



The Wagtale



May 2019 Edition



A message from your Commodore



Welcome to a new, and long overdue, edition of The Wagtail newsletter. For those of you who are relatively new members, The Wagtail is our part of our sailing club's history and has been produced on and off over the last 50 years. The name comes from the original name of the Club - The Wagtail Sailing Club - with the "...tail" becoming "...tale" of this newsletter!

You will find inside a fascinating history of the Club written by Ian Ranford with substantial input from Len Baker, one of the founding members, who has recently celebrated his 99th birthday. Many of you will remember "laughing" Len from his time at the club when he was more active as a long term Committee Member, Bar Manager and renowned GP 14 and Wagtail sailor. Next time you are at the bar, make sure you look out for the photograph of Len being honoured with a long service award by Princess Anne (or is it the other way around!). He still maintains a close and lively interest in what is going on!



Much has happened since the last edition in 2015, but the Club still continues to offer a friendly welcome, good quality training and close racing to all. Membership numbers remain stable with a constant flow of new members from the training courses to replace those drifting away.

Andy Beardshaw has continued to do a great job with Training. Our RYA Level 1 & 2 courses are normally oversubscribed and, this year, we are running an extra course to meet the demand from our success with the JLR programme. Sunday Junior sessions prove popular during the summer holidays and are open to non-members - so tell your friends! We also run occasional taster sessions for schools. We rely heavily on our volunteer instructors and safety crew for all these courses and are in the process of training up a number of other members to join the ranks.

We are now able to run Power Boat courses with in-house instructors again and this will help maintain the safety of all members.

Volunteering is a common theme in this introduction! We are indebted to all members who give a little extra to help with the running of the club – whether on Committees, working groups (the “Wednesday Group” in particular), Social events etc. Clearly all members are required to do duties to help with the racing 4 or 5 times a year and also to attend the Working Parties twice a year. Although I have to say that it is the same old faces who turn up for the latter and we could achieve even more if everyone turned up! We rely on the Working Parties, the Wednesday Group and the Gentlemen’s Group to keep things in good repair and to significantly minimise what would often be expensive contractor jobs.

We are particularly indebted to Lyn and Elaine who maintain the bar and galley. They do a great job in covering our refreshment needs throughout the year. There are times when they are not available and it is great when others step forward to help out.

We are coming up to the warmer weather and our Tuesday Evening racing and food will begin in May. This always proves to be a popular series with novices being encouraged to participate with favourable handicaps and friendly encouragement. We also rely on volunteers to provide a simple meal on a rota basis after sailing. Watch out for the list so that you can treat us to your favourite recipes!

Many of you may not realise that there is an active Sea Cadet section (primarily from Redditch but also Stratford). They are active mainly on Thursday evenings and on some Monday evenings in the summer. We hope to see more of them sailing with us soon.

I hope you enjoy the rest of this edition.
Good sailing, Greg

History of Redditch Sailing Club

By Ian Radford

Redditch Sailing Club’s origins started with a newly designed small compact dinghy and not a Sailing Club at all. This dinghy was called the Wagtail which as you know is our club emblem. A small sturdy designed dinghy was drawn up by Norman Neasom (a senior lecturer at The then Redditch Further Education College). With these plans Norman arranged a like minded group to build the Wagtail at the college. One of these members, Len Baker, remains a life time member and trustee of the club. This concept started in 1959. As dinghies were completed, it was suggested that a Sailing Club should be formed. In 1960 a meeting was held at the Dog Inn Mappleborough Green and the Wagtail Sailing Club was born.

It was also agreed at this meeting to launch the new dinghy above Offenham on the River Avon and sailed downstream where they would congregate at the Bridge Inn Offenham. The Wagtail Sailing Club now had a home.

Saundersfoot was the next venue for proper trials on the sea where the Wagtail passed with flying colours.

Sunday sailing on the Avon took place at Twynning Green, where the first races were held. With more and more dinghies Sailing on Sunday’s at this venue Harry Hadley, the landlord of the Bridge Inn, invited the members to build a wooden clubhouse with an extended deck overlooking the river. This being a more suitable base for the club. Keys were available to members for 7/6d with an annual subscription of £3. No boat parking was available so all boats had to be transported home. This took us to 1965 where all boats using the River Avon had to then have a license. This was a further £3 doubling the annual fee!

As river sailing was never too taxing, capsizing was rare. A large shackle was awarded to the helm for the most capsizes-

End

this was called the Offenham Shackle which sits on our clubhouse wall to this day.

At this time, the highest point navigable was the weir at Offenham. When the Avon Navigation Trust had a lock constructed to allow boats of different type and size to use the upper stretches of the river, this brought about a huge increase in river traffic. Of course this led to interference in club racing. The beginning of the end for the Wagtail Sailing Club on the Avon. With most members travelling from Redditch coupled with a change of landlord at the Bridge Inn an alternative venue was sought.

South Coast Cruising on "Foyle"

I am about to start my 5th season on "Foyle", my Dehler 36 yacht, based from Weymouth. It has been a lot of fun learning about the boat and how to get the best out of her – both in terms of speed and also comfort.



New sails in 2016 made a big difference to her speed and handling. We found ourselves competitive at the Weymouth Regatta that year, finishing 4th in class and a 2nd place in one race. Given that I only race her once a year this isn't too bad! We lose out badly downwind in anything but a gale as the cruising asymmetric spinnaker cannot compete with the downwind sails of the regular racers. However, we get around the course, even braving a Force 8 – gusting 9 – in 2017.

Every year has included a cross Channel cruise to either Brittany or Normandy. Last year we went to Cherbourg, St Vaast, Caen, Deauville and Honfleur – cruising in tandem with Phil Farmiloe's Heaven 47. There wasn't a lot of wind, but enough to keep us going. The longest trip was in 2016 when we sailed 150 miles in nearly 30 hours to the NW corner of Brittany (L'Aber Wrac'h to those who know it). Andy opted to stay on deck for the whole passage!



The benefit of being based in Weymouth is that the Solent, Torbay, Cherbourg and Guernsey are all reachable in a day's sail. These are great cruising areas. One of the highlights of last year was cruising West with some old friends to Dartmouth, Newton Ferrers and Fowey during the glorious weather of August. We saw dolphin every day and fed on fresh mackerel to our heart's content!

[\(Video Link "Dolphin in Start Bay" from Youtube\)](#)

This year I have a couple of weeks cruising already set up in May and June and have entered the Round the Island Race from Cowes at the end of June. This will be quite an event. They expect 1,600 yachts split into 10 or 11 starts every 10 minutes with 150 boats starting each time. You think it gets busy at Redditch!



So what are the benefits of owning rather than chartering? It may sound odd, but I like keeping the boat in good shape and updating her equipment etc. I am getting to know, and have confidence in, almost every part of her. We have had mishaps with the engine and steering systems, but nothing has been too much to overcome. It is a lot of fun mixing up crews with RSC friends, family, University mates, work based friends, US Summer Camp friends from the 70s etc.

Gold, Silver and Bronze – The alchemy of sailing at Redditch!

A number of years ago the Sailing Committee introduced the current Gold, Silver and Bronze Fleet structure in order to encourage racing and reward success and perseverance at all levels. For those of you who are new to the club (and those of you who have forgotten how it works) I will explain below.

At the start of each year 'ctrl' button helms in the club are split into the three categories based on their skill levels established mathematically from a cunning formula based on average finishing positions! (It would need another double length article to explain this – please accept that there is some logic in the system!). Approximately 10 helms are in Gold Fleet, 10-15 in Silver and the rest in Bronze. At the end of each season's racing 1st, 2nd and 3rd places are recognised within each fleet

for both Pursuit and Handicap races. The winners of the Bronze and Silver fleets are promoted to the next fleet for the rest of the year (giving others in the fleet a chance to win for the rest of the year). If you are a Bronze Fleet helm and you beat all the Silver helms you automatically take the Silver prize, with the second Bronze helm winning Bronze Etc. There are no demotions within the year.

At the end of the year the fleets are re-set – so you may be demoted at this stage to bring you back into the correct skill group. (The Sailing Committee hasn't yet mastered the art of their Philosopher's Stone – they are better at turning Gold into Silver than vice versa!) Winners of the Silver and Bronze fleets in the Autumn Series (Oct-Dec) will be promoted for the next 3 months but will only stay up for the full year if either a) they have improved sufficiently that their skill rating justified being in the higher fleet, or b) if they beat everyone from the fleet below during that series.

This system has helped to provide competitive tension within the 3 skill levels and a variety of winners– rewarding people for sailing sufficient races in a series. We hope you are still enjoying the format. Please let us know if not!

Greg Croydon – Results Co-ordinator

Interactive Addition

As this is the Easter Addition you might find 'Easter Eggs'.

By double clicking on certain pictures/logos, you will be linked to various websites and/or videos. Try it and see what you find.

Enjoy!

Family sailing with the Redditch Sailing Club

By Stuart McEwan

I'd been on a Competent Crew Course down in the Solent earlier on in the year and had been bitten by the sailing bug.

After speaking to a few old sea dogs about gaining more sailing experience they all advised that I join my nearest sailing club which turned out to be just down the road in Redditch.

I managed to convince the wife and kids that it would be a great way for us all to spend a bit of rare family time together with a shared interest.

After a quick search on the internet for dates and times we plucked up the courage to visit the clubhouse to enquire as it was only four miles down the road for us.

The door was open so we ventured in. There was an argument between us at the bottom of the stairs as to who was to go first but I drew the short straw. The stairway up to the first floor felt to go on forever but eventually reached the top where we were greeted with such a friendly relaxed welcome. We came away with all of the course info and found out that the kids could enrol on an 'Introduction to Sailing' 6 week course over the summer holidays.

Arran and George absolutely loved the sailing and trainers and seemed to pick it up pretty well. Obviously there was a bit of healthy brotherly competition that came into play along the way between the two of them. All of the volunteer trainers were very attentive and even jumped in the dinghy with the kids to give one to one tuition at times if they were struggling. The handy club house and bar kept Tracy and I cool and entertained in the baking June/July sunshine.

Finally the time came for both Tracy and I to start our RYA Dinghy Sailing 1 course which is an introduction but does get you straight in the boat and sailing with an instructor and another learner. There were plenty of rope knots to practise and a handy RYA theory book to read at home during the week in preparation for the next class.

Pairing up and rotating your training partner helped to compare and learn from them (good and bad habits). The Laser 2000 training boats are easy to handle and comfortably seat four so the ratio of two learner to one trainer gave plenty of room even with arms and legs flying everywhere when tacking and gybing (see I remembered something!)

The trainers delivered the theoretical information needed to make the most of the time on the water. The days that were a little gusty for a learner were very rare but they did make up the time to compensate the loss of sailing time.

What became evident was the need to keep your eye on the wind direction as it tries to keep you on your toes as a learner, catching you out whenever it can. As the trainers pointed out the Redditch Lake encourages you to keep a look out for wind changes and sudden gusts which you don't get at other club lakes, helping make you a better sailor.

Once on the RYA Dinghy 2 course the trainers gave us a little more responsibility and encouraged us to each helm and steer a three point of sail course. Finally, we came to the dreaded capsize drill (sounds easy now but at the time felt impossible)

A big thank you must go to the club members that crewed the safety boats while we were all out on the water as without them there would have been a few very cold capsizers!

Due to the fantastic warm welcome we received we joined the Redditch Sailing Club and plan to join in with the weekend sailing opportunities and great social get togethers throughout the year. Joining the Redditch Sailing Club has given the whole family a common interest and will hopefully see a few young McEwan family race winners in 2019!

A junior's point of view

By Joe Hyde

Sailing at Redditch is fun. Everyone is really friendly and helps a lot. I am not treated as a child, but just like the other sailors. When you fall in, the safety boat comes quickly and gets you out of the water and helps with the boat. If you win prizes everyone is happy for you.



RYA Power Boat Level 2

By Richard Irwin

I was surprised at the opportunity to be able to do 2 day basic power boating course at Redditch Sailing Club. Considering myself a sailor, I am not drawn to noisy, busy, skimmy, power boats and wondered if this could be a lack of reverence to the mission. However, infected by Andy's and Paul's enthusiasm and by browsing the RYA Level 2 course online, persuaded me there

were new experiences here and much to learn. I was not disappointed.

The RYA says the course will equip the User (my words) with insights to know their own and a craft's limits and be safe. By the way, 'Level 2' is entry level too. To complete the course on a inland pool means the trainee earns a suitably endorsed certificate. Further, offshore experience, can change this. 'Tender Operator' and 'Safety Boat' courses take this Level 2 course as a prerequisite.

This is what I enjoyed:

Getting on the water first thing Saturday morning (a better start to the weekend) and making great use of the inclement January weather and the available daylight.

Driving both a wheel steered outboard boat (borrowed from the Sea Scouts) and tiller steered outboard boats (the club's own rescue boats) on some precisely prescribed exercises employing good techniques.

Well supervised play. Including; leaving, arriving to the jetty, picking up a mooring buoy, turning short round, MOB (man overboard) and anchoring. Each explained with a structured approach and with good time to practice.

Hot lunch on a cold day.

Taking the maneuvers from the whiteboard on to the lake, it was easy to experiment. That is, to see and experience the effects of the procedures straight away. For example; the consequences of the wind and the point about which the

boat will rotate. I'd always wanted to try ways of anchoring and noticing when the anchor bites or drags.

Becoming familiar with good practice, like kill cord usage, steering up to a MOB or drifting down to the MOB and towing alongside gives the confidence to react appropriately in the future.

The coffee, banter and good humour of the other boating geeks. The questions they asked which saved me having too.

And finally, knots -Practicing knots.

This is a link to RYA course content...

<https://www.rya.org.uk/courses-training/courses/powerboat/Pages/level-2.aspx>

This is a link to the book that is included in the course, also sold on amazon...

https://www.amazon.co.uk/RYA-Start-Powerboating-Jon-Mendez/dp/1906435472/ref=sr_1_14?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1549214874&sr=8-14&keywords=rya+level+2+power+boat

The same book is on Google Play Books. There are a few YouTube videos as well.

A selection of Nautical terms

By Dave Jackson

Tiller	Someone who prepares the soil for crops
Gybe	Taunt, sarcastic remark
Tack	Stitch up; saddle
A tack	Nail
Roll Tack	Throw a nail across the logo to
Beat	Hit (e.g. with a batten)

Reach	Stretch out to grab (e.g. a batten)
Run	Get away fast if someone tries to hit you with a batten
Sheet	Flat piece of paper
Sheet Bend	Curved piece of paper
Clove Hitch	Divorce
Bowline	String to shoot the arrow
Sails	Where you buy stuff cheaply
Foresails	When you force ales down someone's throat
Mainsails	Usually on Boxing Day
Jib	Part of a crane
Lee	Paul's son
Leech	Bloodsucking worm
Luff	Yorkshireman's reaction to a joke
Head	Main
Heads	Toss of a coin
Kicker	Foot
Foot	Something to attach toes to
Toe Strap	Bandage for when Foot used as a Kicker
Kicking Strap	Bigger bandage than the toe strap
Boom	Noise made if you don't keep your heads down
Batten	Stick used to conduct an orchestra
Reef	Line of rocks where you could come to a sticky end
Capsize	6¾
Whipping	What used to be used as punishment

Comments etc

If you have any comments or have any articles for the next issue, please use the link below.

Redditch Sailing Club
<mailto:Redditchclubnews@redditchsc.co.uk?subject=The Wagtale>

Thank you to everyone who provided articles for this issue. It is much appreciated.

Useful links:

Double click the Logo to go to the webpage.

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Redditch Sailing Club Facebook Page



The Royal Yachting Association



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