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Autumn 2018

Welcome to the autumn edition of 31½

Our cover picture shows the beach during the clubs 50th and its been good to see that the beach has been just as busy over the summer, both on Sundays and the successful Saturday skimmers programme. While we've had some splendid warm weather over the summer the first frosts have been spotted in the dinghy park and the winter series and work parties will soon be with us. Please make sure you check your winter work party dates once they are available, it is our big chance to keep the clubhouse and grounds in top condition

David Wraight

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Contents

1. Blaze Report
2. Fast Handicap Report
3. Slow Fleet Report
4. Medium Fleet Report
5. And Did Those Feet in Ancient times
6. 2000 Fleet Report

Blaze Report

Hello everyone

Allow me to introduce myself. I am Chris Saunders, I've been sailing Blazes for a few years and I've recently taken over from Charles West as the Blaze representative. I'd like to thank Charles for all his efforts and I hope to carry on his good work.

I'd like to welcome David Thornelow to the Blaze fleet. Before taking up the Blaze, David's been sailing a few boats, including Streakers and Solos. He's as keen as mustard, out in all weathers, and a fine example to us all.

Stewart, David and Neil are sailing most weeks, but turnouts have dropped a bit over the summer. I think that'll change now we have a few of our regular Blaze sailors returning. Welcome back Colin and John – you've been missed!

We have twelve Blazes at Wilsonians and with a bit of encouragement I hope to see more sailing on a regular basis. There are a few club members showing interest in the Blaze and with a few more boats sailing, I think we can achieve fleet status. In the mean time, I will be asking Roy to extract the Blaze results from the medium fleet results so that we can award Blaze prizes.

A few of us sail Blazes on Saturdays and I'd like to see more Blazes sailing on Saturdays. It can be of great benefit to do some "recreational" sailing, without the pressure of racing. This is a great time to practice and to try things you wouldn't do during a race. I've had some great Saturday sailing in the last few years, when I really felt I'd improved say my gybing for example.

At the last Sailing Committee meeting there was some discussion regarding a joint Blaze & Musto open meeting during 2019. It's early days but I hope it happens.

The Blaze is the only single hander I have owned. I've always had two man dinghies, often with the usual crew problems so when my friend offered me a sail in his Blaze, I accepted with some trepidation. I thought it would be a bit of a handful, especially those wings, but was pleasantly surprised how easy it was to sail. After a 20-minute sail without capsizing I decided it was the boat for me. 3 days later I'd bought one (679 now owned by Colin).

That was back in 2010 and I've never regretted my choice; the Blaze is a great boat, not difficult to sail and well suited to the River Medway. If you would like to try a Blaze, I'm sure any member of the Blaze fleet would be very happy to lend you his boat, so please ask.

Happy Blazing

Chris

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FAST HANDICAP FLEET REPORT

Graham Smith has stood down as fleet captain, with the baton being passed to me, (Richard Smith). This was some while ago now, but I missed the issue time for Spring!

I'm not exactly known for putting myself up for responsible roles, but it is a pleasure to be involved and look forward to getting stuck in. I mostly sail Musto Skiff No 419 but also sometimes get out with my daughter in our RS800 and sail a RS600 at some events

Over the last couple of years it's been great to see the fast handicap consolidate into fewer classes resulting in some fantastic racing. Examples of this are Dave and Stuart moving from the Laser 4000 to the Alto and Steve moving from the RS700 to Musto.

The Musto fleet has really grown with us now having 10 or 11 members. Some new, some familiar faces rejoined and some switched classes. We are very fortunate that the Mustos we have are fleet travelers with several of us regularly entering national and world championships flying the flag for Wilsonian SC.

Brightlingsea 2017 Nationals

Five of us attended and I'm pleased to report that Neil Ashby won 2 races and Andy Peake won 1. I don't know the exact overall positions but seem to remember they both joined me and Serega in the pack too many times to grab the big prizes!

Melbourne Worlds 2018

The 2018 Worlds have already been and gone. Three of us from Wilsonian shipped our boats out. Targets were difficult to achieve because of the depth of quality in the world-wide fleet. Having said this one of our new members, (Dave Poston) had a great result finishing 6th overall. Andy Peake was looking to have a top 10 position in the bag but suffered some slippage on the final day resulting in 14th. My target was to finish overall in the top half and to get one top 10 position. I achieved this with a 9th but finished one place over midway, (honors even I think).

Castle Cove 2018 Nationals

Five Wilsonian boats attended. It proved to be a pretty windy affair with up to 30 knots being recorded on the sea wall while we were racing. Andy and Neil were again our top performers, but this time only managed some second places with the Andy finishing highest in 8th place. Serega and I were very close again with one point separating us at the finish with the writer losing out. Nick Lett also attended but was unable to fulfill his potential because of ear infection

An extra layer of excitement/ distraction was added to proceedings as the fleet was visited by an 8-foot Porbeagle Shark, sniffing around for swimmers!



RS600 2018 Nationals

The Nationals were at the RS Games in Weymouth which I attended and was fortunate enough to win. The main prize from this was an invite to the Endeavour Trophy at the Royal Corinthian Yacht club which I have just competed in.

The Endeavour is a Regatta held in RS200s, with the winner of national championship being invited. As you can imagine, the level of sailing there was rather good! I am a bit oversize for the 200 but was lucky enough to partner up with Lynne Ratcliffe of Pevensey Bay SC. With her diminutive size, on paper we appeared a good team.

There was training on Friday and 4 races back to back Sat and Sun. Training was great with our boat being one of the very few not to capsize in 25 Knots. Bring it on! On Saturday the breeze was similar. We regularly got good starts, but I found I didn't have the hiking power required to maintain position on the long beat. The downwinds were epic with boats crossing close at high speed on a narrow section of a tributary off the river crouch. We only managed to keep the mast out of water for one race where we finished 12th out of 30 and were lying 17th overnight with our target being mid fleet.

It was a game of two halves with a fickle force one to two on Sunday. We came 18th in the first race of the day thinking that was one to build on. It turned out to be the best of the day with a last place in the 6th race – DOH. Overall, we were 21st. Ben Saxton and Toby Lewis were the winners. He was just back from Tokyo where he was competing in his Nacra for Olympic selection. It was a fantastic event and given the opportunity I would do it again.



Sorry report has been a bit Musto and me centric but... Please feel free to send me articles for next issue rgseng@yahoo.com

Richard

Slow Fleet Report

I have recently been appointed slow fleet Captain (also called Short course fleet!) and after attending yesterday's Sailing committee meeting, it dawned on me that after Georgios' dedication to the Slow fleet in the last few years, he would be a very hard act to follow. It was Georgios' enthusiasm and encouragement which made me take the plunge and go from Adult Skimmers to Sunday racing. In true WSC's style, I have no doubt that experienced members will help me rise to the challenge of keeping our fleet, active, interesting, enthusiastic and keen to encourage new members from Adult Skimmers to join us on Sundays. Stewart Robertson (medium fleet Captain) and I, will soon organise a combined fleet event which, I have no doubt, will be a great opportunity to discuss next season's expectations. It will be a while before I can write in-depth reports of our races, so bear with me if I issue some basic ones in the future. Any ideas, suggestions, support etc, please feel free to contact me. Isabelle Hill Short course / Slow fleet Captain (My boat is a Byte, she has no name, no sail number but has a beautiful bright pink colour sail that you can't miss, or you can find me crewing on Martin's Miracle, Sail number: 3829!)

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Medium Fleet Report

What a year we've had. Cold at first but a great summer and a great summer of sailing - sadly now coming to an end.

I think the numbers out sailing has been OK. I'd always like to see more and I'm particularly disappointed with the turnout of the class I sail - the Blaze. We have 12 in the club and I was hoping this year that we'd get some races with half a dozen at least. We may have had a couple like that but generally, we get 3 or 4. Perhaps I'm a "glass half empty" sort of person! However, things are looking up with John Tinnams now laying up his caravan for the winter and Colin Treadwell thankfully getting over his illness. We might even see John Hewatt out a bit more now that the motor racing season is fading.

Medway Regatta

The regatta must be considered a success. We had 8 Blazes competing in that thanks to some visitors. We had about 6 Wayfarers and so with 16 Medium Fleet boats and the Wayfarers that's 22 boats. We attracted 10 visitors to our fleet - that's good I'd say. The first prize was taken by a Blaze from Blackwater SC and 2nd by a Kestrel from Calshot so we'd better start getting better for next year.

Warm Up Series

Congratulations to Charles West who won this in a Blaze which I believe he is now selling. I seem to remember this was a cold series but I'm going to take credit for the Medium Fleet as he won against some good sailors from the other fleets as well.

Spring Points

Another Blaze triumphed here too with Chris Saunders cleaning up with a sweep of 1st places. Even his discards look good.

Summer Series

This year we didn't split this into 2 series of AM and PM races but reverted to the old system of an Early Points Series and a Late Points Series. The Early Summer Points was won by Brian Lamb in his Wayfarer generally assisted by Sam Pygal, but he had a few other crews too. Fortunately, a Blaze was 2nd ably helmed by John Tinnams. That series was contested by a total of 17 boats - eight of which were Blazes.

For the Late Summer Series, our winner was Chris Saunders again with an impressive score of mostly 1st places but I'm glad to say I did come 2nd and another Blaze (Dave Thornelow) was 3rd out of 15 competitors. I must also note that the Lasers held their own series for that period and it was won by Harry Downard. Congratulations to Harry he is definitely on the way up and at this rate will be challenging us all, next year. Can I say it's good to see - well done Harry.

Commodores

Earlier this year I was lamenting the poor turnout for this series. That's my "half empty" demeanour again, but I'm glad to say the last race was well attended and it's clear the weather forecast is a big determinant. It was a great race too, from my point of view, and you can catch up with details for that on the website. At the time of writing, there is yet one more race in this series.

Website

The website is now becoming a repository of sailing reports and all results as well as some photos. If a series interests you, open the home page, go to "Events" and select the series. You'll be able to select the year and dig deep for the results, and any reports. The website works well on a PC or Mac but not so well with a tablet or phone. However, in the wings and soon to replace the old one is a new more dynamic website which addresses the shortcomings. All the files accumulated and being curated by myself will be on the new system.

Odds and Sods

Yes, we've had the Creeks Race. A tough one and although won by a couple of Altos, Chris Saunders showed absolute domination of the Medium Fleet boats. Also past by has been the Leigh Trophy Race. That was dominated by medium asymmetrics with a Miracle coming 8th behind a bunch of 2000s lead by 2 V3000s. The Miracle was the first non-asymmetric. As for the 3 Race Regatta, I wasn't around but judging by the results it was a windy day with Brian Lamb showing his ability. Just for completeness, I'll mention the Pursuit races, Martin and Ben Brown have shown complete domination of this 2-race series by winning both. I'm second and a long way back so can thus testify to their talent.

That sums up the year. A reasonable turnout, some lovely weather, some interesting races and only a few races left unless you are amongst the hardy few. Have a good winter - I look forward to trying that little bit harder next year.

Fleet Meetings

In the spring no doubt there will be fleet meetings. These are primarily social events where we get to tease the more successful sailors in our fleets and recount some of the Daring Do of the past year. But they also have a special and important function, they are your opportunity to feedback to your class and fleet representatives your thoughts on how the club should organise itself for the coming year. Please don't hold back - what you want the club to do is important for the organisers know. For the record, I am your Medium Fleet representative and the Blazes have their own representative which is now Chris Saunders, talk to us, please.

Stewart Robertson

...And Did Those Feet in Ancient Times

Who knows who has passed by the site of the club over the years? Well, William Hogarth the English painter, printmaker, pictorial satirist, social critic, and editorial cartoonist (obviously no time left for sailing) passed the site of the club on 28 May 1732 having walked from the Crown Inn at Rochester; via Canal Road, Strood and Whitewall Creek to visit first Upnor castle and then on Cockham Wood Fort for a "hurry-scurry" dinner. Having been reduced from 44 to 10 guns the fort was still operational at that time rather than the tumbling mass of red brick masonry we know today.

David Wraight

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It all started with a pink hat.....2000 Fleet Class Captain Report

I helped out on the 2000 stand at the Dinghy Show at Alexandra Palace in March 2018 and that's when I sneakily grabbed a pink 2000 hat while Mark and Kev weren't looking and that pink hat has had a tour around the UK during 2018 and still looking good.

As we are now approaching the end of the traditional sailing season, with the club's Frostbite series starting in November, I am reflecting back on a great 2018 season. Ok perhaps our 2000 Fleet has not been as strong as previous years, but when I think back on some of the great races we've had, some of the boat on boat battles with the cat and mouse chases around the courses, the racing highs and lows, welcoming new and 'old' members to our fleet and the success in 2000 Class Association and other events.

The 2000 Class Association National Championships were the highlight of the season for me in a great location in beautiful Torbay with a fabulous start to the week, bathing in warm sunshine a good breeze, weather not so great at the end of the week and in fact we didn't even launch on Friday as it was ...to quote someone...a howling wind! Andy & Rachelle (21914) also competed and it was her first ever Nationals. I don't think anything will ever beat it, she was absolutely thrilled sailing in all the different conditions and their results climbed up the fleet with a 13th place race finish on the final day. The huge smile of sheer enjoyment on her face was an absolute delight to see. Another highlight from the Nationals was the Chairman's champagne moments, the spot prizes and the video feedback sessions, what a great way to learn, plus all the social events. Congratulations to Simon and Katie our 2000 Class National Champions 2018. I'm already looking forward to our 20th Anniversary 2019 Nationals in Tenby South Wales from 10th to 16th August 2019 and I hear there may be a special edition spinnaker, so I will be asking Santa for one on my Christmas list.

At the club, there has been success with Saturdays Adult Skimmers who have been encouraged by Darren and his team to improve their sailing and racing. Many skimmers are now club members and moving over to Sunday sailing, so let's encourage them into our fleet as they have been using the club 2000's so they have sailing experience.

We have had race entries for most club series and one-off races, so here's a roundup of results so far.

Medway Regatta 14 & 15 July 2018 was another success for WSC, with 64 entries across all fleets and visitors from 13 different clubs, with 6 fleet starts. The 2000 fleet had a total of 10 entries with 3 visitors from Erith YC, Mark Foley from Snettisham, and Richard Hudson & his son Ian from Bough Beech SC, who were overall winners. Richard told me that he was determined to retain his trophy and very much enjoyed the river racing at Wilsonian's.

At WSC across the season we have the Commodores/ Bosuns Series which is coming to a finish soon and morning races for scratch, Ladies, Novices, Juniors and we have entries from 2000 fleet.

The Points Series are almost all completed with Spring Points Series winner David & Janice (2643), 2nd place Nina & Chris (21405) and 3rd place Kevin & Hannah Downard (2586) club boat. Early Summer Points Series winners are me & Geoff (22321), 2nd place was David & Janice (2643) and 3rd place was Nina & Chris (21405). Late Summer Points Series winners are David & Janice (2643), 2nd place Nina & Chris (21405), 3rd place Pat & Tim (22258).



The South Kent Race on 22 July 2018 was dominated by Musto Skiff and Blaze feet, with Nina & Terrie (21405) finishing in 15th place with a time of 3 hours, 43 minutes and 44 seconds.

We had a good turnout of 7 2000's entered for Three Race Regatta on Sunday 26 August 2018 and I had great fun with Christine as my crew, which was particularly special as the race has been dedicated to Bob Dutton. The overall results, well done to Nina & Chris (21405) with two race wins although on adjusted handicap they came overall second place.

The Leigh Trophy on 9 September 2018 had 6 entries for 2000 fleet, with a total of 16 entries across all fleets, with third place David & Janice (2643), fourth place Rich & me in Roy's boat (21366) after replacing the spinnaker on the water at the start of the race, and fifth place Andy & Rachelle (21914).

Currently we have the last few races for Autumn Points Series and so far in first place is Lesley (22115), second David (2643) and third is Pat (22258). There's everything still to play for in the overall Club Championship which is the combined results across various individual races as the Laying Up Cup will confirm the final results but there have been 10 entries from 2000 fleet.

The 2000 Class Association has all the latest updates. <https://www.2000class.org/> Don't forget that the 2000 is part of RS Family, so if you are a 2000 Class Association member this means you get all year-round discount on top brands both online and in-store:

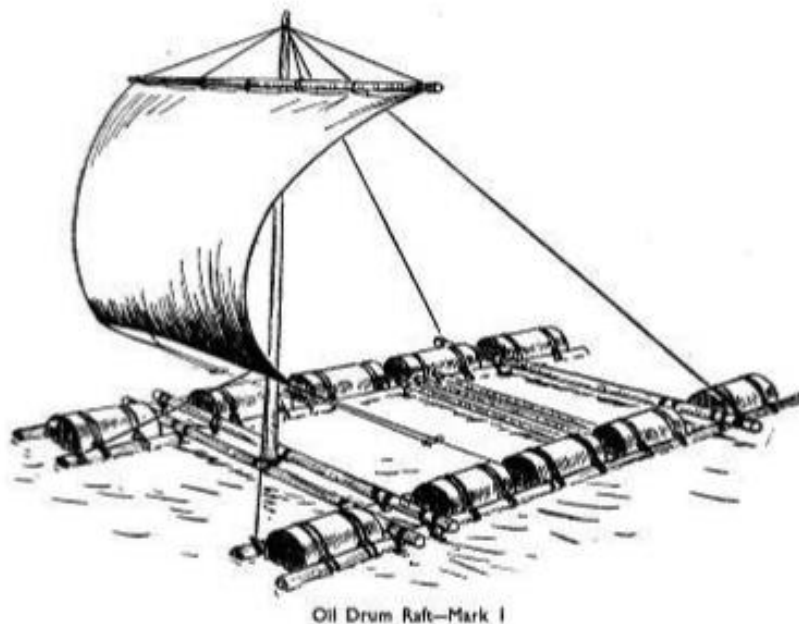
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Finally, I want to say a big thank you once again to David and Roy as my Vice Fleet Captains, for all their help and support throughout the year. A particularly special mention to Roy who has been extremely kind and lent me his boat and crew for several months whilst Lazy Grey was undergoing repairs.

Racing at the club and the 2000 Class Association events have been such a great fleet to sail amongst... what's the motto fast, family fun, and it certainly is very true. Come and join in.

Happy sailing, Rachel Sheridan, 22321 Lazy Grey

Budget Craft Offer



For those looking at cost rather than performance we offer the following from John Thurman's Fun With Ropes and Spars as a possible option or an idea for Junior Week.