

TELLTALES

The Journal Of Priory Sailing Club



COMMODORE'S COLUMN

Firstly, a warm welcome to the many new members that have joined PSC this summer – we have over fifty new memberships so far this year! We hope that you will enjoy making use of our club's facilities and being part of our community.

Our club has been particularly busy over recent months with our coaching sessions very well supported. These are run by our volunteer instructors, helping adult and junior members alike develop their sailing skills. An increasing number of members are also making use of our paddlesport equipment – SUPs, canoes and KataKanus are all available to book on Eventbrite.

Whilst many members may not see it, the club is also busy during the week when our facilities are used by various local youth groups. We are pleased to be able to provide low cost opportunities for young people in the Bedford area to get on the water.

Several members have acquired boats of their own recently, meaning that they can sail whenever they wish. All have received support and advice on how to best set up their boats from experienced members. If you are thinking of buying your own boat do ask around, you'll probably be able to test sail someone else's boat to help you decide what class of boat to buy.

On the subject of equipment, a reminder that there is a 'swaps' rail in our ground floor wet classroom. If you have any items that you no longer need – perhaps your children have grown out of their wetsuits – simply hang them on the rail for others to put to use. Recycling at its best! Please don't hang club equipment on the rail!

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BWe are lucky to have an enormous amount to club equipment for members to use; this has been built up over some time through the club's investment, grant applications and some generous donations. It's a big job keeping everything well maintained and ready for your use, you can help by reporting any signs of wear that you notice and by making sure all equipment is used appropriately and is put away properly. There have been a couple of avoidable breakages recently, costing time and money to repair.

A big thanks to everyone who volunteers their time to help the club provide the opportunities we all enjoy. Our members provide coaching, clean and maintain our building, offer Safety Boat cover, organise events and ensure that all our craft are in good order. If you would like to help in any of these areas, or if you have any questions regarding the club's operation, or suggestions for future events, please do contact me.

See you on the water soon.

Tim



TIM HEWETT
COMMODORE

THESE GIRLS CAN!



Our club has long supported and encouraged female participation in our sport, our Women on the Water group being the latest initiative to do what is says on the tin! This month saw a particular milestone when these three PSC members, all RYA instructors, were the teaching team for one of our monthly RYA Level 1 courses for non members.



WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING AT THE CLUB?

We've already had an incredibly busy summer of activity at Priory Sailing Club!

WE'VE HAD THE FIRST OF OUR TWO PRO-AM CHALLENGES WHERE OUR EXPERIENCED RACERS COMPETE WITH NEW SAILORS...



6 Pros and 6 Ams ready to battle!



SATURDAY MORNING MENTORING SESSIONS HAVE BEEN EXTREMELY WELL ATTENDED, AS NEW SAILORS DEVELOP THEIR BOAT HANDLING SKILLS...



Numerous RYA Level 2 powerboat courses have taken place





WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING AT THE CLUB?

There was some slightly different rescuing at this year's River Festival!



WE'VE SEEN A NEW PROGRAMME OF FRIDAY NIGHT ACTIVITIES AND GAMES, INCLUDING TANDEM WINDSURFING...



...AND SOME VERY IMPRESSIVE CANOE JENGA!



Our Devon Lugger has been in regular use - a fantastic sight!



There's been plenty of time to catch up with friends old and new.





WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING AT THE CLUB?

Members have been out honing their skills on the lake.



LOTS OF MEMBERS HAVE BEEN MAKING THE MOST OF THE RELATIVELY COOL BREEZE ON THE LAKE IN THE HEATWAVES

Longstanding members Nick, Peter and Stuart enjoying evening sailing.



Our winsurfing members have learned lots of new skills at Saturday mentoring.



... AND THERE'S BEEN LOTS OF JUNIOR TRAINING TOO!



We've had a fantastic number of new Oppie sailors, the youngest members of the club.



SEA SURVIVAL – THE PSC EDITION!

BY SIMON HUGHES

After several stormy days in Bedford we were shipwrecked on a calm, bright, warm and sunny evening. But rest assured there is no wreckage of a luxury yacht at the bottom of Priory Lake; rather we were there at the kind invitation of William Armitage who had graciously donated an expired life raft and lifejackets and who gave a great teaching session on how to make use of them. 12 members had the opportunity to experience what it is like to swim in a lifejacket, work as a team of mariners abandoning ship and then inflate and escape into a life raft.

THE THEORY

Before being dumped into the lake, William spoke for 15 mins or so on the procedures to follow and the practicalities of what one should ideally do before entering the water and on being rescued or on rescuing a person from cold water.

Grab bag – water, sunscreen, sunglasses, dry clothing, first aid kit, knife. Some snacks perhaps but food less important.



Before setting sail – Check your emergency equipment is up to date and works and is easily accessible in an emergency. Keep the grab bag up to date.

Wear lifejackets when at sea is William's recommendation even in warm climates. Ensure life jackets have hoods. Hoods reduce risk of secondary drowning.

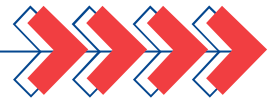
Aim to avoid falling overboard in the first place. Do your best to avoid sinking!! Abandoning ship to the raft is a last resort.

Call Mayday!

Take anti seasickness tabs before getting in the raft ideally. (Am I likely to remember in the panic of an emergency?). Raft has some but once nausea starts and especially if vomiting the medicine may not be absorbed from the stomach.

Make sure the life raft is tied to the yacht before inflating to avoid it being blown away, but make sure it is untied or cut free from yacht once transferred as the sinking yacht would pull the life raft under as well.

Flares (despite fire and injury risk) still recommended by RYA and RNLI. EPIRB (Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons) / PLBs (Personal Locator Beacons) also very useful as are LED lights and highly recommended by William.



THE PRACTICAL

We jumped into lake and inflated lifejackets. Much tighter than one might expect when inflated. Feel bit restrictive but do keep head above water. More difficult to swim compared with a buoyancy aid.

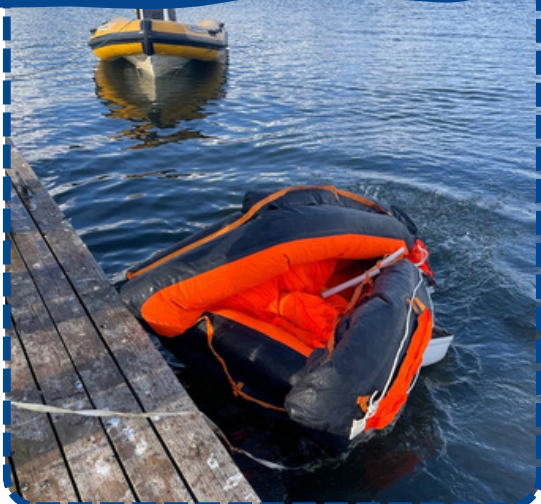


We inflated the life raft and a group of six climbed in to experience how cramped it might be.

Most of us didn't feel it was too unpleasant or claustrophobic but in a real emergency we probably wouldn't have William on the outside giving us reassurance!

Important to bail out water as even in the calm conditions of Priory Lake quite a lot of water came in with us as we clambered in. Try to keep the raft as hygienic and as dry as possible.

The raft inflated in seconds.



William instructed us how we should swim on our backs and move together as a group. Important to stick together. Link arms. Then form a crocodile line. The line can move arms together like rowers.



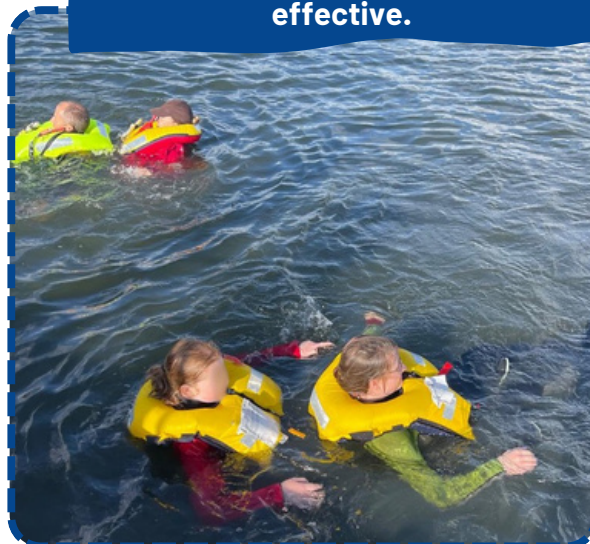
When assessing and managing casualties including oneself, consider:

- Cold water shock
- Post rescue collapse
- Keep person lying down to maintain blood supply to brain – casualty maybe suffering from shock due to various causes.
- Secondary drowning – can occur up to 72 hours but usually withing 24 to 48 hours after immersion.
- Dehydration – warm (not boiling hot) sweet fluids.
- Hypothermia – remove wet clothing and rewarm slowly.

The last task involved righting an upturned life raft and climbing on by oneself without assistance. Righting the raft was relatively easy but climbing in without assistance required some effort.

It was clear how important it is to stay together as a group by linking arms or forming a crocodile to move.

Crocodile swimming was very effective.



Climbing in was not an easy task.



The PSC circle of trust!



It was a very useful exercise. We were in warm conditions, wearing wetsuits under the waterproof gear. We were confident we were in no danger and felt safe being at the shore in very calm water. However, in a real situation of abandoning ship, in all likelihood in stormy conditions and perhaps in the dark it would be a terrifying experience so this session has taught us how useful it is to learn how to launch and enter a life raft in controlled conditions before having to do so "in anger".

A huge thank you to William for organising a splendidly interesting, entertaining and potentially lifesaving experience for those who sail on the sea. It was a lot of fun and is to be recommended.

AHOY THERE! PRIORY PIRATES CONQUER THE GREAT OUSE!

MARY BEARD

What do you get when you combine six club members, one homemade raft, a river full of competitors & water pistols.....Pure entertainment!

On Sunday 19th July, under the fearless leadership of Pirate Neal, our swashbuckling crew of Chloe, Emma, Neal, Marie, Brian, Mike, Owen and Mary took to the waters at the Bedford River Festival Charity Raft Race. After a busy morning constructing our trusted vessel (which remarkably floated & looked magnificent), and a tow to the start line to save muscle power, we were ready for battle.



The first heat saw us paddle half a mile from the Town Bridge to the Suspension Bridge, accompanied by plenty of splashing, water pistol attacks and Neal enthusiastically bellowing "PULL!" every few seconds to keep us going. Somehow, amid the chaos we stormed home in second place, earning ourselves a spot in the final.



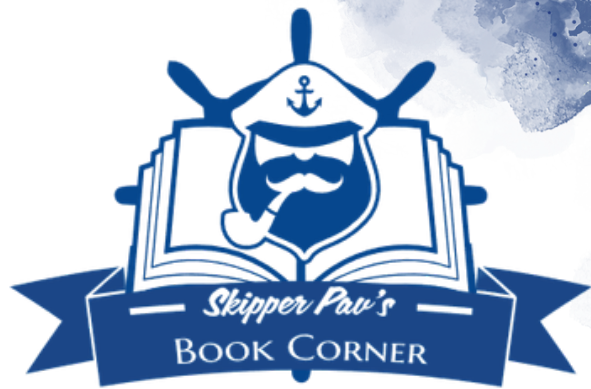
The final proved even more adventurous. Along with the usual soaking and frantic paddling, we had to contend with some friendly sabotage from fellow racers. Despite their best efforts to slow us down, our pirate crew battled on to finish a very respectable sixth overall out of 16 rafts! One pirate paddled so boldly & fast they broke their oar.



It was a brilliant day of fun, fundraising and taking to the water to be part of this core tradition of Bedford River festival.

The Priory pirates were supporting the charity of Impakt and raised so far £70 for the cause.





I hope your sailing season has been full of wind, sunshine and plenty of fun, despite the rather hot weather we've been experiencing this summer.

As we slowly move towards late summer and those evenings begin to draw in a little earlier, I thought I'd bring forward a few book recommendations that you might still enjoy during those quieter moments. Perhaps in the garden with a glass of wine or a cuppa, or even while relaxing on the clubhouse balcony when the wind finally drops and there's time to sit back and enjoy the afternoon.

So I thought I'd share a few sailing and maritime books that might keep us on the water – well, at least in our imagination! I'm a bit of a backyard adventurer myself.

Ever since I was a little boy, I've always liked to explore, venture out, discover new places and find out what is around that next corner.

I think that's probably why I enjoy these kinds of books so much. The stories I'm sharing here are not just random sailing books I've picked off a shelf. They are books that appeal to that part of my character – the bit that always wonders what's over the horizon, where a small boat might take you, and what you might discover along the way.

They might also make a good birthday or Christmas gift for a fellow sailor, your partner, friend, dad, or anyone else who might enjoy a good sailing story. Most of the books I mention are fairly easy to find, either brand new, second-hand from charity bookshops, charities on eBay, and some are available as e-books or audiobooks.

I thought I'd start with a book that has a rather special place on my own bookshelf. And yes, there is a special place on my bookshelf!

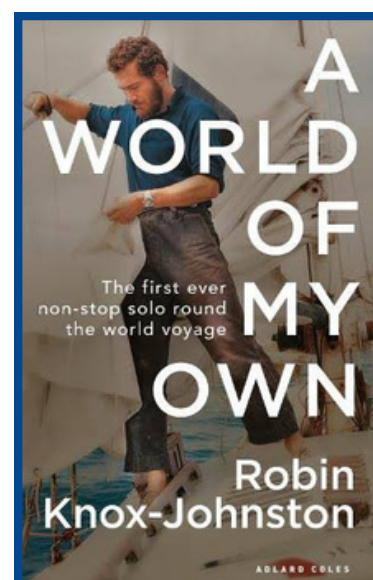
A WORLD OF MY OWN

BY ROBIN KNOX-JOHNSTON

I have to admit that, before reading this book, I wasn't much of a reader. I could quite happily go months without picking up a book. Then I discovered *A World of My Own* by Robin Knox-Johnston – and it completely changed that.

I absolutely loved it from start to finish and it turned me from a non-reader into someone who now quite happily has two or three books on the go at the same time.

If you don't know the story, Robin Knox-Johnston was the first person to sail single-handed and non-stop around the world. In 1968 he entered the Sunday Times Golden Globe Race aboard his 32-foot ketch *Suhaili*.



He left Falmouth on 14 June 1968 and returned 312 days later, on 22 April 1969. He was the only one of the nine original competitors to complete the race. It was the 1960s, in many ways, the Renaissance of the 20th century. We went to the Moon, the Rolling Stones and the Beatles transformed music, cars became a household item, and sailing was no longer just a rich man's sport. It was a new era, with an appetite for exploration and a desire to push the boundaries of human endurance and technology. In many ways a fascinating time.

I first came across an article about his achievement in a sailing magazine and was instantly hooked. I wanted to know how on earth he had managed to provision and prepare for a year-long voyage in such a small boat.

How did he provision her? Where did he put all the food and water? What tools and spare parts did he take? How did he repair things when there was nobody else around to help?

So I got the book.

And I absolutely loved it.

The courage, resilience, determination and seamanship were astounding. Remember, this was 1968. No GPS, no satellite phone, no modern weather-routing software and radar. His radio failed, his freshwater became a problem and he had to collect rainwater. At one point he had to go over the side of Suhaili to make repairs while in shark-infested waters. And this wasn't a 50-foot ocean-going yacht. It was a 32-foot boat.

Yet he did it.

What I really enjoyed about the book was getting an insight into what it actually took to keep the boat going for 312 days. Things broke, things leaked, things needed repairing and there was nobody else there to help. He had to work things out and make do with what he had on board. And I think that's probably something most sailors can appreciate. We all know that feeling of something breaking at the worst possible moment and having to figure out how to fix it!

If you haven't read *A World of My Own*, I'd definitely recommend it for the winter. And if you know someone who likes sailing, it would make a pretty good Christmas present too.

More on the Sunday Times 1969 Golden Globe Race in the next Telltales edition.

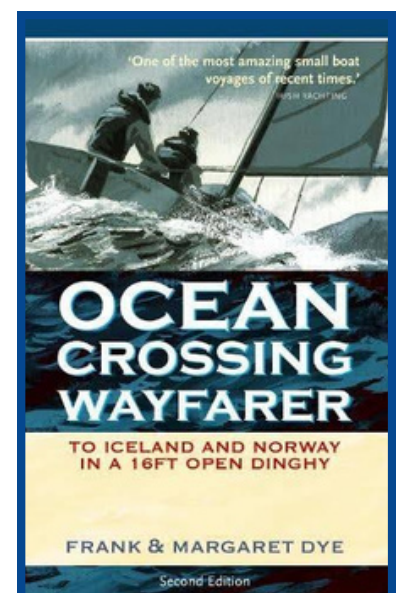
OCEAN CROSSING WAYFARER

BY FRANK DYE

My second recommendation has to be *Ocean Crossing Wayfarer* by Frank Dye.

At some stage, most of us have either sailed a Wayfarer, raced against one, learned to sail in one, or know somebody who has.

I actually read this book for the first time back in 2017. A friend of mine, his six-year-old son and I decided to go camping and do a bit of sailing on a proper big Scottish loch. I wanted somewhere with a bit of adventure, so we packed the camping gear, loaded up my GP14 and headed for Loch Lomond.

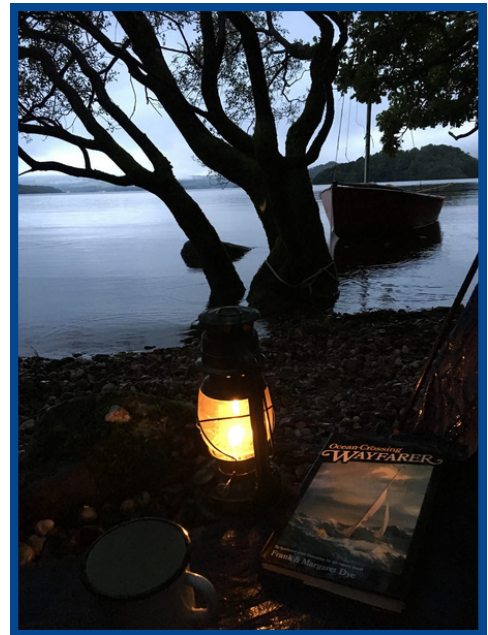


We set off from Balmaha Marina and sailed out onto the loch, eventually finding ourselves a nice little spot on one of the islands where we could camp for the weekend.

Naturally, I had to take a sailing book with me, and *Ocean Crossing Wayfarer* was the one I chose.

I remember sitting there in the evenings, reading the book by the light of the campfire, with a stew slowly bubbling away next to me. My good old GP14 was pulled up on the shore of the little island, and all around us was Loch Lomond. I couldn't have picked a better place to read it.

Frank Dye took a 16-foot Wayfarer and sailed it from Scotland to Iceland and Norway. When you consider the size of the boat and where he took it, you can't help wondering whether he was completely mad!



He and his crew mate encountered some pretty serious conditions, including Force 9 gales, capsizing and a broken mast, but they carried on. What I really liked about the book was that it made the whole idea of adventure feel much closer to home. Robin Knox-Johnston had Suhaili and the entire ocean ahead of him, Frank Dye had a 16-foot dinghy. And here I was, sitting on a tiny island in Loch Lomond, with my GP14 pulled up on the beach, reading about what someone had managed to do with a Wayfarer. It certainly made me look at small sailing boats in a slightly different way.

You don't necessarily need a huge yacht or an enormous budget to have a proper sailing adventure. Sometimes you just need a small boat, somewhere you want to go and a bit of determination. And perhaps a slightly questionable attitude towards the weather!

If your boat is currently sitting under a cover waiting for spring, *Ocean Crossing Wayfarer* is definitely worth picking up. Just be careful – you might start getting ideas about where your own boat could take you.

Why I think this book is a must-read for dinghy sailors.

Frank Dye's adventures in the Wayfarer helped demonstrate just how capable a small open dinghy could be. His experience, together with Margaret's (his wife), eventually influenced the development of another boat that many of us will know – the Wanderer.

Ian Proctor, the designer of the Wayfarer, befriended Dye's and worked with their extensive cruising experience. Margaret was particularly keen to have a smaller and lighter boat than the Wayfarer, and this led Ian Proctor to design the Wanderer in 1979. In many ways, you could think of it as the younger, smaller brother of the Wayfarer – a boat designed with cruising and practicality in mind, but carrying some of the experience gained from those rather serious adventures. And Ian Proctor was no stranger to designing boats that most of us will recognise. Apart from the Wayfarer and Wanderer, he was also responsible for the Topper and many other well-known dinghy designs and boat parts.

So when you read *Ocean Crossing Wayfarer*, you're not just reading about two people taking a small dinghy to Iceland and Norway. You're also reading about the experience and ideas that helped shape some of the boats that many of us have sailed ourselves. For me, that makes the book even more interesting. It makes you look at a small cruising dinghy in a slightly different way and wonder, "I wonder where I could actually take this thing?"

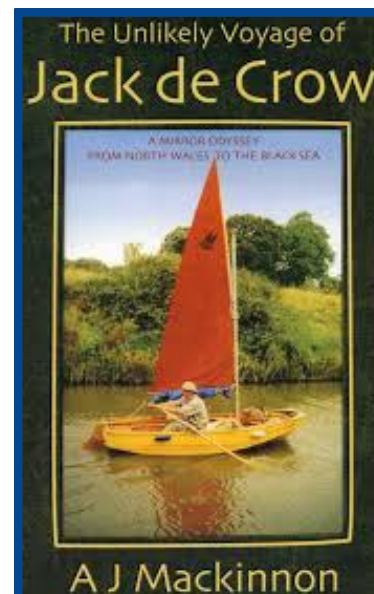
THE UNLIKELY VOYAGE OF JACK DE CROW

BY A. J. MACKINNON

This is another one I really enjoyed.

It's a story of an ordinary 'bloke next door', A. J. Mackinnon, a schoolteacher who set off in an 11-foot Mirror dinghy, originally intending to spend a couple of weeks sailing the River Severn. Somehow, this little trip turned into a 4,900 km adventure through 12 countries, 282 locks and eventually all the way to the Black Sea.

Jack de Crow, his boat, was named after a crow that used to visit the school where he worked.



What I really like about this book is that it isn't about some huge ocean-going yacht or an experienced professional sailor. It is basically a bloke, a tiny Mirror dinghy and an idea that gets completely out of hand! In a good way of course.

There is plenty of sailing, but also a lot of humour, strange encounters and the sort of situations where you think, "Why on earth did he decide to do that?"

It is a really easy and enjoyable read, and I think anyone who has ever sailed a small dinghy will get a particular kick out of it.

Sometimes all you need is a small boat, some time on your hands and a slightly questionable idea! Sailing isn't just about big boats, a suitcase full of money and a crowd of people to crew them. Sometimes a small boat, a bit of determination and a sense of adventure are more than enough.

Until next time...

So, while the boats are safely tucked away for another winter, why not keep the sailing going from the comfort of the sofa?

Light the fire, pour yourself something nice, pick up a good sailing book – and start planning where you're going to take the boat next year.

Happy reading, and fair winds!

Skipper Pav

THE PRO-AM CHALLENGE

SATURDAY 17TH OCTOBER 2025

FIRST RACE STARTS AT 2.00PM

THE PRO-AM CHALLENGE HAS BECOME ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR EVENTS OF THE YEAR.

JUST LIKE IN GOLF, WE PAIR UP A PROFESSIONAL (AN INSTRUCTOR OR EXPERIENCED RACER) WITH AN AMATEUR (A NEW TO RACING SAILOR).

A SERIES OF RACES IN DOUBLE HANDED WILL TAKE PLACE OVER THE AFTERNOON WITH BOTH THE PRO'S AND THE AM'S TAKING IT IN TURNS TO HELM!

YOU DON'T NEED TO FIND YOUR OWN PARTNER AS WE WILL DRAW NAMES OUT OF A HAT TO DETERMINE WHO IS SAILING WITH WHO, ON THE AFTERNOON.

SECURE YOUR SPOT ON EVENTBRITE NOW BEFORE THEY SELL OUT!

LAST ONE
THIS YEAR!





PSC JUNIOR REGATTA 2026



ZOE

PSC JUNIOR REPRESENTATIVE

Recently we had the junior regatta where 11 enthusiastic young sailors took part in 3 fun and competitive games with some sailing and paddling! There was not much wind but we still made the most of the nice hot weather. The group was split into two teams of four and one team of three and made some creative team names!

We started the afternoon with teams paddling out (on paddle boards) to three oppies secured onto temporary buoys in the lake. Teams were only allowed 2 people on the paddle board at a time and they had to get their whole team on the oppie and paddle both the board and boat back. This first game caused lots of confusion and chaos, but it all worked out with all three teams making it back with big smiles and giggles.

Next, we had a small tennis ball scavenger hunt where teams stayed in the same boats but had to paddle and/or sail around collecting lots of little balls with different point values. This created lots of excitement and competitiveness with boats racing to collect as many balls as they possibly could.

Finally, they did a scavenger hunt that was set up before the event started. We sent everyone out sailing in pairs to a certain buoy where they had to control their boats and stop alongside in order to collect the message (the lack of wind made it very easy to stop) pairs had to come back and answer the sailing related question and do the funny task written on the sheet of paper. This had everyone laughing! Teams got 3 points for coming 1st, 2 points for coming 2nd and 1 point for coming 3rd and somehow all the teams managed to draw!

The junior regatta was a very fun afternoon and it wouldn't have been possible without everyone's help! So thank you, Oscar and Vicky for helping, Sue and Ursula for being on the safety boat, Niamh for helping to organise and everyone in the kitchen who provided us with excellent food and snacks after a tiring afternoon on the water!

The more people we have the better so if this sounds like an exciting afternoon to you, come along to the other junior regatta taking place on the 6th of September for similar fun and games!



Diary of a not so Able Sea(wo)man

JULIE MAY

After a few years trying to achieve a reasonable level of competence in a dinghy, I decided that this was the year to take on the challenge of sailing a big boat and signed up for a trip with Hewett's Croatian Tours!

Saturday

The first day dawned not very bright and far too early as we had a 7 am flight booked. My first duty was to make sure that the skipper got to the airport on time! Slightly regretting my offer to be the taxi driver, I breathed a sigh of relief when we got to there with plenty of time to spare.

Arriving at the marina in Zadar, was quite an experience, there were yachts as far as the eye could see! We checked in and found our home for the week, 'Pizulot'. We stocked up and set off in the late afternoon sun, heading north, away from the heat of the marina. We motored along due to the lack of wind and I even took a turn at the wheel.

We anchored for the night in a lovely bay, near to some rather grumpy Italians who suggested that we were too close to their boat. The skipper was happy that there was plenty of room so we stayed where we were and headed out to enjoy the first of our many swims of the week.

After a great evening celebrating Tim's birthday we settled down for the night and much to my surprise I slept through without a problem. Waking up the next morning was fantastic, the bay was calm and still, the air was fresh and I was really looking forward to the day.



“ WAKING UP THE NEXT MORNING WAS FANTASTIC, THE BAY WAS CALM AND STILL AND THE AIR WAS FRESH... ”





Sunday

There was some wind and after a quick lesson on which ropes were which we were sailing along very happily. The time passed quickly. People took turns helming and we practised our tacking upwind.

After lunch we anchored near the wreck of an Italian ship called the Michele which provided a great opportunity for snorkelling – there were loads of fish making the ship their home. We swam back to the boat and continued on to our anchorage for the night. An evening stroll through the village of Ist finished off another great day.



Monday

The next morning we realised that we were running low on water so hatched a plan to head to a petrol station where we would also be able to top up the water tanks. It was interesting to see a petrol station set up for cars on one side of the pumps and boats on the other! Having topped up with water and diesel we set off for our next anchorage in another beautiful bay.



Tuesday

A great morning snorkelling around the bay then a good day's sailing. We were lucky enough to sail past a pod of dolphins. We found another bay for the evening with lots of fish and I even managed to spot an octopus.

After dinner we watched the somewhat disappointing England v Ghana match but at least we didn't lose!





Wednesday

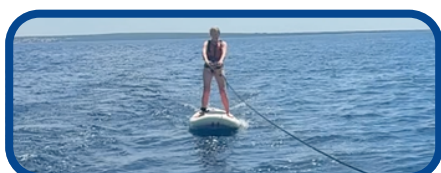
Another beautiful morning dawned and we continued our travels south, heading back towards Zadar. There was some good wind so the skipper decided it was time to try the gennaker. It took quite a bit of work to get everything ready but once the sail was hoisted and we had a great session sailing along. The sight of the gennaker and main sail goosewinging was fantastic.

After an unflinching assessment of my first attempt at rope coiling as being 'pants', Tim very patiently taught me how to do it properly and, after being convinced that my brain was never going to let my hands make the correct movement, I finally got the hang of it.



The wind dropped so the afternoon was spent in fun and games with people taking turns to stand on the paddleboard whilst being towed along behind the boat.

That evening we anchored at Ist again and had a great time competing in the quiz that Emma had written especially for the trip. My prophetic suggestion of naming our team 'The Winners' was turned down by my teammate and we went for INTBO (I'll let you try and work that one out!).



“ AFTER AN UNFLINCHING ASSESSMENT OF MY FIRST ATTEMPT AT ROPE COILING AS BEING 'PANTS', TIM PATIENTLY TAUGHT ME HOW TO ”





Thursday

After several days of hardly leaving the boat, it was time for some walking so we set off through Ist and up the hill to the church of St Mary. The steep climb and heat were worth it for the fantastic views from the top. The stop on the way back for ice-creams and cold drinks was very welcome and we were soon back on the boat, on our way to the next stop.



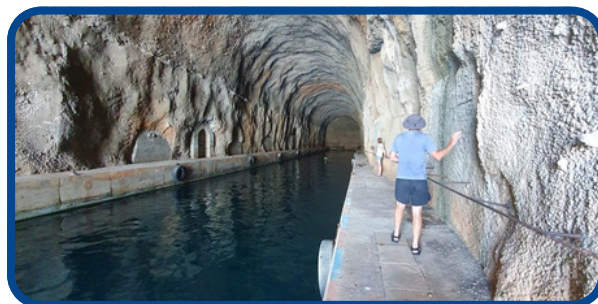
“

IT LOOKED LIKE SOMEWHERE A BOND VILLAIN
WOULD BE LURKING BUT ALL WE FOUND WERE
SOME PIGEONS AND SWIFTS!

”



We tied up in a Submarine pen, built by the Russians, but now disused. It looked like somewhere a Bond villain would be lurking but all we found were some pigeons and swifts! Another group, on a catamaran tried to get us to move on as they wanted to hold a party but we stayed where we were and had another relaxing evening; swimming, eating and playing cards.





Friday

We spent some time in the morning practising laying the anchor and then sailed back towards the marina, along with a lot of other boats. We stopped at another petrol station in Zadar and most of us got off to walk through the old town and get an ice-cream. The plan was for Tim to come alongside the end of the pier at the other side of town and we would all hop back on board. However, the wind had picked up and the water was quite choppy. The swimmers jumping off the pier didn't help either.

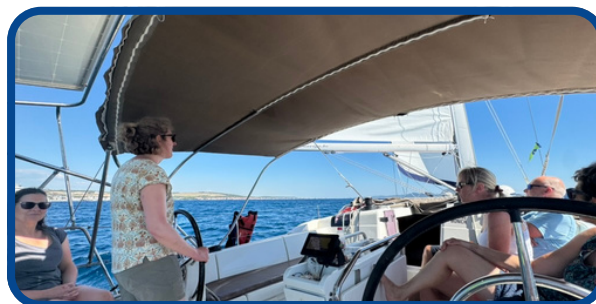
A new plan was hatched which involved lassoing a bollard on the side of the pier so that the boat could be pulled in and it would make it easier for us to get on. Despite some anxious looks all round, it worked well, we all got on and got the boat out of the way of the incoming water taxi just in time.

As the wind had strengthened we took the opportunity to sail upwind for a while, which was quite an experience, I felt like I was on a pirate ship at a theme park! We had to turn back downwind to get to the marina and as it was now or never, I finally plucked up the courage to have a go at helming under sail. I even managed a gybe and although I don't think that I'll ever feel confident to be in charge of one, I definitely enjoyed being part of the team.

Emma had an evening flight booked so we said goodbye and set off to a restaurant on the other side of the marina. Walking around made it even more noticeable just how many boats were there. We all had a great meal and then went back to pack up and get some sleep.

Saturday

A quick breakfast and a final tidy up on the boat and we were all off to the airport.



It was a fantastic week and I'd like to say thank you to Tim, Pascale, Steve, Jeanette, Emma and Helen for sharing my first sailing adventure, some might say that they're all superheroes but that's not my story to tell :)

RACE OFFICERS: **DOES THE RACING IPAD GIVE YOU NIGHTMARES?**

HELP!

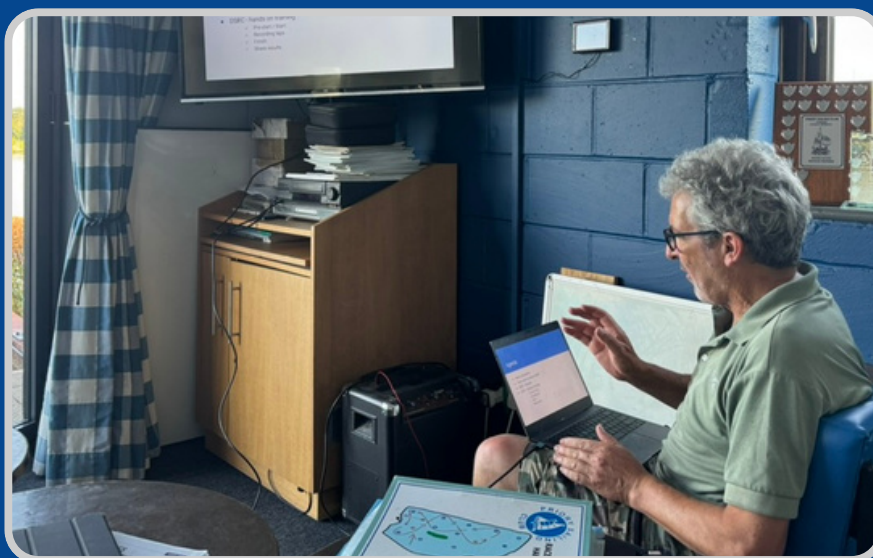
If the answer is 'yes', then don't worry, help is at hand!

Paul Williams, PSC's racing iPad expert, has developed a brilliant training session aimed at helping race officers get to grips with the iPad.

The training is run in small group sessions and everyone gets to use a device throughout the session for maximum experience.

Using his computer development skills, Paul has built a real race simulation so that you can use the device as if you were running a real race - it's a fantastic way to learn 'hands on'.

If you would like to take part in the next training session, please email Paul at: paulmw27@gmail.com



The training session run by Paul was really helpful. I used to dread using the iPad and thought it would just be easier using paper, but actually I think the iPad is easier! I feel much more confident now.

Familiar Faces

WILLIAM ARMITAGE

When William isn't running Sea Survival courses at the club, or paying bills in his role as the Club's Treasurer, he can often be found down in Gosport on his beloved and very beautiful yacht Longbow.

Our thanks to William for taking part in this feature.



How long have you been a member of Priory Sailing Club and why did you decide to join?

"I have always pottered around in boats, but as a school boy, I sailed a Firefly and then a GP14. This then progressed to my own Fireball, which I sailed on the Severn Estuary and then Chew Magna lake in Somerset, moving to Datchet Water and then Pitsford Reservoir more locally before joining Priory in 2001. Joining because it was a much more friendly club than others locally and club rules 'just about' allowed a 16'3" Fireball. Though not realising how unsuitable Priory is for such a craft!"

When are we most likely to see you at the club?

"I sail on Sunday mornings at the club and enjoy undertaking maintenance tasks around the club at all times.

I now spend a huge amount of time maintaining and sailing my 40ft wooden classic boat in the Solent and beyond, which I simply love being onboard."

Night sailing in Portsmouth.



Familiar Faces

Longbow in the Falmouth Classic Race

What's your favourite boat and why?

"For dinghy sailing, I enjoyed trapezing on my Fireball. It felt so exhilarating and straightforward, so different from trying to trapeze on our Omegas!!

For big boats, I just love my wooden classic yacht which handles like a big dinghy rather than a fibreglass caravan with a mast which is the market for many new yachts."



William sailing his Fireball at Grafham Sailing Club.



Do you have any sailing aspirations?

"I have not undertaken a transatlantic crossing, but sailing from south to north through the Caribbean was great, as was cruising in the remoteness of northern Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. Though perhaps the best cruising ground is the west coast of Scotland."

Familiar Faces



William in his Fireball on Priory Lake.



William maintaining his boat cover aboard Longbow.

What's your number one tip for people who have just started sailing?

"My main tip for new sailors is simply 'enjoy it', whether this just feeling the wind and boat movement on your skin, or competitive racing or 'living with the sea' on a bigger boat. This may become a lifelong addiction so beware, but what is so great is that you can do this for a lifetime."



Longbow looking beautiful at night.



SOLAR ECLIPSE 2026: THE PRIORY EDITION

Lots of members arrived at the club on 12th August 2026 to make the most of the PSC balcony to view the eclipse. There were a variety of viewing devices, but none worked better than the club colander! A special mention has to go to Zoe and Fraser who watched the event from the Omega!



THE HISTORY OF PRIORY SAILING CLUB 1978 TO 2004



Priory Sailing Club was formed in 1978. In two years' time, the club will reach its 50 year anniversary!

In 2004, member Roy Beard set about capturing the history of the club in a small book, which is a wonderful record of the club's development. In forthcoming issues of Telltales, we will reproduce chapters from Roy's book for you to enjoy.

Preface

Sunday 15th December 2002 was the last day of Priory Sailing Club's 2002 Frostbite Series for dinghy racing and thus the day when the winner of the Series would be known. Nothing particularly remarkable about that you might say, which is true, but there was something very remarkable about the winner. The winner was 76-year-old John Howard, who joined the club a year after it was formed.

That achievement set me wondering about all that had happened to the club during John's membership and before. How did the club come to be formed, what were the milestones in its history and are there any photographs of the early years? Have the initial aspirations of the founding members been achieved? How, when and why were the lake and the Country Park formed, and what was there before the park was created?

I decided to ask John. What he told me encouraged me to make further enquires that eventually led me to make this record of my findings - The History of Priory Sailing Club. I hope members, and perhaps others, will enjoy reading this record made over the course of 2003 - 4.

Initially I spoke to those people John mentioned as being involved from an early stage in the club's history. They gave me their recollections and in some cases documents about the formation of the club.



In addition they gave me the names of other people and in most cases their telephone numbers or addresses. I was therefore able to contact many people involved with the creation of the club. All received my enquiries with enthusiasm and were able to add to, or confirm and in some instances give a variation to my growing knowledge about the early days of the club.

I am indebted to all these people for the information they supplied without which the following could not have been written. I have therefore recorded in the acknowledgements at the end of this account all those to whom I have spoken and who provided information.

During my enquires and literature searches I came across fascinating references - well I found them fascinating - fascinating references to the use of the land and river, and the activities that occurred in or near to Priory Sailing Club in the past, including some that went back a long way into the past.

I have therefore included a section at the end of the report on what I have called the “Pre-history of Priory SailingClub”, just on the off-chance that it may also be of interest and fascination to some who read this story.

Roy Beard
Member from 1987
Solo 3603

HOW DID THE CLUB BEGIN?

It was apparently spring 1978 when North Bedfordshire Borough Council approached Ed Barker with the idea of forming a sailing club on a lake that did not actually exist!

Their intention was to create Priory Country Park on Council land off Barkers Lane, and the lake was to be created from an empty gravel pit within the Park. The name Priory came from Newnham Priory that existed from 1166 to 1541 on a site close to the new Park.

Ed Barker, who by coincidence resided in Barkers Lane, was a lecturer in electrical engineering at Bedford College of Higher Education on the Mander Site in Cauldwell Street, Bedford. By all accounts Ed was also a well-qualified sailor, for he gave evening courses at the College for both the RYA Navigators and Offshore Skippers qualifications. An advertisement was placed in the local paper inviting those interested in forming a sailing club to attend a meeting at the College of Higher Education. Ed Barker contacted those who had attended his RYA courses to encourage them to attend this meeting. Amongst these was Eric (Taff) Brand, an engineer at Goldington Power Station, John Harrington, a structural engineer in the North Bedfordshire Borough Council Offices, John Hall, Clive Lawless and Doug Haigh. The date of this meeting, which Ed chaired, is not known but John Hall, John Harrington and Clive Lawless believe it was probably in late summer or early autumn, perhaps August, of 1978. About 30 people

attended and during the course of the meeting, when it became apparent that there was sufficient interest in forming a club, the attendees were asked to record their names and addresses in a register for future contact and pay a small founder members fee, probably £1. An interim committee was formed to propose a name and draft a constitution, byelaws, classes of membership and membership fees for the club. Doug Haigh and Clive Lawless recalled that another evening meeting was arranged shortly after, probably early September, but this was held on site to inspect what was to become a lake but at the time was an empty gravel pit with graders still on site for finishing the work of shaping the “lake”, the base of which was waiting to be levelled.

There were other groups of people interested in using the future lake. Two of these were separate canoeing organisations, the Viking Kayak Club and the Bedfordshire Canoeists Association. The latter was founded in the mid 1960s. The first chairman was Tony Hulett from whom Derrick Harper (or Copper to all his friends) took over, remaining chairman for the next 25 years. Copper recalls a Priory Lake Users Group (or PLUG for short) being set up in 1978/9. The membership of PLUG comprised anglers, bird watchers, Viking Kayak Club, Bedfordshire Canoeists Association, and sailing and rowing interests. In fact the rowers were looking for some lanes alongside a straight shore and John Harrington recalls that the North shoreline of the lake was made straight for this purpose. The sailing, which is

incompatible with rowing or with the marked rowing lanes, was to be on the southern side of the lake. Clive Lawless recalls seeing some lanes marked with buoys alongside the straight north shore shortly after the lake was flooded in 1979. However, the rowers decided that the lanes were not long enough for their purpose and lost interest in using the lake. The other potential users did not lose interest and continued through PLUG to find a compatible arrangement to pursue their individual activities.

It would seem most likely that the lake was flooded by means of an underground pipe that had been laid between the Marina (which was open to the river) and the lake. After the lake was filled the pipe served the important purpose of ensuring that the water in the lake is maintained at the same level as that in the river.

On Tuesday 26th June 1979 Paul Cochrane, also a lecturer at Bedford College of Higher Education and no doubt a colleague of Ed Barker, appears to be acting as secretary for the sailing interests. He wrote to all "members", presumably those at the first meeting in the autumn of 1978 who registered an interest in forming a club. One of those was Doug Haigh (and it is from Doug's file that much of this information comes) asking them to attend a meeting at Bedford College of Higher Education. The purpose of the meeting was to enable the interim committee to provide the "members" with a progress report on Priory Sailing Club. Clearly the club's name had been chosen at this time and drafts for the constitution, byelaws, classes of membership and membership fees, which are retained in the club's records, were also available for approval. Because only 12 people attended this meeting no action was taken and Paul Cochrane wrote again to ask members to attend another meeting, this time with their friends as well, on Tuesday 3rd July 1979 starting at 7.30 pm at the College. This meeting was successful, for Paul Cochrane wrote on 12th July 1979 that at the meeting on 3rd July the Constitution of the Priory Sailing Club was accepted by the founder members. Presumably they also accepted the Byelaws, Classes of membership and fees. They also set up a committee, which the constitution required.

The first Officers of the club were E C (Ed) Barker Commodore, E J (Taff) Brand JP Vice Commodore, John Harrington Treasurer and Paul Cochrane Secretary. The empty pit had been flooded so the club did indeed have a lake – an essential facility for a sailing club!

In the same letter of the 12th July, Paul pointed out that funds were now required to pay for the use of the lake and the hire or purchase of a Portakabin. The agreed membership fees for the part year until the end of 1979 were: –

Family membership	£8
Ordinary member	£5
Cadet (under 17 years)	£1

In addition to these fees, founder members had to pay their founder membership fee, and both were required immediately as sailing was to start on Saturday 4th August 1979 at 14.00 hours.

The defining moment for the creation of Priory Sailing Club could therefore be said to be some time after 7.30 pm on Tuesday 3rd July 1979 at Bedford College of Higher Education.

For those who paid their fees immediately there was the pleasure of joining the first sail on Saturday 4th August 1979. Access to the lake was through the compound of H Kitcheners Marina. Whilst boats could be taken through their compound on launching trolleys, cars had to be left outside the compound. Sailing was to finish at 18.00 hours and details of future meetings were to be made available on the day. Priory Sailing Club was in business. The financial year started 1st January and family membership for the first full year of 1980 was £15.00. Although rule 2 of the Club Byelaws did not permit sailing unless a rescue facility was available of a club safety boat or two dinghies sailing, the club did not have a safety boat at this early stage and therefore relied upon the two-boat rule. Although no mention appears to be made about board sailors (alternatively called windsurfers), there were many who had taken to this new sport. Jim and Sue Lloyd took board sailing instruction from Mike and David Clifton and Jim recalls that there were about ten dinghies on the lake at the time.

**FOR
SALE**

ADVERTISE WITH US!

Whether its a boat for sale, free equipment to give away, or a service you can offer to members, you can advertise in Telltales, absolutely free of charge!

The next edition of Telltales will be sent out in mid November, so all you need to do is to send us your advertisement text and any photos by 20th November 2026.

PRIORITYELLTALES@GMAIL.COM

BLUE GREEN ALGAE

One of the consequences of this record breaking summer has been that our lake has had more blue green algae than previous years. We are assured that as long as we all exercise normal personal hygiene when we come off the water that it does not pose a significant health hazard. Our regular water testing shows that our lake is significantly cleaner than the Great Ouse, with none of the E. coli that is present in the river.

CLUBHOUSE CLEANING – CAN YOU HELP?

We have a great lake to sail on, and an enviable number of craft for members to sail/paddle/surf/fall of/ capsize, free training for child members, free mentoring for new members, lots of free social events and we achieve all this at the same time as keeping membership fees as reasonable as possible - by applying successfully for grants - but most of all saving shed loads of money by having an ethos of VOLUNTEERING

Can you spare a couple of hours once a month (or less often if we get loads of help). We work in pairs, work out a time which suits us both, develop a routine among both of us, and enjoy a chat and a cuppa at the same time. AND we have found people tend to keep the clubhouse generally cleaner when they know their friends are cleaning up!!

Please contact:

[JEANETTE - jlile@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jlile@hotmail.co.uk)



SPOTTED AT THE CLUB...



Our members bring all sorts of talents to our club!

The weed boat has been essential to the maintenance of the lake this year, we'd be stuck without it.

A big thank you to Charles for welding our weed boat back together!



A STORY FOR TELLTALES?

Thank you again to all of the members who have contributed to this edition of Telltales.

If you've enjoyed reading, perhaps you'd consider writing a piece for the next edition? Whether it's a story from Priory, or an adventure from further afield, we'd be very pleased to hear from you!

Please send your article, along with any photos to:

PRIORITYELLTALES@GMAIL.COM

Our next copy deadline is:

20TH NOVEMBER 2026

THANK YOU!



WHAT'S ON AT THE CLUB?

- **Friday Evenings 4.30 pm – Friday Afloat.** The club will be open on Friday evenings (with a Safety Boat on duty). The club will be running several Friday evening events throughout the summer, further details will be sent out shortly.
 - **Saturday Mornings 10.00 am to 1.00 pm – Dinghy Mentoring and Windsurfing Workshops.** Improve your Dinghy Sailing or Windsurfing skills with the mentoring sessions run by our own experienced Instructors. Every Saturday morning until the end of October. Book online via Eventbrite.
 - **Wednesday Evenings 4.30 pm – Wednesday on the Water.** The Club will be open on Wednesday evenings with a Safety Boat on duty. After a sail, why not use the club barbecue and use the balcony with the best view in Bedford.
 - **Last Sunday of the month – Lazy Sunday Afternoon Racing.** Sailors new to racing may wish to sail in these races on Sunday afternoons where extra advice and detailed briefings before each race will be available. There are ten races in the Series. Two races on one Sunday afternoon in each of five consecutive months starting in April. Five races to count for a placing in the Series. First race briefing is at 2.00pm and then racing as appropriate for participants and weather conditions. Fun prizes on the day.
 - **Monday 31st August – Bank Holiday – Club Open.** The club will be open from 10.00 am with a Safety Boat on duty. Club boats will be available to book on Eventbrite.
 - **Sunday 6th September 2.00 pm – Junior Regatta.** An opportunity for PSC juniors to take part in this exciting event. Everyone is welcome, whatever your experience or confidence, and there will be plenty of instructors to guide you.
 - **Saturday 12th September – 2.00 pm** – Double Hander racing. For helm and crew, two races of 40-minutes. First race starting at 2:00pm. Use your own boat or book a club double-hander on Eventbrite
 - ***SUNDAY 13th SEPTEMBER – BART'S BASH***. A chance to take part in the world's largest sailing event and enjoy a PSC party! This is one of our club's biggest events of the year. Apart from the race itself we have music and a free BBQ, so it's an opportunity to get the whole family at the club for a party. Anyone who can sail can join in. Book a club boat and your Barbecue on Eventbrite - all welcome!
 - **Saturday 17th October – Pro-Am Challenge** – the first race starts at **2.00pm**. Six experienced racers will be paired with six novice racers for an afternoon of racing. Sign up on Eventbrite now!
 - **Saturday 1st November – Winter Restrictions.** Winter restrictions come into effect from 1st November. Lake use is limited to Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays. Only the northern half of the lake can be used during the winter period.
 - **Saturday 7th November – Winter Lay-up Barbecue and Sailing in the Dark.** Marking the end of our summer sailing season at PSC we will hold our annual Winter Lay Up BBQ starting around 6.00 pm. We will also be running a 'sailing in the dark session' ahead of the BBQ. It may be a race or perhaps just sailing together around a course in the dark; we will decide on the format on the day to suit the conditions and participants.
- A full list of our events can be found on the website [here](#).



TELLTALES

PRIORYTELLTALES@GMAIL.COM