
SHROUD & CLEAR

THE NEWSLETTER OF TONBRIDGE TOWN SAILING CLUB :: SUMMER 2024



Tonbridge Town Sailing Club: a history

Some of you may have sat beside the lake (sorry - Haysden Water)- and pondered the question: 'how did it all begin?' President Barry Bone was asked this very question and here's what he said:

Caveat – "I am sure that there are many who have been members for longer than I have who will correct any inaccuracies in this article!"

Barry.

'As a hoarder of papers, I have been able to find several facts about our club.

'Tonbridge Town Sailing Club (TTSC) was formed in 1972 at the lake* in Lower Haysden, Tonbridge after it was formed by gravel excavations by Redland Gravel Company. I believe that the excavations were used in the construction of the A21 Tonbridge Bypass. Also, that it was two lakes which were made into one by removing a causeway which ran from our existing jetty to One Tree Island.

'The club has for many years held a lease to the water from Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council, the most recent from 2022 having 15 years to run.

'The current lake is approximately 13.79 hectares (34 acres in old money) in size. In many ways, TTSC is fortunate that there is an inlet on the far side and an outflow which allows water from the nearby Medway to create a flow of water. We are also able to control the water levels to some degree with a board in the outflow. Of course, the Environment Agency has much greater control over water levels using the Leigh Barrier.

'As we see quite often, water levels can rise quite high, mainly during the winter months, but it has been known in August. The highest levels that I can remember are to about three-quarters up the side of the containers. We always prepare during the close season to cover such eventualities.

'TTSC has always aimed to be a family club creating opportunities for both young and old to take part in RYA-accredited training courses under qualified supervision. TTSC has been an RYA training establishment for as long as I can remember, although maintaining that status is becoming harder and harder each year as more and more rules and regulations are introduced, primarily it must be said, from a health and safety perspective.

'The first document I found referred to class racing with recognised fleets being Pacers, Lasers, Toppers, and International Moths although Scorpions, Enterprises, GP14, Mirror and Miracle classes were also popular. We still see lots of Toppers, some GP14s, but more recently, Albacores, Solos and Splashes have become very popular.

'Racing has been a mainstay of the sailing at the club and races currently take place on Saturday afternoons and Sunday mornings. Season-long series have been in

place for a long time although single races such as the Easter Egg Pursuit, The Bill Mann Memorial and the Colin Welch Memorial Handicap are also enjoyed.

'The club has always had an active social scene and the social team have organised barn dances, formal dinners, walks and barbecues for many years.

'For over forty years, the club has been able to enjoy a summer camping and caravanning trip to a site near Cobnor Point close to Chichester. Many members have, over time, graduated from tents, through trailer tents to caravans. During what has now become the Cobnor fortnight, there are many social sails with one race, The Tidal Trophy being run during the week. We always have one giant barbecue during the week, as well as the occasional theatre trip and visits to the local pubs.

'The club has always been run by members for members and volunteering is a key feature. The Wednesday Club members are prime examples of how that volunteer approach has benefited TTSC.

'Thanks to Michael and Rosamund Wiles, and their photograph album, I have been able to piece together more information about the club.

'What you see now in the way of the car park, the club compound, slipway and the container-based clubhouse are the result of a lot of hard work on the part of many of the founding members of TTSC. Even I can remember having to tow my boat down every time that we wanted to sail! The compound, slipway and more importantly flush toilets are a positive luxury!

'For many years, members were able to take their boats to sea clubs such as Hampton Pier and Lancing to experience sea sailing. It is interesting that visiting other clubs increased in 2023 and will grow even more in 2024 as the Topper Race Training Group expands its awayday activities.

'TTSC is also a member of the Weald of Kent and Sussex Sailing Association which in the past used to organise inter-club events at Bough Beech, Chipstead etc. The WKSSA still exists but is used primarily to promote club activities through Facebook.

'For the last two years, Triswim, a provider of open water swimming, has run sessions on the water. The club is introducing radio-controlled yachting in 2024 with plans for this to take place on Wednesdays during the club season.'

Barry

**It appears that the correct name is Haysden Water and not Haysden Lake. Mind you, this is still better than a Facebook post I saw recently describing it as "the pond with the oak tree". Haysden Water falls within the Haysden Country Park managed by Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council.*

See early days pictures on pages 3 and 4 for a trip down memory lane. Acknowledgements to Roz and Mick Wiles for provision of the images.



Before the fence and no car park



Container delivery



Early days - look how little vegetation there is!



Not a lot has changed over the years at Cobnor



The Wiles' on the lake ice - do not try this at home!



Above three pictures: Floods!

Snippets from the past . . .

During the preparation of the Club History, Barry also found the following snippets which may be of interest to members, and which in some cases give a sense of deja vue:

- 1 At the AGM in 2000, the then Commodore Michael Wiles “promised that the wind patterns over the lake would be improved with some trimming of the hedgerow on the southwest shore”. Little did he know that the south westerly prevailing winds would no longer be the norm.
- 2 The Commodore, Alf Manktelow, at the 1991 AGM reported that the “flush toilets would be available for use in the near future”. Just like the downstairs ones which have been refurbished this last winter.
- 3 During the 1990 season a 24-hour Sailathon was run.
- 4 In November 1989, a team of six Optimist sailors took part in the Oppie Regatta on the Serpentine organised by the Royal Thams Yacht Club. One member of that team still sails at TTSC. That same group of junior sailors went under the title Tonbridge Town Terriers and when the RYA dinghy show was held at Crystal Palace, Toppers were taken and raced in the pools.
- 5 At the 1988 AGM, the Commodore, Alf Manktelow, reported on many improvements at the club: new fencing, boat park, new rescue boat and the laying of a water supply to the second gate. Also, that sailing for the young proved popular in 1987, just as it has done in 2023.
- 6 Projects referred to at the 1988 AGM included the provision of a generator for lighting, a Race Box and to bring the water supply nearer the club buildings. There was concern about the water silting up after being flooded by the EA. An AOB item suggested that “greater use of Haysden should be made especially weekdays, holidays and evenings”.
- 7 The 1987/88 season saw a second invasion by Travellers.
- 8 A letter to members in November 1986 from the Sailing Secretary advised that “duties at the Lake have presented quite a problem. Late cancellations and people just not turning up has meant several members have done extra duties covering non-attendants”.
- 9 At the 1985 AGM the Commodore reported on the progress made on the club house, that the cabins



Above three pics: Now THAT'S what's called a working party!



Sailing on the Medway at the River Festival

were in their final position and the decking had been ordered. Reference was made to the then Bosun, Michael Wiles, who remains an active member of TTSC to this day. Bob Elliott filled the position of Treasurer to the Social Committee. Stephen Larter, also a current member, was Rear Commodore.

- 10 On 22nd April 1985, an Extraordinary General Meeting of the club was held due to the encampment of forty caravans on the approach road. It was decided that the club would suspend sailing until further notice; Any of the Club's financial spending would cease and there would be a suspension of the building of the club house. The Sunday race programme was to be carried out at Chipstead SC until the end of May. The "unwanted campers" stayed for what was described as "an endless six weeks".
- 11 A quote from the Secretary's Report to the 1985 AGM read: "I would like to see more members taking part in the running of the club. Many of the Sub-Committees need help- please do not leave it to the hard working few . . . we would welcome new faces as many of the committee now have served for many years and would welcome a rest".
- 12 1984 was a very eventful year on the social side of the club. There was Fancy Dress at the Barbecue evening with most members in costume.
- 13 The Vice-Commodore reported on the 1984 season – the purchase of two containers, foundations were laid. Early in 1985 the steelwork was in position to create the deck.
- 14 In March 1984, there were 35 students on the National Dinghy Certificate Course with up to 21 Instructors and Assistant Instructors.

NEW MEMBERS & DUTIES

We are delighted to see many new members join our club over the last six weeks or so, not just those taking part in the training courses. Welcome to TTSC!

With so many newbies joining, it is worth mentioning a few admin bits and pieces.

We have a sailing log in the clubhouse, and we ask all who go sailing to sign in at each session please. If you hire a club boat, there is a separate log to be completed please.

Many of you will not have your own keys to the club, although the main set can be collected if required out of the sailing sessions. If you do access the club out of session, please can you make sure that you close and lock all the gates (to the compound, and on the access road). A member visited on Bank Holiday Monday and found the club compound open; being isolated, this does present a potential security problem.

Duties are also an important part of the club administration as without your help and support, it is difficult to run a completely volunteer based club.

We have been very fortunate this year that those running the Level 1 & 2 Courses and the Topper Race Training team have covered many of the Saturday duties of Officer of the Day (OOD), Safety Officer (SO) and Race Officer (RO).

In theory, this should mean that we have more members available to cover fewer duties.

For SO, either completion of the powerboat course, or substantial experience of safety boat driving is a prerequisite to cover that duty. A reminder to some of those who took part in the Powerboat Course back in March that you are qualified for the SO role.

That leaves OOD, a title which appears somewhat

continued in Page 6

VOLUNTEERING

We recently received this on a template from the RYA following our annual inspection; we have added the name of the club and a couple more areas where help would be useful.

Why don't you have a think and let us know if you are willing to volunteer in any of the roles.

Tonbridge Town Sailing Club is a volunteer-led organisation which relies on volunteers to ensure the smooth running of the club. If you would be interested in volunteering for the club, please indicate your preferences below is

- **Club Welfare Officer**
- **Club Development Team**
- **Disclosure Coordinator**
- **Safety Boat Crew**
- **Flag Officer**

- **Committee Member**
- **Administration.**
- **Dinghy Instructor/Senior Instructor**
- **Social Committee**

Please note that some volunteering roles may require us to carry out an enhanced DBS check with or without the children's barred list in line with our safeguarding policy and procedures.

New Members & Duties - from page 5

daunting to those new to sailing and those new to our club. It need not be; with the duty SO you are jointly responsible for overseeing the sailing session. If you can collect keys, open padlocks, turn on the gas and generally open the club, and then reverse the process at the end of the session, then you are qualified. And we do try and match a first-time OOD with an experienced SO where we can. It was recently suggested that in fact, Assistant Safety Officer would be a better description than OOD. And there are normally many long-standing club members around who can help the first timers among you.

Unfortunately, we do have both several duties still to fill, and some members who have yet to volunteer for a duty.

RUNNING THE CANTEEN

After more than **thirty years** running the canteen, Gwen Bone has decided to “hang up her pinny” at the end of this season.

We are therefore looking for a volunteer who can learn the ropes in time for 2025. If you think you can help, please speak to her or a committee member.

Shroud & Clear

*The next edition of **Shroud & Clear** is scheduled for October. Geoff Fisher would be only too pleased to receive articles and images which you think will be of interest to members for inclusion in this.*

E-mail geoff.fisher@yahoo.co.uk

IN BRIEF . . .

Stand-up paddleboarding. We have been approached by a qualified SUP Instructor who would consider running a six-week introduction to SUP for club members at TTSC. If this is of interest to you, please let Malcolm Jarrett know.

Radio-controlled yachting is another activity that the club is permitted to do at Haysden Water. There are currently just a few of us who have a go on Wednesdays, when not carrying out maintenance. Again, please let us know if you are interested and we will try and set up regular meetings.

Scaffolding. You will all no doubt have seen the scaffolding at the rear of the clubhouse. This is to enable the toilet block roof to be re-felted and other jobs, including painting the cedar shed and cutting back the overhanging trees. Watch the club notice boards (*and page 8*) for dates and details of upcoming **social events** and the **buddy sailing protocol**.

* * *

We have tried many times to obtain comments and ideas about the club from members with questionnaires etc. Mostly, the responses have been few and far between. In fact, there has not been one comment in the suggestion box at the club this year!

*So, we are going to try a suggestion made by a member based on what they saw recently at another club – **POST-IT NOTES!** You will find several pads of brightly coloured sticky post-it notes around the clubhouse. Please take the opportunity to fill in these with ideas, comments and even criticisms, and stick them on either the white board in the clubhouse, or the one in container 2. Putting your name to these is entirely up to you. The committee will then review these. Remember, this is **your** club, so please take the opportunity to give us **your** views.*

FOR SALE - MIRROR DINGHY 'PELICAN' M34266



After much consideration I've decided to sell my old faithful Mirror dinghy. I've had her for six years and had lots of fun in her- never won a race but was never in it to win it!

She's in fine fettle for her age and doesn't leak. I re-taped all her joints two years ago and repainted her with top-quality primer, undercoat and topcoat. She comes with main and jib sail which are in good nick, spare standing rigging, all running rigging, oars, rowlocks, anchor, paddle, boathook, two adult buoyancy aids, launching trolley (new wheels), and some sailing boots if wanted. Mast-down cover and large tarpaulin to go underneath the cover (guarantees no rain ingress). I'm looking for offers in the region of £125.

Buy her now and have fun in the sun with the kids for the rest of the season. Inspection at the club invited by arrangement.

Geoff Fisher 07963 412972 or geoff.fisher@yahoo.co.uk



From Sally Hutchings . . .

Thank you – to all who helped make Guide Sailing Day a success. About 40 Guides (and two adult leaders) each enjoyed a one-hour sailing session as well as land activities which included learning about clothing and boat parts.

Whilst this year's feedback, as always, highlighted the sailing as the best bit, girls also enjoyed the land activities, which were led by Hannah and Graham. The wind was favourable this year, enabling short races to be held and resulting in sufficient tipping of the boats to cause great excitement among the Guides.

My mistake this year was to mention rats (with regard to Weil's disease): as a result, the instructors were puzzled by questions such as, "Are we going to get bitten by a rat?" and, "Is the rat going to bite the boat?"

Many thanks to the instructors, safety boat crews, shore support and car park marshals who made this event possible.

*Sally
for Girlguiding Kent Weald*

CHICHESTER 2024

The club's annual camping, caravanning and sailing trip to Cobnor starts on Saturday 20th July.
If you are new to the club and are interested please ask an existing member.

RYA Training 2024

Despite some challenging weather conditions, the club has successfully trained six adults to RYA Levels 1 & 2, whilst the Juniors completed RYA Stages 1 & 2. With boats beautifully reflected in the water on one day and 37 mph winds (F7) on another day, the trainees experienced a wide range of conditions and the instructors successfully adapted the course to cope with some rather inclement weather.

The course covered rigging, towing, paddling, knot-tying and basic racing. Capsize drill was practised – on more than one occasion by some crews! With the main elements of the curriculum covered, there was time for some fun on the last day – juniors swapped to the GP14s and adults squeezed into the Oppies.

Well done to all the students – we look forward to seeing you at the club over the summer. Don't forget to come along to Junior Club and the Adult Improvers' sessions for opportunities to practise your new skills. Racing takes place on Sunday mornings and some Saturdays – do come along to watch or even participate! Check your calendar for events.

Finally, many thanks to all those involved in the training, all of whom are volunteers: our instructors,



powerboat drivers and shore support. Thank you also to Dawn, our Training Principal, whose hard work led to a successful RYA inspection. We were also pleased to have the "awesome" help of the Topper Race Team on the final two days of the training. See pages 8 to 11 for further photos of the training days. Thanks to Barry Bone for these.

*Bill Hutchings
Senior Instructor*

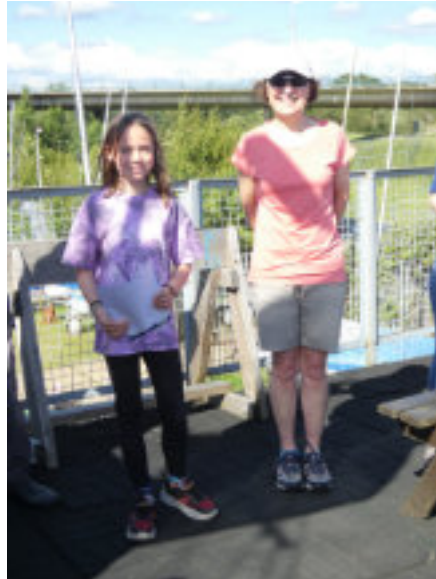


RYA TRAINING 2024 GALLERY

RYA TRAINING 2024 GALLERY



RYA Training Awards presentation 2024



RYA Training Awards presentation 2024



TOPPER RACE TRAINING

Spring 2024 — Stuart Shields reports

It has been a busy spring for the Topper Team. On 16th March TTSC hosted a **Training Day** with an external coach funded by the Topper Class Association. We asked the coach to work on starting and the results were easy to see: at the beginning of the day it was 40 seconds before everyone had crossed the start line. By the end of the day that figure was down to 4 seconds.

Jonathan attended the **Topper Inland Championships** at Grafham Water 13-14 April but wasn't able to repeat his 2023 performance of 3rd in his fleet, this time coming 17th out of 24. Although a little disappointed, he did come away with the Endeavour Trophy for perseverance. The following week he was accompanied by Evie, Charlie and Myles to the **Kent Schools Sailing Association (KSSA) Opening Splash Regatta** at Herne Bay SC. The wind was blowing a good Force 5-6 at the beginning of the day and there were big waves.



You wouldn't have imagined it was the sort of conditions to favour our young and lightweight lake sailors against the best youth from the Kent sea clubs, but Charlie gained a very creditable 7th place out of 37 in the first race, beating even Jonathan. Experience paid off, however, and Jonathan completed all 3 races with a 4th in the last giving him 5th overall . . . our other sailors didn't finish all the races but showed great determination and gained some valuable experience in strong winds and big seas.

Meanwhile back at TTSC we were welcoming another intake of Topper sailors and 3 of these, Dougie, Will and Guy joined Jonathan, Charlie and Myles at the **KSSA New Racers** event at Redoubt SC, Hythe on 11th May.



In the end not all were deemed eligible to be "New Racers" but well done to all and especially to Dougie who came away with the "Master Apprentice Trophy" which we believe is the first ever piece of silverware won by TTSC in the 50+ year history of KSSA!



Next up was the **Topper Coastal Championships** at Poole Yacht Club on 17-18 May and the intrepid trio of Jonathan, Myles and Charlie formed one of the biggest club teams in the 4.2 fleet. Race 1 was again Charlie's best, getting him an incredible 6th place and beating many sailors who had been training the whole winter, including Jonathan. Jonathan bounced back however, and won the second race by a long way, finishing 6th overall after 8 races. Charlie ended up in 16th and Myles (who at age 11 was among the youngest) in joint 27th out of 29.



KSSA Team racing competition

With not enough sailors available to enter our own team Jonathan was invited to join two of his former sailing companions from Chipstead, and the combined team took on 12 teams from schools and sailing clubs across Kent at Westbere Lake on 8th June. Due to the team's lack of experience expectations were moderate however the light and fluky winds and the choice of boat (Toppers) admittedly suited the team. After the round robin stage they were unbeaten, but the Downs SC 'A' team were as well and strong favourites to win. The TTSC/Chipstead team faced Sevenoaks School in the semi-finals and though winning the first race the second seemed lost. A drop in the wind, however, enabled the team to dramatically turn the race around and they were unbeaten as they started the final 3 races against the Downs team. Our team won the first race, but it wasn't looking good in the second when Jonathan was protested for hitting another boat and started penalty turns. Team racing has an on the water umpire, however, who immediately awarded a penalty against the Downs boat, and this enabled Jonathan and his team mates to win the race and the trophy.

Finally, on 29th June our Herne Bay team was joined by Amelia to take on Chipstead SC at their "Junior Regatta".

This was really two events in one: a two-race regatta in the morning, followed by a "double-handed extravaganza" in the afternoon, which raised a few logistical problems for us. Jonathan takes up the story:



"We started planning for this event quite a long time before as we had to bring eight boats from TTSC and other clubs (five Toppers and three double-handers)... When we arrived everyone immediately started getting the boats off the trailers and rigged... it helped having the TTSC team as everyone could help each other with their boats...soon the briefing happened. With a total of 27 in the Main Fleet, 27 in the Regatta Fleet and a number of beginners in Optimists it was quite a lot of people for the size of lake and the organiser said it was "the biggest junior regatta known to mankind at Chipstead". When we headed out on the water, the wind was not very strong, and we were barely moving. This meant that roll tacks were extremely important and also leeward heel to keep the shape of the sail. The ILCA (Laser) ahead of me was using a full

rig so had a much bigger sail and could get away. I haven't sailed that much in handicap fleets recently and sometimes it can get a bit confusing when you don't know if that boat is going to be ahead of you or behind you on handicap. In the end I finished first Topper and third boat overall, beaten by the Laser and an Optimist"

Amelia also came away with a trophy, and writes:

"We arrived at Chipstead to a warm morning with little wind. When we started sailing there was a little breeze with some nice gusts. The first race started with all of the TTSC boats at the far end of the line with Jonathan leading closely followed by Myles and Charlie. We managed 2 laps in the light fluky winds with lots of jostling for position. The second race was much the same, but I got a better start. Evie and I had a great battle on the first down wind leg. Unfortunately, an annoyingly good Oppi managed to stay with us all the way round! Despite the tricky conditions I came first female in the main fleet winning a really cool trophy and prize."



Jonathan helming the Wayfarer



Amelia and Evie in the Pacer

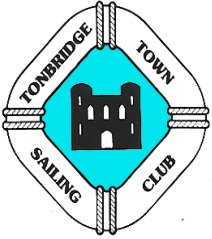


Charlie and Myles in the Gull demonstrating to perfection how to get your weight forward in light winds!



The official results put Amelia in 6th, and Myles, Evie and Charlie 10th, 11th and 12th respectively, a very healthy performance for us as a club!

At lunch all the Toppers were put away and in the afternoon Charlie and Myles teamed up to sail a Gull while Amelia and Evie were in a Pacer. Meanwhile Jonathan sailed his family Wayfarer with his dad crewing. The conditions were tricky with the wind at intervals dying and then coming in from another direction. Jonathan had a hard fight at the front of the fleet with a Graduate, eventually finishing 5th out of 27 while Charlie/Myles were 15th and Amelia/Evie 19th. Overall, I think everyone agreed that despite the work involved it was a great day out and really good experience of different kinds of sailing!



Tonbridge Town Sailing Club

EVENTS CALENDAR

13th July

RNLI FUN RACE

13th July

BARBECUE 5.30 pm

29th Sept

CLUB WALK & PUB LUNCH

12th Oct

QUIZ NIGHT

26th Oct

TRT PRIZEGIVING

30th Nov

LAYING UP SUPPER

Put the dates in your diaries!
Details to follow