

# Afloat

*News, views & information from Weir Wood Sailing Club*



*Issue 3 Spring 2010*



**Introducing Simon Davis — Our new commodore**  
**Weir Wood wins Wealden Events**  
**Profile of the Enterprise**



## Profile Of Our New Commodore: Simon Davis

**Simon was elected Commodore at the AGM and a few days later the Editor interviewed him to find out more about Simon.**

**Ed:** So Simon you've just been voted in as the new Commodore of WWSC. Give us a bit of background about yourself.

**SD:** I'm 54, I've lived in Forest Row for 20 odd years and have been a member of the Club for about 15 of those, I forget exactly. My wife Annie likes sailing when the water temperature exceeds 20 C (which basically means the Med and warmer). I have two kids, Rory who most of you know and Ella who most of you don't. She plays Hockey despite the fact that she is a very competent sailor. I run a small computer software development business in Twickenham. Other than sailing I am a swimmer and a swimming coach and I adore ski-ing.

**Ed:** How did you get into sailing in the first place?

**SD:** I grew up on the banks of Draycote Water in Warwickshire but I learnt to sail from an old sailing barge on the Hamble when I was 8. I sailed for my school that had a

fleet of National 12's but I really gave up when I left to go to University. I didn't do much sailing then until I came back to this country in early '85 after ski-ing for 6 years although I did teach beginner Laser in Cala D'Or, Majorca for 2 summers.

**Ed:** So you're an old hand. What have you been sailing recently then?

**SD:** Less of the old, John! I went cruising for a long time and we only sold our last big boat in 2007. One piece of advice for all sailors. One trip I did involved a three day sail from North Shields to Stavanger in Norway. We only trimmed the sail twice in the entire trip. Cruising ain't good for sailing technique and I wish I'd spent more time dinghy sailing than cruising. In dinghy sailing we brought an Enterprise to the Club and chopped that in for a Laser 3000. Rory and I then got our own Lasers and we now have a family RS200.

**Ed:** So what has been your greatest sailing achievement to date?

**SD:** We won our class in the 2003 Round the Island and the 'Silver Jubilee Cup' which wasn't quite the accolade it may first appear because, as it turned out, we were the only boat in our Class! Nonetheless Rory skippered and it is a great memory seeing him, aged 10, in full control with Spinnaker up running down the Eastern Solent. I was 41<sup>st</sup> at the recent Laser Inlands, a result I was very pleased with.

**Ed:** Things seemed to be going swimmingly. What made you want to become Commodore?

**SD:** Well in the end it wasn't as much a case of 'last man standing' as much as only man standing! In all seriousness though, I love the Club and its people and atmosphere and I love being down on or next to the water even when the Club isn't operating. You'd be hard pressed to find anywhere within 35 miles of the centre of London so beautiful with no houses in view. Also I've been on the Social Committee for years and served as Social Secretary so it was a natural progression. I firmly believe that sailing has a very exciting future and I have been developing my vision for the Club over the years. I also think I can do a lot for the Club over the next 2 – 3 years as well. In addition to all this Tony told me I had to do it!

**Ed:** So what are your plans for the Club?

**SD:** Well first off Tony is a really hard act to follow. The Club is buzzing at the moment, membership is up, the finances are on an even keel, participation is up across the board and there is a really good atmosphere around about. People liked having him around the premises to talk to (and lambaste at times!) So my first aim is evolutionary rather than revolutionary. There are a few themes:

**Youth Development:** Oppy Club is probably the greatest single achievement of the Club to date. It is consistently successful down the generations and the aim would be to continue this. Youth has always been a vibrant part of the Club but the racing development has not produced the Open, zonal or National competitors that a Club of our size and prestige should demand.

### Stop Press

*It is with great sadness we have to inform members that Gerald Pendry, our president, died on 19th January. Gerald was a key founder member of Weir Wood Sailing Club more than 40 years ago. He served on the committee in many capacities and maintained his enthusiasm and commitment to the organization throughout his life.*

*Gerald will be greatly missed and our thoughts are with Eva and his family at this time.*

*We will keep members informed of funeral arrangements through the normal channels.*

Steps are already under way to put this right and swing the pendulum the other way. We have some really talented young sailors in the Club and we want to consolidate and build on the skills of those and nurture the talent in those coming through both from the existing youth sailors and, later, through Oppys.

We are already well down the road to accrediting the Club as a 'Volvo Champion Club' which will have a range of monetary, support and PR benefits to the Club. We should look to extend the relationship we have with local schools and I would like to welcome Ardingly College as winter members this year.

My stretched objective here is to establish an Endowment to provide financial support to promising young sailors who possibly don't have parents who have the wherewithal to allow their kids to compete in the way they need to in order to progress.

**Race Development:** I don't want to stress this unduly but we should have more good racers out there whenever the water is open. We should also have more of our competitive sailors out there in Open, Regional and National (and indeed European and World) competitions. As a counterpoint there is probably room for a 'Cruising' Section for the non-competitive sailors and if anyone shares my vision maybe they would like to come forward and we can share ideas.

We will be working on the whole Training and Development programme as a matter of priority to get additional arrangements in place for the coming summer season, particularly among the fleets. Specifically budget is available for a large, flat screen TV in the Clubhouse. I intend to see if we can afford a DVD and memory player with a water resistant video camera.

**Summer camps:** There is room for Youth and Family camps and weekend courses. We will look at all ideas on this and bring forward some concrete proposals for summer 2010 on the Oppie Club model.

**Class Associations:** The Laser 2000 is a great model for these ideas. At the Nationals this year there were 14 WWSC boats out of a total fleet of 84. They organise fleet training and fleet socials. I am **not** advocating limiting or even encouraging memberships only from certain classes but they are so many advantages where associations can form around a design or even group of designs or manufacturer. I will be approaching members over the next few months and 'encouraging' them to try this idea out.

**Membership:** This has been a real strong point of the Club over the last couple of years and I shall try to maintain the momentum as far as possible. With the 2012 Olympics coming up it should be a very exciting time for sailing clubs. We should target 500 'membership units' by the end of 2011 where a membership unit is either an individual member, a family etc.

We have already started work on a Direct Debit system to make annual membership processes easier for all concerned.

I am heavily involved with a local swimming club and I have been involved in voluntary organisations since I settled back

in this country in the mid 80's so I am well aware of the way they work. Fundamentally they depend on a public spirited and committed 5% of the membership to do all the work. This has always been the case and I have no illusions about changing that. But the committee's average age is well above the Club's and this will be reflected, inevitably, in the decisions taken. Therefore, the Club membership ultimately gets the Club that it deserves. You can put this right in two specific ways; firstly volunteer and secondly participate in the decision making process by making suggestions. I am always available either from the website, on Commodore@wwsc.org.uk and around the Club. I would particularly value your input now as I have the power to change my ideas. I'll offer a £20 voucher at the Swan in Forest Row or a slap up chez the Commodores to the best two suggestions I get as a result of this entreaty. (Decided entirely at the Commodores whim!)

As stretched objectives I think a Club finance scheme may be interesting where we should investigate means by which new members can have the very high cost of starting sailing reduced. Not sure at this stage how to achieve that but I'm working on some proposals at the moment.

**House & Grounds:** The website is fabulous and I'm delighted that Tony has offered to continue to manage that side of things. Maybe we could put the Club 'For Sale' and 'Wanted' on the web rather than on a board?

I want to continue to help Christopher Moir clean up the boat park and particularly the old trailers. There must be a Grands worth of scrap out there!! How about melting it down and having a statue of previous Commodores erected? Answers to \*\*\*\*&!@wwsc.org.

The hire fleet needs looking at and, in some cases, dumping and in others, re-furbing. The new Laser purchase is taking off in a big way so I would like Laser owners to look out all their good but superfluous boat kit, including good, but old, sails etc to support the new fleet.

We are 18 months into Tony's 3 year development plan and there are some changes I intend that we should make around the Clubhouse. The kitchen is one major priority! Overall I see the 'greening' of the Club as an essential to the future and, if we need to dig into cash resources to do this, then I think we should do it as part of our commitment to the generations that follow us as we have followed those that have gone before.

I actually think the Clubhouse as a whole is past its sell-by-date and maybe we should establish an objective of providing a new one for those to come as well. This could go down not as a stretched objective but a "bungie-cord" objective.

**Ed: That's a huge manifesto. If you manage to achieve half of it we'll have gone a long way. Before we bore everyone to sleep is there anything about the Club that really ticks you off?**

We certainly don't have time to go into that list! It's hugely annoying that I still get beaten around the race course by Chris Fynes occasionally. ▲

# Sailing Secretary Manifesto for David Giles

David Giles

David has stepped into the role of Sailing Secretary and outlines his ideas.

With the position of Sailing Secretary being vacant for some time and with no other candidate putting their name forward I offered my services to Weir Wood Sailing Club.

My name is David Giles and I have been a member of Weir Wood for 22 years. Over that time I have owned and raced Standard Laser, Rooster Laser, ISO, RS200, RS400, RS500, RS800 and an Enterprise both at the club and away from the club.

With a job that keeps me out the country much of the time and a growing family I have always believed my time constraints would make doing a flag officer job for the club impossible but I am going to give it a go.

My main aim as Sailing Secretary is to keep going what we already have that is good on the racing side. I will make sure the Club Championship and Winter Draws On are well run. I will make sure we participate in the Inter club and continue to dominate the event.

I will try and provide what the club racers want in the club racing programme.

Where I do want to add something is in the area of youth training. Having been involved in the Optimist flotilla a few years ago I am acutely aware of how many talented sailors we have trained who have dropped out of sight once they reached 16. I would like to try and do something about this. To this end I have lobbied and won approval from the club to purchase four good Laser dinghies with 4.7, Radial and Standard rigs. The plan is to offer youths who have or are about to outgrow their Optimists or Toppers the chance to learn how to race a Laser with the view of joining the Sunday Club racing in due course. Training will be offered free of charge on Saturdays to those interested in moving up into Lasers using the club boats.

The club Lasers will also be offered to experience club members who wish to try out a Laser on a Sunday morning for this there will be a £10.00 fee levied.

If anyone is interested in using the club Lasers I will be the point of contact on d.giles2@btinternet.com or 01342300969 or 07932162847.

*Welcome on board David. And for those of you who don't yet know him, David is a very accomplished sailor having won many National, European and World titles including World ISO Champion and National and European RS 200 Champion.*

Ed ▲



→ Jean Chisnall

## Introducing our new secretary Geoff Bush

Ed

Geoff learned to sail on a pond (Frensham) and in a ditch (The Thames at Reading) which was ideal training for a ticket on "Second Life" in the first Whitbread Round the World Race. Some long distance short handed racing and cruising followed. Still doing the short handed racing, but around cans in a Laser at WWSC. Two sons, Olly and Nick, also sail Lasers and an Enterprise, occasionally appearing for the second or third Sunday morning race. Martha (Geoff's wife) prefers terra ferma normally, but does find Bosun gunwales seductive.

Geoff's a great bloke to sail with but don't ever go for a walk with him. The Ed and the Enterprise Fleet Captain did early last year and are still recovering. Following these warm ups on the South Downs Geoff walked from Lewes to Turin across France and the Alps. ▲



↑ Geoff Bush

## Social News

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Jean Chisnall

The Christmas party went off with a real swing on 12th December with nearly 100 people attending. A big thanks to Julia and team for providing a wonderful hot buffet and thanks to Funky Junky for providing the music which, judging by the numbers dancing right up to the end, was just right. We hope everyone enjoyed the different format and do let us know if you want the same again.

We are continuing with our Mid Week evening social evenings in the New Year. The next is on 17th February which will be another quiz night on a "Round the World" theme. Food from 7.00; quiz at 8.30.

On 30th March (NB It's Tuesday) Jon Emmett will be coming to talk. His theme will be coaching yourself to be a better sailor. It will not be aimed just at the racers. And the final one is on 28th April with a Food Extravaganza; that's right and evening devoted totally to eating, drinking, convivial conversation and eager anticipation of the summer season.

Keep an eye out on the Web Site for further social events which are still in the very early stages of planning. ▲

## More Editor's Woes

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Ed

Being married to the Social Secretary every now and then brings with it some awesome responsibilities. Take for example the Wednesday evening Quiz Night. I volunteered to organise the quiz. That was relatively easy; it just took some time and imagination. But my main challenge for the evening was to transport three slow cookers full of Chilli from home to the Club as Jean was otherwise occupied.

I had done this successfully before and so I followed my proven routine, loading the three pots on the floor behind the front seats of the car. I turned carefully into the main road and heard an ominous sound. I glanced over my shoulder and saw what I feared had happened. One pot, the biggest, was leaning at a strange angle and its contents were spilling out. I stopped the car and went to the rear passenger door. The situation required fast and confident action. I opened the door but didn't follow through fast enough. The contents of the pot started to flow down the Coulsdon Road. I righted the pot and fleetingly considered scooping the precious food up off the road but thought better about it. Folk would surely register the difference between kidney beans and gravel. So I turned back for home to sort the mess out. A phone call to Jean to alert her that she had lost a serious amount of the supper was not well received.

Closer inspection of the car revealed that the wretched stuff had flowed everywhere and was now congealing. It managed to get under the carpet trim and had seeped right under the carpet. As if that wasn't bad enough. The pot was over a floor storage compartment and lifting the top revealed it half full of semi solid chilli. No time to clean up. Back on the road to deliver the food. As it worked out there was plenty for all indeed enough for seconds. If anyone wants advice how to clean up a car full of chilli do get in touch. I am still being reminded of the evening with what is now, three months later, a diminishing but distinct aroma of spices and rank fat.

So we went to the States to get over it all and watched you all being rained on continuously throughout November. We returned to a full reservoir and of course I was raring to get back on the water. I left Jean in bed on the Sunday after the Christmas party and arrived at the Club in good time to rig the Laser. Jon Emmett was in the boat park and I enquired what size sail he was using.

"I always sail a radial" he said.

"So should I be doing the same?"

"That depends" he said "What are you? About 70?"

I wondered what age had to do with it. Perhaps an issue of declining fitness? He clearly wasn't in that bracket.

"Well you're close" I said "I'm six ....."

"No. Your weight in Kilos!"

Having sorted that out and deciding that, despite the fact that I fitted his criteria, I couldn't be bothered to go back to the car and get the smaller sail, I rigged the boat. Now I don't know what it is, but the Laser seems rather more complicated than the 2000 when it comes to rigging. I had to ask a friendly rival how the main sheet went for example. Anyway, I finished the job, put the boat in the water, pulled the trolley from underneath and leaving the boat head to wind in the water (it was coming over the dam) left it there to park the trolley. I find it very irritating when single handers leave their trolleys in the water for others to trip over but I realize now they have learned to put up with the wrath of others for good reason. It only took a minute but when I turned round my boat was sailing unattended across the lake. What's worse it was going a lot better than it would have done with me in it! An embarrassed plea to the support boat retrieved the wanton boat and off I went, several minutes late for the race despite having arrived with loads of time to prepare. It went downhill from there. I hadn't put the tiller under the horse so tacking and steering generally were just about impossible and that took several more minutes to sort out, the down haul was stuck down the centre board slot, the main sheet stopper knot came undone and I lost that through the block, and if that wasn't bad enough the fleet was now lapping me with shouts of "It doesn't go any better with you in it!" as they sailed past.

No doubt the New Year will bring better luck as I train down to 70 ▲

## Weir Wood Interclub 2009.

David Giles

On Saturday 10th October Weir Wood again ran the annual interclub competition this year when at the last minute Bewl Valley Sailing Club were forced to withdraw as hosts. Despite an already heavy commitment to the club Martin and Julie Pascoe stepped up to race officer the event and Peter and James Mears took on the nightmare task of time keeping and working out the results.

Over fifty sailors from five Wealden Clubs; Bough Beech, Chipstead, Crawley Mariners, Tonbridge and Weir Wood, competed in the event. Clubs could enter up to two senior and two junior teams. Three races were held during the day with each race taking about an hour. The best two out of three individual results from each team member were taken to give the overall team score. Weir Wood entered two senior teams and one junior team.

Racing started in a light and patchy North Westerly wind which built during the day to about 10kts.

In the first senior's Race Dave Derby from Bough Beech made the best of the conditions to win but Weir Wood A and B team members Dave Binding (Laser 1), Chris Fyans (Laser Rooster), John Ramshaw and Mark Harrington (RS 200) and John Holroyd and Jane Rusbatch (Laser 2000) took the next four places to give Weir Wood the slight edge overall.



↓ John Ramshaw & Mark Harrington

In the first junior race Matt Giles and George Collett (RS400) showed good speed to win from Elyse Atkinson (laser 4.7)

Race two seniors again saw Derby win but again the next three places were taken by WWSC team members. Holroyd was second, Ramshaw third and David Giles and Mark Chester (RS400) fourth.

In the juniors Weir Wood team members Alexei Nicholas and Jamie Blanchard (Laser 2000) won with Matt Giles second.

And so to the final race. With the wind now a pleasant 10 kts Derby powered round the course to record his third individual race win. However, also as before, Weir Wood took the next four places with Holroyd, Ramshaw, Binding and Simon Barrington (Laser Rooster) finishing second, third, fourth and fifth.

The junior team finished in style with Giles winning again, Nicholas second and Atkinson third; 1, 2, 3 for Weir Wood!

For Weir Wood Seniors it was consistency that won the day. Despite no overall win in any race, packing out the next few places gave the Weir Wood A team a narrow overall victory over the Weir Wood B team with Bough Beech third.

No such need for this type of consistency for the junior team who blew away the opposition to win convincingly overall. Matt Giles and George Collett sailed particularly well to record a 1, 2, 1 in the three races with his team mates Atkinson 2, 6, 3 and Nicholas 8, 1, 2 close behind.

So Weir Wood again showed that they were the best racing club in the local area for both seniors and juniors. Next year the event is to be held at Bough Beech with their commodore muttering something about pulling out all the stops next year to win the Chipstead plate back and break Weir Woods dominance as he left. No Chance! ▲



↑ The winning Junior Team



↑ The winning Senior Team



## ***Laser 2000 inland Nationals at Ullswater***

Ed

The Foye Belle crew was the only WWSC boat to go to Ullswater for the Laser 2000. What a daunting responsibility; WWSC's L2K fleet reputation in our hands! Ullswater is a fantastic place to sail. It is about 8 mile long and a mile wide at its widest in a quieter part of the Lake District, surrounded by fantastic hills on all sides. No motor boats except the Lake Steamer.

The event was in mid September and when we arrived it had rained solidly for about 10 weeks. The lake had risen so much that Ullswater Sailing Club launching jetty had been several feet under water and all of the boats in the lower boat park had had to be moved up to higher ground.

But we were lucky and had two days sailing that were just perfect for us; sunny, warm and with a light wind of constant direction for both days. About 40 boats took part and the fleet was split into Gold and Silver. And for us we did quite well, 29th overall and 5th in the silver fleet. I say the wind as constant. It was until on the Sunday the Mountain Rescue helicopter flew at a height of about 100 feet over part of the fleet. This was a new experience for us with the downwash throwing everyone all over the place, no doubt to the huge amusement of the chopper crew.

Ullswater Yacht Club proved to be a very friendly crowd and they put on an excellent evening dinner with live band following. However, those brave souls who camped reckoned it was the coldest night they had ever endured.

We stayed on for the rest of the week walking the local hills. I have mentioned before the astonishing coincidences we have had on our travels meeting people we know in all parts of the world. This time was no exception. Picking up provisions in the local shop we were accosted by a certain Allan Jones who was in the area on a walking holiday!

We thoroughly recommend making the effort of taking the boat up and experiencing the Lake. And one event that might tempt you is the Great Sailing Race held in mid July organised by Ullswater Yacht Club when sailing boats of any shape or size race from one end of the lake to the other and back. Apparently they have up to 200 boats taking part.

The Foye Belle Crew

Poor Ullswater Yacht Club suffered badly in the November floods. The lake rose so much that the Club House which is 3-4 metres at least above normal lake level had a foot over water above floor level. All boats have had to be removed from site or well up the hillside and the access road is in a dangerous state. Our condolences to them and we hope they manage to get it all back in working order before too long. ▲

## ***Messrs Gibbs and Stone to Note***

Yes, this had to come from the States as the Car Sticker shows but I'm sure his political affinities hadn't got anything to do with what happened!

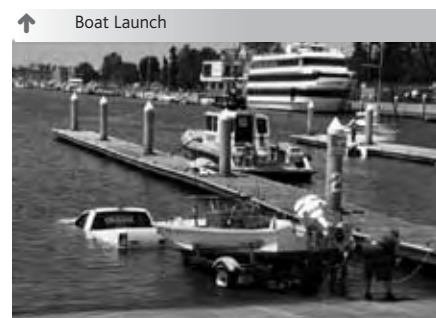
It was this guy's first boat and he was taking it to the lake, but he wasn't quite sure of the correct procedure for launching a boat off a ramp (slipway).

However, he figured it couldn't be that difficult to do, so he stopped by his Union office for advice and they just told him

"Don't let the trailer get too deep in the water when you're launching your boat".

Well later on, he couldn't understand what they meant by that, as he just could barely get his trailer in the water!

The picture is worth a thousand words!



## Winter Draws On 2009. Sunday 8th November 2009.

David Giles

Weir Wood held its annual Winter Draws on Open event on Sunday 8th. The event is open to all and follows the same format as the club championship, namely two handicap races in the morning and a pursuit race in the afternoon. To encourage competitors to stay all day and support the prize giving a change was introduced to the notice of race for the first time this year. Although one of the two morning handicap races could be discarded, the afternoon pursuit race had to be counted. This resulted in a record 25 of the 47 entries sailing all day with nearly all the prize winners taking part in the prize giving after the racing concluded.

Sunday 8th was an overcast and chilly day but an 8 to 10 mile per hour east-north-east wind allowed for close racing. For the two morning races, Race Officers Ernie Hatton and Peter Clifton set a windward/leeward course with a requirement to pass through an upwind gate on each lap. A long mid lake start line had a slight bias to the pin end although the leading boats tended to come from the committee boat end of the line as a starboard wind bend further up the lake penalised those out to the left.

Front runners at this stage included Chris Fyans (Rooster 8.1) and Joe and Martin Pascoe (RS200). The situation changed quite rapidly during the long downwind leg with John Ramshaw and Mark Harrington (RS200) making good progress along with Rob and Katie Burridge (Laser 2000) and Paul Jenkins and Colin Hatton (RS800). As the 45 minute lime limit for the morning races approached Burridge was close enough to Ramshaw to win on handicap with Tim and Linda Hulley (Laser 2000) third and a very commendable 4th going to Paul Luttmann (Standard Laser).

The wind died slightly for the second morning race and with the starting line even the leading boats arrived at the windward mark from both sides of the course. Ramshaw looked well placed along with visitor Neil Peters (Rooster 8.1). With the wind becoming ever patchier, being in the right place when the gusts arrived was the key to success. Bruce Ramshaw (standard Laser) demonstrated this well on the last down wind leg to move into second place with Peters closely behind. Junior Fiona Harrington (Optimist) had an excellent last lap to take 4th but clear winners were Ramshaw and Harrington in the RS 200.

Before the afternoon compulsory pursuit race joint leaders were Burridge and Harrington each having a first to take forward into the afternoon. Bruce Ramshaw had a second place while Peters and Hulley each had a third.

The pursuit race incorporated nearly all the racing marks on the lake and hence all points of sailing rather than just upwind/downwind. This suited some classes more than others. The wind remained light but short lived stronger gusts continued to blow through the racing area and keeping a careful look out for these was essential. The Optimists were first away in probably

the lightest breeze of the race. The RS 200's on the other hand seemed to have a good patch of wind to start in. Ramshaw made good use of this to quickly catch the earlier starters. The Rooster rigs closed down the Standard Lasers with the added reaching legs while further back the Fireballs were struggling to make an impression in the light breeze. Comfortably out in front as the race time limit approached was Ramshaw and Harrington. Second was a much closer affair with David Giles (Rooster 8.1) Bruce Ramshaw, Tim Hulley and Matthew Giles (standard Laser) all in a line approaching the finish. In the end the order was Ramshaw 2, David Giles 3, Hulley 4 and Matt Giles 5 but barely a boat length separated all 4.

It was great to see so many participants at the prize giving. Only three overall prizes are now given with extra "spot" prizes to encourage those who are unlikely to make the top three to take part. As an added incentive, anyone making the top three is ineligible for a spot prize.

The endeavour award is for the participant who finished last having finished all three races (ie no retirements). This went to Andy and Conner Genders in a Laser 2000. The loving trophy is presented to the first placed married couple sailing together. This was won by David and Miriam Ramshaw. The family trophy is presented to the first placed couple from the same family other than husband and wife. Winners of this were Joe and Martin Pascoe, father and son.

The special awards of first youth (under 18) first master (over 50) and first lady have been with us for some time and were won this time around by Matt Giles, David Giles and Fiona Harrington respectively.

Final category in the spot prizes was the Duckhams award given to the competitor who committed the biggest "bloomer" of the day. There were no really clear winners despite some synchronised capsizing in five knots of wind by Chris Fyans and Chris Spencer-Smith so it was decided to award it to Amy Hulley for her dash to the club from Brighton only to arrive on the start line a minute after the rest of the fleet had set off, something Dave Mason would be familiar with!

Overall, winner of The Winter Draws On 2009 were John Ramshaw and Mark Harrington in their RS 200. Many congratulations to them, in the light winds the boys take some beating. Second was Bruce Ramshaw in a Standard Laser, a great result for this relatively poorly handicapped boat. Rounding up the top three was Tim and Linda Hulley in a Laser 2000, again a great result in a boat that is not renowned for its light wind performance.

Mark Harrington gave thanks to the race management team of Ernie and Barbara Hatton and Peter Clifton who ran the event superbly both on and off the water. The next major event is the Club Championship where I hope we will top the 50 entry mark. Again the majority of awards will be made to those outside the top three so give it a go and if all else fails make a complete fool of yourself and you may well win the Duckhams award ▲.



→ Rooster open winner Jon Emmet

## Rooster Inland Nationals

### Weir Wood Hosts the First Event for this class.

Chris Fyans

The weekend of the 31st October and 1st November saw the Rooster Inland Nationals at Weir Wood Sailing Club. There were some very testing conditions not only for the competitors but also the race officers. The forecast for the weekend was predicted lively to say the least, but when it comes to the weather things never go to plan.

34 competitors signed in for the on the Saturday morning with rigs provided by Rooster for a modest hire fee of £15 for those who did not have their own. Race officers Ernie Hatton & Pete Clifton set an Olympic course of triangle sausage with instructions to the fleet they had to pass through the start/finish line gate during the upwind legs only. Unfortunately Weir Wood Reservoir was a little low on water being only 43% full at present. So the race officers were somewhat handicapped to get big enough courses set to avoid the shallow spots especially if the wind was from the northwest. With winds forecast of gusting 38knts for the Sunday the race officer proposed to fit as many races as possible in the first day. The prevailing SW wind ran the length of the reservoir which helped. With the course laid the 1st Race start was 12:00noon.

The forecast was for SW wind of a force 3 but this proved not the case as it was struggling to get above a force 1 to 2. The visibility conditions were poor to start but gradually clearing just before the start of the first race. With what promised to be a steady force 2 the competitors were very keen to get underway; too keen in fact which resulted in two general recalls. The race officer then decided to use a black flag start. This brought the fleet into line with all 34 getting away. The wind proved to be quite testing veering to the north then backing a little as the rains arrived resulting in the beat becoming a fetch for the second lap. Jon Emmett made the best of these testing conditions leading the race from the start despite capsizing halfway through after an overstated roll tack. With Jon Holroyd and Ian Jones close on his heels he held them off to get 1st place with Holroyd 2nd and Jones 3rd.

After some repositioning of the race course, which proved quite difficult resulting in a shortened beat due to the lack of width in the water, the wind was now blowing across the reservoir. The 2nd race started under a Black Flag from the start with three boats over the line at the start. This meant their race was over. Race 2 proved to be re-run of race 1 with one exception, David Giles taking over 2nd place instead of Holroyd who had to settle with a disappointing 14th.

## Farewell to John Ramshaw

Ed

It's not only congratulations to John for winning the event but also congratulations to John and his wife, Vanessa, on the birth of their second son, Jake. No doubt we will be seeing him and his brother Luc in a few years time sailing together.

Sadly John will be leaving the Club as a result of his new family commitments. But he won't be stopping sailing. He has sold his RS 200 to Dad (without the crew!) and is joining Queen Mary's where he will be sailing a Foiling Moth. Good luck John and you'd better brush up on your swimming skills before taking to the air. All our best wishes go to John and his family for the future especially from the RS200 fleet. No doubt we will be kept up to date on all your news.

So what is Mark Harrington going to do now? I'm told he has a cunning plan so watch the water to see where this versatile sailor reappears ▲.



↑ Roosters Downwind



↓ Competitive Starting

The wind had now veered towards the SW again resulting in a 15 min delay with the course being reset for the third time. By now the wind was a steady force 3 and the sun was out giving some late autumn sunshine. Race 3 started under an "I Flag" with all the competitors getting away with a clean start first time for some good close racing. Again the race was dominated by Emmett who was clearly enjoying the light wind conditions, which suited his sailing style really well. With Emmett again finishing 1st it was Steve Cockerill providing a late challenge getting 2nd, his highest placing so far and Giles 3rd.

With the course having to be repositioned for the fourth time with the wind now back to the SW the fourth race started in similar conditions. It was clear this was unlikely to last as the wind began to drop again. With Emmett again leading from the start this was clearly his event for the taking, finishing 1st for the fourth occasion. Jones was 2nd for the first time partly due to a very close battle between Giles and Holroyd, whose positions changed several times during the race. Holroyd getting the better of Giles finishing half a boat's length ahead. With the wind dropping the race officer called it a day.

Sunday proved to be a complete contrast weather-wise to Saturday with driving rain squalling gusting winds of some 32knots. It was clear that the weather front which was supposed to pass over during the night was some 12hrs delayed. A quick check with the forecasters the race officers took to the water and laid a course. However, with the winds now gusting their promised 32knts a postponement was signaled.

After much debate with the winds predicted to build further the racing was abandoned for the day.

The final results for the Rooster Inland Nationals 2009 were:

- 1st Jon Emmett Weir Wood SC
- 2nd Ian Jones Dovestone SC
- 3rd David Giles Weir Wood SC
- 4th Jon Holroyd Weir Wood SC
- 5th Ian Morgan Weston SC.

A full list of results can be found along with Photos of the event by Captura Images on the Club Web Site.

*For those who don't know the Rooster sail is 8.1 metres which compares about 7 metres for the standard sail.*

*Jon Holroyd borrowed my boat for the event. No doubt this is the best it will ever do unless he borrows it again!*

Ed ▲

## New Club Lasers

David Giles

In early November Weir Wood took delivery of four Club Lasers. The boats are about 10 years old but have had some reconditioning and are setup to the latest specifications that the Laser class allow. Each boat has three choices of rig, the 4.7, radial and standard.

The principal use for these four club boats are to allow our Optimist and Topper sailors who are out growing or have out grown their boats to get the feel of a Laser with an experienced coach on hand to help them. The coaching is aimed at giving the recipients enough experience and confidence to join in the Laser Sunday morning club race in time.

The Laser coaching will take place on Saturday afternoon and will run along side Optimist club. There will therefore be plenty of support boats and experienced adults on hand to assist if need be.

The Saturday afternoon use of Lasers and coaching will be free of charge. Training will begin in earnest with the restart of Optimist club in 2010 but there will be a few coaching days before that which will be advertised on the club web site. The first of these will be Saturday 16th. Jan. 2010.

The second use for the club boats is to allow experienced club members who do not own a Laser to join in the Sunday Laser club race. There will be someone on hand on a Sunday morning to help rig the boat and to give advice before the racing starts.

There will be a £10.00 hire charge for adult Sunday morning use.

For more details and to book one of the boats contact David Giles on d.giles2@btinternet.com or 01342300969 or 07932162847.

This is a great new initiative by Weir Wood Sailing Club to increase the number of Lasers Sailing at the club and to give those who might otherwise not get the chance to race in a large one design fleet to do so.

See "Youf" section for preliminary details  
Ed ▲



↓ Peter Young

## Laser Sailing Review of 2009

Peter Young

Well folks, it has been an eventful year for WWSC Laser sailors. The theme has been one of fresh faces coming into the class – which is great to see – even if some of them are being a little rude by finishing so far up the fleet. Further speed has been injected into the class on 4 occasions courtesy of training sessions run by David Giles, Steve Cockerill and Jon Emmett (twice). The sessions have ranged from boat basics all the way up to a dummies guide to Laser fluid dynamics. Despite being one of the simplest classes on the planet it is really difficult to stop learning. Lord only knows how Chris Fyans manages it.

There has been more good news with the introduction of four race spec hire Lasers to the club. This is the most fantastic way of getting even more new blood hooked on the class. So – please encourage others to have a go. And, when you pass the hire boats (right next to the race hut), keep an eye out to make sure that they are put away properly and looked cared for. Oh – and if you have any spare (working) Laser kit that you no longer need it would be great to have it for the hire fleet – tiller extensions, tillers, top-sections etc.

Club racing has brought some pretty large fleets out on the water; we have pushed twenty on more than one occasion. The race results paint a picture of a much more even fleet, again great to see, all at [wwsc.org.uk](http://wwsc.org.uk). Pretty much most racers have had the bit between their teeth at the front of the fleet for at least one leg of club racing.

Over to Miss Ford for the scores on the board:

### Late Summer

1. David Binding
2. Paul Luttman
3. Bill Stean

### Winter Warm-Up

1. Peter Young
2. Paul Luttman
3. David Binding

Wednesday racing has happened too. The highlights there are always much closer to the clubhouse than the water. It is notable that those first off the start-line often struggle to maintain the same form during the move ashore to the bar ; Barrington and Fyans especially.

There has also been a fair amount of travelling going on; Grand Prix, Masters, Seniors and International events. Peter Young, David Binding and Simon Barrington have qualified for the

2010 Masters Worlds due to be held at Hayling Island. We'll be watching the British Senior/Youth results to see George, Matt and Rory (and others?) climb even faster next year.

So, whilst you sit like a potato during the festive break watching Where Eagles Dare wondering if you would rather be one of the good guys, or, the baddy with the better uniform, take some time to:

- ▶ Visit the [laser.org.uk](http://laser.org.uk) to work out which events you are going to attend in 2010
- ▶ Get your diary out and plug in 27 March and 1 May for the Bough Beech and Weir Wood Grand Prix respectively
- ▶ On your New Year's resolution list under the 'fitness' category – add, "attend Laser winter Sunday sessions"

Look forward to seeing you down at the club.

Pete 07799 765 216

*PS Here's the salient points from Pete's post Christmas e-mail to the Laser fleet*

## Ho Ho Ho! Festive greetings to you all.

A big thank you to Jon Emmett for an excellent Laser training session in December. It is just amazing what a video camera picks up. It can feel good and be wrong and it can feel wrong and be right. There are now 10 better Laser sailors in the fleet - watch out everybody!

Results - don't forget we always try and get the Laser race results up on the WWSC site so you can see how you are getting on.

Now I know that 'More Laser Sailing' will be on your New Year's Resolution list so make sure and get 27 March at Bough Beech and 1 May at WWSC in your new Sugababes Calendar (Chris F - the Sugababes are a young person's popular music band that a gentleman might watch for all the wrong reasons).

Keeping things fresh. I'd really like us to rotate this Laser Captain thing around every year to keep the energy levels up. It is certainly not onerous; it just really requires a wee bit of keenness. I've been at it (the Laser Captain thing) for 18 months now and I'd like to hand it over before I start a new job up in London town. So - I am after a volunteer as I don't want to leave the role without a chief. To help you volunteer find bulleted below all that is involved:

- ▶ Sorting out people to tasks for the Laser Open in May.
- ▶ Keeping people in the loop as to all things Laser.
- ▶ Organising stuff now and again like: curries, training and fast & furious racing. This is the making it up as you go along bit.
- ▶ Doing the results, or eating chips on Sunday and making others do them whilst you shout instructions with your mouth full.

The keen eye will note that you don't actually do much yourself, rather you nudge, encourage and force others to help out - and being a great bunch they always do. So - LET ME KNOW IF YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED.

Have a great New Year, ▲



## Model Yacht Racing Revived

**Peter Gorman revives the Model Yacht Fleet.**

Peter Gorman

Have you ever fancied sailing a modern racing yacht? Now there's no need to sell the house! The beautiful models which have been sitting in the clubhouse for the last year are begging to be taken out on the water.

The first of the Kyosho 1 m. class boats was donated by Neil Peters and Chris Fyans, Matt Giles, Colin Hatton and Andy Barnes have left theirs at the club for anyone to use. (Alex Barata donated two smaller Triumph class boats which proved less popular) They will be joined by a sixth which my wife gave me for my birthday, when I have mastered the rather daunting complexities of assembling it.

The intention was to start model yacht racing both for fun and to raise money for the club. There were a few impromptu races but with Neil's departure the plans rather fizzled out. My own interest was kindled by having a go at sailing one at the Open Day, and when I became temporarily unable to sail a 'proper' boat a few weeks ago as a result of knee surgery, model yacht sailing seemed an ideal substitute. I have discovered, however, that it has a fascination and challenge of its own. (There is a certain appeal of staying warm and dry at this time of year but that is only a minor part of the pleasure) The controls are very simple but precise, and the boats are beautifully responsive. The basic skills can be mastered in a few minutes, but actually getting the boat to do what you want all the time is quite another matter. I know remembering that port is port and starboard is starboard whether it is sailing away from you or towards you sounds obvious but is all too easy to get it wrong. Likewise judging the wind direction relative to the boat, not to you, is not easy especially when it is all over the place in the corner by the clubhouse with an easterly blowing. (I must confess to difficulty in overcoming the urge to use too much helm when the boat is going the wrong way, which usually results in an abrupt tack or gybe and the boat setting off in an opposite and equally wrong direction!) The boats are a little over-canvased and tender and you have to be very quick to ease sheets in gusts before they lie on their beam ends.

This is all great fun but the boats, like our dinghies, are designed for the challenge of racing. They (and their control units) are available for anyone to borrow, the only stipulation being the provision of eight AA batteries. The hope is to organise some regular racing, perhaps on Saturday mornings or Sunday afternoons, when we could have the services of the OOD as race officer (and the support boat to retrieve any errant boats whose batteries have run out, as has happened to me!)

So anyone interested in having a go is invited to get in touch with the undersigned. Hopefully we can get something going in the late winter or early spring.

peter.gorman@matmosonline.co.uk ▲

## Profile of the Enterprise class

**Dick Lankester continues our series of profiles of the most popular classes at Weir Wood.**

Dick Lankester  
Fleet Captain

So, you've successfully completed your Level 1 course and discovered the joys of sailing. You have joined the club and you now need to get a boat. You have listened politely to the siren voices of Messrs Carter, Hulley, Sloper and others and yes, you would love to buy a Laser 2000. Unfortunately, you are not currently an investment banker with RBS and therefore you don't have £4000-£5000 spare cash to spend on a boat. In fact, the most you can afford at the moment is about £500. Don't despair, thousands have been there and come up with the answer, which is, of course, to buy a second hand Enterprise, it's a no-brainer! In a moment, I will explain why I believe that the Enterprise is the most sensible choice of boat to sail at Weir Wood. But first, a few facts and figures. The vital statistics of the Enterprise are:

Length	4.04m
Beam	1.6m
Weight	94kg
Sail area	10.5m

PY handicap 1116 (1096 if sailed single handed and John Prince spots you!)  
Recommended crew weight: 125-150 kg  
Cost new: £6,500-£7,000  
Cost second hand: from £100

Almost everyone knows one fact about Enterprises, which is that you can have any colour of sail you like, so long as it is blue - it is a class rule and it makes the boats instantly recognisable.

Designed by Jack Holt, doyen of dinghy designers, in conjunction with the News Chronicle national newspaper, the Enterprise class was born in January 1956. The designer's brief was to build a boat which was suitable both for racing and cruising, was affordable in post-war austerity Britain (sound familiar?) and, for those with a penchant for DIY, could



→ Competitive starting

be built in the front room from a kit. The launch was celebrated by an unusual publicity stunt. The first two Enterprises built by Jack Holt in his Putney workshop - E1 and E2 – were sailed across the Channel, at night and in January by mixed crews, an unprecedented feat at the time. The trip was achieved apparently without any great dramas, apart for the chase boat having difficulty keeping up with the dinghies. The trip demonstrated the soundness of the design and helped to make the class an instant success. The Enterprise quickly established itself as the dominant double-handed dinghy in sailing clubs up and down the country.

53 years on, over 23,000 Enterprises have been built and a large proportion are still around, although sadly, and inexplicably, many languish unloved and unsailed in dinghy parks up and down the country. In the 1980s, up to a dozen boats regularly turned out for Sunday morning racing at Weir Wood.

Although the early boats were all constructed from wood, in due course fibreglass technology arrived and many Enterprises were constructed from this material. However, serious racers steered clear of the plastic boats as they were considered not to be as stiff as the wooden boats and consequently not competitive. They are, however, ideal as cruising or occasional racing boats, requiring minimal maintenance.

In the mid 1990s a glass fibre foam sandwich form of construction was developed, known as FRP (Foam Reinforced Plastic). These boats proved to be as competitive as the wooden boats

(although not as attractive) and have been very popular. However, questions are currently being asked about their longevity and the class association is currently working up a revised FRP design.

Some may regard the Enterprise as an outdated design in the 21st century and it is a fact that the explosion of new dinghy designs over the last 25 years has had an impact on the class, as it has on all traditional classes. Enterprises these days tend to be sailed by more 'mature' crews and it is a shame that the younger generation pass them over in favour of more modern classes, because Enterprises still have an enormous amount to offer. So here are some reasons why I believe the class is still very relevant in 2009, particularly for inland clubs like Weir Wood:

- ▶ Boats are cheap and plentiful. A serviceable boat suitable for cruising can be picked up for a few hundred pounds and can comfortably accommodate the family. A boat kitted out for racing will cost a little more.
- ▶ The Enterprise is a simple boat to sail. With a relatively small jib, no spinnaker and few bits of string to pull, a crew with little or no experience can go out and race. On the other hand, to get the last 10% of performance out of the boat requires great skill on the part of both helm and crew.
- ▶ The simplicity of the boat makes setting the rig up very straightforward. You need to get the mast rake right and plenty of tension

on the jib halyard using a Highfield Lever (essential). Outhaul and downhaul sail controls are desirable and an effective kicking strap with lots of purchase is also essential. Guides to setting up your rig can be found on the club website and are all you need to make your boat a potential winner!

- ▶ Because they are not designed to provide high performance sailing, racing is invariably very close. The emphasis is therefore on boat handling and tactical sailing, as opposed to out and out speed. The regular Enterprise racers at Weir Wood swap places all round the race course and invariably finish within a few yards of each other.
- ▶ One of the best features of the boat is that it is fun to sail in light wind (unlike a Laser 2000!). Because of their light weight and relatively large sail area, they keep going when the modern classes go to sleep. In these conditions, the slightest puff will send an Enterprise on its way, overtaking most other boats on the lake. So I would argue, on inland sailing water, where as often as not the wind is on the light side, the Enterprise is actually the perfect boat to sail.
- ▶ In their own way, Enterprises are just as much fun and as satisfying to sail in a breeze as the modern, asymmetric boats. They can certainly be challenging and give you a good work out, as we discovered at our Open Meeting this year, when we enjoyed F6 conditions. It is true that they fill up with water when they capsize, but it is surprising how quickly an experienced crew can get rid of the water through the transom flaps and self bailers and resume racing.
- ▶ The large sail area takes all the wind away from any Lasers which stray too close – immensely satisfying!
- ▶ It is easy to get hold of a set of cut-down cruising sails which will enable you to keep things under control on those windy days. Few will forget the sight of 'Stormin' Norman Bowden charging across the lake in The Starship Enterprise with cruising sails at the Big 40 event in 2007, while all

the other Enterprise sailors were to be found cowering in the club house!

- ▶ If your crew doesn't turn up, no matter, Enterprises are easy and fun to sail single-handed in anything up to about F3. And being light, they can be launched and recovered by one person without difficulty. (Top Tip: tie the ends of the jib sheets together if you sail on your own).
- ▶ The class has an active class association ([www.sailenterprise.org.uk](http://www.sailenterprise.org.uk)) which publishes regular newsletters full of interesting and useful information, including boats and equipment for sale. Last year, I picked up a set of very lightly used sails for half the price of a new set.
- ▶ If you want to explore the world beyond Weir Wood, there is an extensive Open Meeting circuit (including the local Blue Jib series), and Nationals, Inland Nationals and Masters championships.
- ▶ On 18th July next year Weir Wood will be hosting the Enterprise South East Area Championships. It will be very important for the club to enter as many boats as possible. So I would ask all Weir Wood Enterprise owners to make a note of this date and make sure they support the club by entering.

If anyone wants to find out anything about Enterprises, please have a word with one of our regular racers:

John Prince/Joyce Skilton  
Vic Hopkins/Kevin Francis  
Chris Daniels/Ray Nevard (summer only, currently in winter hibernation)  
Dick Lankester/anyone-whose-arm-I-can-twist  
Geoff Bush/AN Other

Or log on to [www.sailenterprise.org.uk](http://www.sailenterprise.org.uk)

Finally, can I say that nothing would make us happier than to see more blue sails racing on Sunday mornings. There are a large number of boats in the boat park which are desperate to join in, so it is up to you, their owners, to do something about it and make your boats happy. I can think of no better New Year's resolution for 2010!

[lankesters@hotmail.com](mailto:lankesters@hotmail.com) 



→ Peter Deeming

## The Isle of Sheppey Race

### Peter Deeming and Martin Cragg take part in this classic round the island race.

#### Peter takes up the story:

Peter Deeming and Martin Cragg  
My alarm rang at 5:30 but I was awake anyway. Weeks of preparation and of worrying that I would forget my wetsuit was over, and the moment to begin our adventure around the Isle of Sheppey in the 51st IOS race had arrived. It was still dark but I had already packed the car and left my clothes in the bathroom so as not to wake the missus: "Have a nice time" came a sleepy mumble from the darkness. Oh well, the thought was there.

Off I set to Martin's house where our boat lay patiently, along with a now repaired spinnaker pole. The Sun was just peeping out through the trees as I phoned Martin to ask "Whereabouts is your house mate?". It's all in the preparation you know!

Boat hitched, sausage sandwiches perched securely on the dashboard and we were on our way by 6:30. An easy drive at that time of the morning and only one slight deviation around the Maidstone area (recovered without too much drama with the aid of Martin's GPS phone - it's all in the preparation you know!) saw us at the bridge to Sheppey. What an almighty bridge it is too - a dual carriageway arching high up into the air that you could fit the QE2 under. Odd really, since only a stone's throw away is a railway bridge that is so low that you have to capsize a dinghy to get under!

Sheppey is only a small place so you can't get too lost, which is just as well given that I was driving. But only a couple of guessed turns presented us with a helpful chap in a fluorescent jacket urging us to drive along the seafront promenade. I guess these guys have been doing this for a long time, but from start to finish, their organisation was impeccable. Driving competitors along the promenade was genius; it gets all the boats off the road, queuing in a long line towards the bit of beach in front of the IOS sailing club. We soon followed the example of the people in front of us and rigged our boat whilst it was still on the trailer, pulling the car up another few yards at convenient intervals. By the time we were at the front of the queue, we had a fully rigged boat that 2 very enthusiastic chaps removed from my car and with Martin's help, deposited on the beach. In the meanwhile I was directed to the car park which is just a short stroll along the front. Clockwork. Fantastic.

Signing in was a breeze and before we know it we had posted our safety tag in the 'started' box and after a quick briefing at about 9:15, we were on the shore pushing our boat out. The race has 4 starts depending upon PY number:- 10:00 (PY > 1120 and sailboards), 10:30 (PY > 1030), 11:00 (PY <=1030) and 11:30 (Multihulls). So although 140 boats were taking part, the start line was populated for the 10:00 start with only around a dozen boats and sailboards.

Unlike the races on our lake where course is set according to wind direction, this race course is fixed at clockwise around the



← Nick Bush & crew



reach and more by luck than judgement, got up onto the plane and roared along the curiously flat water created by the combining flows of the Swale, the Medway and the Thames. We didn't know our little boat could go so fast and dare not move or touch a thing in case we should spoil our progress. Whilst this part of the island is not so picturesque, zooming along under the enormous structures of the port was very exciting nonetheless.

Rounding the Port of Sheerness, we soon left the Outfall marker behind us as we approached the finish line on a dead run. Time again for the spinnaker, but this time it was stowed on the windward side so a chuck launch was necessary. We

didn't get that quite right however, and the spinnaker dived under the bow of the boat and ended up dragging underneath us. Bugger – a water anchor is not what we had intended! We untied the sheet on one side and pulled the whole thing out from under the boat and stowed our now drenched sail back in its bag. Needless to say, that is where it stayed until we were back on shore.

We crossed the finish line in 6 hours 33 minutes which, on corrected time, put us in 96th place out of 118 qualifiers and 138 entrants. No medals for us for sure, but we did come away with big smiles and a huge sense of achievement. It was by far the longest sail we had ever done, the fastest we had ever sailed, the longest

we had flown our spinnaker, in short we had a fantastic day.

The sailing club put on a curry and a band in the evening, and since we had planned to stay on the Island for the night, we stayed for the entertainment and prize giving. All in all I was very impressed with IOSSC's organization of the event and I can't recommend the race highly enough. We will definitely be back for next years race which will be on the 11th September next year. Jot that in your diary right now because this is not an event to be missed!

See you on the water



**Martin's comment:**

In my defence, your honour, when my sailing companion was exposing himself over the port rear quarter of the vessel, I did attempt to tack the boat and remove him using the boom. Unfortunately, due to inadequate sailing skills I did not manage to dislodge him. The lady crew member in the vessel behind was wondering why our boat was creating a rainbow and it was her own inquisitiveness that led her to ask her helm to move to a position where she could see around the jib of their boat. The fact that I stand before you now in the dock is entirely a misrepresentation of my character and will have serious consequences for both me and any future CRB checks that may be carried out. I did intend to give up sailing, but it has been clearly pointed out on many occasions, that I don't know how to sail anyway!

***The dynamic duo put in much hard work in order to master the spinnaker before the race. It went something like this:***

Sunday 23 Aug 09 - Mr Commodore very kindly offered to teach us to use our spinnaker. I'm not sure whether the motive was entirely gracious, or whether Tony predicted he would have a good laugh at our incompetence. Well, we didn't

disappoint! Wind was across the lake giving us a shorter run than we would have preferred. After a lot of faffing around on shore and practice at running the spinnaker up and down, we got on the water and gave it a go. Tony, sensibly, removed himself to a safety boat from where he could offer guidance from a distance. Martin helming and me imitating an octopus on speed, we made a frenzied attempt at setting the pole, cleating every piece of string I could see including the draw-string on my shorts, hoisting the kite, pulling in, letting out, trying to understand why Tony was laughing, until scrunch.... we ran out of lake. Neither of us had even seen it coming! Out of the boat, push off and beat back for another go. Same recipe, pole, cleats, shouting, pushing, pulling, Tony providing encouraging laughter, and hey presto - there was our spinnaker billowing out before us! Scrunch....oh no! Not again! 3 times we managed to run her aground, but I'm pleased to report that by the end of the day, we had managed to hoist, fly AND retrieve our spinnaker before running out of pond.

Wednesday 26 Aug 09 - last wed evening race and what a night. 30mph gusts right on the start horn. Suddenly we could not reach the start line for the capsized flotilla in front of us. Determined to fly our kite, we hoisted it once on a leg from 4 to 1. It flapped horribly and rather than give us an advantage, it delivered us close to the dam wall and nowhere near the buoy by the time we had kerbed it's voracious behaviour. We didn't dare expose our kite to the fury of the wind again that night, but it made little difference - we still capsized!

Wednesday 02 Sept. 09 - final 'training day' to learn how to use our spinnaker before IOS. Reasonable winds although again across the lake rather than up/down so only a short run. Hoisted spinnaker 3 times and even did our first gybe! Then had a problem taking the pole down which resulted in bending the latch pin. Sailed back to jetty with pole dangling in the water. Another problem for the industrious Martin to overcome before the big day on Saturday. 🚩



↓ Chris



↓ Alan, Gill & Sue

## The Cobnor Season

Ed  
 Since the last magazine there have been a number of events at Cobnor which are all featured in this issue. So for those who don't know about Cobnor here's some background. It is a Youth Centre located at Chidham, which is a peninsular that bounds the west side of the Bosham Channel on the Chichester Estuary. It has bunk house accommodation, a galley and dining room and a lecture room. It can accommodate up to about 38 people in total (although it has been known to take many more with our kids sleeping on the floor of the lecture room).

The Activity centre is a Charitable Trust set up in 1979 (although it had been operating since the middle 1950's) and it works in close collaboration with West Sussex County Council Youth Services.

Boats are supplied including the robust and trusty Bosuns plus Pico's and RS Fevas. Support boats are also supplied. It is currently undergoing a major refurbishment and also having additional facilities added. From the Centre we can sail up to the Chichester Estuary and go east to Dell Quay or west to East Head and then up to Emsworth. This year the Youth sailed all round Hayling Island.

Weir Wood has been using the facility for many years and this year has seen Oppy Cobnor in May, Youth Camp in August, Youth Cobnor in October and Adult Cobnor also in October. I have to say the Adult gate crashing happened first of all 4 years ago when we saw how much fun the kids were having and felt left out. Adults don't sleep on the floor, make a row until the early hours, play daft games in the evening, play

silly games on the beech, walk several miles to get to the toilets at East Head or capsize the boats. But they do have very serious conversations about sailing both at breakfast and supper, they smile politely and don't shriek with laughter, they go to the pub for just one drink and go straight to bed every evening with lights out at 11.30. (If you believe that you will read the Sunday Sport as a serious newspaper!)

The sailing activities are tailored to suit those who are there and the weather. It is all designed to be fun as well as doing some serious sailing. Many of the youth do their RYA Coastal Seamanship Endorsements on the Estuary

We rely on a group of very dedicated helpers to make the sessions work and we have this year to thank in particular Alan Jones, Tony Carter, Chris Hopkins, Gill and Mark Greenfield, Sue Wood, all of whom have been I think at most of this year's occasions, plus Carolyn Chandler who helped out at camp. We also have to thank many of our young instructors and A I's for their help at the Youth Sessions without which they wouldn't happen. Many come back from Uni to take part and from what I hear

don't need to have their arms twisted. Perhaps they would consider coming and teaching the Adults a thing or two.

As far as we know the refurbishment will be completed over the winter and the facility will be up and running next year and we hope that we can run our usual complement of activities again. ▲



← Mark



↑ Tony Carter

# August Cobnor





## Adult Cobnor – a beginner's experience.

### Ian Brooker describes his first Adult Cobnor

Ian Brooker

After countless years of saying how great it would be to give sailing a try, it was my wife Sue who seized the initiative and booked James (my son) and I some sailing lessons whilst on holiday. We had two great sessions (roughly equating to the RYA Level 1 – Start Sailing) in a Laser 16 at Dell Quay near Chichester. That was back in August.

Whilst fear was the predominant feeling when the wind got up during our first session, I was well and truly bitten by the sailing bug. On returning home I was keen to keep up the momentum and get more instruction and experience. A quick look on Google turned up WWSC and their Level 2 - Basic Skills course in September. Three days instruction in the Wayfarer provided pleasure and frustration in equal measure. If nothing else, I was certainly fully qualified with the baler!

So what next.....how about a couple of days sailing in Chichester Harbour? The perfect opportunity to practice my new found skills, or so I hoped. One small problem though, I had no kit appropriate to coastal sailing in late October. A click of the mouse soon sorted that and a plain brown box of items (looking like they could be part of some weird fetish) arrived at work.

The first 'try-on' (dry-suit, romper suit, boots and gloves) generated much mirth and merriment in the Brooker household, along with pulling, pushing and cursing. I was certainly not looking forward to the prospect of getting in and out of it single-handed at Cobnor. Maybe keeping it on all weekend wouldn't be so bad!

To be honest, I was a bit apprehensive when I arrived at the Cobnor activities centre on the Friday evening. Not knowing anyone and having such little sailing experience was definitely praying on my mind. But I needn't have



↓ Bridget & Richard

worried and was made to feel really welcome right from the off. Then it was down to the pub for a couple liveners before bed, the perfect way to break the ice. Oh and many thanks to Tony for introducing me to the delights of single malt whisky, by way of an impromptu nightcap!

Saturday dawned with a slightly thick-head, but I soon perked up after the hearty breakfast. Then followed a briefing on the days sailing and the dreaded donning of the dry-suit. This turned out not to be nearly as bad as I feared, helped considerably by some expert guidance. I was also taught the importance of 'burping' the suit, rather important if you don't want to float feet upwards!

Martin drew the short-straw and was lumbered with me. He was if nothing else extremely patient and not easily scared! In truth, it was just too windy for my limited experience and modest skills. But nonetheless, with encouragement from Martin, I took the helm. The following 45 minutes were more a matter of survival rather than refining sailing skills. The Bosun was a real handful for me in the conditions. Strangely, given that it's mainly fibreglass, it had a magnetic attraction to moored boats! The most notable occasion saw us run down the side of a 35' yacht, catching our mainsheet on the handrail. Now I know what the rubber trousers are for! We later realised that the centreboard probably wasn't down.....oops!

Martin very wisely took the helm from then on and I spent the rest of the day performing the role I'm best qualified for – ballast! Following lunch afloat, we set course for Dell Quay. An easy run ended with the mainsheet block parting just at the critical moment approaching the pontoon. Thank goodness for the safety boat!

It has to be said that stepping off the boat at Dell Quay, I was absolutely shattered, both mentally and physically. I would like to think this was the cause of me slipping base over apex on the pontoon ramp. At least my embarrassment was soon eclipsed by the guys who capsized 20 feet from the pontoon, in front of the gathered WWSC crew....not once, but twice!

With a quick repair to our main block, we set off back to Cobnor. This leg was relatively relaxed and I had opportunity to see just how beautiful this part of the world



↑ Tea Break

really is and what better way to see it than from the water.

Back at the centre, a first-class dinner was followed by the obligatory 'who's coming to the pub?' Sorry not this time.....I was in bed by 9:30, and asleep 2 minutes later.

The weather for Sunday promised little better than Saturday. Possibly some rain, but definitely a breeze. After my baptism yesterday, I didn't want to send today's companions Bridget and Richard in for a swim. So I contented myself with the ballast role.

It was a taxing but thoroughly exhilarating run in a stiff breeze to our morning tea and cake stop. On the way we passed through a race of the most beautiful sailing craft (I think they were called x-boats). What particularly struck me was how calm and collected the crew were; a far cry from my own near-death frenzy of the previous day. It did no harm having three pairs of eyes in the boat as we threaded our way carefully when they gathered for the race-start.

Whilst sitting on the beach in the very welcome sunshine, we had a great vantage point to watch the various sailing races going on in front of us, as well as seeing two of the Bosuns drift off without any crew! With the errant boats recovered, we set off again, this time heading for Thorney Island Sailing Club, which was quickly reached. It was on the return journey, where we found out just how far a Bosun will go over, without actually capsizing...phew, that was a close call!

Not long after, we were back at the centre packing the boats away. Lunch followed, together with packing of gear and a clean round the Centre, possibly less important this year I as think the builders were to come in after us. The Centre is having a bit of face-lift ready for next season.

I left Cobnor having had a brilliant weekend. In truth and as a novice sailor, the weather conditions were too much for me. But this didn't detract from what was a great experience, in a beautiful part of the country. Everyone made me welcome and my lack of skill was met only with patience and words of wisdom. Thank you to everyone who made the weekend possible. When can I put my name down for the next one?

*I asked Ian if he was enjoying himself at the lunch stop on the first day up near Chichester Marina. "It's rather like the pleasure of sticking a needle in your eye" was the reply. Oh well; Newton did that just to find out what it was like and look what he discovered!*

*But more seriously, Ian has been bitten by the sailing bug and wants to do more. To consolidate his experience he would like to crew so if you are looking for a crew get in touch with Ian. Contact details are: [ian.brooker5@hotmail.com](mailto:ian.brooker5@hotmail.com) phone no. 0777 3172983*

Ed ▲

## **Why I think the Adult Cobnor weekend is a must for Weir Wood members.**

**Andy Genders tells us why he is hooked.**

Andy Genders

If I was asked for an elevator pitch promoting Cobnor I would say 'A fantastic value for money weekend socialising with great people and some of the best sailing you just cannot experience at Weir Wood. You should really give it a go'

This was my second visit to Adult Cobnor Weekend and I will be going back if not for the sailing, certainly for the great social atmosphere. The sailing is challenging and I learnt so much that I am sure will help me move from the back of the racing fleet at Weir Wood. So watch out, I might even get to finish a race. Those at the back have been warned.

Describing the Cobnor weekend is not easy as it offers everybody that attends individual experiences and we all get

something different back. As a venue we would all agree the sailing can't get any better. The setting is dreamy and several times over the weekend you hear 'it would be great to have the view and location everyday'. The company is always cheerful, the food plentiful, the cakes greatly appreciated and hugely calorific. So if you are reading this and wondering why you should sign up then this is what happens over the weekend.

The Friday evening start is a great excuse to get away from work early and make the trip to the centre. I always have a feeling of great excitement travelling down wondering what events and experiences I am going to have. It is like being a kid and going to camp. Arrive at Cobnor in the dark so the expectation for Saturday is

Andy Genders



heightened. We gather for a quick overview of the weekend from Tony and Allan, general 5 minutes chit chat, and the shout out for 'who's coming to the pub?'. Remember you don't need any baby sitters or worry about what your teenage kids are up to. This is an adult weekend. Slight dilemma on Friday night: do you go and have just one too many pints and really start to relax, or think about the affect of the beer on your head and stomach on Saturday whilst sailing? What the hell, let's have another one and talk about our sailing stories and expectations. Closing time is called and some retire to the bunk house whilst the a few stand up for a crafty night cap (well done Tony!).

Let's just break to mention the 'bunk house' If you are expecting 5 star luxury its not. You have a bed, a basin and a light in each room, sharing with up to 3 others (remember its an activity centre and not the Ritz). But then when you are so knackered after a hard day's sailing you just want warmth and somewhere to sleep, and that's what you get. They are modernising the Centre considerably over the winter months so next year maybe even better. Yes it's basic, but warm and dry. If only they could improve the sound proofing (Martin, you snore too much. I thought I was bad at times, but this was enough to shake the foundations.)

So back to what actually happens. Everybody mucks in over the weekend; duties are assigned, mainly cooking under the watchful eye of the chief chef. (Gill's food is terrific). If you get the morning shift, a 7.30am call for breakfast at 8am, then you're unlucky, and if you get the evening shift then you're also unlucky as you are so tired after a day on the water your just want to sit down and relax. Neither is better, its just part of the weekend and everybody helps so it is not an onerous task.

Saturday morning begins with a hearty breakfast at 8am sharp, then everybody is raring to go sailing. After breakfast is packed away and the flasks filled, cakes and rolls packed, briefing is at 10am, plan for the day discussed, boats and crews assigned and on the water by 10.30am at the latest. Just a word about the boats; these are not, how shall I say, the fastest, sleekest, lightest boats in the world. They are Bosuns. This year we were 2 in a boat on Saturday and 3 in a boat on Sunday (means you need to practise tacking with 3 in the boat and moving 3 adults around from side to side takes some co-ordination).

So boats rigged, (with an interesting reefing mechanism!) and down on the beach for the big off. Tony always says that there is no competition or racing, the weekend is not about that, but we know all the helms are thinking how much faster they are going to be than everybody else. And we're off. This weekend the wind was up and we head initially for East Head, not that far away but excellent tacking practise. With a head wind, incoming tide and swell it is great sailing (I would seriously recommend a dry suit for the weekend. It is October after all and you need to keep warm). So come midday we reach East Head without any dramas on the way.

Tony shoots away in the rib to see if we can make Hayling Island, but comes back saying the weather is too heavy for us. We all grumble but soon the conversation on shore is about the morning's hard sailing, individual stories and lots of hot drink and cake. Heaven does not get much better than this. But it does as the afternoon results in a downwind run up the estuary past Itchener on towards Chichester Marina and if lucky up to Dell Quay. The routes planned are very weather dependant so no two days are totally the same. With a swell and heavy boat, balance becomes an art form and we all shoot off leaving Allan in the support boat (known as the Chugger) way behind us. Do we continue on or wait, as we are all supposed to stay together? We decide to harden up, come up on the wind and wait. Ultimately we all end up in close proximity of the other boats. Its great experience and something you will not get at Weir Wood. Sailing continues, changing helms and crew in each boat so those that want to get a go at helming and those that don't can carry on doing what they feel comfortable with. We tie up outside Chichester harbour for lunch, and recover some much needed energy and then set off back towards the Centre threading our way through a large number of very expensive boats tied up in the estuary. At about 4.30 we come back to the centre, where everybody helps pack the boats away and then for those on dinner duty get in first to get showered and changed.. Some of us (well one) goes for quite nap (lightweight) and the rest change and gather in and around the kitchen to enjoy some good banter. The atmosphere is one of adults being as excited as children are at Christmas. Dinner is a round table affair, all sitting down together to eat a hearty meal, the decks are cleared away and by 8.30pm the call out for a walk to pub. Some don't, some do. This year I was so tired I did not, but from experience the walk to the pub is about 30 minutes and you don't come back until after closing time when the walk back is about 45 minutes as the legs are tired and it's very dark.

The clocks change and we all get an extra welcomed hour in bed, and again a hot breakfast served at 8am. Yes it's early for a Sunday, but I know what is coming for the day so don't mind. There are certainly a number of fuzzy heads at the breakfast table, but lots of coffee, sausages, beans, eggy bread and everybody is ready to go.

The Sunday briefing (as Saturday does) covers weather expectations, planned route, times, tides and crew swaps. Sunday was 3 to a boat, more challenging, as we are all adults and the boats whilst they can accommodate 6 children easily, struggle with 3 larger proportioned individuals (we know who we are!). Again boats rigged and out on the water by 9.30. As the wind had shifted again overnight and picked up to a steady F5 gusting F7 we decide to make for East Head then Thorny Island Sailing Club and then back to Cobnor. That takes several hours, and my experience this time is helming up to East Head in what I would say is the heaviest swell and wind I have sailed in. We manage to fill the boat about 5 inches of water (no self

bailer; Note to self – remember to take a bailer next time). Again a cake and hot drink break, and this year it helps to ensure the anchor is actually in the sand properly as Martin ends up swimming out to his boat as it drifted off the beach as the tide was rising. We all set off towards Thorny Island on a reach making sure we stick to the channel markers (several boats over the two days run aground) and then we turn round and head back towards Cobnor. On the downwind run to this year we chickened out of the gybe as most of the other boats did, but we did see a spectacular broach caused by tacking on top of wave and being gusted just at the wrong time, the boat recovers well, hoots and screams of laughter are heard and the boat is on its way again. The wind has really been full on today and we are all glad to get on shore and recover. The boats are tucked away for the next group to use and we retire to the centre

to change and get ready for lunch. Lunch again is a hearty feast and with full tummies we start to clean the centre. Once completed we all convene to have a closing debrief with Tony and then is homes for a well earned rest

So why should you go? It's great fun, it's safely managed, it's great value for money, it's an experience you won't get on inland water and it's a great social event for club members. So I encourage you to give it serious consideration and drop Tony a note booking a place on next years Adult Cobnor Weekend.

*The Ed had the pleasure of sharing the boat with Andy on the Sunday; just the two of us, and I have to thank him for his 6 foot 7 inches and ?? kilos of ballast which a light weight like me needs in those conditions.*

Ed ▲

## RS100 – The ideal single hander for WWSC?

Colin Hatton

I have been looking for a singlehander that will be competitive against the assymmetric RS400/200 and Laser 2000 and give a challenging sail. My RS600 was a brilliant missile, I loved the boat it was always an intense sail. But it is time for a change, and then came along the RS100 now finalised after a very public development by LDC (Mine arrives in a couple of months). The development process was followed online all over the world. Many sailors were given the opportunity to test prototype boats then give their detailed feedback on all key design elements of the boat, this has helped to define where the performance and handling were pitched, and the myriad of options surrounding all significant features of a modern sailboat. Over one hundred and twenty RS100s had been ordered around the world before production started – probably the highest ever pre-sales in the history of racing sailboat launches – and a likely indication of the success in store for this class.

The epoxy GRP composite sandwich hull is easily driven with a reasonably fine bow and sufficient waterline width further aft to give the stability desired. Flared topsides give reserve buoyancy

as the boat heels, and the moulded in wings add to this. Spray rails on the chines give excellent water release and also a drier ride.

The rotating carbon fibre mast is in two main parts for easy transport on a car roof or in a 20' shipping container. In addition a removable bottom stump adjusts the mast length for the 8.4 or 10.2 sqm sails.

Shrouds, but no forestay, means the rig can work automatically upwind. The shrouds stop the rig bending forwards under spinnaker loads downwind – this is important to keep the bow up and reduce nose diving without the need for a heavy super stiff mast. The RS100 has two mainsail size options, either 8.4 or 10.2 sqm. The 12.5sqm asymmetric spinnaker has a big chute beneath the foredeck for quick hoists and drops. The lack of a forestay and the mast reasonably well aft, mean that the spinnaker has a huge amount of space to blow through and should make for quick gybing.

The specs. Length 4300mm, Beam 1830mm, Sailing weight 80kg, Mainsail areas 8.4m<sup>2</sup>, 10.2m<sup>2</sup> Radial Mylar cut with Dacron luff panel, Asymmetric spinnaker area 12.5m<sup>2</sup>, Twin patch



← The RS 100

downhaul system, Hull construction epoxy GRP foam sandwich, Foils pivoting centreboard and rudder epoxy foam sandwich, Mast rotating carbon composite – 2 part + removable bottom stump, Boom carbon composite, Twin tube compression strut vang, Bowsprit carbon reinforced GRP composite, Hull designer Paul Handley.

I believe this looks like it is going to be a brilliant boat for Wier Wood as it will be quick on a single sail reach, always interesting on a run and with those built in wings as comfortable as a non trapeze boat gets upwind..... Would love some competition!



← The RS 100

## Beneath the keel

Michael Evans, our head lease holder and World Class Fly Fisherman, explains the lure of fishing.

Michael Evans

John Chisnall wrote to me some time ago suggesting that WWSC members might be interested in hearing about what we fishermen get up to at Weir Wood, when we are not getting in the way of the sailing of course!

Apart from the more general stuff such as what types of fish live in the lake and what sort of fishing we do, he also asked, and I quote "What the appeal of the sport is compared with the kind of frantic goings on that excite most dinghy sailors."

And I did chuckle I have to say. I chuckled because of the delightful human trait that makes us all as diverse as the fish we pursue. My sudden urge was to square up and say "How can you possibly even suggest that bobbing up and down a bit of water in an oversized bath tub could be regarded as exciting compared to say the surge of a 4ft Pike on the end of the line?" Oh and yes, there are Pike of this size in Weir Wood.

But of course that is exactly why he wrote it. John is really a natural born fisherman. He merely baited his hook with words and I took the bait...

"Well, didn't you John? And aren't you just loving that feeling, the satisfaction that you hooked the fish you were after?"

That is the sort of feeling that generates a smile like this from father or son, and especially after catching your first ever carp.

That is what fishing is all about. I suspect it is not all that different to what excites you guys about sailing. It is a challenge. Pitting your knowledge, skill, training and experience against nature. In the case of sailing, I presume primarily the wind? Sorry I am not a sailor; you can probably tell.

In the case of the fisher, the challenge is of course the fish: oh and the wind, the rain (or lack of it) the cold, the heat, the depth (or lack of it!), the water clarity and

not forgetting the wife or mother that wants to know why you are always out so late.

To be a good fisher you must first become a true countryman (or woman) and learn about the quarry. Study its lifestyle, where it lives where it breeds, where it feeds, what it eats. Then you must learn the skills required to present your bait, be it natural or artificial; what sort of rod and line you need; what sort of hook; how to tie the required knots (similarities here) and how to cast – a skill in itself, sometimes enjoyed and practiced by people who don't even fish.

All this then comes together when, sometimes after agonising disappointments or a long wait, the line trembles or the float dips. Your heart stops for a moment... then leaps into the back of your throat as the line hisses out through the rings. You lift, the rod bucks... He's on!

And then the additional bonus. What is it?

In Weir Wood it could be nothing more than a little Roach or Perch, such as the one here my son Rory, then aged 5 fishing at Weir Wood back in 2003, proudly shows an admirer but such delights will keep many a youngster away from a computer game. Then again it could be a Bream the size of a dinner plate or a big fat wily Carp that knows

every trick an angler can conjure up. Oh and believe me, some Carp fishermen spend more time in the kitchen cooking up special Carp baits than they do cooking for themselves.

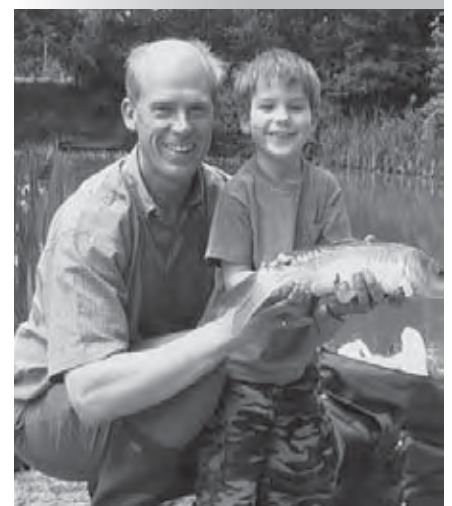
Different species are fished for at different times of the year at Weir Wood and in winter the quarry for the coarse fishermen might well be that cunning Barracuda of English freshwaters, *Esox Lucius*, the Pike.

I spent much of my childhood pursuing that most elusive hunter with such diverse baits as a drilled spoon from the kitchen drawer with the handle cut off and even a toy mouse. Another trick learned was to use my bicycle pump (I



← Rory at Weir Wood

← Rory's first Carp



often took the train and then cycled to the lakes) to squirt water over the surface to fool old Esox into thinking shoals of small fish were being attacked, and bring him out of his lair.

"Isn't it boring?" I hear some ask. No not at all. Because even the Coarse fisher sitting at his peg waiting for a bite alarm to go off has plenty to enjoy. A great crested Grebe bobbing on the water with her chicks on her back, a moorhen and coot squabbling in the margins, a turquoise flash as a kingfisher whirrs past, and yes even a yacht struggling to stay upright in a contrary wind!

For the fly fisher – we hope to re-introduce fly-fishing for trout as well at the reservoir this season. The required casting skills alone give cause for hours of learning, practice and concentration. Then there is the study of the terrestrial and aquatic insects that the trout feed on. The skill of learning to tie a mixture of fur feather and silk into an artificial representation, and finally the thrill of what you hope will be supper, cart-wheeling through the air in a series of spectacular leaps as it tries to spit out your hook.

But in truth, all that excitement is really only the icing on the cake for most fishermen, just as the "frantic goings on" will be for all you members of WWSC. The real joy is just being outside in the fresh air, able to enjoy this wonderful place, in the heart of the most beautiful countryside in the world. Do we really need much more of an excuse at all?

On behalf of Weald Water Enterprises Ltd, I would finally like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy new year and a successful season on the water.

*Thanks very much Michael. I am sure readers will now better understand what drives you all. I must say I hadn't consciously "baited the hook". It was rather just the natural deviousness of a magazine editor; but maybe that's the same thing!*

Ed ▲

## 2010 Sunday Youth Sailing

Are You between  
12 years and 16 years old  
and want to learn to sail  
Gain an RYA Sailing Award  
Have fun  
Then we have the thing for you.



Space is limited so if you want to join in contact:

**Allan Jones 01883 346188 or  
allan.sailing@btinternet.com**

## Dates at a Glance

### Sailing Events

20th March	<i>Oppy Club starts</i>
20th March	<i>Youth racing Starts</i>
28th March	<i>Club Championships</i>
11th April	<i>Youth Sunday Sailing Starts</i>
21st May-23rd May	<i>Oppy Cobnor</i>
3rd and 4th July	<i>Laser 2000 Millennium Series Open</i>
18th July	<i>Enterprise South East Area Championship</i>

### Social Events

**All in the Club House with 7.30pm start for food.:**

17th February	<i>Family Social Evening Round the World Quiz</i>
30th March	<i>John Emmett tells you how to be your own sailing coach</i>
20th April	<i>Food Extravaganza</i>

**Write them in your diaries NOW**

# The Chance of a Lifetime; My visit to China

Flo Childs describes her visit to China last year.

Flo Childs

When asked about my World Challenge Expedition to China, I've only ever been able to manage a small number of words: "Fantastic, Amazing, Incredible." To the disappointment of most, my experiences cannot be summed up in a few short phrases; in fact I don't think I will ever be able to cover all the details of my five week journey last summer. It is only now, that I'm able to write it all down, and hopefully come up with a reasonable excuse for missing the infamous antics of Oppy Camp that has entertained me for years.

Eighteen months of fundraising passed in a strange, chaotic blur. Juggling my part time job with school fundraisers proved taxing when it came to AS Level revision, so naturally I was very relieved when the team and I boarded the twenty two hour flight to Hong Kong. Our first bus journey showed each and every one of us the sporadic variation in culture and the huge industrial power China has to offer. Three days in 38 degree temperatures were filled with tram rides, unidentified meals and poor attempts at speaking Cantonese. One highlight in particular was a visit to Victoria Peak, situated high above the towering city. Not only did we see the breathtaking landscape and the on-going construction

work, we were unfortunate enough to experience the worst rainstorm of the season. I fully understood the meaning of 'Soaked to the skin.'

Relieved to be leaving the humidity behind, we moved northwards to the small town of Yangshou to begin the first of many exciting activities. Bamboo rafting and caving are a few memories that I will never forget, jumping into mud baths and hot springs after swimming in the Li River really was the perfect end to the perfect week.

It was always tricky to transport sixteen people from city to city, so when we arrived at Guangzhou station we were very surprised to find our first class sleeper train booked and paid for by World Challenge. It had seemed easy up until this moment, and it was lying in our bunks that we all realised the 'World Challenge' was about to begin.

In the preparation stages we had chosen to complete two 'trekking phrases', the first of which took us to the summit of Mount Emei Shan, a popular Buddhist pilgrimage route. Two days of solid staircases had seemed simple sitting in our comfortable English classroom, but in reality it was the one of the toughest things I've had to do. We reached the



← For who the bell tolls

half way stage at dusk on the second day, and collapsed into a monastery overflowing with Chinese priests and foreign backpackers, unaware that we had to vacate our rooms by 4am. Being woken up in the dark by an angry Chinese monk was something I was keen to forget, despite the spectacular sunrise. Reaching the 'Golden Buddha' on day four was a welcome, welcome relief and this was the moment we really became a 'team'. A slight accommodation hiccup forced us to sleep in a restaurant half way down the mountain. Regardless of the cramped conditions we were all glad to have completed the trek together.

Our charity project took us to the Tibetan village of Tagong, which was a real culture shock to us all. Working in an all boys orphanage emphasised the rural poverty that is often forgotten in these developing nations and the gratitude we received for our work around the village, teaching, and building and cleaning, only added to the humbling experience. In all honesty, I was reluctant to leave behind the simple lifestyle and friendly faces, as it had given me an insight into the true Chinese society. Our final meal was held at the local café, where we ignored warnings and tucked into hot chocolate, yak stews and fruit salads.

It was the following morning, about to begin the trek to the summit of Mount Jola – (6200m) that a few people suffered from food poisoning. Slowly, it made its way around the group and on day three, along with the altitude sickness, it found me. Progress was sluggish to say the least. On countless occasions one or other of us had to stop and sleep for

↑ Flo and her adopted family



lack of energy. The five day trek turned into a seven day struggle and as team members were forced to return to base camp, it made me more determined to reach the top.

The views from the summit were astonishing, and I was very grateful to be there. We returned to Kangding, to regroup and *almost* enjoyed a Chinese hotpot of Brain, Tongue, Intestines and chicken feet. Mmmmmm...

Our final days were spent exploring Xi'an and Beijing. The hidden markets provided opportunity for tacky souvenirs and numerous bottles of rice wine and The Terracotta Warriors and Forbidden City were nearly forgotten after the excitement of The Great Wall, which acted as a tremendous climax to our expedition.

Five weeks in an incredible country undoubtedly increased my desire to travel. I am however, most thankful for the firm friendships I made in that short month. Without them my experiences would have been quite different.



← Striding out in China

*For those of you who don't know Flo she has been a member of WWSC for many years, growing up through Oppy Club and then going on to be a key AI and essential helper at Oppy Camp. In fact I think this year was the first time Flo hadn't been there either as a an Oppy Sailor or helper.*

Ed ▲

## Annual General Meeting

Ed

The Club held its AGM on Sunday 5th December and about 40 members attended. The full minutes, including main reports, can be read in the folder adjacent the bar. The main points arising summarized here:

New Committee Members are:

Commodore – Simon Davis  
Secretary – Geoffrey Bush  
Sailing Secretary – David Giles  
See elsewhere for profiles of the new committee members.

Other Committee members remain as before and are:

Vice Commodore – Chris Fyans  
Membership Secretary – Lynn Sandhu  
Duty Coordinator – Dick Lankester  
Magazine – John Chisnall  
Marketing – David Whensley  
House and Grounds – Stephen Carr

Other key posts remain:

President – Gerald Pendry  
Training Committee Chairman – Peter Hargreaves  
Social Secretary – Jean Chisnall  
Youth – Allan Jones  
Boat Parking Marshal – Chris Moir  
Bosun – John Gibbs

The new subscription rates were agreed

as current rates plus an increase of 10% across all memberships.

Tony Carter, the retiring Commodore, was thanked by Chris Wilson on behalf of all members for all the excellent work he has done. Tony was presented with a picture of his boat, Salamander.

John Norris, who had been club secretary for more than 10 years, was thanked for everything he had done in keeping the Club running smoothly from an admin point of view, mostly behind the scenes. He was presented with a fleecy hat with the Club logos on each.



← John Norris sporting his new gear

Ken Stone retired after many years of maintaining the power boat fleet and helping with the power boat courses. Peter Hargreaves thanked him on behalf of the Club and Ken was presented with a picture of a general view of the lake featuring himself at the controls of a power boat. ▲

← Thanks to Ken Stone



# What are you doing this weekend?

## Power Boat instruction in extremis

Glynis Hargreaves

Late on Friday the conversation in the office usually turns to what everyone has planned for the weekend. Whilst doing powerboat assessments in winds up to 70mph rated on the 'you must be crazy' scale this week it was definitely surpassed by my doggy obsessed colleagues who were sticking pictures of Scooby Doo onto a card so the office collection could be converted into what has to be the world's oddest wedding present – sponsorship of a sick Great Dane! Anyway, I did my Level 2 Powerboat assessment in Chichester Harbour in a gale, so I didn't think my plans rated crazy, merely challenging.

On the way home the storm warnings on the radio were telling people not even to go out shopping. Pete arrived home and assured me that it would be really good fun and that anyway the worst would have blown through before we started at 10am. Still not crazy then!

The forecast the following morning was for gusts up to 55mph with the worst weather at about 2pm. When we got to Weir Wood, because of the wind direction there was a relatively calm area from Oppy Bay to the plug hole so we were able to go ahead with no major problems.

Our 6 intrepid Oppy parents launched an Avon and brought in the 3 big ribs ready to do their assessment. One had been moored with the Committee Boat and the other 2 were downwind on the orange mooring. Our plan, to do all the test manoeuvres and then practice some towing, was looking good.

The first sign of trouble was when someone spotted the Water Authority dory down near the safety boat garages. Pete made an initial inspection and decided it had stopped moving and the buoy had probably reattached itself to the bottom, but

he was soon proved wrong as it progressed further towards the dam. He and Richard set off to recover it and towed it back to Oppy Bay.

Shortly afterwards, while Pete and I were out in an Avon watching the person overboard recoveries, the engine cut out. Despite reattaching the fuel pipe, it wouldn't restart, so we anchored to stop our rapid progress towards the dam. Fortunately, on about his 20th attempt and before we had to be rescued Pete managed to restart the engine. It was about then that he mentioned that it would be a good idea to anchor the Committee Boat as it did not look too secure, but then he got distracted and didn't actually do it.

Once everyone had completed their manoeuvres, we decided to call it a day and Pete went off to do all the books and certificates. His parting words were you'll be fine getting the boats away won't you and by the way I suggest you put all 3 big ribs on the orange buoy rather than risking the Committee Boat mooring. We had been slightly delayed when the OOD decided to close the water so we didn't quite make it off before the really big squall came through. At the height of the squall our Oppy parents proved that an Avon will still float and manoeuvre with 6 adults in it and that having off loaded 4 people that it is possible to get back to the slipway and recover a powerboat even in a gale.

Unfortunately, having got that far, we then realised that the 3 big ribs were towing their mooring buoy towards us. Had this been a beginner's course, I would have had to re-launch the Avon, take someone with me and tow the 3 ribs back to Oppy Bay one at a time, but my luck was in; with competent helms working together it was much more straightforward. Richard, Mark, Carolyn and Mike set off in the Avon,

which luckily still contained all the petrol tanks, kill cords and keys and they were able to drive the boats back up to the shallower moorings in Oppy Bay or at least that was the plan.

I was standing on the slipway watching them in action, when John who was standing next to me suddenly ran off in the direction of the pontoon. He had seen the Committee Boat mooring line break and it was now making quite rapid progress towards the dam. One of the ribs then detoured to pick John up and the 5 of them then worked together to tow the Committee Boat back to its mooring and anchor it, before putting all the ribs away for the second time.

A big thank you to all of them for a superb display of communication and powerboat driving and for making my day much easier. Needless to say, Pete turned up again when it was all over to ask what had taken so long!

### Lessons learned

- ▶ If you decide a boat needs anchoring do it straight away before you forget
- ▶ Don't believe anyone who says a mooring buoy will hold 3 ribs in a gale
- ▶ Radio communication would have helped – note for my Christmas list
- ▶ Next time I'll volunteer to do the paperwork! ▲

# Celebrating Burn's Night

Saturday 13th February 2010

Sackville School, East Grinstead at 7:30pm

Live Band "Doctors Orders" ( Formerly PUGWASH )

Fantastic Caller ■ Three Course Meal ■ Whisky and Dancing.

BlackTie £25

**Please Call Julia Childs: 07765856610 or 01342 317077**

## **Outgoing Commodore, Tony Carter, reflects on his time in office.**

It has given me great pleasure to serve as your commodore for the last 3½ years. Like any job of that kind it has its ups and downs but there were more ups. These include being able to celebrate the club's 40th Birthday with the Big40 regatta, being chosen as an RYA Club of the Year finalist in 2008 and to see our members achieve many successes, at home and on the open circuit.

For any club to be successful people need to hear about it and most of all feel welcome when they visit. But first they need to know of our existence. In 2007 I made a conscious decision to make Weir Wood the premier sailing club in the south east and set about what I felt needed to be done to achieve this. First we required a portal to make people aware of our existence. The one thing members had been asking for many years was a weather station. This request goes back to the 80's and 90's but the technology did not exist at that time to make the project viable. Thankfully we now live in a wireless age which made a weather station a possibility. We also added a webcam to this for a modest cost. All that now remained was a means to exploit these resources and make them available to our members and beyond, hence the re-launch of the club website on January 1st 2008. This in itself proved a little trickier than

Tony Carter

I first thought. I approached several web design companies to establish what they could do for us. Once I have picked myself off the floor (the cheapest quote was around £5,000 plus) I decided to do it myself. So I set about learning how to build websites (after all how difficult could it be? I did the same sort of thing in 1999 when we needed a new membership database). Some 200 hours and many sleepless nights later we have our website. This now gave us an up to date platform not only to keep our members informed but also promote Weir Wood SC. Of course it is not only a website that makes people want to join Weir Wood, it's the reputation we have earned as being a friendly family club and that is due to you our members.

In the middle of all this we had the opportunity of acquiring the head lease for the reservoir covering the land the club occupies. After many meetings with banks, surveyors and legal eagles, sadly our bid was rejected by Southern Water.

With that out of the way I set my eyes on enhancing our facilities. I announced a 3 to 5 year refurbishment plan for Weir Wood. We started with improvements to the changing rooms, adding proper furniture on the balcony and additional outside tables. This was followed with more storage at the race control, relocating the hire fleet in a



← Tony receives his picture

more convenient place and latterly 4 Laser 1's with various rigs to help our youth to move out of Optimists and Toppers. The plan is still there and I hope will continue.

I could not have achieved half I did without the support of my fellow committee members who have shown a dedication to the club for many years. I will not embarrass them by naming them but they and you know who they are.

Simon Davis is now your new commodore and like me I know he wants to see Weir Wood continue to grow. I know he has many plans and I hope I have left a good foundation for him to build on. The one thing I do know is I have left you in good hands, and I know you will give him the support you gave me.

*We are pleased to say that Tony isn't going to just disappear into the L2K fleet. He is carrying on with his training role, will be getting more involved with the youth development and continues to act as web master.*

Ed ▲

# Youf

## "YOUF" NEWS

Ed

The Youfs have had a busy summer with two trips to Cobnor; a week's Youf Camp in August and Youf Cobnor weekend in October. The August week had mixed weather with a couple of hot days and some very windy ones. Lexi will tell you more about the antics they all got up to including sailing round Hayling Island, raft building and busting Fevas I'm told. Youf Cobnor weekend was warmer than usual as it had been brought forward a few weeks and winds were light. Katie, Fiona, Elizabeth and Oliver give us their impressions. During the Cobnor weekend a number of the kids did their RYA Seamanship which included tides, weather, reefing, sailing backwards and rudderless sailing. Congratulations to Tamsin, Katie, Evi and Fiona who all passed and thanks also to Tim and Heather for instructing.

On another note we have to say "Au Revoir" and "Bon Voyage" to two of our stalwarts. It only seems like yesterday they were in Oppy Club, then AI's and now they are leaving the nest! But not for ever we hope. Good luck to Amy Hulley and Helena Grieg who are off on their travels in the New Year. Amy is going to New Zealand for several months and Helena to Thailand. Then they both meet up for fun traveling up the East Coast of Australia. Amy will then be spending the summer with Neilsons on the Island of Lesbos and Helena hopes to be spending the summer with Minorca Sailing. Have a great time both of you and we hope to see you later in 2010.

*Incidentally, getting articles out of our Youfs is an Editor's nightmare. Whilst assembling the magazine I only had two submissions and then just as I was putting it all on disk to go to print the rest turned up. Is this how they deal with their homework? Heaven help their teachers ▲*

## News From Lexi

Lexi Nicholas

As you may have heard, WEEK LONG SUMMER COBNOR IS BACK!! It goes without saying that we owe special thanks to Alan, Tony, Sue, Chris, and everyone that helped organise it and made it possible. For us instructors it was a great reunion as all those who'd gone to Uni were back for this week in summer to help out. During the week we had all kinds of weather as you could imagine, from force 10 winds to flat calm paddling conditions!

Typically, the windless day was reserved for the return of the truly epic 'Round Hayling Island' day sail! We set out early in the morning, destined not to return until late in the evening. Needless to say as we set off we were all very excited! We sailed down to East Head, a familiar short sail, but rather than playing on the beach, we took a right and headed for Emsworth. The tide was hard against us at this point so we were all trying to sail as shallow as possible. However, some of us instructors took it a bit too far and might have grounded on the sand. But that didn't matter, because we were too focused on the next obstacle; the infamous Hayling Island Bridge. To navigate Hayling Island Bridge sailors are required and expected to capsize their boat (making sure Haribo is somewhere safe), get out into the mud, and push their capsized boat under the bridge. Why couldn't they make the bridge Bosun sized!?! Nevertheless everyone dutifully complied, and as

a special treat, we instructors stayed in the water and mud and helped the others through. Soon we were all through the bridge and it was time to continue our voyage.

Our next stop was on the west coast of Hayling Island, just before Langstone ends and the open sea begins. We had some Mars Bars and played some football to get ready for the longest leg across the bottom of the island, against the wind, and the tide, and the waves! Many long hours later we all made it to the mouth of Chichester harbour, with the sun setting and the wind dying. At this point we met a man in a small yacht, in a similar situation to us. He sympathised for a while, then put his engine on and jetted off home! Eventually we all arrived back at Cobnor, knackered but thrilled that we'd conquered Hayling Island.

Along with the return of the 'Round Hayling Day Sail', there was a new event that proved extremely popular with all; raft building. This saw several teams competing to create the best raft to cross Bosham channel and come back. Naturally, the instructor raft was the best, dressed with a jolly roger, a plank and the compulsory bandanas! However our ship was commandeered and destroyed by everyone else who were clearly jealous of our vessel! The raft building went down a storm and we all hope that it, along with the rest of the week, will be back next year.



## **Fiona Harrington's Youth Cobnor**

Fiona Harrington

Well here comes Cobnor again, and this year was no different than the normal fun and frolics that kicks off in the small cabins and wooden walls of Cobnor that we can call 'home' for a weekend.

On the first night we went for the usual walk to the point, Katie and I still getting freaked out by the 'crocodiles', but had great fun and when we got back went to sleep.

The next morning, we had a great breakfast cooked by Sue and the gang and, at the briefing, we had the delight of finding out who we were with that day. Oh God, I was with Tim! Once we headed off we were shortly greeted with Katie being ill with the result that I was stuck with Tim on my own. We soon decided to rudderless sail, as I was doing my seamanship qualification and we had become professionals when we had reached Hailing Island. We then had the long trudge up to the toilets but when we came back, had a lovely lunch and an exciting time annoying a seagull. Blame Jack!

After lunch, we headed off again. We had all decided to do a bit of rudderless sailing (obviously Tim and I still being the champions) when this 'older' male sailor insulted us, big time!

"Do you even know how to sail?" Unfortunately, we didn't really understand what he meant, but if we had been quicker to react, our answer would have been

"Yes actually, we are sailing rudderless, in a Bosun and keeping up with you, mate."

In the evening, we played some games, including the classic: 'Honey If You Love Me'. That always causes a few laughs, the Key game and the Balancing Game. Off to 'bed' we went and I have realised that eating a brownie in the kitchen at 2 o'clock in the morning can definitely have its upsides!

Tired in the morning, but still not tired of the joy that Cobnor does bring to us all. A great day sailing, stopping for lunch and playing 'Tug Of War' (very fun) and '40 40 It' and then setting back off for the Big Clear-Up back on land.

Other than some manky old pants (with I think were David's if I remember rightly!), the clear-up went well and soon our parents were here to collect us.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who helped organise this amazing experience for us all. If we didn't have Cobnor, I don't know what we would do! Thanks to Sue, Emma, Gill, Mark and everyone who helped prepare our wonderful meals. Tim, Amy, Tom, Heather and Katherine etc for helping instruct us. Tony and Chris for looking after us out on the big sea. That's it. Now, have I forgotten anyone? Oh yes. ALLAN, for putting it altogether! Thank you everyone for all your support that you give to the Youth of WWSC. ▲

## **My First Cobnor**

Katie BurrIDGE

My first youth Cobnor was great; I absolutely loved it and I know that it was to be the first of many! I have to admit that I was a bit apprehensive at first because I didn't know many people. I haven't really ever been involved in Weir Wood Youth; I've been more concentrated on the Laser 2000s, but I should have known that I'd get to know people quickly as they're all so friendly. We went for a walk in the dark on Friday night - it wasn't far. The rest of the evening we played games and slept - sort of! On Saturday, we were teamed up and assigned and assigned boats. I'd never sailed a Boson before, or any other rear main boat for that matter. Fiona Harrington and I rigged our Boson the best that we could only for the other member of our crew, Tim Russell, to come and severely change/fix everything that we'd done! We set sail for Emsworth and shared the 'duties' between us. When we got there, we ate lunch - after tying the boats to the pontoons you understand. On the way from Emsworth to East Head, we tried rudderless sailing which we had to do for our seamanship skills course. It was quite alright until we had to cross a channel full of yachts and racing boats. We got into a bit of trouble when a man from one of the boats asked "Do you even know how to sail?" when we were: rudderless, on starboard and could have called windward on him too! If there's one thing I learned at Cobnor it's that the toilets are a million miles away from the Beach at East Head, especially when walking in a drysuit! On Sunday we went to East Head again and played 40/40 it in the sand dunes which was harder than it sounds. Over the weekend there was lots of fun, sleeping (Not!) and flapjack eating; homemade flapjack you must understand!! For me, the weekend was a real highlight of my 2009 sailing season and thanks to everyone who helped to organise Youth Cobnor '09. ▲

## **On Line Clothing**

Ed

A number of members have now purchased clothing from our on-line suppliers, Ravenspring. Articles have been embroidered with the Club logo and the Foye Belle crew has had their boat name added too. Everyone is delighted with the clothing both in terms of quality and especially in terms of value for money. So enthusiastic is our ex-commodore that he has taken up a new career; supermodel! Check the images on the web site for yourself.

So visit the web site and browse the catalogue and treat yourself. If the on-line service isn't your cup of tea then just phone up and place your order. You will get very good advice also from Ravenspring about how sizes from different manufacturers work out. And don't forget, the Club gets 5% of the value of all purchases made. So you are supporting the Club as well as treating yourself. ▲

## Yet another Cobnor report

Oliver Foord

Driving up the road towards the centre, I was anticipating the great time that I was about to have over the weekend. We dragged our bags along the gravel paths after a tiring day at school for most of us, we all needed to sleep that night, but unfortunately it was a late one. During the traditional first evening walk, we were all told to leave torches in our rooms and to try and use our natural night vision, when somebody lost their phone, it was lucky someone had brought a torch but it wasn't needed, the phone was luckily found under their pillow!

I rose early to the joys of doing breakfast and lunch making; this in my opinion was the worst of the duties because of the early wake up, whilst everyone else gets to lie in, and being a teenager I like my sleep. We got away after breakfast quite slowly with the majority of people still not being quite awake; it made rigging the boats quite a long procedure with no one knowing where things were kept! We sailed out with the aim of going to Hayling Island Sailing club for lunch. However the weather was on our side, so these plans quickly changed, instead we went on towards Emsworth which was back upwind. When we eventually got there we set to lunch, finding that there were only three benches, the scramble for the best seats began, ending with most of the group on the ground. The journey back was a downwind run, so most of the group decided it would be a good idea to practice some rudderless sailing, this was until we came to one of the busiest waterways in the south. Heading into a race being held by HISC, most of us decided to go straight through it which would never turn out well, nevertheless we went on, rudder or rudderless. After everyone had made it back to shore, we were exhausted and needed a great dinner, which is just what the amazing chefs had cooked up for us. After playing some games and having hot chocolate we all went to have the sleep that most of us needed.

The start of day two was quicker than day one with most people accepting that they needed to get up at some point that day, even if they were still exhausted from the previous day's sailing. The plans for today were a little vague "we shall go where the winds take us" or something to that extent. After battling with stronger winds that were this time against us, we managed to get to West Wittering beach or more commonly known as East Head where we stopped for lunch. When quite a lot of people wanted to go to the supposedly quite close toilets, it took them over half an hour to get back. Whilst the remaining people were waiting, we played a clever version of the tug of war, which involved a circular piece of rope and we were trying to get back to a buoyancy aid on the ground whilst everyone else pulled against us. Still waiting for the toilet goers we decided to dig in to lunch getting the best pick of the rolls and crisps. Finally they got back and had the remains of lunch and before we knew it we were sailing back home to pack up.

The weekend's sailing was certainly worth the exhausting days and endless nights, as well as the annoying chores we had to do before we left. I would like to thank the kitchen team for making the great meals over the weekend, also to all the helpers who came down to help out on the support boats. Finally, I would like to thank Tony and Allan for all the hard work they put into the weekend to make it enjoyable for all. I think everyone would agree that it was a great Cobnor. ▲

## Cobnor 2009

### Elizabeth Andrews enjoys her first Youth Cobnor

Elizabeth Andrews

The weekend began with everyone arriving at Cobnor activity centre at about 8 o'clock on the Friday evening. We all hung around in the sleeping area, waiting for everyone to arrive. The evening finished with games, such as 'Honey I love you' in the Jubilee Room, before a cup of hot chocolate and bed; after all, we had a whole day of sailing ahead of us!!

After an early breakfast Saturday morning, we all got changed and Allan split us up in to the groups in which we would be sailing for the day. I was with Amy and Jacob, and we had great fun, as Amy had brought plenty of sweets! Needless to say, we still welcomed the cakes we were offered during bun break! We each took a turn at helming and crewing, slowly making our way to Emsworth, where we stopped for lunch and many took pleasure in feeding the swans there. We then all swapped boats so everyone had a go at trapezing. My thanks go to Amy for showing me how to trapeze (it was my first time, and I loved every minute of it!). By the end of the afternoon, she even got me to do the YMCA whilst trapezing! Once again, after dinner we had games in the jubilee room, with everyone using David in 'Honey I love you' because he kept laughing. J Once again, we all enjoyed hot chocolate and brownies before going to bed.

Sunday morning brought a misty morning, with everyone very tired. However, we were put into groups, working with people who we were not with the day before. I was with Laura and we had an interesting morning, running aground (in style!) twice and getting very muddy in the process! However, we slowly, but surely, made our way to Fairway, where we all anchored for lunch. While half the group took a very long loo-break, the rest of us had a large tug of war, getting all the adults, including Tony and Sue, involved. On the way back,

we all started the usual songs, including 'I saw a bird' and 'Ring-a-ding-ding', singing (or rather, shouting!) across the harbour to other boats. Once reaching Cobnor, we all had to de-rig and put our boats away, before the manic rush to get the hot showers first.

As it was my first time at Cobnor and I wasn't really sure what to expect. However, I had a fantastic time. Time with the youths is always a great experience and I am all ready looking forward to next year. A massive thanks go to Allan and Tony for organising the weekend, and to Sue for feeding us so well, as usual! ▲

## **Life after Oppies – formation of a new Youth Racing Group at Weir Wood**

Chris Hopkins

For many years as a club we have fretted about what to do with children once they have outgrown Oppy club. Allan's Sunday afternoon Youth Group provides one avenue but we have a gap for young people that want to progress their racing careers.

Dave Giles our new Sailing Secretary started things moving by acquiring 4 Lasers with 4.7 rigs for the club and we then started to discuss the best ways to use them.

At the same time a group of hard core Oppy parents are faced with having a child outgrowing Oppies in the next couple of years. As one such I have been volunteered to launch a new initiative for the club to address these issues.

So the new initiative – we want to set up a group on Saturday afternoons for post Oppy children and young people to participate in racing and race coaching in a similar format to the racing group in the Oppy fleet.

### **How will it work?**

#### **Boats**

We will use the new Lasers and the other boats available to the club (including Toppers) as the basis because it fits in with the RYA Youth Programme with its established coaching structures and funding. However we do not want to limit participation to these classes. Any class will be accepted for our group and 2 man boats will be particularly welcome. Ultimately members will be expected to acquire their own boats with the club boats being prioritised for new members and sailors transitioning from other classes.

We ask that group members commit to a particular class of boat as we believe that to be a key to making serious progress in racing. We also don't want to see children switching between Oppies and Youth classes as the weather or mood takes them.

### **Abilities**

This is intended to be a serious racing group. Although we must never forget that we are doing this for fun it is not our intention to spend the afternoon fooling about on and in the water.

Our target group is young people who have several years experience and ideally some racing experience. This will hopefully cover children progressing from Oppies and those that have spent some time in the Sunday afternoon groups. We do not intend to teach children to sail as part of this group. Our adult support needs to be focussed on race coaching and not on continually recovering capsizes.

Our aim is that we can guide children towards their class schemes with a view to those that are interested applying for the respective RYA squads.

### **Why Saturday afternoons?**

OK pure selfishness. Several of the older children have younger siblings in Oppies – running alongside Oppies makes sense for us! Also many families are accustomed to leaving Saturday afternoons for sailing in Oppies and thus this slot is kept free of football, rugby, dance etc.

### **When do we start?**

We aim to run alongside Oppies whose first session is 20 March.

### **What do we need to make it happen?**

In a word people! Young people to participate and adults prepared to assist in running things. I am happy to take a lead but after many years where my Saturdays are locked into Oppy club I want to be able to take my children to open meetings and even occasionally spend some time with my wife! I plan to use the clubs expert racers and coaches as I can and, as things develop, use external coaches from time to time. I need volunteers who can assist with safety cover and with coaching. As a first step can I ask interested parties and willing volunteers to contact me (youth@wwsc.org.uk)? I will then look to arrange a meeting at which we can flesh out the details. I will use contact details to set up a mailing list to keep everyone informed.

### **The future**

Once we get the new group running we will have 3 tiers to our youth programme – Oppies, Sunday afternoon Youth Group, and the Youth Racing Group. Although working as independent groups we aim to establish a framework co-ordinate these into a unified structure. This will hopefully make a more easily understood structure for non-sailors and provide the basis for us to access support and funding from the RYA. Early days yet but watch this space.▲

# Oppy Oppy Oppy

## Optimist Report

Mark Harrington Flotilla Leader

It's been a good year for the Optimists at Weir Wood, with enthusiastic and increasingly competent children and parents getting involved in many activities at the club and beyond.

Since the last magazine we have successfully run the Open Meeting, which was held in September, where over 85 sailors took part. Although the competition from visiting clubs proved to be very strong in the light conditions, many of our sailors came into their own in the afternoon following their expertly prepared lasagna, curry or chilli. In the main fleet Emma Baker was sailing really well despite the crowded mark roundings and finished an excellent 11th in the race giving her 28th overall. Verity Hopkins won the first WWSC boat in the Main Fleet with a 21st overall. Five minutes after in the Regatta fleet the WWSC newcomers to open meetings were really coming into their own. Great concentration from George Blatchford as he sailed away from the competition to win, with time to chat! This gave George 3rd overall in his first open. Well done! His counterparts from Weir Wood were not far behind, Chris Taylor finishing a very good 7th and Cameron Harris in 9th almost neck and neck with Lewis Johnston in 10th. Overall in the Regatta Fleet WWSC got 4 boats in the top 10 including Sophie Mamalis in 9th overall - excellent! At the prize giving the youngest helm (7 yrs) went to Sophie Dorrington. For enthusiasm and determination, the Endeavour Trophy was awarded to Maddie Aloof. Well done to you both. A huge thanks to everyone involved in the day - a great team effort. We did our club proud! I am pleased to say that we have already been selected to run the Open again next year and again it will be the SE Zone selection event.

External Open Meetings we have attended include Datchet, Papercourt and Bewl, where Verity Hopkins was first overall in 30 knots with over 40 boats competing. This was the final zone selection event, unfortunately none of our children were selected this year, lets see how we get on in 2010. Most recently four of our fleet joined over 170 of the country's top Optimist sailors at the Winter Championships held at Datchet on 28 and 29 November. Day 1 saw the fleet split into 4 groups and each start combining 2 of the groups with 85 boats on the line at each of the 3 starts. With an onshore breeze up to 28 knots, short large waves made launching hugely challenging and a few chunks were taken out of the grp as a result. Once away our sailors were finding it difficult to cope in the offshore like conditions and all 4 of them took an early bath in the first race. Verity managed to finish

race 1 in a reasonable place. By race 2 Fiona Harrington and Jacob Hamilton had started to get the hang of tacking at the top of the waves and Jacob pulled out an excellent 19th place with Fiona finishing mid-fleet. Emma Baker was suffering a bit from the cold, but after a warming hot chocolate bravely went back out and completed race 3 admirably. The results from Day 1 saw Jacob and Verity in the gold fleet and ready to compete against many of the national and zone squad sailors, with Fiona and Emma in good positions in the silver fleet. Day 2 was a much lighter affair but with heavy rain even Windsor Castle almost disappeared from view. The 4 of them set off for 3 more races in 10 -12 knots. With races running back to back it meant 4 hours of continuous sailing and all of them did really well to complete the day with a number of very good mid-fleet results. It was all topped off with a gusty squall and torrential rain just after the final race with all 4 of them coming back smiling! Parent pit crews then took over with rigs away, boats on trailers, jeans ruined - all in time for the M25! Our girls and guy sailed really well throughout the regatta, with Verity finishing in 70th overall, Jacob in 85th, both in the gold fleet, Emma in 34th and Fiona 36th in the silver fleet with 50 boats behind them. Putting that in perspective, all 4 of our sailors finished amongst the children selected this year for the SE Zone squad.

OK back to what's been going on at our club. The beginner's courses are still proving to be very popular with the first course of the season already fully booked and pleased to say that from the new season Chris Hopkins will be looking after the beginners group with the club AIs.

The training sessions which have run very well this year are being increased during this season and we are fortunate to have Ben Ainsworth as our regular coach, as we aim to take the children to the next level of competition and success. The children now have the opportunity for regular racing on a Sunday morning and the Winter Draws On event saw an Optimist sailed by Fiona Harrington in the top ten and winning first lady.

The full results for the Autumn series can be seen on the website with a spectacular final race which was run in 25+knts and persistent rain. 14 boats made the start but only about half finished as the conditions made it tough for some of the less experienced sailors. With the series open for any of the top 3 to win, it was a battle between the Baker sisters and Fiona Harrington. The first start had to be abandoned as the start line made rapid progress toward the dam wall! Once underway, Jacob Hamilton hit the front and was never overtaken around the Olympic course. Well done to him. Fiona suffered a capsized before the start but managed some fast bailing to get to the line on time. Emma Baker headed up the first beat in 2nd, closely followed by Fiona. 8yr old Georgia Baker was understandably finding

the conditions challenging and didn't do enough to hold her leading position in the series. A number of spectacular capsizes wiped out half of the fleet at times but some determined sailing/bailing from Lewis Johnston and Chris Taylor gave them 5th and 6th places respectively. Sophie Mamalis didn't get to the back of the boat quickly enough to avoid a nosedive and pitchpole capsize but she battled on finishing 4th. Meanwhile the battle was still on between 2nd and 3rd. Fiona managed to get ahead of Emma on the second run only to capsize near the end to give Emma Baker 2nd place and 1st in the series with Fiona Harrington 2nd and Georgia Baker 3rd overall. Well done to all.

In addition to the racing many of the children have successfully completed their IOCA Grade awards which were awarded at the annual prize giving. These have previously been awarded only during Oppy Camp and we are aiming to include these as part of the overall development of the sailor during the year. Talking of Oppy Camp the dates have now been secured and camping facilities are currently being finalized. Dates on the website.

The oppy parent team and many others have been busy 'getting in to shape' for the coming season. A big thanks to Glynis and Peter for getting us through the powerboat course in 40+ knts. We have the first aid course and the race training course in January. It's as important for the parents to have the same commitment as the children and talking of that, thanks to the main committee for supporting the plans that we have for taking Oppy Club forward. A particular

## WWSC Oppy Open Meeting

### A note of appreciation from an impressed parent

Tim Taylor

As a Dad of a new Optimist sailor, I have to admit to a little trepidation at the thought of that number of Oppy's careering together around Weir Wood reservoir. My fears were of course unfounded and the day went like clockwork. The registration and briefing was delivered to the high standard we have all come to expect from the Oppy Parents team, and the vast armada of small boats were soon being launched, ready to take on what ever the competition or the weather would throw their way.

So off they set down the lake to the start, where they sat, for what I am sure seemed to them a life time waiting for enough wind to start the race. Eventually the wind picked up and the races started; first the main and then the regatta fleet set off around the course – all very exciting! What followed was not only a great spectacle of sailing, but also of young people making new friends and enjoying the challenge that our visiting sailors brought to the day.

My expected carnage never materialised, and we both can't wait for next year's event! 🚩

thanks to Tony for all he has done to be part of that and look forward to working with Simon in the future. Whilst on thanks, Richard Baker, John Hamilton and Richard Haw plus many other parents have worked very hard this year to give the children a wide range of safe and well supported sailing activities. A big thanks to them. They have lots of plans for this year so keeeeeeeep dancing!

Oppy Club is the starting point for many of our sailors and a strong start usually results in a strong finish, particularly with sailing. We need to ensure that the fun they have, the skills they learn and the friends they meet as a result are maintained as they develop through the club. The launch of the Youth Racing Group is an important step for the club and should ensure a seamless transition for our children.

See you on the water! 🚩

← Race relaxation



← Ready for the off



← The Fleet Downwind



*Santa arrives before lake freezes ...*

*...and just in time!*



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Editor: John Chisnall e-mail [chisnall@globalnet.co.uk](mailto:chisnall@globalnet.co.uk) or [magazineed@wwsc.org.uk](mailto:magazineed@wwsc.org.uk)

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