



31 1/2

Autumn 2019

Welcome to the Autumn edition of 31½

This month we learn how Chatham Dockyard was instrumental in the defeat of the Martian invasion of 1899.

Thanks to those fleet captains and others who regularly contribute to the magazine but also a warm welcome to those who would like to contribute; if you have any tweaking tips for the new season or maintenance tips for the Spring edition, please contact me before 15th March 2020..

This month the cover shows some of the Blaze fleet out on the water and the accompanying article "Our Racing Area" by Stewart Robertson is well worth a read.

David Wraight

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From the Commodore

With the race for the laying up cup sailed, we have finished our 60th year, sailing season. Much has changed since the founding of the club in 1959 until 2019 both in terms of the club and the boats being sailed today. There are few of the original members left to comment on the changes made over the years, but I hope that they would approve of how the club is to-date.

This season we have hosted a Musto Skiff open meeting, changed from the Medway Regatta to the first of the Sail Juice series on tidal waters and there are plans already in hand for next season to host other open meetings. This is reminiscent of when we had up to 3/4 class meetings at the club in a year.

Before we start the frostbite and have the New Years day race, our annual prize giving dinner is being held in the Windmill Pub, Hoo on the 23rd November and I gather from the house committee, that all tickets are sold. Congratulations to all involved in the organisation of the event,

I would like to thank all who have helped in every capacity to make the club as successful as it has been this year and for all those working behind the scenes, that are not normally noticed but help to keep the club running. The work parties start in January to prepare for next season, so please check your date, which will be sent with your renewal form.

The Committee and I we wish you and your families a very happy Christmas and New Year and an even better sailing season for 2020.

Bernard Smith

Chief Duty Officer Duties 2020

If you have been in the club for more than two years and would like to take on the responsibility of running the club for a weekend, but are unsure of what is involved, then we can assist you with an experienced C.D.O. going through and explaining the various duties involved and two shadowing weekends before commencing your first weekend as a C.D.O..

Do not be put off from trying it as a change of duty, but we are looking for several new volunteer's to fill in missing gaps in the duty list during the oncoming sailing season.

Please contact Bernard Smith and arrange a convenient date for an initial explanation of what is involved.

Lost Property

Over the season, various items of shoes and clothing, sun glasses etc. have been left behind at the club. These will be put out on the outside racks during the winter work parties and what is left after the final work party will be disposed of.

Gates Locked from Main Road, Hoo

The Farm Gate from the Main Road will be closed and locked each evening after the 1st December from 18:30 until early spring.

Winter work party dates and membership allocation 2020

Please make a note of your work party date and contact us in advance of the date should you be unable to attend. This is so that we can offer you another date and ensure that we have enough food for the work party dates and have enough people on the days to carry out the work that needs to be done.

Sunday 5 th January	A – B
Saturday 11 th January	S – T
Sunday 12 th January	G – H
Sunday 19 th January	P – R
Saturday 25 th January	M – O
Sunday 26 th January	U – Z
Sunday 2 nd February	I – L
Saturday 8 th February	C – F

It is a condition of membership that all members should attend a winter work party. However if instead a member would prefer to do a duty during the racing season, such as prior to Medway Regatta and Junior Week, please let me know.

Tea, coffee or soft drinks are provided along with soup and sandwiches for lunch.

The work can be rather dirty, so please wear suitable clothing and footwear.

The work parties start at 9:30 and normally finish at 4:30 in the afternoon.

If you are unable to attend on your allotted date, please let me know.

Phone number 01689 835379 or email bernardsmith61@hotmail.co.uk

Many thanks,

Bernard

Our Racing Area

Sadly, winter is coming and by the time you receive this newsletter you may have hung up your wetsuit for another year. If so it's time for some armchair sailing, so I thought I'd give you some of my knowledge of our racing area. You can download the chart I'm using from the Wilsonian SC website, at this address.

<http://www.wilsoniansc.org.uk/content/documents/WSC%20Racing%20Charts.pdf>

I find racing on the Medway a fascinating challenge. One that changes on every outing. Never are the conditions repeated, rarely is the tidal flow the same and the wind, well that can be strong or weak, but also turbulent or smooth. Turbulent or smooth also means it deflects and bends in different ways. Even the water depth changes over the years, creeks silt up and sandbanks shift. There are so many variables but there are a few constants which are largely true, and these are my subjects for this little essay. Learn about these and one day if you are out cruising you might just get home when you might just have not. But more likely they will be of use if you are racing. Class racing at Wilsonian SC often entails 90 minutes of close combat and at the finish, the winner crosses the line often with only half a minute margin. We have had Blazes racing where the top 4 boats finished within a span of a couple of minutes. In those circumstances every little helps and so knowing where to round a promontory, when to step out into a contrary tide and how shallow the mud banks are, this all saves a few seconds here and there. Rarely do my competitors get it very wrong - they are all experienced dinghy racers but sometimes you do see novices make a right mess of it and that can lose tens of minutes.

The type of boat that is raced is a factor. I used to sail a beast of a boat, I loved it, fast but difficult to get right and slow to tack. Such a boat is so fast in a medium breeze that tide has only a passing relevance. Wind bends were still important but an error in boat handling would lead to a large distance lost and so risk had to be managed and the smaller shifts and bends were best ignored. Shallow water was very much a factor though, the boat had a dagger board and so if you hit the bottom you stopped, and at the speeds that boat was capable of, that could completely wipe you out. It was actually quite a long dagger board and we needed to leave well over a metre to be safe.



The boat I sail now is not so fast and being single handed the boat handling can be refined to a high level such that a tack or a gybe can be thrown in at almost any time. It's not a slow boat and it's not for the novice. Tacking in light winds can be slow and has to be done "just right" or you can stop altogether. It does, however, have a centreboard which slides up if you ground so you can really take some risks with shallow water, you do still need a metre. Being not so fast and manoeuvrable means the wind and the current can be more easily exploited and I wouldn't have learnt what I have if I had still been racing the faster boat.

So, let us examine our racing area and start at the Wilsonian Club line and going down the river. In a wind that has any northerly component, always sail on the St Mary's Island side of the river - there's more wind there. Conversely any wind with any south in it, always sail on the north side of the river. This has become particularly important now that there are some very tall flats on the corner of St Mary's Island near buoy 30A.

Buoy 30 is often a racing mark and naturally, you'd go straight down the middle if you have the tide with you. If not it's a difficult decision whether to plug the tide by taking the direct route to 30 or head for the shallows of Hoo Bay. It depends on the boat and the wind strength but in a wind from the North through to the SE you can do well by using the shallows on the St Mary's Island shore.

In a contrary tide always then head for Hoo Ness, called "Myers" by some of the locals. It never pays to go around the outside of this bend in the belief that you can utilise the shallows off Gillingham. My theory is that the wind follows the bend in the river and so by going around the outside you are completely wrong regarding the wind shift that you will experience. This applies upwind or down. In any case, Gillingham Reach is not as straight as it looks on the water - it's more a curve.

So, from Hoo Ness, you will stick to the shallows on your left in a contrary tide. If your next mark is 26 or 27, you'll have to judge how close you get to Folly Point before you launch out into the tide to get around these marks. Be aware that the tidal flow changes direction in the shallows before it changes in the main channel. The tide can still be flowing upriver in the main channel when your clock says it's past high water.

As I've said before, the wind tends to follow the route of the river, not precisely but it does bend at the corners. So again, in a foul tide always head for Folly Point if you are trying to get around it. This works downwind as well as up. Downwind you are looking to be in headers (nothing is slower than a dead run) and upwind it pays to sail into a header when a tack is imminent. This is what you'll find at Folly Point, sail straight at the post if you can and tack or gybe away from it. This also takes you into shallow water which when the tide is against is a good thing. As a rule, it's good because shallow water flows slower. It may not look slow at Folly Point however, because the sudden shelving disturbs the surface and makes it look rough, don't be deterred, it will pay. Going down river past Folly Point in a foul tide it pays to tack (or gybe) back in towards the Hoo Island shore. On the other hand, to get around 25 or 24 in light winds it may also be necessary to tack or gybe back into the island shore because the tide out there in the main channel runs pretty fast and you have to get well uptide before you venture into the channel. In a favourable tide be careful you get your approach right as it's easy to get swept the wrong side of these marks.

Once around this corner, you are now in what is called Pinup Reach. At low to half tide the flow is aligned with the river, but once above mid-tide, there is a substantial flow through South Yantlet Creek. If your next mark is 23 and the tide is against, then keep left and use the shallows around Hoo Island. If your next mark is SY4 then it must be higher than mid-tide - if not blame the course setter because you are going to hit the bottom! If your target is SY4 in a foul tide get across the river early and you can plug the tide along the shore of Nor Marsh. With a favourable tide just aim straight at the buoy, but if you are tacking or gybing round it be careful you don't overstand.

Pinup Reach can be a wild place when there is wind against tide. If it's a strong South Westerly and an incoming tide expect white water. Very nice up to a point and the point is when the pressure in the rig pushes the bow down under the water. Ease the kicker a bit and pull the mainsheet in a tad. Actually, do it the other way round, pull in the mainsheet and ease the kicker. You won't go as fast, but you'll sail past your competitors because they'll probably be swimming or struggling with their boat trying to be a submarine.

That eased kicker will pay dividends when you came to gybe around 23. I am continually surprised that people don't realise that a slightly eased kicker makes a gybe just that bit easier and also just a bit more forgiving if you get it wrong. If it is wild though you can always "wear around". There's no shame in that if it

wins the race for you but go well past 23 so that once complete you don't have to bear away too much to get around the mark. Aim to pass the mark close and go on at least 3 boat lengths. You must be close to the mark because to the left (which is west) the water is shallow and that is a lee shore in the wind direction we are talking about. Also, down at 23 in-coming tidal flow is from the east to the west so you will be pushed left towards the shallows. Get your deep running in early so that you approach 23 on a broad reach and not on a dead run and close to an involuntary gybe.

If on the other hand, the tide is falling it will be with you, the water will be flat and the flow at the mark will be from left to right. Make sure you don't get swept the wrong side of the mark.

Sometimes we go down river as far as 16. If you have to dodge the tide then keep close to the southern shore. This applies to any of the buoys in this part of the river which is called Long Reach. A foul tide may mean going along the shore to the vicinity of 18 and then stepping out to round MYC4, for instance. Beating or running you'll be surprised at just how close you can get to the grassy island on your right, called Bishop Marsh because it shelves steeply here. I remember crewing a Sonata near 20 and the helm was looking at a depth sounder and said we had 5m. A moment later we stopped with a thud and had to be pulled off by a power boat. No doubt there was mud on the keel, but we also had mud on our bow! Conversely, between 18 and 16 it shelves very gently and if you round 16 and head for Otterham Fairway you will be going into shallow water. Better to keep a bit left at first and head for B.OOZ, but B.OOZ is such a small buoy you'll never spot it. At high tide, this area of the river is a huge area of shallow water that stretches as far as the eye can see. If you are going to hit the bottom make sure it's not on a lee shore. On a windward shore, it's not too bad - you can always jump over the side and push off - it's often sandy and not muddy in this area.

If your course takes you around the back of Nor Marsh be aware that the buoy labelled RC is now called Rainham Fairway and it's written on it. All the other red buoys in the area are very small. Nor Marsh is not very high so at high water springs all you'll see is a few blades of grass. Head for the little red buoy on its SW corner. If you go to the south of that you are going over a rocky causeway, that's best avoided but many have done that at high tide and were completely oblivious. It's best to pass that red buoy close to port where there is a relatively deep channel.

Coming back up river it pays to hit the corners again. Not only does this provide the straightest course but again it is favourable, wind wise. If from Long Reach, clip close to Darnet Fort, in fact just around the corner in Pinup Reach there is a back eddy on a falling tide. You can only take that back eddy so far, as much of South Yantlet Creek also drains out around Darnet Fort causing a very strong flow just at its SW tip. So, at that point sail fast and free for the shallows off Hoo Island and work these to get up to Folly Point.

The next time you are near Darnet Fort at low tide just have a look at what you would be sailing over at high tide. It's hundreds of closely spaced wooden piles with pointed tips, you wouldn't want to fluff a tack there and get swept onto them. Make sure you can execute nice smooth consistent tacks in the lightest of winds if you want to utilise that back eddy.

There is a local rule which says you cannot sail inside Folly Point Beacon, so in an adverse tide, you have to step out to go around it. In light winds and a falling tide, you'll need to get right in close to the beacon before stepping out and tack just as soon as you feel you can come back in and be on the correct side of the post. Once you have passed the beacon keep heading inshore as you are in the least tide. It's a bit risky because the bottom is sharp and nasty, but you can get in and away from the tide because it's quite deep. Another 200m west and you'll have passed a couple of sunken barges and you'll see a causeway running into the water from the island, don't try and pass that close because you'll be sailing into a dead end. No, from the sunken barges you should see if you can spot the first of the moorings on this side of the river and head for them. Even then you might touch the bottom so be careful, but you do need to stay close into the shallows to make progress against a foul tide.

The mud here is like custard before you get stuck you will find the boat just slowing down as it drags the board through the custard. If you have a centreboard just keep an eye on it, even a dagger board will tip slightly due to the drag and this is the clue to tack or change course for the deeper water. Mud like custard sounds good because you get a warning before you stop dead - the disadvantage is when you do stop dead and you have to jump over the side, and well, the mud is like custard!

If you are running here's a tip for shallow water. If your boom is out on the opposite side of the boat to the shallows be extra vigilant. If you run aground from that position the boat will round up and drive you harder into the mud. If on the other hand, the boom is out on the same side as the shallows then if you run aground the boat will round up and take you out into deeper water.

If you are beating along this shore be aware that tacking does take time and if you tack too often somebody can simply overtake by putting in longer lengths. Also, in those lighter winds which are patchy in our summer months, there is often just a little more wind just a bit further out. It's a judgement but if you are class racing keep an eye on the opposition, they might just sail around you. It's happened to me.

Whatever you do head for the corner of Hoo Island which is called Hoo Ness. The tide fairly flushes around that corner but if you get tucked in close to the island before you venture out into the stream you can cut your exposure time down to only a few minutes. Whereas if you try further out, you'll spend a long time out in the current. Basically, you cut the corner as tight as you can, but once around don't be tempted to sail along the island shore. It works for a while, but you are sailing into a dead end and the only way out is back. No, you have to sail along on the inside of the moorings.

Now we have to consider the wind direction. Obviously, you will know the wind direction, but we now have to consider which side of the river we are going to sail to get to the finish. There is no point in sailing up into Hoo Bay if the wind comes from anywhere with any north in it. Wilsonian SC sits at the bottom of a steep hill covered with trees. The wind doesn't slide down that hill and onto the water, the trees make sure it tumbles and twist over itself into a turbulent mess that sometimes produces gust from the south and then from the north and sometimes no wind at all. If the tide is against you this last part of the race can be as long as the whole of the preceding part and is full of pitfalls and frustrations. If the wind is from the north, you must stay on the southerly shore of this final leg but be warned it can rise up over the flats and houses and thus be weaker close into the shore.

If the wind is from the south you have to avoid the holes formed by the towering flats on the corner of St Mary's Island, but at least you'll be on a fast point of sailing so tide will not be as big a factor compared to beating. Never-the-less stick to the north side of the river but on the way, you'll have to cut across some of the wind shadows - make sure you stay between the finish and your opposition. You are unlikely to be successful if you sail a great big arc around Hoo Bay just so you are always in clean wind.

If the wind is from the east, you'd not have any of these considerations, you'll have uninterrupted wind all the way home. There's just one other specific direction which requires consideration and that's wind from the west. Generally, wind from the west or slightly north of west comes straight down the reach between Medway YC and Wilsonians. That's going to be a beat to the line. The Wilsonian line is closer if you cross to the southern end but that would mean sailing into the wind shadow from the flats.

Wind from the west means you are likely to be sailing up amongst the moorings and into Hoo Bay, that will decide for you that you'll buck the tide by sailing across the Wilsonian line on the north shore. However, if a competitor can cut the corner, he could get past you so you may have to sail against the tide and more in the mainstream. It's a difficult call, made more difficult by the permanent shift you will experience on this corner. It's often a lift on port tack, so don't let any opposition get on your left-hand side because when you both tack, he will gain.

If you have to round 31 to port be careful in a favourable tide, it's easy to overstand when luffing to defend from boats behind and you can end up very broad (hence slow) against your "favourable" tide. In an ebb tide, the flow at 31 can be strong so you may decide to continue on port tack into the moorings. Be warned I have been pipped at the post more than once by a boat that tacked at 31 and although the tide was sweeping them to the left they just managed to lay the finish line since it is closer on the south side of the river.

I'm keen to learn all I can of this complex and interesting river. If you have any particular experiences to pass on, we can all benefit and it's not a bad way to fill a winter's evening.

Stewart

2000 Fleet Captain Autumn 2019

What a year 2019 has been for the weather, too much or not enough wind has presented many challenges as I look back over the season so far. The 2000 fleet at WSC has grown in strength with increasing overall race entries and the transition of some Saturday Rookies over to Sunday racers. We have a total of 14 boats plus 3 club training boats – come one everyone, let's go sailing.

The 2000 results across the various Point Series 2019 have a mix of sailors and I am waiting for final confirmation of the season results:

- Autumn Points – final race to be held but results so far are John & Simon (2826) first place, David & Janice (2643) second place
- Bosuns Fleet: John & Sue (2826) second place, me & Geoff (22321) third place
- Ladies Fleet: Lesley & Peter/ John (22115) winner, me & Geoff (22321) second place
- Leigh Trophy: Andy & Rachelle (21914) second place – by only 30 seconds behind Richard Smith in RS800, Brian & Tony who borrowed Darren's boat (2924) third place, Nina & Dave (21405) fourth place – it was definitely 2000's weather
- Late Summer Points: John & Sue/ Amy (2826) first place, David & Janice (2643) second place and Lesley & various crew (22115) third place,
- Pursuit race: John & Sue (2826) second place, Nina & Chris (21405) eleventh place
- Early summer Points: Rich/ Rachel & Liath/Geoff (22321) first place, Nina & Chris (21405) second place, Lesley & John (22115) third place
- Spring Points: me & Geoff (22321) first place, David & Janice (2643) second place, Nina & Chris (21405) third place

The popularity of the new Adult Week in early July 2019 was encouraging and I know this will be repeated in summer 2020 – it could be our very own version of Tokyo Olympics!

Away from the club, the 2000 Class Association events <https://www.2000class.org/> have been busy and well attended, with 7 Millennium Series events, including the Rutland Sprints in April, totalling 70 entries, with me & various crew (22321) finishing overall in 9th place – you've got to be in it to avoid those discards!

The 20th Anniversary National Champs in Tenby, South Wales with 54 entries, fantastic location and those beautiful special edition pink and purple spinnakers were a sight to behold. Congratulations and well done, the final WSC Nationals results were Andy & Rachelle (21914) 37th place, Nina & Chris (21405) 39th place, me & Geoff (22321) 45th place, Zoe & Peter (2523) 50th place. It was tight racing at the front of the fleet all week and congratulations to Jasper and Laura Barnham from Snettisham Beach SC as our 2019 National Champions. The Inland Champs round of the 2000 Class Association events on 19th & 20th October 2019 at Weir Wood SC.

The National Champs for summer 2020, 16th to 21st August 2020, will be Brixham SC – who's coming along? Let's do a house share as it was fun last year.

Finishing off the 2019 WSC season, for the hard-core sailors, will be the aptly named Frostbite Series starting from 3 November to 15 December 2019.

There's a couple of sailing and social events with last race in the Autumn Points, Laying Up Cup Supper on 27 October, WSC Prize Giving Dinner on Saturday 23 November and a Christmas Lunch in December 2019.

The 2020 season starts with Chilly Willies Race on 1 January 2020. Its an Olympic Year for Tokyo, so let's enjoy the sailing with a busy sailing programme planned at the club, in 2000 Class Association events and on the world stage, hoping for medal success.

Happy sailing

Rachel Sheridan

22321 Lazy Grey

2000 Fleet Captain

Why Medway

We are all happy to sail about and, sometimes swim about in it but have you ever wondered why it's the Medway. There seem to be a range of options:

One cites the name being recorded in the Saxon Chronicles of 764, as 'medunuaeian' (meduwaen), and suggests that it is derived from the British, pre-Roman, river name 'wey' or 'way', with the Celtic word 'medu', meaning 'mead' and referring to the colour of the water, a golden brown.

Another, less romantic option, takes its lead from the river Medina in the Isle of Wight and suggests the med (middle) refers to a river halfway between Dubris and Londinium.

Samuel Ireland in his magnificently and grandiloquently titled "Picturesque Views on the River Medway from the Nore to the Vicinity of its Source in Sussex with Observations on the Public Buildings and other Works of Art in its Neighbourhood" of 1793 suggests; the Medway, originally denominated Vega by the Ancient Britons, from the Saxons received the additional syllable of Med, signifying Mid or Middle to denote its course through the centre of the Kingdom of Kent and hence its compound appellation Med-vaga or Medwage now modernised to Medway.

To round off, Judith Glover in The Place Names of Kent returns to the name being composed of a British river name *wey*, with an Old English word *medu*: mead – hence 'mead water', a reference to the sweetness of the water of this river!

So next time you capsize and find yourself in the middle of the river take time to admire the golden brown tone and the sweetness of the water.

David Wraight

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Slow Fleet Report

News update from the Fabulous Fleet

It has been a fairly difficult summer for the Slow Fleet as it seems that the weather never seemed right. It was either too windy or not windy enough.

Martin Smith continues to lead in his Streaker with not much hope for any of us to be able to catch up.

However; Streakers are still the most popular boats in our Slow Fleet with Richard Middleton and Steve Dixon being now the proud owners of such boats and I am sure that Martin (any of the Martins who belong to the Slow Fleet in fact) will very soon have some serious competition.

You might on the other hand have heard that a Miracle won the pursuit race. Which brings me to the subject that we still have a fair amount of Miracles in the fleet and it would be lovely to see more of them on the water on Sundays as we all know that they are amazing boats - not as amazing as Bytes mind you.

With winter approaching I hope that we will again have a combined Rookies / Slow fleet evening to discuss next year's season and share our experiences this year.

You might know that my most ambitious (and scary I must admit) experience this year has been during the Medway Marathon (A challenge in itself by the fact that my boat has a hole, repaired with some good old duct tape!). This experience, as well as the cruises to Rochester bridge and Darnet Fort with Ashley McDermott, has showed me that you just have to have a go, conquer your fear and just see what happens, with some planning ahead off course.

I am hoping that we will be able to have more amazing races before the end of the year and show everyone that we are indeed the most Fabulous Fleet!

Isabelle Hill

Captain of the Slow Fleet with probably the most beautiful colourful sail in the club.

WSC Adult Rookies 2019

The Saturday afternoon Adult Skimmers was re-named as Adult Rookies and has gone from strength to strength; it's been great to see the progression of sailors from previous season beginners to confident sailors and some racers during 2019 season. There have been a number of existing members who have taken the opportunity to brush up their skills or just fancy a lovely Saturday afternoon sail on the River Medway, and I can't blame them, certainly when you think of the weather conditions this season, Saturday sailing has been a good choice.

The success of Adult Week in July and the ongoing help and support from WSC membership has encouraged our 'Rookies' to try new boats and build their skills. We enjoyed a fabulous cruise and some racing both off the club as well as up to buoy 23 plus a few trips around Hoo island, there's been plenty of training and coaching advice as well.

Darren has been running the WhatsApp group and it's been a big success plus great method to keep in contact. There's been a regular turnout of 20+ sailors and this has been generated new membership for the club.

For 2020, there's a plan to offer some structured Saturday afternoon session which may include Seamanship Skills – when was the last time you tried rudderless sailing, sailing backwards, picking up a buoy, man-overboard?, racing start line strategies, focus on the 5 Essentials, mark rounding strategies, as

well as cruise to Aylesford and cruise to Darnet Fort – watch this space or join the WhatsApp group for more details.

The 2020 season starts from April 2020 until October, so if you want to brush up your sailing skills, come along, everyone's welcome.



2000 Fleet 20th anniversary National Champs Tenby, South Wales, 11th to 16th August 2019

4 Wilsonian SC boats travelled to 20th Anniversary 2000 National Championships at Tenby, South Wales on 10th to 16th August 2019. The 2000 Class Association <https://www.2000class.org/index.asp> made the decision to offer a number of entry categories for sailors as well as the traditional Gold and Silver Fleets, which included Welsh, First timers, Junior helm and Inter Services, as we are well supported as a fleet by the Army, Navy and



RAF. Some sailors went via M4 to Wales whilst others did a detour route at the roundabout via M4 to London, then turned around and headed for M4 Wales. One sailor discovered that height restrictions means you can't park in a multi-story car park with your bikes on the roof rack!

On Saturday night there was a welcome supper hosted by Tenby SC and the Commodore and his team, which provided a chance to catch up with fellow sailors before the serious business of racing started on Sunday 11th August 2019, with first warning signal from the committee boat off shore at 11.55am.



Sunshine and breath-taking coastal scenery, with beautiful sandy beach – more about that beach later – greeted the fleet of 54 entries on Sunday morning; 2 races were completed with traditional 2000 windward/leeward course in F2/F3 conditions. This was a good shake-down sail and initial results were Andy & Rachelle (21914) 29 & 31 places, Nina & Chris (21405) 26 & DNF places, me & Geoff (22321) 38 & 40 places, Zoe & Peter (2523) 48 & DNC places. Nina's DNF, similar to her road navigation skills, she forgot to cross the finishing line in race 2, mind you her delicious Sunday roast dinner made up for it. Zoe had a skiing accident in March which resulted in a broken

leg and Peter had undergone shoulder surgery last year, so they made the cautious choice to take it easy on day one.

The good weather and favourable sailing conditions continued on Monday, with 2 more races held and our results were improving across WSC fleet. Zoe & Peter decided that after a couple of capsizes it was time to retire for the week and enjoy the sights of Tenby. Monday evening was 2000 Class Association AGM and I'm now the editor of the Millennium Mutterings magazine.

Oh yes, about that sandy beach, we launched mid-morning on an outgoing tide each day so the sand was wet but ok to push the boats to the



shoreline, although it was a long walk back for the crew to drop off the launch trolley to the trailer storage area, so we thought that coming back on high water meant we didn't have far to go to recover the boats – how wrong we were! What we didn't realise that thousands of holiday maker would descend to that beautiful beach, building sandcastles, swimming in the sea and enjoying the beach whilst we (the exhausted sailors) tried to drag out boats through that light fluffy golden sand avoiding the 'pot holes', it needed at least 4 – 6 people per boat!

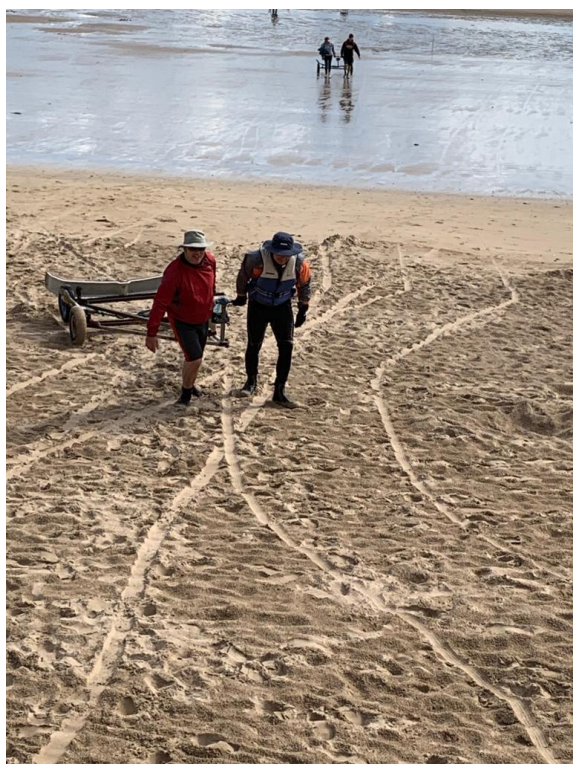
On Tuesday evening, on Stan's recommendation, we went to a local restaurant. The WhatsApp National group (love the technology) sent a message – our planned traditional lay day on Wednesday could possibly be cancelled as strong winds and stormy weather were predicted for end of the week, so they may squeeze in racing. In the end, decision made mid-morning, Wednesday was a lay day so we went for a 'short' cycle ride from Neyland, starting at Brunnel Quay, to Haverfordwest, with a stop off a local bakery before heading back – totalling only 22 miles - I'm sure we worked off those cream cakes!



Thursday was back to back 3 races planned and Friday, as expected, racing cancelled due to weather, so many sailors took the opportunity on Thursday to pack up their boats ready for Saturday morning drive home. Andy described the Welsh weather as rain between showers and we certainly had all seasons during the week.

Friday night was final prize giving and trophies were award across all categories. Final WSC results were Andy & Rachelle 37th place, Nina & Chris 39th place, me & Geoff 45th place, Zoe & Peter 50th place. It was tight racing at the

front of the fleet all week and congratulations to Jasper and Laura Barnham as our 2019 National Champions.





Results so Far

You will notice a blackboard in the club on which the current leaders and winners of various series are supposed to be written. Unfortunately, nobody is keeping it up to date so here it is on paper for you to consider.

Stewart Robertson

Commodores					
1st	MUSTO SKIFF	419	Richard Smith		
2nd	BLAZE	778	Chris Saunders		
3rd	BLAZE	756	Stuart Bailey		
Bosuns					
1st	STREAKER	1965	Martin Jessop		
2nd		2000	2826	John Hewat	Sue Hart
3rd		2000	22321	Rachel Sheridan	Geoff Lambert
Medway River Challenge					
1st	MUSTO	556	Graeme OLIVER		
2nd	ALTO	118	Timothy KIFT		Jo WICKEN
3rd	Osprey from SYC	1372	Mick GREENLAND		David DOWNS
3 Race Regatta					
1st	BLAZE	778	Chris Saunders		
2nd	ALTO	118	Tim Kift		Jo Wicken
3rd	ALTO	122	Chris Ashby		Grahame Smith
Bob Dutton Regatta					
1st	BLAZE	778	Chris Saunders		
2nd	WAYFARER	11170	Brian Lamb		Bernard Smith
3rd	ALTO	122	Chris Ashby		Ian Parris
Spring Points - Fast					
1st	ALTO	122	Chris Ashby		Ian Parris
2nd	ALTO	118	Tim Kift/Andy Hockey		Jo Wicken
3rd	OSPREY	13	John Shenton		Steve Offer
Spring Points - Medium					
1st	BLAZE	679	Colin Treadwell		
2nd	RS 200	323	Tim Truin		Beth Gibbs
3rd	BLAZE	778	Chris Saunders		
Spring Points - Short Course					
1st	STREAKER	1965	Martin Jessop		
2nd	LASER RADIAL	166417	Martin Vinton		
3rd	TOPAZ RACEX	5801	Stuart Bailey		Frankie Lawrence
Spring Points - 2000s					
1st		2000	2643	David Vettergreen	Janice Smith
2nd		2000	21415	Nina Wallis	Chris Wallis
3rd		2000	22321	Rachel Sheridan	Geoff Lambert
Spring Points - Lasers					
1st	LASER RADIAL/LASER	172348	Gordon Belcher		

2nd	LASER	191856	Graham Jenkinson	
3rd	LASER RADIAL	130732	Harry Downard	
Early Summer Points - Fast				
1st	ALTO	122	Chris Ashby	Ian Parris/Lucy Hockey
2nd	ALTO	120	David Mason	Stuart Mason
3rd	V3000	3605	David Fenech	Alison Williams
Early Summer Points - Medium				
1st	BLAZE	609	Stewart Robertson	
2nd	BLAZE	679	Colin Treadwell	
3rd	BLAZE	617	David Thornelow	
Early Summer Points - Short Course				
1st	STREAKER	1965	Martin Jessop	
2nd	MIRACLE	3829	Martin McKay	Isabelle Hill
3rd	STREAKER	1774	Martin Smith	
Early Summer Points - 2000s				
1st	2000	22321	Rich/Rachel Sheridan	L Campbell/Geoff Lambert/John Hewat
2nd	2000	2643	David Vettergreen	Janice Smith/Lesley O'Rourke
3rd	2000	22115	Lesley O'Rourke	J Southall/Simon McCausland/B Truin
Early Summer Points - Lasers				
1st	LASER LASER	191856	Graham Jenkinson	
2nd	RADIAL/LASER	172348	Gordon Belcher	
3rd	LASER 3000	3356	Ellie Kift	Robert Crane
Late Summer Points - Fast				
1st	ALTO	122	Chris Ashby	Ian Parris
2nd	ALTO	118	Tim Kift	Jo Wicken
3rd	V3000	3605	David Fenech	Alison Williams
Late Summer Points - Medium				
1st	BLAZE	778	Chris Saunders	
2nd	BLAZE	609	Stewart Robertson	
3rd	BLAZE	617	David Thornelow	
Late Summer Points - Short Course				
1st	STREAKER	1774	Martin Smith	
2nd	STREAKER	1680	Georgios Rafeletos	
3rd	MIRACLE	3829	Martin McKay	Isabelle Hil
Late Summer Points - 2000s				
1st	2000	2826	John Hewat	Sue Hart/Amy Adams
2nd	2000	2643	David Vettergreen Lesley O'Rourke/Brian	Janice Smith
3rd	2000	22115	Lamb	F Lawrence/J Southall/L O'Rourke
Late Summer Points - Lasers				
1st	LASER	172348	Gordon Belcher	
2nd	LASER	191856	Graham Jenkinson	
3rd	LASER	195119	Morgan Tindall	

Meandering Upriver

On the 4 May 1899 the Royal Navy ram ship *Thunder Child* came to the rescue of those fleeing a Martian overrun Essex in HQ Wells War of The Worlds and demonstrated the vulnerability of the Martians.

“A douche of spray blinded my brother for a moment. When his eyes were clear again he saw the monster had passed and was rushing landward. Big iron upper-works rose out of this headlong structure, and from that twin funnels projected and spat a smoking blast shot with fire into the air. It was the torpedo-ram, *Thunder Child* steaming headlong, coming to the rescue of the threatened shipping.

Keeping his footing on the heaving deck by clutching the bulwarks, my brother looked past this charging leviathan at the Martians again, and he saw the three of them now close together, and standing so far out to sea that their tripod supports were almost entirely submerged. Thus sunken, and seen in remote perspective, they appeared far less formidable than the huge iron bulk in whose wake the steamer was pitching so helplessly. It would seem they were regarding this new antagonist with astonishment. To their intelligence, it may be, the giant was even such another as themselves. The *Thunder Child* fired no gun, but simply drove full speed towards them. It was probably her not firing that enabled her to get so near the enemy as she did. They did not know what to make of her. One shell, and they would have sent her to the bottom forthwith with the Heat-Ray.

She was steaming at such a pace that in a minute she seemed half-way between the steamboat and the Martians—a diminishing black bulk against the receding horizontal expanse of the Essex coast.

Suddenly the foremost Martian lowered his tube and discharged a canister of the black gas at the ironclad. It hit her larboard side and glanced off in an inky jet that rolled away to seaward, an unfolding torrent of Black Smoke, from which the ironclad drove clear. To the watchers from the steamer, low in the water and with the sun in their eyes, it seemed as though she were already among the Martians.

They saw the gaunt figures separating and rising out of the water as they retreated shore-ward, and one of them raised the camera-like generator of the Heat-Ray. He held it pointing obliquely downward, and a bank of steam sprang from the water at its touch. It must have driven through the iron of the ship's side like a white-hot iron rod through paper.

A flicker of flame went up through the rising steam, and then the Martian reeled and staggered. In another moment he was cut down, and a great body of water and steam shot high in the air. The guns of the *Thunder Child* sounded through the reek, going off one after the other, and one shot splashed the water high close by the steamer, ricocheted towards the other flying ships to the north, and smashed a smack to match-wood.

But no one heeded that very much. At the sight of the Martian's collapse the captain on the bridge yelled inarticulately, and all the crowding passengers on the steamer's stern shouted together. And then they yelled again. For, surging out beyond the white tumult drove something long and black, the flames streaming from its middle parts, its ventilators and funnels spouting fire.

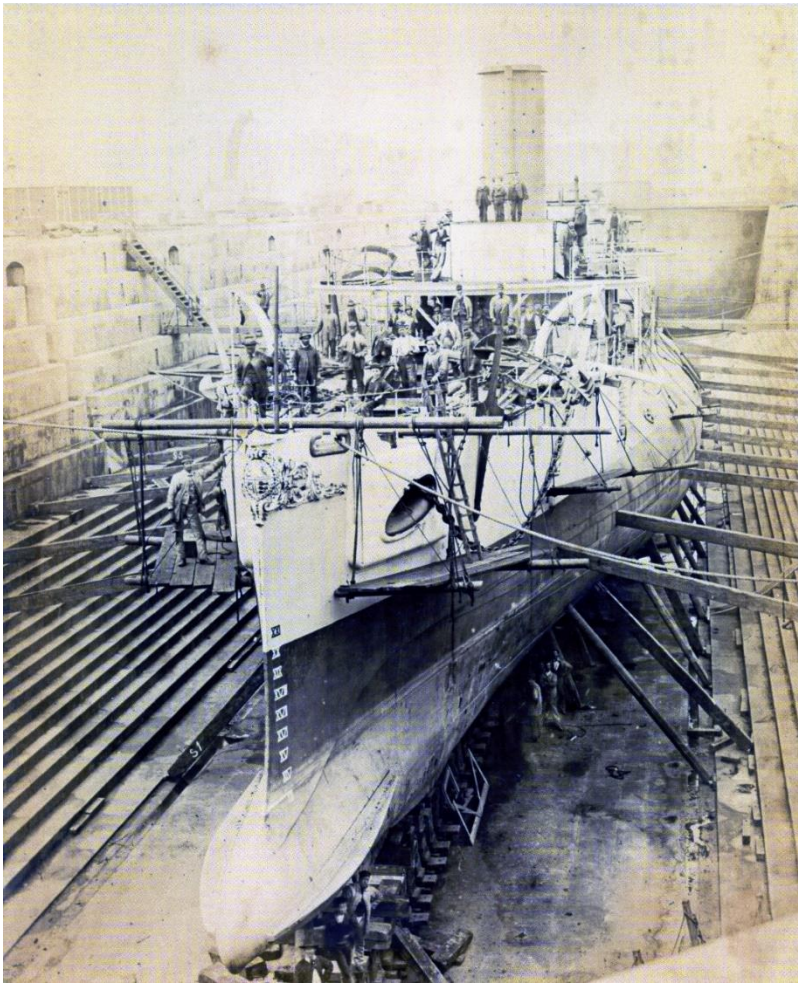
She was alive still; the steering-gear, it seems, was intact and her engines working. She headed straight for a second Martian and was within a hundred yards of him when the Heat-Ray came to bear. Then with a violent thud, a blinding flash, her decks, her funnels, leaped upward. The Martian staggered with the violence of her explosion, and in another moment the flaming wreckage, still driving forward with the impetus of its pace, had struck him and crumpled him up like a thing of cardboard. My brother shouted involuntarily. A boiling tumult of steam hid everything again.

"Two!" yelled the captain."

While there was no real HMS *Thunder Child* but there was the inspiration, HMS *Polyphemus*, the Royal Navy's only ram ship, was laid down in Chatham Dockyard (the dock still exists and you will sail past it if you venture upriver) on 21 September 1878 and launched from Chatham on 15 June 1881.

Ram ships became all the rage after the ramming and sinking of the *Re d'Italia* at the Battle of Lissa in 1866 by the Austrian flagship, *Ferdinand Max*. Despite the Italian warship being stationary at the time. Most major seafaring nations had at least one but the development of development of quick-traversing and quick-firing guns brought their use to an end, HMS *Polyphemus* was decommission in April 1902 All that remains is the original naval architects model which is held in the National Maritime Museum historic models ships collection at their repository at Chatham Dockyard. If you are interested, contact them, they are more than happy show the model.

The picture below shows HMS Polyphemus reaching completion in Chatham Dockyard and the press cutting from The Frome Times of 22 June 1881 details the launch.



LAUNCH OF H.M.S. POLYPHEMUS.

Her Majesty's ship Polyphemus was launched on Wednesday from Chatham Dockyard, where she has been in course of construction since the 21st of September, 1878. The Polyphemus is in all respects a singular vessel. Her length is 246ft., breadth 90ft., and her displacement 2,640 tons, while her engines are of 5,500h.p., and are calculated to give her a speed of 17 knots. She is built principally of steel, and is eight shaped, and for the greater part of her length she will be entirely under water—that is, her two circular like ends will be totally submerged. Above water her deck, vertically and horizontally armoured, will be of a convex shape, with the object of reducing to a minimum danger from shot or shell. This conical deck will be 5ft. above the water line, and will be for the most part all that will be visible of her at sea, except that on the deck a slight superstructure or hurricane deck will be raised, and that a counting tower, signal-post, and funnels will be seen. Her weapons will consist of a powerful ram and of Whitehead torpedoes, both of which she is destined to use with much cunning and with deadly effect. As she will have no guns and will carry no masts or canvas, her principal fighting strength has been concentrated in her ram, which is carried at the bow. It is 12ft. long, and will be submerged when the vessel is afloat so as to be capable of striking most ironclads of modern construction well beneath their armour-plating and in their most vulnerable part. The torpedo fittings, which form the other prominent fighting feature of the Polyphemus, are so arranged as to be used in all directions in the most effective and deadly way. Under the ram a large torpedo port is made for the ejection of the "Whitehead," and two other ports are provided for broadside use, one being placed on each side of the vessel. These ports are, of course, under water, and will be provided with the most improved apparatus for ejecting torpedoes. The Polyphemus will in addition carry some deck torpedoes, either of the "spar" kind, or any which may be found useful; and she will also have a few Gatling guns, which will be strictly confined to her hurricane deck, and be regarded as solely useful on an emergency against boarding or torpedo boats, or against any attack of an unusual nature. The launch took place in the presence of an enormous concourse of spectators. After the customary religious service by the chaplain, the christening ceremony was performed by Mrs. G. O. Trevelyan, wife of the Secretary to the Admiralty. By simply pushing forward a lever that lady released the dog-shores, and at the same time actuated a piece of mechanism by which the traditional bottle of wine was dashed against the bows of the vessel, which were wreathed with flowers. With an uttered good wish from Mrs. Trevelyan, the Polyphemus glided down her ways into the river amid the plaudits of the spectators, and the strains of the National Anthem, played by the band of the Royal Marines. There was a large and distinguished company present upon the platform. The Polyphemus was launched with her engines on board, and will be taken into dock and got ready for her steam trials, which will be carried out at an early date.