



31 1/2

AUTUMN 2021

Welcome to the Autumn edition of 31½

With Covid-19 still impacting on activity in 2021 and despite a huge amount of work behind the scenes to ensure the club could open for racing and the Saturday sessions there has been less opportunity for news than previous years; therefore, it was decided to skip the summer edition to give the opportunity to capture both seasons activity in the autumn edition.

With changes in social media and communication the club continues to evolve; however, 31½ continues to function as it always has as a record of the club activity supported by email, social media and Wilsonian Watch. As always, thank you to all the members who have contributed to this edition and the ongoing record of club activity.

Over the winter months why not take the option to consider an item for the next edition. Why not share your experiences of learning to sail at the club, your personal cruises on the river, sailing at different locations, any sailing or maintenance tips, or anything else which reflects the diversity of the club. If you are a fleet captain a record of the winter series and a look ahead to the main 2022 sailing season should be submitted by the March 2022 copy date.

David Wraight

NEXT COPY DATE: 15th March 2022

Future copy dates: 15th June 2022

15th October 2022

Copy to: editor@wilsoniansc.org.uk

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COMMODORE Rachelle Hockey

SECRETARY Simon McCausland

SAILING SECRETARY Andy Hockey

The cover pictures show the 38th&40th Strood Sea Scouts and some of the boats they use at Wilsonians sailing through a raised Tower Bridge – a club first?

From the Commodore

As I write this, I find it hard to believe we are almost at the end of 2021! I must apologise that this is the first issue I have submitted an article for 31½, but it really has been a wild year not only for the club but for each and every one of us.

As many of you know, this is my first season as commodore having served as the Hon. Secretary and as the rear commodore in previous years. So, I must start with a long overdue thank you, for your support and understanding during a very challenging first term. I know committee members old and new would agree that we have faced many firsts as a club since March 2020.

I am incredibly passionate about our club, if you have had a chance to catch up with me in the dinghy park, I am sure you know this already. You will also know how difficult it is for me to capture this (and most things) in just a few words.

Juniors...wow what an utterly amazing group of juniors we have, I hope you have taken the time to read the articles these fantastic sailors have submitted in the newsletters this year. Parents, guardians and supporters of the juniors... you cook, you clean, you bake, and you cheer from the shore. Rookies...you are a breath of fresh ideas and hold an enthusiasm that ripples throughout the club, you are always ready to step up to cover duties and help racing days happen. I appreciate your support and enthusiasm more than I can express. Racers and sailors old and new... you roar and scream with excitement/frustration and share your tips and advice in the dinghy park. You also take out the new and inexperienced and make them feel they belong to our sailing family.

Committee members, officers, assistants and fleet captains...this modest group give more time and commitment to the day to day running of the club than any of us truly realise. Quite simply the club could not run without their support and time. Many difficult conversations take place but please remember that everything the committee does is with the best intention and for the good of our club and members. If you want to get involved talk to the flag officers or general committee members.

I will leave it to the relevant people to share updates on the many events that have happened this season, but I extend a thank you on behalf of us all to the people that have worked hard to make these things happen. I would also like to share a personal thank you to Ann Heather our commodore in 2000 who for many years continued to co-ordinate the catering for our junior week. She has now stepped down from this role living so far away and with her own juniors having long grown up and now having their own juniors.

I look forward to catching up with you at one of our new social events or even just over a coffee in the clubhouse.

Rachelle Hockey

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Notes from the Treasurer

For 2021 we reduced our membership fees as a thank you to members for staying with us during 2020 and encouraging members to stay with us for 2021. This appears to have worked as most members have stayed with us. Welcome also to the members that have joined us this year.

We pay business rates for our club, with 80% reduction due to our CASC status, giving 20% paid to Medway Council. We successfully applied for Covid restriction grants, which have been very helpful this year as our income has been much lower this year. Lower income has been due to the ongoing covid pandemic, leading to no open meetings, no Medway Regatta/River Challenge, galley/bar restrictions and lower numbers for Adult Sailing week and Junior week.

At the beginning of the year, we experienced lots of problems with the club RIB outboards, including fuel filters, fuel pumps and fuel lines. This led to costs for diagnosis, repairs and spare parts. The 50hp outboard on Bluebird is corroding inside the middle part of the leg, so will need replacing before the main 2022 season. Due to the success of the 15hp Yamaha dory outboard, we plan to purchase another one for next year, keeping the 9.9hp outboards as back up.

Due to ongoing problems with the Blue Generator, plus the yellow generator not providing sufficient power for winter running a new Generator (White) has been fitted. We allocate some costs each year toward a Boat and Generator fund. Well done to Tim Kift and Stan Sprout for removing the yellow generator, moving the blue Generator and fitting the White Generator. The Blue generator kept on causing problems, but hopefully following three trips of the alternator back to the manufacturers is now fixed.

With the success of the tea/coffee shed outside, we purchased a larger store for a buoyancy aid/clothing store.

Martin Vinton

GALLEY UPDATE

2021 Started with a Total Lock down. The galley was closed – but our Resilient Members were not deterred. They donned their wet suits and changed outdoors. They brought their packed lunches and thermos flasks and huddled around their boats. Social discourse was socially distanced. The British Spirit still going strong despite the C word

We tried to run the galley within the parameters of the ever changing rules.

As winter turned to spring, Penny's Tuck Shop appeared, so did the gelling of hands and frantic wiping of surfaces. We relied on the Honesty Box and members not scalding themselves in the process of making themselves DIY tea and coffee, and

even the modern technology in the form of a card reader was taken up by most members.

The BBQ resurfaced and was in constant use both Saturdays, Sundays and any Day that involved Sailing. Some members excelled in the 'Bake Off' Department to the detriment of our waistlines.

A big Thank you to the Saturday Girls Jane Cornwall and Emma Russell who resiliently soldiered on to provide the Skimmers and Rookies with drinks and nourishment. If a few mums and dads could help the Saturday girls now and again it would give them a break.

However, during the spring and summer months we had big problems filling the Sunday duties. We are indebted to those volunteers who were continually offering their services and not sailing themselves.

If you are volunteering for the galley, you will receive a call with a shopping list and asked if you are able to make or by a pre-prepared meal for about ten persons. The cost of the meal will be x 3 divided by how many portions served. The second volunteer will be asked if they can bake a cake. If you can advertise your meal on the Wilsonian Facebook that would be great.

We had high hopes with regards to planned meal events. We are now taking bookings for our yearly Prize Giving and Annual Meal Event on Saturday 29th January. These events have been such good fun in the past and I highly recommend that you attend.

Nina Wallis

Training

This year we have run many training courses. During Adult Sailing week we carried out some beginner sailing courses. A Start Sailing course has also been run. Lots of qualifications were awarded during Junior week.

Lots of powerboat courses have been run this year, both Powerboat 2 and Safety boat course run and a record year with twenty-four qualifications issued. Powerboat 1 is a one day course for children 8 to 11 years old. Powerboat 2 is the two day course with minimum age of twelve teaching powerboat handling, with no previous experience required. The RYA Safety boat course teaches rescue techniques, for those holding Powerboat 2 qualification and having good powerboat driving skills. At weekends it is difficult to run powerboat and sailing courses due to instructors and boats being difficult to use at times. This year we have run a few mid-week powerboat courses which have been popular, plus we can use all the club RIBs. Many thanks to our Instructors and helpers for their support during Adult Sailing week, Junior week, sailing course and powerboat courses.

To help with the requirements of the Powerboat 2 course, we have now fitted GPS plotters to Bluebird and Kittiwake, which include echo sounders. So, if using these RIBs, you can see where you are, how fast you are going and tell whether you are running into shallow water.

To keep our RYA Training Centre status an RYA inspector normally visits every year to review our documents, procedures and training. This is also an opportunity to discuss with the inspector any latest information and guidance. Our inspection this year was successful, with only a few minor suggestions for improvements to our procedures.

Next year we are planning to run more mid-week courses, due to their success this year. Please contact Martin Vinton if you are interested in training courses.

Martin Vinton

Adult Sailing Week

Following the success of our first Adult Sailing week in 2019, we ran the week again this year. We were joined this year by Richard Sheridan, a very experienced coach who ran training sessions for our experienced sailors. For beginners we also ran beginner training sessions. The week was similar to 2019, including the cruise to Darnet fort. Many thanks for all the participants who helped with cooking, safety boats and all the support to make the week a great success. All suggestions for improvements are very welcome. Dates for 2022 will be published soon, with consideration given to tides (ideally mid-day high water), weekend events (e.g. River Challenge) and probably in early July, before school holidays.

Martin Vinton

Junior week.

Due to the ongoing Covid-19 situation we did not give much notice for this year's Junior week. Despite the short notice it was great to welcome lots of regular and new faces for the week. Richard Sheridan joined us as coach during the week for the racing group, and our other juniors were split into groups according to their abilities. Many thanks for the great enthusiastic support from the instructors and helpers throughout the week, spending their holidays at Costa-del-Medway. Jane Cornwell did an excellent job in organising the galley and keeping us well fed all week, together with help from parents. Michelle Cope often turned up early in the morning bringing food and drink, before going off to work. The week finished with the Junior Regatta on Saturday, which most of the Juniors took part.

Martin Vinton

From the Social Secretary

I have been bringing my son to a Wilsonian now for the last five years or so and have enjoyed watching from the side-lines and helping out as needed. Sam has progressed from sailing a Topper to now sailing a Laser 2000 and I have moved from an observer/helper to Social Secretary. I was honoured when asked and thought I would be able to rise to the challenge, especially as I had co-ordinated Junior week this year and there were no complaints. Anne Heather was a fine figure to follow, and I think I did very well as there were empty plates every day.

My first event as Social Secretary was to organise a Macmillan Coffee morning. My goodness we have some amazing cake bakers and dare I say eaters too. I sourced prizes for the raffle and thought up some games to get the brains working. It was quite funny watching people try and guess what objects were from pictures captured at strange angles. But we had a winner scoring 8 out of 12. Wilsonian raised an amazing £530 for the charity that will help them to continue the fantastic work they do.

Following on from the success of the Macmillan Coffee morning I was somewhat anxious about the planning of the next social event, but I need not have worried as it was another roaring success! There were some brilliant Team names for our 1st Wilsonian Quiz Night. Stuart Angell stepped up as Quiz Master and my goodness he had us all thinking. The subject groups were fabulous, we had a little general knowledge, we had to know our Chickens from our Dickens; still a source of conversation today, we had to guess what Robert was famous for what, the good old true or false round, identify cartoon characters and to sum it up an aeroplane flight-of the paper variety. Not only do we have fantastic sailors who are amazing cake eaters but there are also some potential pilots amongst us too. Well, I use that term loosely- as one aeroplane got deflected by a breast, another was caught in the light fittings, one almost had my head off and a few hit the desired target...well made the distance anyway. Food was plentiful and the drink flowed. The night was full of fun and laughter.

Future events currently advertised are:

Cheese and Wine Evening Saturday 27th November 7:30pm

Christmas Wreath/Advent Ring making Wednesday 8th December 2021 @ 7pm

Celebrate New Year's Eve in style!

There will be another quiz evening, I am in discussion with a member who has kindly agreed to talk one evening on Roman Shipwreck to Roman Shipwreck- An overview of The River Medway's History. There are many more ideas floating around too. Please look at the notice board as you come up to the galley where all events will be advertised.

The annual award and prize giving evening is booked for Saturday 29th January 2022 arrive 7pm seated 7:30
Menus can be seen on Facebook, WhatsApp groups and will be emailed to all members.

If you have any ideas for future social events or have something you think we would all benefit from hearing about or an activity you would like us to all have a go at, then please get in touch and I will see what I can do.

Jane Cornwell

Macmillan Coffee Weekend

This was the first event organised by our new social secretary Jane Cornwell and what a success!

Firstly, I would like to personally thank Jane for her organisation and the fantastic raffle prizes that she was able to source. Well done Ali for winning the meal at Hilltops.

I would also like to thank not only our members that baked but also the wife's, partners, mums, dads and family friends that baked and donated cakes. Finally, I would like to thank all of you that supported this weekend by buying raffle tickets and eating your way through the goodies. I should probably apologise to those of you that were at the club at the end of today and were 'forced' to finish up the cakes.

Well done Wilsonians an amazing weekend, you all dug deep, and we all raised £530 for Macmillan. I am so proud of you all and to be a member of this fantastic club. Sailors like their cake.

Rachelle Hockey

Willies on tour....

Dear Reader, just to warn you of any disappointment from the misleading title as this is not some sordid Stag/Hen night story but merely a happy recount of the 2000 Class Association National Championships held in Royal Torbay Yacht Club from 8th to 13th August 2021. There were four boats entered from Wilsonian SC, otherwise known as the Willies. We had our 'support team' with us including Rachelle who was recovering from shoulder surgery the day before (how's that for dedication) and Geoff, our personal club bosun, who Zoe would be grateful for later in the week when she had some spinnaker problems and crew shortage, we also had our 'nationals newbie' Isabelle who was crewing for me who is originally from France, although she's been in the UK for 20+ years . After 220 mile drive taking about 8 hours, most of which was spent on A303. Stonehenge – they're just some stones, they've been there ages, they'll still be there when we go past later. Following the

brilliant welcome instructions from the 2000 Class Association and fabulous welcome from the team at RTYC. Boats unloaded and masts erected, then new measurement checks completed and most kit passing – don't ask about sail numbers! The Commodore's Welcome meal at the club on Saturday night was a great opportunity to catch up with old friends and make new ones. After enjoying the delicious chicken dinner, a story was recounted of school basic French lessons and a holiday to France which led to an incident in a *bouchere* involving a beautiful French shop assistant and a nervous teenage boy who instead of asking for chicken breasts, commented on her voluptuous figure!

The 2000 National's format is ten races, scheduled at 2 per day, over 5 days. The great news about nationals is that the fleets are split into different groups to encourage sailing, everyone is in the main overall classification then it's broken into Family fleet, Youth helm fleet, Newcomer fleet for first timers and silver fleet for previous nationals entries, which included all the 4 Willies boats. Day 1, Sunday 9th August 2021, wow what a start to the week! The gusts were recorded up to 30 knots. Race briefing at 11.30am on the quay side, two races planned with 13.30 start time. Launching was the first challenge and Zoe & Peter (2523) should have been nominated for a chairman's champagne moment after capsizing within the harbour walls. Day 2, Monday, still very breezy with gusts slightly lower at 27 knots and the race start time now at 11.30am for the first of two daily races. I cannot remember how many times Andy & Felix (21914) and Nina & Chris (21405) capsized those first 2 days but certainly they were in double figures, whilst Isabelle & I (22321) and Zoe & Peter (2523) launched and sailed to the race area but decided the conditions were too much for us. Day 3, much better conditions. Fortunately, during the week, the winds calmed down, in fact Race 5 on Tuesday got off to a great start with a couple of amazing spinnaker runs, then, much to everyone's disappointment on the final lap, the wind completely dropped, and the race officer hoisted the postponement flag. This meant that we would be a race behind schedule, so Thursday would have three races planned. After 3 days of racing, Wednesday is the traditional lay day, which meant a trip to Dartmouth on the ferry. Feeling rested, we were back on the water for Day 4 Thursday. The breeze was good and there were some amazing spinnaker runs. Peter was feeling unwell, so Geoff stepped in for Zoe as crew. In Race 6, Isabelle (my crew) had mastered the spinnaker and we were screaming downwind then decided to gybe - big mistake – we went over with a classic capsize and she was swearing in both French and English, much to the amusement of the safety boat who were within earshot on standby. A very exhausted fleet returned to the harbour, and I have never been so glad to see a man in uniform to help pull the boat up the slipway – we are very fortunate to have the Services sailing as part of our 2000 fleet. To round off the day, even better, was a tasty curry waiting for us back at our accommodation, thanks to Rachelle. Day 5, final races, there was great with excitement at the top of the fleet.

It soon became clear who the top sailors would be this year and it was a tightly fought battle, with each race finishing with a potential different National Champion. In fact, it was so thrilling the top sailors had discards for fourth place, something I can only every dream of, absolutely down to the wire excitement so much so that on the last windward mark rounding and last spinnaker hoist and run of the 2000 National Championship, determined who the final winner would be! Prize giving and championship dinner on Friday night confirmed the results, with congratulations to Rob Burrige & his daughter Sarah our 2000 Class Association National Champions 2021.

Our Willies boats did well, final overall results:

- 36th place Andy & Felix (21914)
- 37th place Nina & Chris (21405)
- 42nd place Rachel & Isabelle (22321)
- 46th place Zoe & Peter/Geoff (2523)

We were all placed in Silver Fleet as all Willies boats had already entered previous nationals, with results 11th place Andy & Felix (21914), 13th place Nina & Chris (21405), 15th place Rachel & Isabelle (22321) and 18th place Zoe & Peter/Geoff (2523).

Our best overall race results were 3 x 32nd place for Andy & Felix in Race 2, Race 4 and Race 8, 25th place for Nina & Chris in Race 9, 2 x 37th place for Rachel & Isabelle in Race 5 and Race 9, 39th place for Zoe & Peter/Geoff in Race 7. The results can be viewed online at results.rtyc.org

We have an exciting season ahead for 2022, combined RS event for our 2000 Class Association to Carnac in Northwest France for from 2nd to 6th June 2022. Looking forward to seeing everyone at next year 2000 National Championships at Castle Cove, near Weymouth, from 13th to 19th August 2022. Come along and join us.



Rachel Sheridan 22321 Lazy Grey

2000 Fleet Captain Wilsonian Sailing Club

Sailing Through Tower Bridge

How did the club's 38th&40th Strood Sea Scout Group get to have Tower Bridge raised for their sail through? For nearly eight years the Scouts have been involved in a project to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the first two Scouts to sail to Antarctica. Following a national competition Scouts Norman Mooney and James Marr were selected to sail with Sir Ernest Shackleton on the Shackleton–Rowett Expedition (1921-1922) to Antarctica. While Shackleton died on expedition and was buried on St Georgia, James Marr returned to become an Antarctic explorer and marine biologist in his own right, you can read more about the project at <https://www.request2021.org.uk/>

Before moving on to Tower Bridge Scout Silas and Seb Maxwell, who sailed a sponsored one hundred miles at the club to raise money for ReQuest 2021, deserve a mention for their support.

So why Tower Bridge? On the 17th of September 1921 Shackleton and his boat Request sailed through Tower Bridge, with Scouts Mooney and Marr at the start of the expedition (you can see a video at <https://youtu.be/8r5jtV4vNRM>) and so on the 17th of September 2021 we recreated that event using the Lady Daphne (a coastal sailing barge the 38th&40th Strood Sea Scout Group have been helping restore), tow Drascombe Luggers (which the scouts sail at the club) and two other Kent scout boats.

So early in the morning of the 17th the Scouts were launching their boats at Greenwich Yacht Club ready to meet the Lady Daphne coming up through the Thames Barrier and then to sail in convoy to Greenwich Pier to add the Golden Star (a river tourist boat carrying over a hundred Request 2021 supporters and fund raisers, including Seb and Silas) to the fleet.

Changing passengers between Lady Daphne and Golden Star took a little longer than anticipated and so we had to press hard against an outgoing tide to make Tower Bridge by the scheduled lift at 13.00hrs. Going upriver off the top of the tide also meant waves from passing traffic were being reflected back by the embankment rather than absorbed by the shoreline making for a very lively journey upriver; however, we did make it just in time and were able to sail through the raised bascules and hold water off the old Billingsgate Fish Market before sailing back out on the 13.30hrs raising of the bridge – I am sure the London traffic loved us.

As a further link to the club, one of the crew on the Kent Scouts boats is a member of 1st Portsmouth Sea Scouts, the Sea Scout Group founded by the marine artist W L Wyllie who lived in Hoo Lodge from 1885 to 1905. Hoo lodge is the house and gardens you pass before going down the hill to the club car park.

David Wraight