

Reflections on the Spring Training Course

The (Allegedly) Adult Class of spring 2005

SUE: I really enjoyed being part of the Class of 2005 TSC Sailing Course. Pretty much we were all new members of the club so on an equal footing with regards to knowing what was going on! We couldn't have had a nicer crowd of people - students, teachers and kids - who all mucked in to help each other out. Everyone was so encouraging and supportive to each other and this has continued well after the course on Tuesday evenings and weekends! A big thank you to everyone who helped make it a success from those behind the scenes making the yummy bacon/sausage sandwiches to the 'guest speakers' which made each of the six Saturdays so much fun.

BEN: For me the biggest shock once on the water, was how busy the Thames is. I can understand now why they say that if you can sail at the TSC you can sail anywhere - what with wind changes every few seconds and cruise boats, paddle boats, rowers, skiffs and sea scouts not to mention running out of river. Course made good seemed like an impossible dream! Having completed the course and had some time to get used to it, the river doesn't seem as crowded. On the other hand 'finding' the slightest breeze looks to be a skill that will take a lifetime to develop!

NICOLE: I found it amazing how supportive and encouraging all the instructors were. I also found the talks very informative - especially Ingrid's talk on the weather. I want to thank Negla for her welcome when we first turned up at the club to take a look. She showed us around and told us about the club and was incredibly friendly and helpful. My only disappointment is that Patrick's from Chesterfield and I'm still waiting for him to greet me with an 'alright duck'!

JASON: High winds, freezing water, low winds, mad skiffs, circular winds, ripped trousers, vertical winds, too many Simons, capsize drills, roll tacks, bank creeping, lost shrouds, lost glasses, ice on boat covers, spiders, idiots in pleasure boats, naked ironing, sea scouts, river cruisers who can't (or won't) turn or even slow down, suicidal skulls and teenagers in toppers falling in on purpose, sausages, bacon and one-handed bowlines. These are just a few of the things that made learning to sail challenging, fun and unique this year at TSC. And I don't see many of them in the RYA Learn to sail manual! For me it was a great experience, meeting all the people, being made truly welcome in the club, and becoming part of the day-to-day TSC experience. I'm looking forward to next year when we can do it all again. Just remember TSC rule number One - The Club Shall Always be Located in Surbiton.

SUSIE: MMMmmm...Memorable moments...First lessons started with those familiar words " a flappy sail is an unhappy sail" to be followed by lots of seaman like decisions as we were entertained by Simons advanced sailing course. Later to be known as Scary Simon. There were three Simons so we needed to differentiate. However the scariest moment on the course was as we were practising rudderless sailing. Having mastered the theory, one of my course mates (not mentioning Tony by name) was trying it out in practice with as much effect as an effectless thing and, as we picked up speed sailing towards a stationary barge, we didn't flinch an inch off our original course...fortunately the barge we tee-boned was empty on impact... Hmmm back to the white board

HOWARD: I thoroughly enjoyed the course. Learning to sail was at times both exhilarating and scary (particularly when I was helming!!) Having come to sailing a little later in life than most people, I wasn't sure what I was about to let myself in for. I didn't know a jib from a gybe, a gooseneck from a goosewing but what I came away with, to my surprise, was (and is) a great enthusiasm for sailing. I think that enthusiasm is in part a reflectance of the enthusiasm and passion displayed by all members of TSC, fellow students and especially the instructors which was quite evident throughout the duration of the course.

To repeat Jason's sentiment, can we do it all over again next year?

SAM: With a keen interest in sailing but never having lived close to water, once I moved to Surbiton and saw TSC at the end of my road, I didn't think twice about joining the club and signing up for the course. Patrick and Alexis were great, very encouraging and certainly helped build up my confidence on the water. No two Saturdays were the same and I fully appreciated their enthusiasm, each week teaching us something different. I would also like to thank Sally for her encouragement too and for lending me her waterproof clothing on the couple of Saturdays when the weather wasn't so good! The club has really been so welcoming; I feel proud to be part of it.

IAN: The course provided an excellent introduction to TSC and to the peculiarities of sailing on the Thames at Surbiton. The training was informative and most importantly, highly enjoyable. So enjoyable that upon completion of the course I no longer knew what to do with my weekends. Of course that soon changed when I started racing on Sundays and then on Saturdays. The training also afforded me the opportunity to race at Bourne End, which is an experience I would recommend to all new members; great sailing and one heck of a party. Of course, as you would expect, 'Team Haegel'

dramatically out performed all the other competitors in the Wayfarer series; OK, so we finished last in every race but boy did we entertain!

Danni: Well the highlight of the course has to be being Tango'd by Alexis, his amazingly orange suit did keep me warm and dry in my hour of capsizing need, what a star! To be honest all the trainers were fantastic, very helpful and really patient. David L did a storming job bringing me up to speed! I still have no idea where the wind is coming from but like all workmen I'm blaming the tools - River Thames, so fickle! Thanks to my fellow trainee dinghy handlers for welcoming me into the group halfway through the course - I had a wicked 3 days and looking forward to next year, that is if the Southern Bell doesn't run me over in the meantime!

Memorable moments (on & off the course) include bacon sandwiches - mmmm (Thank you Negla & Patrick's Mum), getting tied up with Sally, 'The Minima Incident' (ask no questions & you'll be told no lies!), 'The Two Bridges Spinnaker Triumph' with Sue & Tiger - fantastic (Thank you Patrick) & many many more....

At the end of the spring course the adult beginners were delighted to find that the club had laid on an awards ceremony and BBQ to honour our graduation. What follows however are the alternative award categories. The nominations are as follows...

Best Instructor response to questions they couldn't answer:	Both Patrick and Alexis for 'It's something to do with the spinnaker'
Least efficient method for getting out of irons:	Jason for encouraging Jemima the club Wayfarer by jiggling about and shouting 'c'mon boaty!
Best advice that wasn't on the syllabus:	All the little tricks that Patrick let us in on such as bank creeping, roll tacking and all sorts of other things that we probably shouldn't have been taught but have added to the fun during races since the course ended.
Best Party Trick:	Alexis' one-handed speed method for tying a bowline. Probably second nature to all the 'salts' in the club but it really impressed us!
Best Blonde Moment:	Nicole for saying 'I can't see that far around' to which the response was 'try looking over your OTHER shoulder'
Most Embarrassing moment for an instructor:	With no wind and the current against us, myself and the instructor (who shall remain nameless) had to submit to the ignominy of a tow back upriver by the sea scouts. In his defence, we were rigged with a storm mainsail and the jib from a firefly on one of the Leaders for strong winds that subsequently dropped to almost a dead calm!
Most Stylish Capsize drill:	Nicole for managing to do capsize drill without getting her hair wet (though she did show her pants!)
Best Prepared Instructor:	Alexis who appears to have EVERYTHING needed for ANY eventuality – and he keeps it all in his magic briefcase...
Most damage done:	To Ian 'the butcher' Pratt for outhaul on 1 topper, tiller extension on a Leader and a slightly banana'd mast (or asymmetric as he prefers to call it). Fortunately he's a top chap and repairs everything regardless of whether he's really to blame.
Best T bone into a Barge:	Tony – he's a tiger – Grrrrr!
<i>And last and best forgotten.....</i>	
Best Bankside Entertainment:	To the chap in the barge who does his ironing naked. If you're a member of the club sir you should know that you're responsible for the fastest roll tack in history as Susie went back for a second look.