



31 1/2

2023

Welcome to the 2023 edition of 31½.

A single 31½ for 2023 might represent a lack of submissions but it also recognises changes in the use of social media and email by the club; 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 2024 sailing season should be submitted by the March 2024 copy date.

David Wraight

NEXT COPY DATE: 15th March 2024
Future copy dates: 15th June 2024
 15th October 2024
Copy to: editor@wilsoniansc.org.uk

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COMMODORE
 Jason Ramsden

Wilsonian SC - Warm Up Race Series 2023 including 2000 Fleet update

| Warm Up Series 2023 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------|--------|-----------------|--------------------|------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|----|---|
| Wilsonian Sailing Club | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Results are final as of 11:46 on March 20, 2023 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Overall | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Sailed: 10, Discards: 4, To count: 6, Rating system: PY, Series: 11, Scoring system: Appendix A | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Rank | Class | SailNo | HelmName | CrewName | PY | Race 1 | Race 2 | Race 3 | Race 4 | Race 5 | Race 6 | Race 7 | RACE 8 | Race 9 | Race 10 | Total | Nett | | |
| 1st | SLAZE | 817 | Ian Forwell | | 1030 | (13.0 DNC) | (13.0 DNC) | (13.0 DNC) | (13.0 DNC) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 58 | 6 | | |
| 2nd | ALTO | 122 | Chris Ashby | Ian Farnblack-Lott | 829 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | -2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | (10.0 DNC) | (13.0 DNC) | (13.0 DNC) | 42 | 8 |
| 3rd | SLAZE | 614 | Wen Cuijver | | 1030 | (13.0 DNC) | (13.0 DNC) | (13.0 DNC) | 3 | 2 | 3 | -5 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 69 | 56 | | |
| 4th | 2000 | 2305 | Nik Antonsson | Annie Crane | 1114 | 3 | 3 | 2 | (13.0 DNC) | 4 | -5 | 3 | 2 | -5 | 4 | 40 | 37 | | |
| 5th | SLAZE | 587 | Phil Cope | | 1030 | 4 | 4 | (13.0 DNC) | 2 | (13.0 DNC) | (13.0 DNC) | 4 | 0.0 DNF | (13.0 DNC) | (13.0 DNC) | 85 | 33 | | |
| 6th | 2000 | 22115 | Lesley O'Rourke | John Southall | 1114 | (13.0 DNC) | (13.0 DNC) | (13.0 DNC) | (13.0 DNC) | 5 | 4 | (13.0 DNC) | (13.0 DNC) | 4 | 3 | 94 | 42 | | |
| 7th | LASER RADIAL/CA II | 203593 | Enya O'Brien | | 1147 | 2 | 2 | (13.0 DNC) | (13.0 DNC) | (13.0 DNC) | (13.0 DNC) | (13.0 DNC) | (13.0 DNC) | 3 | (13.0 DNC) | (13.0 DNC) | 98 | 46 | |
| 8th | LASER RADIAL/CA II | 178489 | Rebecca Jackson | | 1147 | (13.0 DNC) | (13.0 DNC) | 3 | (13.0 DNC) | 4 | (13.0 DNC) | (13.0 DNC) | (13.0 DNC) | (13.0 DNC) | (13.0 DNC) | 111 | 59 | | |
| 9th | LASER RADIAL/CA II | 156408 | James Heman | | 1147 | 5 | 0.0 DNC | (13.0 DNC) | (13.0 DNC) | (13.0 DNC) | (13.0 DNC) | (13.0 DNC) | (13.0 DNC) | (13.0 DNC) | (13.0 DNC) | 115 | 63 | | |
| 10th | 2000 | 2523 | Zoe Ralph | Rachel Sheridan | 1114 | (13.0 DNC) | (13.0 DNC) | (13.0 DNC) | (13.0 DNC) | 8 | (13.0 DNC) | (13.0 DNC) | (13.0 DNC) | 6 | (13.0 DNC) | 118 | 66 | | |
| 11th | B14 Tin Rig | 783 | Bobbie Deards | Frankie Lawrence | 896 | (13.0 DNC) | (13.0 DNC) | (13.0 DNC) | (13.0 DNC) | 7 | (13.0 DNC) | 7.0 DNF | (13.0 DNC) | (13.0 DNC) | (13.0 DNC) | 118 | 60 | | |

The sailing season at Wilsonian SC started on 19 February 2023 for 5 weeks with the Warm Up Race Series 2023, for those hardy sailors wanting to begin their early season racing after the break for winter and I am reminded of the poem by John Masefield, to quote 'I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky'.

Overall there were 11 boats entered for the series including 3 x 2000 with some sailors sailing braving it for just the one race! A lapping course was set just off the club which was ideal, however on some weeks, the weather was not so ideal with very strong winds and gusts coming through. A big thank you to all volunteers in the galley, race box and safety boats and elsewhere who made the racing possible. Many congratulations to Ian Foxwell (Blaze 817) with a clean sweep of 6 wins, as overall winner of the Warm Up Series.

I was delighted when Zoe kindly invited me to crew her 2000 as my return to sailing after breaking my leg last summer; we both agreed that we would only sail the morning race on Sunday 5th March 2023 and try not to be too competitive. The sun was shining, the wind was perfect so it was looking like champagne sailing conditions. The race was great fun, we managed to fly the spinnaker and the race was an ideal length at just a few seconds over 35 minutes and one lap completed for us before the Race Officer sounded the horn as we crossed the finish line. What I should mention is the time spent in the changing rooms trying to get into and then out of my drysuit, which was almost 3 times the length of the race, followed by a slight panic as the ladies changing room door got jammed and we had to be rescued.

Very windy weather conditions on Sunday 12th March so opted for a walk around Shorne Country Park with plan to race the next week on **Sunday 19th March 2023 for the last race in the Warm Up Series**, once again just the morning race, sailing near the top of the incoming tide as the wind was predicted to drop off in the afternoon plus the tide would have turned. Despite a pre-race capsized practice by Nik and Anna (2000 2305), everyone got off to a good race start with Brian (Blaze 614) commenting that every time he wanted to tack he was in a pincer move with those 2000's. Obviously this was also the start of the motorboat season as we were dodging several flotillas from Chatham Marina as we rounded the course.



Another great sailing series at Wilsonian SC and looking forward to 2023 season.

Rachel Sheridan

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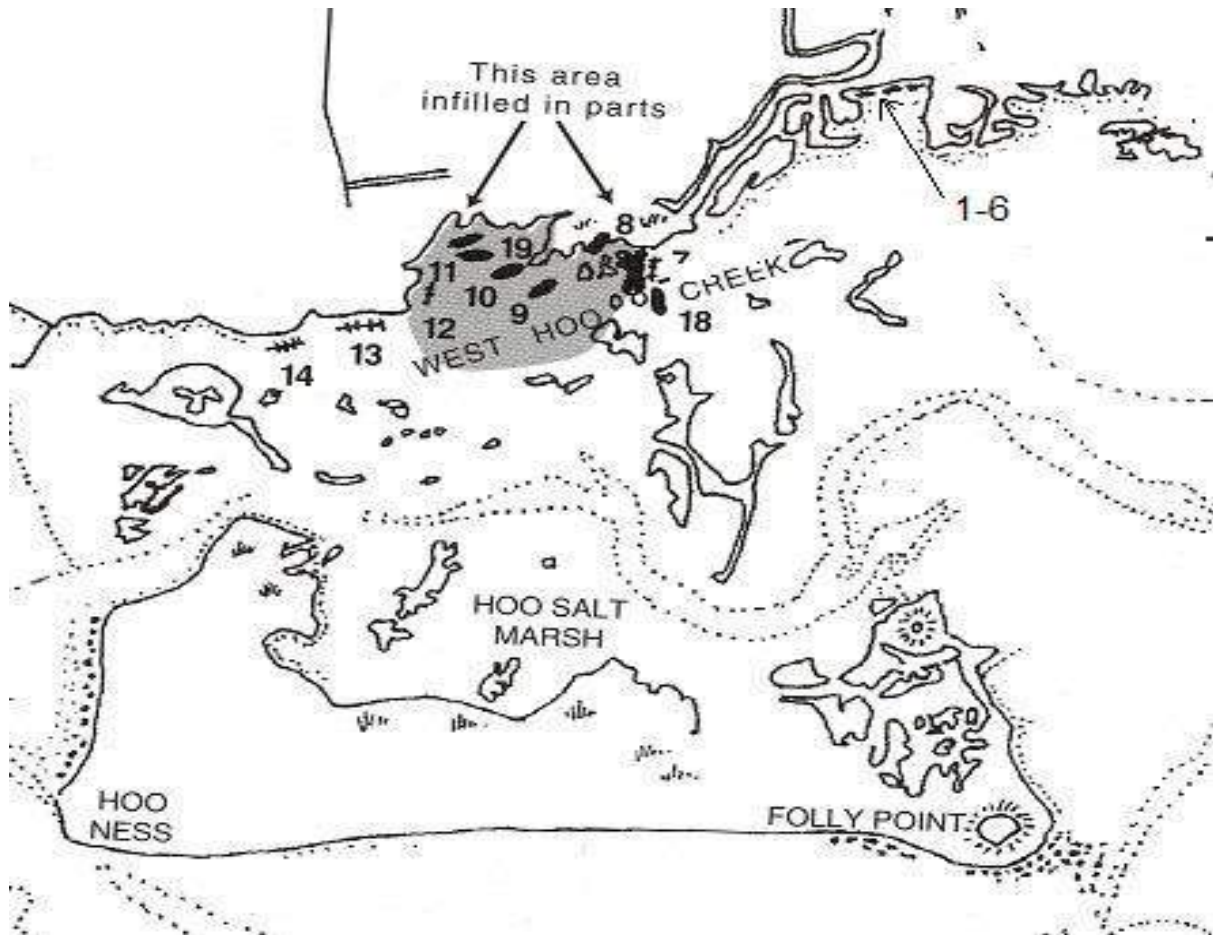


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The Barge Graveyard and Sea Scouts

Some of you may have noticed the barge graveyard on the Hoo shore and just upriver of Stargate Marine as you have sailed through West Hoo Creek and wondered what you were seeing or how others imagined the experience.



The map* above shows the location and location numbers of the sailing barge remains.

- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| 1. Partridge | 7. Esther |
| 2. Bessie Hart | 8. Mildreda |
| 3. Henry Wood | 9. Pearl Wood |
| 4. Metropolis | 10. Petrel |
| 5. Violet | 11. Alan |
| 6. Meteor | 12. Northfleet |
| 18. Ethel Ada | |
| 19. Anglia | |

* The edited map is based on that available in *The Last Berth of The Sailor* published by the Society for Sailing Barge Research

Also in the area are *Adriatic*, *Dannebrog* and, sadly, *Ena* in the infill area. *Ena*, built at Harwich in 1906 and weighing in at 73 tons, is both a WWI and WWII veteran. She served as a supply barge, carrying supplies to France in WWI and served at Dunkirk in WWII. Her shallow draft allowed her to access the French beaches during the 1940 evacuation but ultimately, she became stranded on the beach and was abandoned. However, she was later discovered by Lt Colonel W G Mc Kay and men of the 19th Field Regiment, Royal Artillery who paddled her off the beach and, despite not being sailors, sailed her back to England. If you closely at the background in the 2017 Christopher Nolan film *Dunkirk* you will see briefly a barge being paddled off the shore, that is inspired by *Ena's* story.

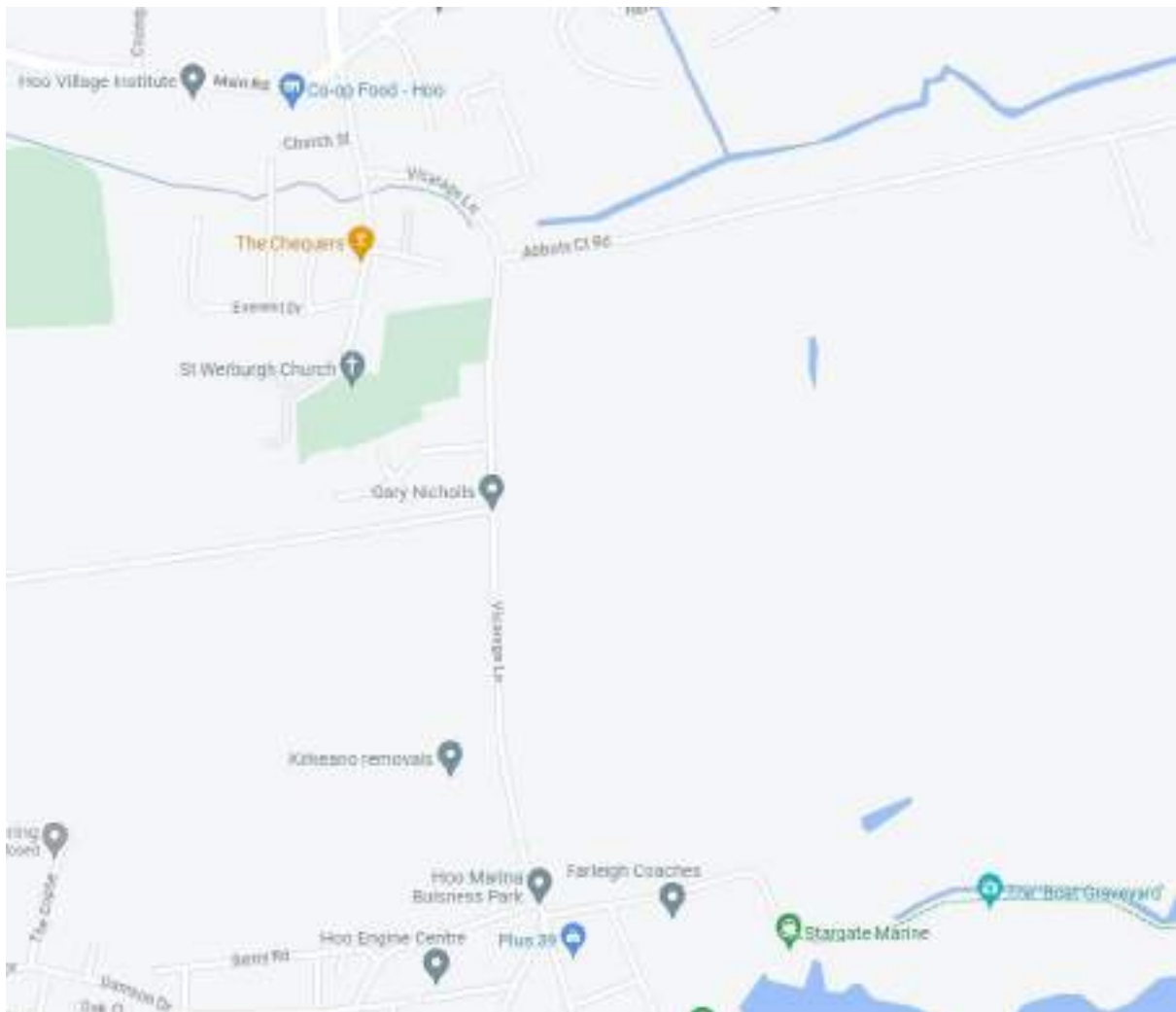
Just revisiting Christopher Nolan's film. A major part of the film concerns a small motor cruiser crewed by a man, his son and his son's friend. This is based on a true story. In real life the small motor cruiser, *Sundowner*, was owned and helmed by Commander CH Lightroller who was 2nd Officer on the *Titanic* when it sank in April 1912, but the rescued Lightroller went on to command *HMS falcon* in WWI before returning to the White Star Line and retiring in 1924. In 1929 he brought *Sundowner* and moored it opposite the 1st Mortlake Sea Scout Headquarters. On the 31st May 1940 the Admiralty instructed him to take the boat down to Ramsgate and hand it over to Navy personal for Operation *Dynamo*. Lightfoot said he had commanded a destroyer in WWI, and he was going to command his own boat and of he set with son and his son's friend Joey Ashcroft a Sea Scout with the 1st Mortlake and a tenuous link with the club's own Sea Scouts the 38th&40th Strood Sea Scout Group. Unlike the film they all survived Dunkirk and carried 134 soldiers to safety (the boat was bigger than the film version but the soldiers did need to ditch all their kit including boots to keep the boat afloat) and did carry out the manoeuvre in the film to avoid attack by Stuka dive bomber – Lightfoot had been told by his younger son, in the RAF, how Stukas lined up their guns on a target for an attack run and was able to call hard to starboard once the Stuka had over committed to its attack run.

After WWII Sea Scout Joey Ashcroft became a barge master although not a master of any of the Hoo barges.

Actually, the best way to view the barge graveyard is from the seawall and the best way to experience it is through a sound walk. Never heard of a sound walk, it uses the GPS and sound functions on your smart phone to create an immersive sound experience. Go to your App store and download *Echoes*.



Next go to the entrance to Stargate Marina.



If travelling by car there are a few parking spots just outside the Marina or you could park in Vicarage Lane and walk.

When you are ready open the Echoes app, you will see a list of walks near you, select the one called Sunken Silence or look it up using the search function. Once you press start you will hear the introduction and as you walk your phone's GPS will trigger the various musical and spoken pieces – there are long silences between some of the pieces. If you want to download the audio without doing the walk, go to <https://explore.echoes.xyz/collections/H54bUwaOH310ISxC> David Wraight

Junior Fleet report (Summer update)

Topper Team Racing

On 10th June, six skimmers made up two teams for the KSSA Topper team racing event in Westbere Lake, Canterbury. We were defending our title from last year – the first time Wilsonian had won this Junior single handed team racing. Even though there was tough competition, from schools who regularly practice team racing, we didn't give up and one of our teams just missed out on a spot in the semi-finals. We still had lots of fun and it was a great new experience for the Skimmers who haven't done team racing before. Well done guys, hopefully next year we can bring back the trophy again! 🏆



All Girls Event

On May 8th, bank holiday Monday, five of our wonderful girl skimmers went to the second KSSA all girls event that was held at Downs sailing club in Deal.



The event is organised to encourage more girls into sailing and included an inspirational talk after lunch. Although Enya wasn't sailing, she still came along to support all the girls, as she is the KSSA girls fleet captain and had partly organised the event. It was fantastic to see Wilsonian SC so well represented.



All our girls got to sail unfamiliar boats with girls they'd not met before, making new friends and learning new skills. There was a good breeze, and it didn't rain.

We all enjoyed the event and hopefully will go again next year.

Skimmers Working Party

On 8th April the Skimmers rigged ALL the Optimists, Toppers and Teras in preparation for the start of the Skimmers season. We cleared out all Topper, Tera and Optimist sails, booms centreboards and rudders, checked and numbered them and have tidied them away again nice and neatly! Thanks to everyone's hard work the club was ready for the new season!





New Racers



Congratulations to Christopher, who smashed it at the New Racers KSSA event 3rd June, at Redout SC. It was his first KSSA event and he was the only Wilsonian there, sailing a Topper Topaz, which he'd not sailed before. He stayed and came first throughout winning the KSSA Training Regatta, Cheswick Trophy. We are all extremely proud of Christopher and his quick progression! Well done Christopher 🏆

And Skimmers Return

Skimmers has welcomed back a good number of returning members and some new members this year. It was also fantastic to see ex-skimmers returning as qualified instructors to teach the new Juniors and improvers. Enya has helped at Skimmers in between her exam schedule and sailing her new Europe dinghy. Charlotte has also helped as assistant coach for the racing group; however, Charlotte will soon be off on her travels, competing again, with her new 29er crew. We all wish Charlotte good luck!

Recently, Frankie accompanied Bobby to the Isle of Wight. Bobby regularly crews on a racing yacht called Resolute, which is a Fareast 28R. They raced for 2 days, and Frankie really enjoyed it as it was a different type of sailing to what he would normally do. There were six crew and Frankie was in charge of the bow and getting the sails up and down.

Junior Skimmers continued into late May and early June, sometimes with low numbers due to Juniors at external events. Thank you to all the volunteers who keep Skimmers running. Skimmers were sad to learn that Jayne is moving house, and this is her last season at Wilsonians. We are going to miss her very much as she has had a massive impact on the Junior fleet, always encouraging everyone to try and to achieve their best. We're pleased she's coming back for Junior Week.

Sophie Wantling

Junior Fleet Captain

Junior Fleet report (Autum update)

Skimmers continued through the summer months, with a couple of sessions cancelled due to weather, or sessions only for intermediate/racers due to SI availability.

KSSA events

1st July was the KSSA Summer Regatta at Medway Yacht Club. We had 5 juniors at the event, with day 1 coaching and day 2 racing, in strong winds. Enya won the Main fleet and Skyla won the Rookie fleet Regatta. The club provided ribs to support the event and thanks to volunteers for getting skimmers there.



The KSSA Annual Regatta was at Whitstable in September and 3 skimmers attended. It started with light winds which picked up during the day. It meant we could only get 3 races completed. There were 68 entrants and 50 on the main fleet start line, so it was busy.



Four juniors attended training at Herne Bay in October and the last KSSA event of the season is on 25th November at Chipstead, with three currently booked to attend.

Any Juniors wanting to know more about the KSSA events, please contact me. It's great coaching and gives opportunity to sail at different clubs. It really helps you to develop and improve your skills.

National Schools Sailing Association Annual Regatta

In July the NSSA held their annual Regatta at Draycote Sailing Club. Out of 22 sailors in the Kent Team, I believe Wilsonian was the best represented Kent club, having 5 juniors attend. It was the last year that Bobby and Enya could participate and their last year as KSSA captains. There were four days of racing in fleets and one day with team racing and a pursuit race. Conditions were challenging as we had every sort of weather (except snow) and some long days, often 6 hours on the water. Bobby and Frankie had some boat problems including a snapped rudder. Hetty was injured by a boom but carried on, the KSSA awarded her the Kent trophy for Endeavour. Enya came third in the ILCA 6 fleet. Overall, the Kent Team won for the second year in a row.



KSSA KENT TEAM 2023

WSC Junior Week, August 2023

A working party was set up before the Junior Week to make sure the club boats and safety boats were all in good order. Jayne managed and ran the event and also returned to coach and enjoy her last Junior Week. Thanks go to Phil who became Chief Dinghy Instructor, so RYA certificates were able to be awarded.

It was great to see the progress the children had made from last year. We had 27 participants, including skimmers, scouts, juniors who don't normally attend skimmers, and some new members. We had 5 groups with 20 on the water crew/coaches. Our race coach was Cameron Tweedle, Olympic Finn Sailor, but light winds hindered the race coaching. House committee managed the food orders and all parents helped either on the water or in the galley. Kerry obtained sponsorship so all participants were given a t-shirt. Crafts, dress up and karaoke took place lunch times and in the evening. The junior week regatta was run on two fleets, fast and slow, with the less experienced

sailors having separate fun races nearer the shore. Overall, I believe people felt it was a very successful event. Next year dates for the calendar = 20th – 24th August 2024



Other updates:

As well as Jayne moving away, our Race Coach has also stepped down and we are looking for others to step in and continue to bring more skimmers on to a level where they can start joining Sunday racing and open events. Thanks go to Andy Gibbs for the last couple of years as Race Coach. Thanks also to Jo Wicken and Andy Hockey who have assisted so far.

Enya has been nominated by the KSSA and awarded the NSSA Presidents award, for all she did to promote sailing and supporting others. Her award was a week on a 72ft clipper, Challenger 2 where she also gained her Start Yachting Certificate.

Charlotte has new crew and continues sailing in her 29er at open events at national level. Our congratulations to Charlotte and crew as they have been placed in the 29er National Squad

Bobby has continued sailing at the Isle of Wight most weekends but coaches at Skimmers when available.

Skimmers has a social event in December – Bowling in Rochester followed by a Christmas party at the club. We will also have a working party over winter and a second social (laser tag) before the season restarts.

Sophie Wantling
Junior Fleet Captain