, it would provide the opportunity to explore any possible breach of the rules without perhaps the upset caused by the confrontation of a protest and protest hearing, with the offending boat facing the severe penalty of disqualification.

To summarise this new best practice it introduces (1) an Exoneration Penalty, less severe than disqualification, and (2) an Advisory Hearing and RYA Arbitration. One or both of these can be adopted.

The Exoneration Penalty would apply where a boat may have broken a rule and a protest has been called. After finishing the race but before a protest hearing, the protested boat can notify the race committee that she accepts an exoneration penalty, which may be a 20% scoring penalty or loss of two places, whichever is worse. There are circumstances where this cannot apply - such as when a boat causes serious damage or gains significant advantage. Otherwise, when the penalty has been accepted it cannot be revoked or removed, and the boat cannot be penalised further by a protest hearing if it is decided one is still applicable.

If the Advisory Hearing and RYA Arbitration are adopted these will apply as follows:

The Advisory Hearing is more about exploration of the rules. This can be used where there is an incident that will not result in lodging of a protest. A boat may, within the protest time limit, request an Advisory Hearing with the race office and notify any other boat involved in the incident. An advisor will hold a hearing to learn what may have happened and will state what rule appears to have been broken, and by which boat. A boat may as a result of this accept an Exoneration Penalty, or retire, but this would be voluntary.

The RYA Arbitration is available when a protest or request for redress is lodged. This can be requested or offered prior to a protest hearing

graded it to the carbon mast, and changed the jib sheeting etc, he fitted the boat out but then never actually sailed it. You couldn't even hoist the jib when I got it, the jib sheeting didn't work and it had numerous other little problems. Although initially I was a little disheartened, I realised that the boat was still everything I wanted in a Canoe, just that it would demand some of that tinkering sooner rather than later. But then hey, that was part of the reason for buying it.

Next instalment: sailing it.



Photo: Paul Thorpe

Sailing 245 - part 1 by Ian Foxwell

I wasn't really looking for a Canoe. I'd just sold the Blaze and really had my eyes open for another one, although older, but as I wasn't having much luck finding the right boat at the right price I thought I'd re-evaluate my options.

I gave a lot of consideration to getting a Contender but having spent some time single handing the Buzz decided that I really preferred hiking over trapezing and when it came to fast single-handed hiking boats for someone less than 70kgs, there really isn't much to choose from. I'd love a Phantom but...

Anyway, as a boat for me the Canoe did appear to have a lot going for it. It's a development boat, so I get to spend lots of time fiddling, which I enjoy. I'm within the weight range for one, and they would appear to suit the river (or at least Mark and Simon's results would suggest that they do!)

Deciding on one to get and actually getting one however turned out to be two completely different things. Maybe I just picked a lean time in the market but there really wasn't anything around for a first-time buyer to look at. I had tracked down a wooden boat on the south coast that sounded appealing but it hadn't been measured and neither the owner or class association knew the builder, so if I wanted to do any events it could have caused me some problems. However, just as I was about to give up, David Turner from Draycote got in touch. He had bought 245 a couple of years ago and as he was now about to undertake a serious Fireball campaign and was thinking of selling his Canoe. It was more than I wanted to spend but Dave seemed prepared to haggle and the boat had all the right bits, so I went to take a look.

Unfortunately on the day I picked it up was blowing force 4-5 and chucking it down so after a good look over the hull we retired to somewhere out of the wind to check the sails etc and to haggle. Because of the distance involved, my impatience and Dave accepting a silly price, I decided to buy it there and then. Bit of a mistake in some ways though and it's taught me a lesson.

Just because the boat had a reputable builder, was well fitted out in good quality gear and had a racing record it didn't mean that I was getting a sailable boat. It wasn't until I got it home let the weather calm down and could rig it for the first time that I realised that it hadn't been sailed in a while. Unfortunately it would appear that when David up-

where the protest is not complex. In this case an arbitrator will call a hearing. If the arbitrator decides that a boat that is a party to the hearing has broken a rule for which an exoneration penalty is available, the party will be invited to accept it, and if accepted the protesting boat will be allowed to withdraw the protest.

To see the details in full you will find them on the RYA website at:

<http://www.rya.org.uk/AboutRYA/programmes/initiatives/racingcharter/bestpractices.htm>

Additionally a copy of the Best Practice will be pinned to the Medium Fleet notice board for you all to read. **Please let your Fleet Captain know your views.**

Alison Williams

Photo: Peter Horner



Stay Out of Trouble and Sail Faster

Real title: 'The Racing Rules'. Let me start by saying I am no rules expert but I did once read the rule book from cover to cover over a couple of months. Strangely, two things came out of the exercise, the first being that there is a logic and rhyme to them, and secondly by having a good knowledge of them meant I could anticipate events, stay out of the carnage and gain places.

Let me also state that I regard the Racing Rules as being devised to keep boats apart and not locked in mortal combat.

The first Racing Rule 1.1 says "A boat or competitor shall give all possible help to any person or vessel in danger." That to me is the core, it is just not about rendering assistance to a boat in distress, it also means not ramming somebody simply because you are in the right.

In the past, if you received assistance it was deemed that you should retire from the race, but now it is accepted that a another boat, rescue or otherwise, helping you in a dangerous situation, say returning a crew member that has drifted away or pulling your mast out of the mud, does not render your race over; also, the helping boat, if a competitor, can even claim redress. The idea being that people will accept help before the situation deteriorates.

Taking 1.1 as our guide, it would also preclude putting another boat in a dangerous situation by applying any other rule. Or, if you believe another boat has broken a rule it does not give you the right to put them in danger.

Also remember that the Racing Rules need to be able to be applied in light and strong winds so what may seem a little unfair in a drifter may be a life saver in a Force 6.

I would suggest a good book that explains the rules is of great value but the following is a good starting point.

The ISAF President, Paul Henderson, has recommended the following highly simplified racing rules for club racing:-

1. Port keeps clear of starboard.
2. Windward boat keeps clear of leeward.
3. The boat astern keeps clear of the boat ahead.

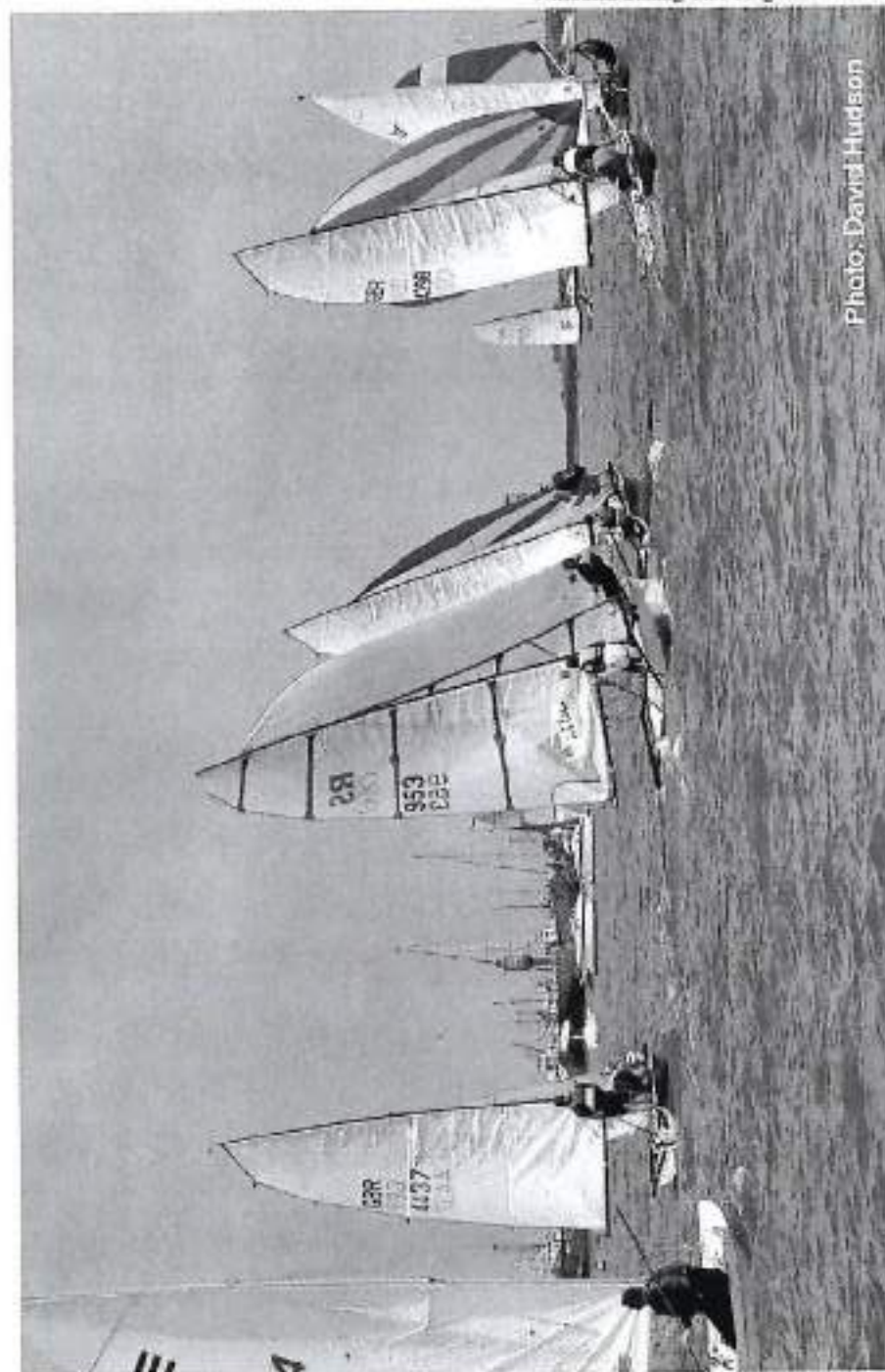


Photo: David Hudson

Fast Handicap Report

Its only the second cry from Tony for articles for 31½ and already I'm running out of steam. It doesn't look good for the rest of my tenure as class captain. Anyway, I'd better get going and waffle about something.

Well, the racing in brief. Its been windy! It started this way with the Ice Breaker where the miserable-looking weather kept many off the water; however, for those of us that took the plunge (literally in many cases) it turned out to be a pretty good sail, and certainly a good way to blow away the cobwebs!

Things took a turn for the worse the following week, with the racing cancelled due to bad weather but uncharacteristically it all brightened up by the time we had the now traditional Easter Egg Race hosted by MYC on the Bank Holiday Monday. One of the few days on which we've had some lighter wind over the last couple of months but the fast fleet was well represented and at the finish we were, quite literally, in the chocolates, with Hannah and I in second in Fungus and the ever quick pairing of Mark Heather and Doug Horner in their 4000 in third.

Since then we have had a surprising number of different winners in the various race series that are being run, an indication perhaps of the challenging conditions we have been sailing in at times, but also of just how competitive the fleet is becoming. It still seems to be the normal faces at the sharp end of the overall leader boards, though proving that consistency is worth much more than just outright speed on the odd weekend. But it all bodes well for some competitive racing over the coming months.

I'll finish off by reminding everyone that the Big Three are only weeks away starting on the 1st July with the Grand Prix. This traditionally gives us some of the best sailing of the year with courses that are often perfect for the faster boats to stretch their legs on. This is followed by the Marathon the week after (or at least I hope it is a Marathon unlike last year's shortened course!) and on the 14th and 15th by the Medway Regatta. All in all there is some great sailing to be had which I for one am looking forward to.

Have fun

Ian 29er 060 and Canoe 245

4. A boat tacking or gybing keeps clear of one that is not.
5. Avoid collisions. Racing Rules are defensive to prevent collisions not offensive racing tactics.
6. If you gain right of way or change course, give the other boat time to keep clear.
7. The inside boat(s) at two boat lengths from the mark is entitled to room to round the mark.
8. A boat that is backing up or not racing keeps clear.
9. If you have violated a rule, take a penalty.
10. It is better to give way than to spend hours in a protest room.

If you follow these simplified rules, you will never break a real racing rule: but you may very occasionally be giving-way when you don't need to.

Re number 8 remember he is talking about fellow competitors not the freighters or yachts coming along our river.

I hope all the above helps and I am happy to give an opinion on the rules, buy me a beer and I will give you lots of opinions but just because the bloke in the bar seemed to know what he was talking about don't make it right.

Brian Reeve

Photo: Dan Drummond



Miracle Fleet Report



The sailing season is now well underway and those of us who have managed to drag ourselves away from the gardening, the decorating and all the other chores have been rewarded with some fantastic sailing. By that I mean that the wind has, as usual, been totally unpredictable and conditions have fluctuated between very light winds and very strong gusty winds. In April the weather was glorious for the whole month and it was great to be able to sail in summer gear.

Thanks to Martin and Mike missing some of the races, I and Peter Matthews managed to win the Spring points series. Ben and Gordon who bought the new sails have been rewarded with improved performance. It has been good to see Adrian, as a relatively new Miracle sailor, trying to sail as often as he can. Keith surprised us by sailing at the end of May, the first time for quite a while and I'm sure he enjoyed it so much that he'll be back soon.

On the social side, the bike ride that Martin organised was enjoyed by all. Although it was a cold, murky day, we all soon warmed up. The cycling from Reculver to Margate was easy as the coastal path was flat and then half of us continued to Broadstairs. At Margate, while we ate our fish and chips we were entertained by little girls in their fairy dresses dancing round the maypole, and by Morris dancers.

Lastly, if any helms find themselves without a crew, please contact me as I have a list of people who may be available for crewing.

Lesley
M.3722



Looking forward to seeing even more of you out there as the sun pops it's head out more frequently to warm up the Medway. Good sailing!

Alison and Dave

V3000 3605



Photo: David Hudson

Medium Fleet Report

It's been a great start to the year with full sign-up sheets for the Medium Fleet. The wind and weather has been extremely variable, starting the Spring Series with winds too strong to sail in; week 1; and then lack of wind requiring shortening of the course; week 2. Despite this we have had some great competition, thrills and spills, bumps and breaks. The first week we hear Brian in his Wayfarer, broke his boom, and second week, when we managed to finish ahead of Tony – he said something about a broken spinnaker halyard [*Lots of people told me they heard it got 1.5mm Dyneema is, indeed, too thin. Ed.*]. Sad to say we have now lost Tony to the Fast Fleet. Sadly too, one of our new members had an accident on his first outing with us (sailing a Buzz, in the Commodore's race) resulting in the helm dislocating his shoulder. We wish him a speedy recovery and hope to see him sailing under better circumstances soon.

There has been tight competition within the classes, with Neil, Brian and Malcolm in their Phantoms battling it out, and Neil most often coming out on top. Also the virtual fleet of Laser 2000s, managed to get 5 out together one week, and some close sailing with Roy and Geoff, Dave and Janice, Nik and Cathy, John and Bryan, and Andy and Rachel, all battling it out, Roy/Geoff coming out on top in the morning, and Nik/Cathy turning around their fortunes to beat off the other 2000's in the afternoon. It must have been the only week Jayne and Paul weren't sailing!

Good to see the regular appearances of the Buzzes with Peter and David still getting to grips with theirs, and Martin and Amanda providing some close racing with ourselves in the V3000, and getting some very good results. We've also had plenty of Lasers out together with Gordon taking first place in the fleet in the Spring series, and John Player coming not far behind.

We have also seen the Kestrels, and more recently the Wayfarers battling it out. Brian and Brian seem to often, but certainly not always, come in ahead. I am also happy to say we have managed to avoid getting in Brian's way so far this year [*for rather, you've avoided Brian getting in your way. Ed.*].

Keeping to the style of Brian Reeve last year, we have been aiming to make the morning courses more adventurous and the afternoon course more conservative so that you don't have too long for lunch – of course, things don't always turn out that way.

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OPENING
TIMES:

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

Find Sundays Boring?

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.

