



31 1/2 Summer 2015

## Welcome to the Summer edition of 31 ½

How quickly the summer comes round and how soon we realise that the work we intended to do on the boat over the winter needs to be done now, for Sundays race, should have been done last week or all three. In between bumping into members at the club midweek undertaking just such work, while I have been doing the same, I have also taken up the challenge of the editor's role. Amy has certainly done a great job and I hope I can match that. Having said that I hope members will accept a slight change in format while I experiment with the best format and software; any comments are always welcome.

I am hoping that as well as the normal reports we can feature articles on skills, on the river, some of the club's social activities and almost anything else related to sailing at Wilsonian SC. We are a busy club and have a membership with a wide range of experience and knowledge, so plenty of scope.

Finally, thanks to David Vettergreen who's photographs of the Warm-up and Spring Series are featured on the front page and elsewhere in the magazine.

David Wraight

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## From the Commodore...



At last the weather is warming up and the sun is starting to appear more regularly.

We have had a few struggles with the safety boats this year, with steering problems and Dunlin out of action for a few weeks. Fortunately Dunlin is now repaired and back in action and steering problems fixed.

Saturday Skimmers has started well this year, with lots of juniors out racing and learning to sail in Toppers and Optimists. The racing group is gradually increasing in numbers, with plenty of competition. Beginners and Intermediate groups are also progressing well. High winds recently have been a challenge for the juniors, with plenty of capsizes and smiles. Skimmers are proving very popular, with at times a queue for the Optimists so please be patient with the instructors as we try to give everyone a chance to go sailing. Sometimes if the winds are too strong we need to limit the numbers on the water for safety reasons, stopping the juniors becoming too scared and ensuring there are sufficient safety boats to cover the beginners and intermediate groups. All the Toppers have now been fixed with centre main sheeting, so this should reduce the confusion when moving between boats, with the Optimists, Teras, Toppers and Fevas all centre main. This also helps when progressing to most other boats (e.g. Lasers) which are centre main. If you would like to help with shore support (standing in the water, helping with launching and recovering boats), crewing in the safety boats, helping in the race box, or helping us to have hot food after the sailing, please talk to the instructors, we would be delighted for your help!

Adults Skimmers on Saturday afternoons has also started for the year. This is an ideal opportunity to go out sailing and practice your skills, whilst we have safety boat cover if you need it. We have an RYA coach booked for a few Saturdays this year. This proved very popular last year to learn new skills, improve your sailing and for advice on what we are doing wrong (or could improve). Saturday afternoons is not just for adults, families are also welcome to go out for a sail! The club has a few boats you can use if you don't have your own, including a Wayfarer, Laser 2000, 2 Lasers and the latest addition a generous donation of a Wayfarer by Richard Seabrook. We usually start after a lunch break from Junior Skimmers for the instructors, before we go out again. Please ask the instructors if you have any particular skills you would like help with. We are planning to provide training by progressing through the RYA schemes in modules on Saturday afternoons. Please contact our Sailing Principal, Paul Thorpe for more details.

To help with training a Dinghy Instructor course is being run at the club this year for experienced sailors, ready to become instructors. Paul Thorpe is fixing dates for the course, which will probably be run over 3 consecutive weekends.

Racing on Sundays is popular with boats racing regularly down the river and back. If you have considered racing, there are plenty of members that would be pleased to offer advice. Why not try just following the fleets, so you can go sailing in the same area, viewing the racing until you are ready to take part. The Blazes are slowly increasing in numbers, plus Streakers are becoming popular, so we may have a Blaze and Streaker fleet in the future if the numbers keep increasing. Every year the handicaps are adjusted and they change each year based on racing results sent in by many clubs, including Wilsonian Sailing Club. Personally it is interesting how much the Laser Radial handicap has changed this year. Perhaps I'll stand more chance of moving up the medium fleet (or do I just need to improve my sailing)! We have lots more racing to look forward to during the summer, including the Medway Regatta in July. To enable us to finish lunch, the afternoon start will normally be 1400 for most races. This replaces the previous scheme of afternoon start at 1330, with possible postponement if the morning racing finished late.

Work is in progress on an automated starting system, involving lights and sound signals, all controlled from

a computer based system. This should make the Race Officers job easier, by just pressing a button to start the sequence and more time available to concentrate on the dinghies at the start line. More details will be published as the construction and testing progresses.

This year we are planning a Steel Band on Saturday evening for the Medway Regatta, so even if you aren't taking part in the Regatta, pop down to enjoy the entertainment!

I've heard that Friday fun sailing is becoming popular, with the opportunity to relax after a week at work with some fun sailing and a barbeque after the sailing. Please contact Jayne or Paul Thorpe for more details.

Unfortunately the numbers for Wednesday evening racing have dropped off over recent years, so it is no longer running, due to insufficient numbers turning up for the racing. If there is sufficient interest and commitment, we can consider restarting the Wednesday racing.

Keep an eye on notice boards and emails for social events this year, when we meet up, relax and chat to fellow members.

If you are planning to go cruising, please advise the CDO (at weekends) or a shore contact before you go and when you expect to return. There is a cruising board on the Racebox, so you can leave details of your plans. Also consider what equipment to take with you and boat preparations to enable you to cope with conditions – e.g. masthead buoyancy, anchor, reefing, portable VHF radio, paddles.

There are also club cruises planned this year, please contact David Wraight or Derek Zobel for further details.

Our upstream slipway is planned for refurbishment works this year. Progress is being made and we should have this completed this year. It is amazing how many organisations are involved in gaining all the necessary permissions before we can go ahead with the work!

Our change this year for duties to using the Dutyman programme is going very well, with much simpler ways to ask members to help if you have any difficulties with being able to do your duty. We all rely on being able to enjoy our sailing by having everyone doing their duties, so please remember your duty dates.

Here's hoping for a great summer with good winds and warm weather!

Martin Vinton

## **Darnet Island Camp/Cruise May 2015**

The club's 38th&40th Strood Sea Scouts members arranged with Peel Ports for WSC members and themselves to undertake a weekend camp on Darnet Island Fort. The sail over on the Saturday saw pleasant conditions allowing plenty time to pitch tents and explore the fort. There was also the opportunity to explore the flooded interior by canoe. A cold and windy night saw most campers retiring to their tents early. Heavy rain fell overnight but stopped before it was time to cook breakfast and strike camp. A few brave WSC souls were seen taking up the challenge of a windy morning race and then it was time for us to make our own spray soaked journey back to the club.



The event was captured by the Tony Malone the Scout's artist in residence.

## 2000 Fleet Report

There has been lots of sailing activity in the 2000 Fleet with entries for every race – even the when the condition were challenging with gusts at 30+ knots for the Ice Breaker on 29 March 2015, well done to Brian Lamb and Sam Pygall in second place overall by 3 seconds on corrected time, and even stronger winds during the Spring Points on 12 April 2015 with 2 finishers from 7 boats entered, with Colin and Lauren in first place and Brian Lamb and Brian Warwick in second place, and some sorry looking boats returning to the shore ( including John Goudie's Wayfarer).

Well done and thanks to everyone who have been out sailing recently; we seem to be an active as a Fleet or perhaps it's because we are at the start of the sailing programme. I am very impressed. We have 16 boats on station and an average between 6 – 8 boats racing most weekends, weather dependant. It's a great feeling to look across the river and see the positions changing as we race along and lovely to see the coloured spinnakers, everything from Nina's shocking pink, Colin's scarlet red, Paul's black and the remaining light blues!

A warm welcome to our new 2000 sailors Darren and Ken, who joined at the start of the season, and it is great to see Rob and his daughter Esther (youth) continue to sail with the fleet in the club 2000. My continued thanks go to David and Roy for their support and advice as 2000 Fleet Vice Captains.

**Results so far.... The Warm Up Series**, suitably named due to the varying conditions at the start of the season, had a total of 21 entries across all fleets for a lapping series of races, with 4 entries in the 2000 Fleet. From the overall results, I was highest placed 2000 in 4<sup>th</sup> place with my son Richard, Darren and Ken in 6<sup>th</sup> place, Lesley and Peter/ Adam in 7<sup>th</sup> place and Anna and I in 14<sup>th</sup> place in the club 2000. **The Spring Series** was raced over a total of 10 races and the winners were Adam and Claire, second place Paul

Rodgers and Paul Thorpe, and in third place was me with various crew combinations.

I have a great photo of the racing in the Spring Series and many thanks to David Vettergreen for forwarding the picture which shows Adam with Claire in first place on the far left, Roy with Geoff (hiding behind the sail) and Lesley with Lucy.



**Events at the club.....The Early Summer Points Series** is underway now, with 9 entries from the 2000 Fleet, and at present, the leading boat is Paul Rodgers and Paul Thorpe (11 points), closely followed by Roy and Geoff (17 points), third place currently are David and Janice (24 points), fourth place Colin and Lauren (25 points) and my son/ Caroline and I are fifth place (25 points) and the remainder of the fleet on a maximum of 31 points, so everything still to race for the rest of the fleet. Sunday 25 May 2015 saw the first race in the **Commodores Series**, consisting of a total of 5 races through the season. The morning races are **Ladies/ Novices/ Juniors and Masters** and the afternoon has a choice of Commodores longer race or Bosuns shorter race, and there are 2000 entries in each grouping. We are only a couple of months away from the **Medway Regatta on 18<sup>th</sup> & 19 July 2015**.

**Away from the club.....** the 2 boats were entered for the **Broadstairs SC Crewsaver Millennium Series** 1 Race on 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2015 which is part of the **2000 Class Association events**. The conditions were challenging and well done to

Andy and Anna for a respectable 5<sup>th</sup> place finish, unfortunately I got a bash on the head and Nik put his back out (not all at the same time) – my personal thanks for Colin for stepping into the double challenge of my helm as well as managing to fit into Nik’s dry suit – lots more stories to tell here!! Last weekend was **Crewsaver Millennium Series 2 Race at Chichester YC** and Andy and I took his boat. There was a large fleet of 29 entries which included several current and former championship sailors, so competition was tough and we finished a respectable 23<sup>rd</sup> place – we swapped sails on day 2 and having new spinnaker and jib is definitely a worthwhile investment.

**Events coming up in the 2000 Class Association.....** At Chichester YC we met up again with the lovely Jenny and James MacGregor, Membership Secretary and Sailing Secretary respectively for the 2000 Class Association, and the **Inland Championship** will be at their home club **Grafham Water on 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> June 2015**. We were also discussing the Nationals as we have at least 7 WSC boats intending to go to the **National Championship 9th - 14th August 2015 at Abersoch SC in North Wales**. I am trying to persuade a few more members so we may make double figures. The **Crewsaver Millennium Series** continues with a visit to Thorney Island SC, accommodation in the army barracks sounds like fun, but unfortunately it clashes with our **Medway Regatta on 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> July 2015**.



Anyone fancy another burger? It was a great start to the **Friday evening Fun Sailing** on 15 May 2015 with half a dozen boats having a lovely gentle sail followed by a delicious BBQ - the perfect wind down from a busy week – thanks to Jayne and Paul for their organisation. In fact there were a few of us that seemed to spent the whole weekend at the club - and I'm certainly not complaining.

Some of us will miss the next couple of weeks as we will be away the first week of June at the WSC Menorca Sailing holiday.

I would like to **invite all sailors** to come along and join in with the fun sailing and with the racing - maybe try out a 2000 as we are always looking for crew/ helms plus there's the club 2000 available for hire. Please contact me if I can help anyone and I will continue to send out my email ramblings every couple of weeks to the fleet to update everyone!!

The full list of events can be found on the club WSC notice board, the WSC website or the 2000 Class Association website [www.2000class.org](http://www.2000class.org)

I look forward to a good season racing in 2015.

Rachel Sheridan

2000 2229

2000 Fleet Captain

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## **Toms Sims 09/04/1931 to 23/03/2015**

Tom was a loyal and dedicated servant of WSC and other institutions such as MSBA (MYC) and the RYA. Tom was a Master Mariner and served in the merchant navy for many years so well voiced with the Sea River Traffic Tides and pretty much everything about the water.

Tom joined Wilsonian Sailing Club with his wife Barbara in approximately Summer 1974 when family membership was £10 a year. They sailed a Mirror Dinghy first then a Graduate (built in a garage I know well) together and of course got to know the Graduate Association members and made friends through this route.

Tom and Barbara integrated into the club on the Barge as it was then and in 1980 became Bosun well experienced in this with his background. He did this role until 1986 when he became Training Secretary. More responsibility came as Rear Commodore in 1987 to 1989 and also keeping his role as Training Secretary.

In 1989 Tom became Training Principle and helped forge ahead with making the club a recognised centre along with Ann Heather. In 2000 the club was accepted as a recognised RYA Training Establishment and Tom was recognized by the RYA as RYA Training Principle a role he kept until illness forced him to retire from that in 2013. He developed and expanded the clubs RYA training courses introducing RYA level 1, 2 3, and instructor power and safety boat courses which we still try and run today. He was well known and respected by the RYA.

Tom became Commodore in 1990 to 1992 then Vice Commodore 1993 to 1995 the usual 6year commitment as a Flag Officer. Not content with completing the usual 6year commitment as a Flag Officer he took on in 1998 the mammoth task of Sail Measurer. This was on just for the Graduate class but for all classes a job he had to retire from in 2013 due to ill health.

These roles were the official positions of the club but Tom took on more in his dependable style. Being a qualified Race Officer he took on the role of MYA (as it was known then now Medway and Swale Boating Association) Medway Regatta Race officer for many years as he did for the Hoo Freezer. Tom and Barbara were always at the club as Barbara, who sadly died in March 2007, including toiling away at keeping the club clean every week a chore we have to pay dearly for now.

Tom was on the General Committee for many years and could always turn to him for historical aspects of the clubs past procedure or where fencing went and who put it up how we had this and that etc. He always knew such a great deal about the club and how it worked. The decision to Build the Clubhouse or replace the Barge was taken at a Special General meeting and the successful motion was proposed by Tom and he certainly never regretted that decision.

Both Tom and Barbara in October 2004 were nominated by WSC and rewarded by the RYA the Community Award for their outstanding services to the club which was presented by HRH the Princess Royal in London, a great Tribute to a dedicated couple.

In 2013 Wilsonian Sailing Club gave Honorary Membership to Tom for all his dedication and hard work that he had done for the club. A sadly missed loyal and dedicated servant of WSC.

Tom's funeral took place at Beckenham Crematorium on 22nd April at 1030am and as well as a floral tribute many members attended the funeral.



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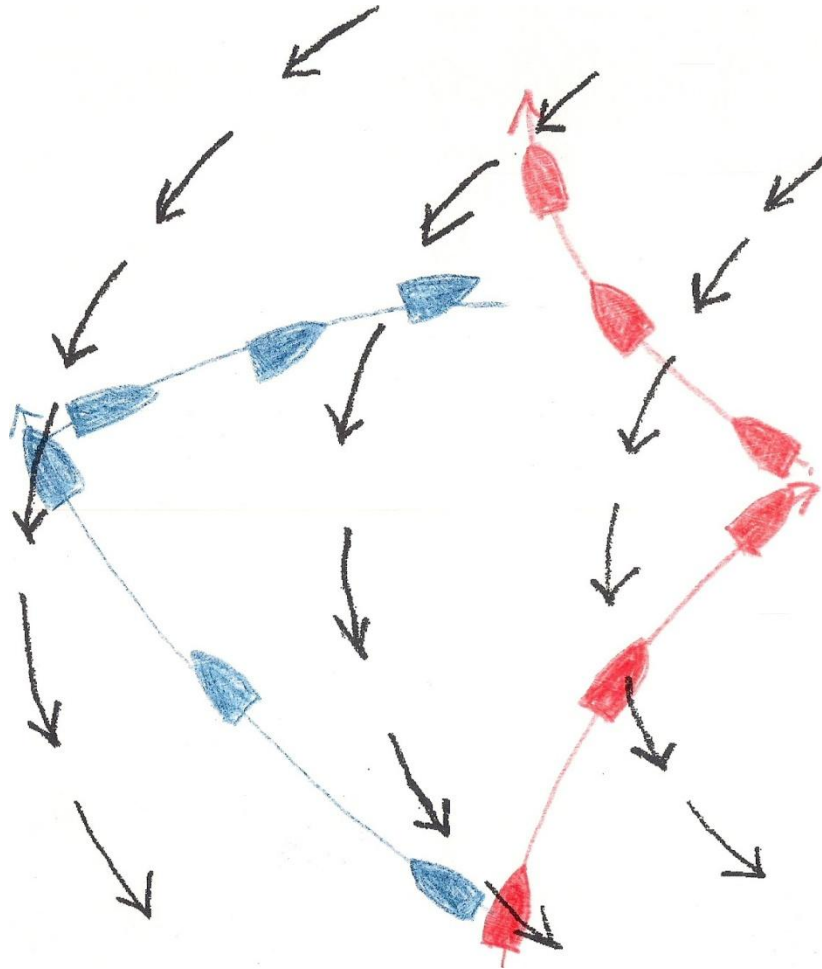


## Tips and Techniques for Racing on the Medway

This is aimed at those who are just starting to race - or maybe those who have been racing but would like a little more success. Even if you are a cruiser it helps if you can get somewhere quicker, or get to where you want to go even if the tide is against you. I'm hoping this will provoke some disagreement amongst the racers and then I might learn something too.

The secret wind bends on the Medway

It doesn't matter how fast you sail, if you sail in the wrong direction it's going to take you a long time and yet so many do. Take this diagram, there is a rather large wind bend but it illustrates the point. The black arrows represent the wind and the red boat sails a considerably shorter distance than the blue boat. You can almost hear the blue boat helm saying "How did that happen?" as the red boat sails across his bow.

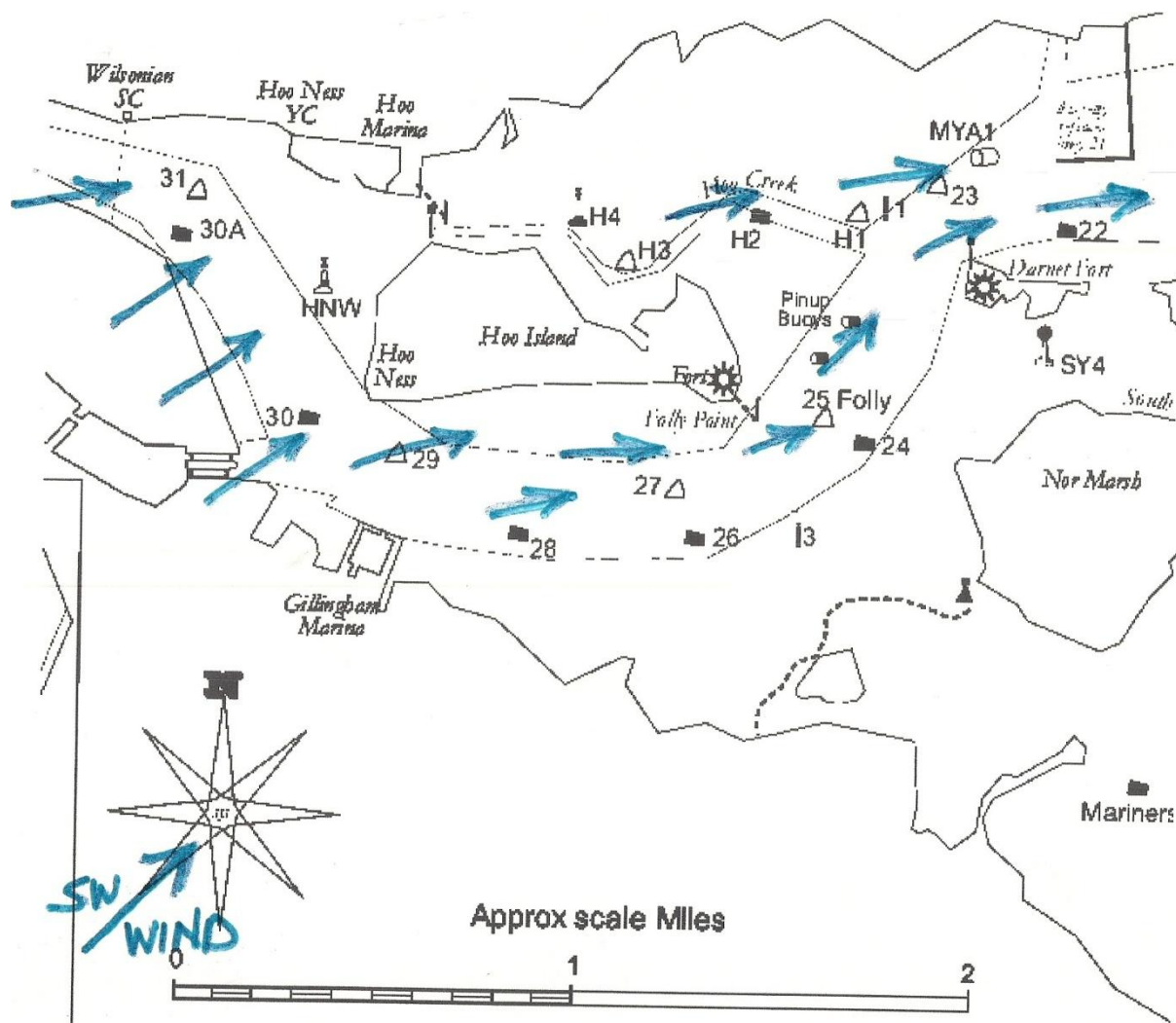


I could have drawn it better I guess, but the point is made, it provides a simple rule and all else being equal (like tide and wind strength) you will get further, quicker if you *sail towards the inside of a wind bend*.

So what does that mean on the Medway? Well on the Medway, and I'm sure it applies to all rivers, the wind tends to follow the river. Only on rivers with steep canyon-like banks will it apply completely but nevertheless the effect can be seen close to our club and to a lesser extent further down along Gillingham Reach, but once down past the power station the effect gets less and less - after all it's rather flat down there.

So if the wind follows the river and our river has bends in it, then the wind will bend, and if there is a bend in the wind there is an advantage to be had. Like the advantage the red boat has taken over the blue boat. So where are the wind bends on the Medway? Well that depends on wind direction, strength of the wind, and a whole host of other factors like height of the tide and air temperature. So I can't give you any definitive answers - well not quite. What you'll have to do is observe. On each day it is different, you need to look at other boats, the direction of waves, smoke and flags ashore and wind indicators on the top of boats on moorings. But one of the best indicators is the boat just in front of you, what is he doing relative to you? That can be a vital clue and with practice and experience you can begin to read the wind.

I said I can't give you a definitive answer but I am going to reveal a secret. Look at the chart below.



We get a south westerly wind about 60% of the time. Generally the wind can't follow the river when it has blown across Chatham Docks and so it rather gustily blows its true direction across to Hoo Marina and Hoo Island, but it can sometimes try and blow down the river past our club. This explains why it can sometimes be a very broad reach away from the club line and soon get rather too tight to lay buoy 30. That's very significant for spinnaker boats.

Now down Gillingham Reach it can become very broad again because the wind bends more westerly. But this is still not the secret I intend to reveal and nor is this next. In fact this is such a small thing I have not been able to draw it on the diagram but I have noticed that on Gillingham Reach where the wind rises back up the slope onto Hoo Island it often swings back to the SW direction. This means that if you tack up the middle of Gillingham Reach on the way back to the club you can get overtaken by a boat that manages

the whole length on one tack because he is sailing in this more favourable wind close to the island. That can be a bit gutting but naturally it can only happen around high tide.

Now we come to Folly - you'll notice a distinct bend. This happens on winds south of SW and even winds with a good bit of westerly. There is invariably some sort of wind bend around Folly. And so this is my secret. The good guys know it but never talk about it - they all think nobody else has noticed. So mark my words, down-wind always organise your gybes so that you head for Folly Point and upwind always arrange to tack at Folly Point. Just ask any of the good racers why they don't try to avoid a foul tide by sailing in the shallows outside buoys 28, 26 and 24 and the answer will be that nine out of ten times it doesn't work. It always pays to sail into Folly Point even if you have to cross a foul tide twice to do it.

There I've spilled the beans, everybody knows it now, and I have something to add. Even when the wind is in the reverse direction, an easterly, and that's about 30% of the time, there is a wind bend around Folly. So the rule is, *always head for the inside of any wind bend and that means always head for Folly Point.*

Stuart Robertson

## Slow fleet report

The first few races of the Early Summer Points saw a series of heroic solo performances with David and Jackie Hudson, Amy Adams, myself and Martin McKay all braving wild weather to bag an uncontested first place. More interesting sailing was provided by the new Bosun's Series which has been re-introduced to run concurrently with the Commodores series. The Bosun's trophy enables slower handicap boats to compete over a lapping course fairly close to the club house with less risk of being caught in an adverse tide and missing the time limit, a situation which was frustrating several helms who competed in the longer Commodore's series. With twelve entries so far, the new Bosun's series is looking like a popular addition to our sailing programme.

The Streaker fleet is continuing to grow in numbers as members have realised what a fast and delightful class this is to sail. Martin Smith will no doubt be very hard to beat in his beautiful Butler boat, and several other members are honing their skills at our Saturday and Friday sailing sessions, ready to take the Slow Fleet by storm – or will they follow in Amy Adams wake and upset the Blazes and Lasers in the medium fleet?

*Some members may remember seeing this attractive Butler Streaker at the 2015 Dinghy Show - Editor.*

