
SHROUD & CLEAR

THE NEWSLETTER OF TONBRIDGE TOWN SAILING CLUB :: WINTER 2023



Committee updates

Maintenance. The “Wednesday Club continue with the repairs to the floor of the downstairs toilet which are more extensive than expected and will be completed before the beginning of the 2024 season.

Working Parties. Thanks to all who came to the end of season working party. Everything was completed in record time with the club boats being stored to avoid any damage from flooding, and important kit was stowed above the potential flood levels. Fingers crossed we have had all our flooding for the winter!

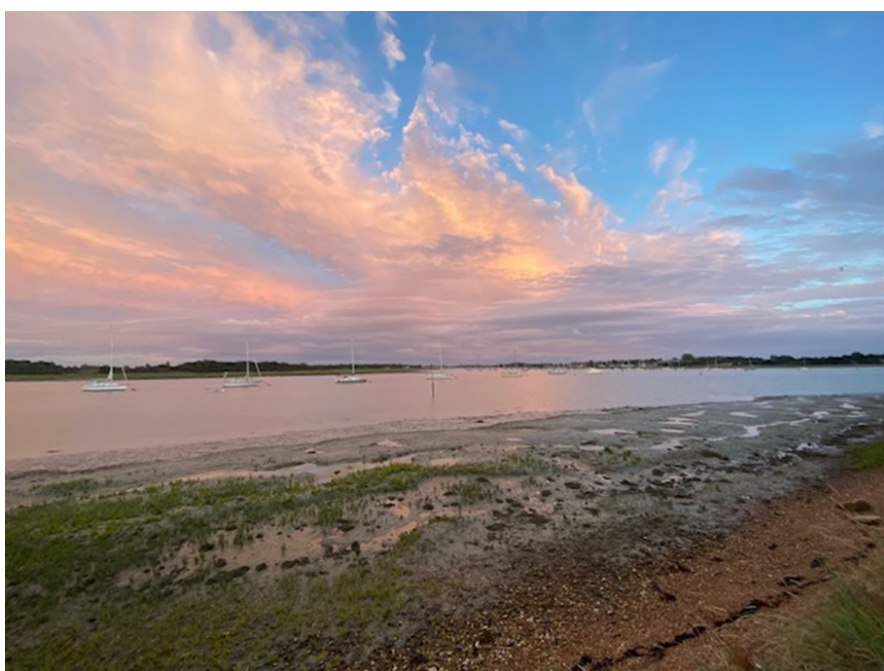
As noted in the November S & C, we will be planning regular working parties during the close season to complete a number of important repairs. Please watch your emails for details. We are planning to offer tea, coffee, hot chocolate, cake, or biscuits as an incentive!

The Committee wishes you all a very happy Festive Season and great sailing in 2024.

Laying Up Supper

The Laying Up Supper (pictured right), was held at Poult Wood Golf Club on Saturday 2nd December.

A great success with just over 60 members and their families attending - a significant increase on 2022's attendance.



Cobnor 2024

Just an ongoing reminder of the 2024 dates - Saturday 20th July to Sunday 4th August 2024.

Left – sunset at Cobnor 2023

AGM

The 2024 Annual General Meeting will be at Bidborough Village Hall in the evening of Friday 23rd February 2024 – another date for your diary.

Photo Competition 2023 — we need more entries!



The annual competition is for images taken up to and submitted before 31st December 2023.

Three topics: “TTSC Events, Racing and Social;” “Sailing Oddities” and “Open Class” where anything goes.

Please send in your entries as JPEGs attached to an email as this makes it easier to send to the independent judge.

Above — Top winning image from the Cobnor photo competition entry from Sarah Hutchings.

Right — the third placed image from Fiona Wiles, who also came second with the image of Adam published in November’s Shroud & Clear.

TTSC branded clothing

Thanks to Francesca Herve, the club now has a new supplier for club branded clothing. The link is: <https://st-cyr.co.uk/product-category/tonbridge-town-sailing-club/>

REMINDER

Don’t forget to send me your pictures, articles or anything interesting.

barrybone@btinternet.com



RADIO CONTROLLED YACHTING

The club now has a group of members with radio-controlled yachts (sorry – no power boats) and has had an enquiry forwarded to us by the Model Yachting Association.

We are planning to have a few sessions on Sunday mornings in the New Year, with confirmation of dates and times following.

Right - An RG65 RC yacht at TTSC in the summer.

REMINDER

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Topper race training 2023

Can we run a youth race training programme?

TTSC has always been popular with families and for many years we have been a place they come to learn to sail. In recent years we have had thriving racing amongst young people on Saturday afternoons. But as they improved, the ones who showed most promise left to join other clubs with youth race training programmes.

Being convinced that we could and should do something about this at the end of 2021 I rang the RYA for advice. After being bounced between the switchboard and various voicemails I finally got to speak to a real person who turned out to be none other than double Olympic silver medallist Ian Walker. He suggested I head over to his old sailing club at Chipstead and take a look.

So the following spring I took Jonathan each Saturday to their "Chipmates" club. He made rapid progress. By end of the season, I could see how we could do something on a smaller scale at TTSC. After pitching the idea to the club, I got the go-ahead and with David and Roger now on board 22nd April saw us run the first session.



Will they come back?

I didn't doubt that we would get a flurry of interest at the start. The question would be: how many would come back? It was reassuring then when 8 turned up for the first session but even more reassuring when there were more at the second!

What we can and can't change

I was keen to find out what works and adjust things. There wasn't however much we could do about the wind. Sometimes we had a lack of it, and one day we had gales. However, we didn't cancel sessions but modified the plan. The Topper gale sailing demonstration by David and Roger with an onshore commentary worked surprisingly well.

"Their sport"

By the time we broke up for the summer holidays 11 young people had come along to sessions of which 4 were regulars: Jonathan, Amelia, Rory and Evie. I wasn't too surprised. Some by now had decided sailing was "their sport" amongst the myriad of other things to do at the weekend.

Team Racing

In September we restarted with a new intake from the RYA course. Now there were groups at two levels. Charlie and Myles were quickly promoted to the senior group and joined the others for a Team racing competition. With a complicated arrangement in which the teams changed every time, competitors scored the points gained by their team in that race. Amazingly, once the final results were calculated, the result was a 4-way dead heat.



The first "Away" event

By the end of September, the embryonic "Team" were ready to take on other clubs. 4 young people went to Chipstead and all of them acquitted themselves well against the competition. Myles pipped Amelia to the 4.2 trophy while Charlie took home a prize for the first Under 13. Jonathan, meanwhile, had broken his leg over the summer, so couldn't compete but got appointed "Event Photographer" and you can see his photos on the Chipstead website.



Wind and waves

The following week the same group plus Rohan travelled to Herne Bay SC for a training event run by the Kent Schools Sailing Association. The real wind and waves were a big change from TTSC!

Finally, on 14th October Evie and Charlie braved even more wind and waves at Hastings Sailing Club and put in very creditable performances in challenging conditions, Evie persevering to the end of the last race despite suffering a blow to the head and damage to her boat coming in before lunch.



Last race

At the end of the season Jonathan was back in a boat to race against seven of the others for the final Commodore's Cup race at TTSC. There was some close racing, but the light winds favoured his experience and light weight, and he took first place from Amelia, followed by Ethan (in a GP14), Evie, Charlie, Myles, Seb and Rory.

Overall, the Junior Cup was won by Jonathan with Amelia in second and Charlie in third. The Cadet Cup was won by Evie from Rohan in second. We also ran two 'personal handicap' series during the course of the season, one in the spring and one in the

autumn. In some ways a measure of who was improving the most, the spring series was won by Evie whilst in the autumn Charlie won the series a single point ahead of Amelia and Myles tied for second.



After the last race Jonathan, Evie and Amelia were awarded certificates for completing the first year of the Topper Race Training Programme along with TTSC Topper Team hoodies for representing the club at Open Meetings which were also presented to Myles and Charlie.

Endeavour prizes were awarded to Rory and Evie for their dedication to the programme during the season.

Next year the plan is to build on the skills and knowledge of main group by roughly alternating events at home and away and also to train up a second group of other young people to follow in their footsteps.

Stuart Shields.

Postscript:- I am surprised to say that on the day of writing at the end of November it is remarkable that 7 TTSC young people have just completed a freezing Winter training event at Chipstead Sailing Club! It now seems that there is nothing too hard-core for these guys!



Photo credits: Jonathan Shields, Kelly-Zee Botley, Stuart Shields, Valerie Shields

Racing news

The Frostbite Series was completed on 26th November with the competitors suffering from a cancellation due to floods, two very (very!) light wind days, and one very (very!) windy one. Well done to those who took part.

Right— A few trophy winners at the Laying Up Supper.



Do you know your nautical phrases?

What's the origin of the nautical phrase *down in the doldrums*? This idiom was used by sailors to describe a situation in which no wind was present—sometimes for weeks at a time. Originating from a time when sailors relied solely on wind power, this meant their ship would be stuck with no wind in her sails.

Example sentence: "I'm feeling down in the doldrums today; nothing seems to be happening, and I'm getting nowhere fast."

How about *sailing close to the wind*? It means taking risks that may be unreasonable or being close to breaking some rules.

Example sentence: "The authorities suspended his licence six months ago, and if you ask me, he is sailing close to the wind if he's going to drive that car"

TTSC Training Courses 2024 — 1

An RYA Level/Stage 1 and 2 training course is being planned for 2024 on the following dates:

Adults and Juniors - Saturdays 11/18 May and 15/22 June; Plus, adults only on Friday evenings 10/17 May and 14/21 June. ALSO, an introduction session on Sunday 28 April 2pm to 3pm – both Adults and Juniors.

Trainees will need to be able to attend ALL these dates.

Initially we are looking to offer 12 Junior and 6 adult places.

Cost is £180 per person, reduced to £145 per person if both Adult and Juniors book from the same family, or two or more Juniors book from the same family. A £50 booking fee will be required, with the balance to be paid by 31st March.

If Juniors only are booked, a parent/guardian will need to be in attendance at the Club when the Juniors attend (the four Saturdays and the Sunday intro session).

You will need to renew your Membership of the Club for 2024, or become a club member.

Priority will be given to current members first.

TTSC Training Courses 2024 — 2

The Club is looking to offer an RYA Level2 Powerboat course in March next year. This leads to an internationally recognised qualification.

This is open to Members only and places are limited to nine participants who must be 18 or over.

This offer is to increase the Club's resource pool of Members able to provide safety cover – normal duties and help with training courses/junior club/etc, where additional safety boats are deployed. We are looking for Members active in the Club, who would be keen and willing to help the Club develop into the future.

Course dates are Sunday 3rd and Saturday 9th of March 2024 (need to attend both days), with a nominal charge of £30 to cover materials.

Contact Doug Williamson, tonbridge.training@yahoo.com, to register your interest - **by 22nd December.**

The Three Rivers Race 2023



"I've done this 8 times and only finished once".

We were talking to other Wayfarer sailors having just arrived at Horning Sailing Club the day before the iconic "*Three Rivers Race*", a 50-mile dinghy and yacht race across the Norfolk Broads. The plan was to enter my Wayfarer 8787 "*Grey Mouse*"

in what is billed as "Europe's toughest inland sailing race". To add to the challenge, it was our first race together and I had a rib that was, at best, bruised.

No mercy

The race has a time limit of 24 hours and there is no mercy if you don't finish in time: - you are deemed to have retired. As we talked to people, it seemed that only the top racers could aspire to finish before the pubs closed. For most the aim was to finish.

A different kind of race

There are only 4 marks in this race, and you can choose the order to round them. "*We've got a plan, but the plan might change*" said one Wayfarer crew who were contenders for a top position. The strategy is to manage the tide: - you have to get to the turning point down-river before the tide turns. This means a calculation about how many diversions you can make on the way



down. As we were to find, there were different strategies, and you had to come up with your own.

There are also 3 bridges to negotiate, which means lowering the mast. We knew this could be dicey, having sailed and paddled the length of the Medway earlier in the year. There are all sorts of things to get caught and you have to have a strict routine.

Shotgun Start

The race got underway the next morning at 11am with a local farmer firing his shotgun. The 12 Wayfarers had the second start all to themselves, with a very short upwind leg followed by a



run downwind. This meant that all the boats quickly bunched up again. The narrowness of the river led to a contrived chaos that could have been an exercise to test your knowledge of the rules.

We fought it out for several hundred metres, at one point at the front of the pack but then settling into a position a few places back as the boats spread out down the river.

Strategic Decision

We decided to skip the first diversion and leave it for the way back. That turned out to be the key decision of the race.

On the run down to South Walsham Broad we passed the previous year's winning boat coming back, which told us they had



chosen the same strategy as us. Having rounded the first mark and heading back upwind we started tacking, and the next few



hours could have been an intensive roll-tacking practice session.

The River Thurne

After South Walsham we headed for the River Thurne and the Potter Heigham bridges. After what seemed like an eternity of tacking in an ever more confined river channel, we put into operation the practised mast-lowering routine. By this time faster boats were coming up behind us and we let a trapeze-rigged "*Norfolk Punt*" under the bridge in front of us. It didn't seem worth risking a crash under the bridge for the sake of a few metres.

The Thurne is the longest diversion of the three and the turning

mark is the far end of Hickling Broad. By this time it wasn't just the fast boats that were coming up behind us but yachts which seemed to be able to point a good 10 degrees higher than us. These boats by this time were tacking up a river not much wider than they were long.

On the way back down-river we passed two other Wayfarers that had been ahead of us. Now we knew they had taken the first diversion we had skipped. Before long we were back at Potter

Heigham. Once the nerve-racking mast dropping was over, we could enjoy the spinnaker run down to the Bure.

Back on the Bure

Once back on the main river we found ourselves among a fleet of sailing craft of all shapes, sizes and ages. Among them were traditional gaff-rigged yachts, conventional yachts and 100-year-old open keelboats called "half-deckers". By about seven in the evening we had negotiated Acle Bridge, rounded the lowest mark at Stokesby and could start tacking back up river. It was a beautiful summer evening and we had high hopes of getting back to Horning not long after dark.



Where's the wind gone?

It proved not to be. The wind started dropping with the sun as we were taking our final diversion up the river Ant to Ludham. With one mile to go the wind dropped entirely and our last three hours were spent in the pitch black trying to get a hundredth of a knot out of the zephyr of wind we were left with.

Grey Mouse at this point proved a great boat for light wind sailing. With an hour to go we sailed past a much newer Wayfarer and left it hundreds of metres behind us. After about four hours of eerie night-sailing using only the feel of the boat and sails we drifted across the finish line just after 1am.

Once the results were calculated the handicaps seemed almost irrelevant. Our position was where we finished on the water. This was 32nd out of 103 entries and 4th Wayfarer out of 12. This we were more than happy with, and it rounded off what had been quite a unique and unforgettable experience.

With special thanks to our families who supported and encouraged us around the course!





DISCOVER SAILING

WITH TONBRIDGE TOWN SAILING CLUB

Located at the scenic Haysden Lake just outside Tonbridge, TTSC offers you an entry into an exciting and fulfilling sport for all ages.

Associated with the Royal Yacht Association, we offer training courses run by our own qualified instructors and fleet of dinghies.

All are welcome but some sailing competence must be proved prior to use of Club boats.

If 'full-sized' sailing isn't your thing then we also offer membership of TTSC's remote controlled yachting section.

Our 2024 season commences in March so why not take that first step of discovery?

Contact Barry Bone at barrybone@btinternet.com to find out more or view our website at www.tonbridge sailing.org

TTSC PUBLICITY 2024

An A4 flyer above) has been printed to promote TTSC's activities and encourage membership in 2024.

Copies may be obtained from Barry Bone—please do your best to place the flyer in a prominent location.

A PDF version for online use may be obtained from Geoff Fisher at geoff.fisher@yahoo.co.uk