

An essential guide to get kids sailing

£2.75

Get Sailing



See inside!
Boat buying
guide

What to wear?

Keeping safe and warm

How to
get Started

Training, schools and holidays

Published by

YACHTS
& YACHTING



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Tel: +44 (0)1702 582245, Fax: +44 (0)1702 588434

EDITOR: Gael Pawson PRODUCTION: Peter Spence TEXT: Helen Fretter, Dawn Hinsley PIC ED: Graeme Sweeney
DESIGN: Danielle Smith

AD SALES: John Arthur, James Bergersen AD PROD: Tom Ramsay, Rachel Pedlar, Kylie Alder AD DESIGN: Warren McGee
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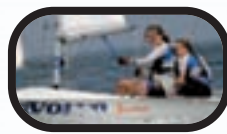
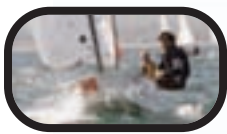


ILLUSTRATION CLAUDIA MARTE FOR BOA BO SAILING

Why sailing?

Sailing is a sport for everyone...

Everyone loves the beach, but what can you do when you've had enough of building sandcastles? There's nowhere better to be when the summer hits than on the water. The beauty of a sport like sailing is that the whole family can get involved, and you can choose the kind of sailing that appeals to you; fast, exciting and competitive, or relaxing, quiet and laid-back.

It can be as simple as sailing as a family to have a picnic on a secluded beach somewhere, to joining a cadet group at a local sailing club, or even racing at national and international level. You might be sailing in a boat on your own, or with other people. Whatever kind of sailing you choose, it's a lot of fun both on and off the water and you are guaranteed to make lots of new friends.

Where can I sail?

Sailing takes place all over the world,

and you don't even need to be near the sea to take part. There are sailing clubs on many lakes and reservoirs around the country, so if you live in Birmingham you might actually be closer to a sailing club than if you live in Southampton! Inland waters are often a very good place to learn as they tend to be sheltered and can be quite small. They also tend to run sailing all year round, while many clubs on the sea or based in rivers or harbours have a few months off in the winter.



PHOTO SASHA LEAN-HERCOT/RYA*

Above Modern beginners' and youth boats like the Pico are simple to rig and light enough for youngsters to move around.

What will I be sailing?

If you start off dinghy sailing you might be sailing on your own in a boat like a Pico or an Optimist before progressing, often depending on your weight, to a Topper and then a Laser. Triple Olympic medallist Ben Ainslie started off in an Optimist before moving on to the Laser, the dinghy he won two of his Olympic medals in. You might start off in a two-man boat, perhaps crewing for a family member — two-times Olympic gold medallist Shirley Robertson first sailed with her father in a two-man Miracle dinghy. Many brothers and sisters also sail together in popular youth or junior classes such as the Mirror, Cadet or RS Feva, or you may end up sailing with a friend or another adult at your sailing club.

Whatever class of boat you start sailing in, there will always be new ones out there and you can move on to bigger more exciting boats as your skills grow.

How do I start?

There are many options, and these are covered in this booklet. You could go on a sailing holiday: the great thing about this option is that you can go somewhere warm to learn, get top instruction, and if any of



PHOTO SASHA LEAN-HERCOT/RYA*

Above The Mirror is a traditional youth class, but one that lots of adults sail in too as parent-child teams. It also has a symmetrical spinnaker making it a great learning curve for the crew.

Left Whether you learn at home or abroad, sailing is a great way of making a beach holiday even more fun.

Below Modern youth boats like the RS Feva have simple asymmetric spinnakers for lots of high-speed fun.



PHOTO SASHA LEAN-HERCOT/RYA*

your family doesn't want to sail there are often other activities for them to do.

Or you could go on a course at a sailing school. There are lots of schools around the country, running courses recognised by sailing's national authority, the RYA.

Your other option is to join a sailing club. Most clubs are run by the members themselves, but many run training programmes, especially for young sailors, often known as 'cadets'. Fees for cadets are often very low and your parents don't necessarily have to sail themselves.



PHOTO SASHA LEAN-HERCOT/RYA*



Any top tips?

The most important thing is to make sure you have fun. You won't enjoy it very much if you get cold and wet, so the right clothing is important. Don't expect to be brilliant straight away, sailing is a sport where you will improve your skills over the course of your whole life. People who start at a younger age than you will have a

headstart, but there's nothing to stop you catching them up. Olympic sailor Laura Baldwin didn't start sailing until she was 12, and famous round-the-world yachtswoman Dee Caffari didn't start sailing until she was an adult. The right boat is also important, and it's good if you can join a sailing club that has lots of people the same age as you —

things are always much more fun with good friends to share things with. Sailing should put a smile on your face. 🌸

Above There are many different kinds of sailing to enjoy from racing to going for a picnic.

Below No matter what boat you learn to sail in, the principles are the same as those sailed by top Olympians and round-the-world stars.

How did the stars start?



Ellen MacArthur

Ellen started sailing on her Aunt's 26ft yacht, 'Cabaret' when she was five years old. She used to sail with her family, cruising around the estuaries of East Anglia, and later across to Holland and France. A few years later she started dinghy sailing at her local reservoir in Derbyshire, and got her first boat, a Blue Peter dinghy, when she was nine.



Ben Ainslie

Ben has three Olympic medals to his name, he learnt to sail and then race in Optimists, then it was straight

into the Laser. 'At 15 I moved into the Laser, but found I wasn't heavy enough and so sailed a Radial for a year until I had the weight. I sailed the standard Laser from 16 onwards.'



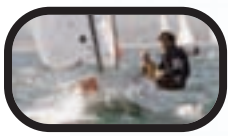
Iain Percy

Olympic gold medallist Iain Percy recalls his first sail, 'I think I got bitten by a Swan! It was in the Norfolk Broads in a Skipper 16 or something like that.' And it didn't put him off? 'No — that was good fun — the whole family in the boat!' Iain was four at the time. He got an old wooden Optimist at the age of seven, which he sailed until he was 13.



Ian Walker

Ian has won two Olympic silver medals and skippered the British America's Cup team. He describes himself as 'a Mirror man through and through'. He started off crewing for his sister at the age of eight at Chipstead SC. 'By 11 I had started helming, but crewed mainly in any boat I could at the club — Fireflies and Graduates mainly.' He then moved into the 420.



With a little help from Claudia Myatt's fantastic children's book *Go Sailing*, we run through some of the basics of dinghy sailing, and have a quick look at cruising boats...

Most people start sailing in dinghies. A dinghy is a small boat which is easy to put in the water. You might start in a boat on your own, in which case the dinghy will have just one sail, a mainsail, or if it is a two-man boat you might have a second sail at the front, a jib. There might even be a third sail, a spinnaker, which is used when you are sailing downwind. For more on the parts of a dinghy, see page 45.

So where do I start?

There are two basics you will need to learn to be able to control your dinghy: controlling the power and steering. These

are both linked to wind direction and wind strength.

Your sails are like the accelerator in a car - they make you go forward. You will have a rope for pulling the sail in and out - this is called a sheet. If it pulls the mainsail in and out, it is called a mainsheet, if it pulls the jib in and out it is called a jib sheet.

You will be steering using a tiller—a long stick which is attached to a rudder which sits in the water and controls the direction of the boat.

The wind

Wind is the invisible free fuel that makes sailing so exciting. Using it to get your boat where you want to go is very satisfying.

Start to develop wind awareness — work out where the wind is coming from in relation to you and your boat. Eventually this will become instinctive. Don't forget the wind can change direction!

The next page shows you the points of sailing which refer to the boat's course in relation to the wind. They've all got names which you'll need to learn. When you are sailing 'upwind', you are sailing towards the wind (close-hauled), while 'downwind' (on a 'run') you will have the wind behind you.

Sailing upwind

Boats can sail in any direction except into the wind. So if that's the way you want to go you have to zig-zag from side to side of the 'no go zone'. This is called beating to windward and involves tacking the boat through about 90 degrees from close-hauled to close-hauled through the

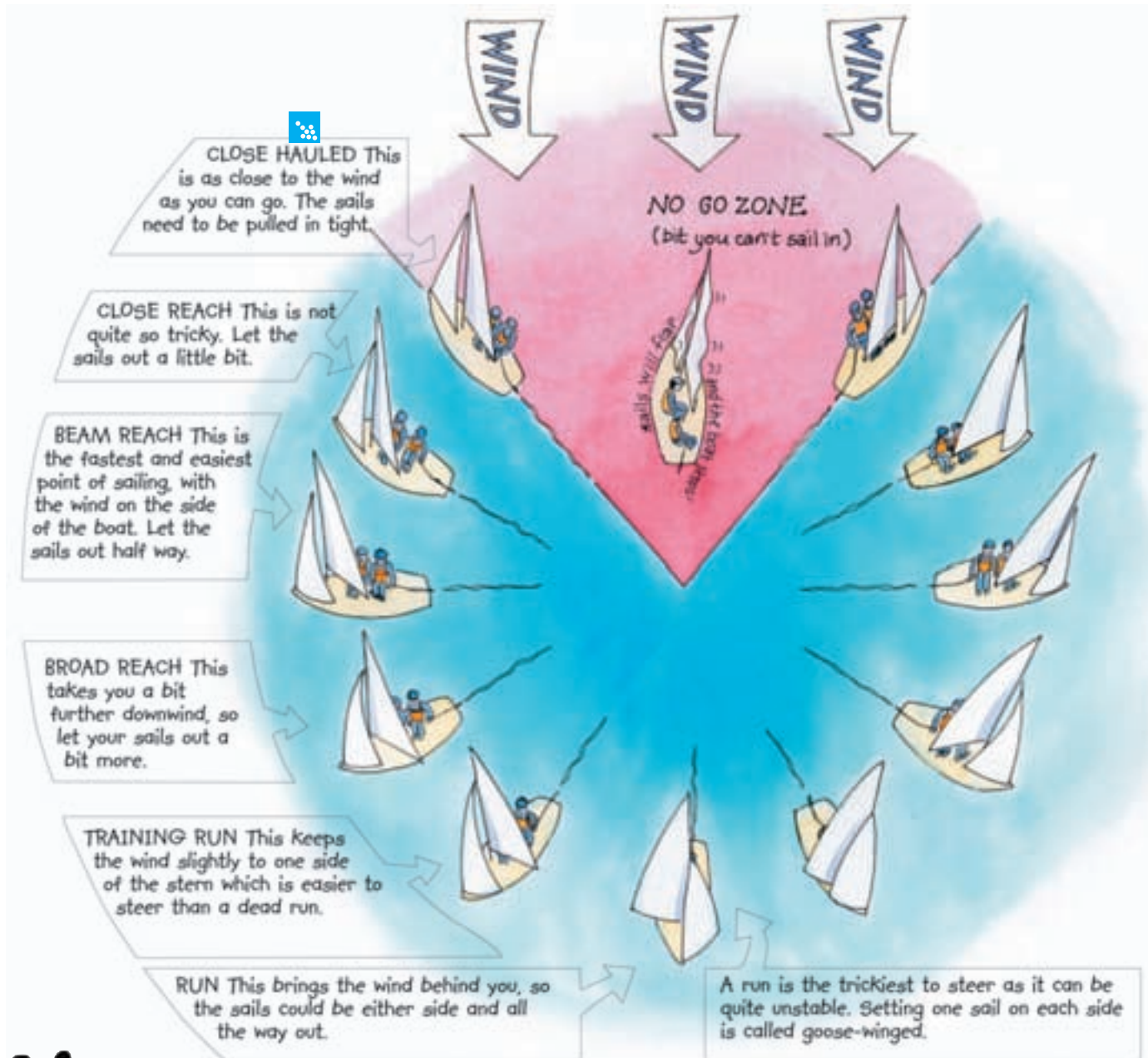


PHOTO PETER NEWTON

ILLUSTRATION CLAUDIA MATE-RVA GO SAUNGI



“Boats can sail in any direction except into the wind; the boat will stop in the no-go zone”

‘no-go zone’. If you end up in the ‘no-go zone’ you will soon know as your sails will flap and the boat will stop, this is worth remembering if you want to stop the boat for any reason or slow down; just head for the no-go zone.

Sail trim

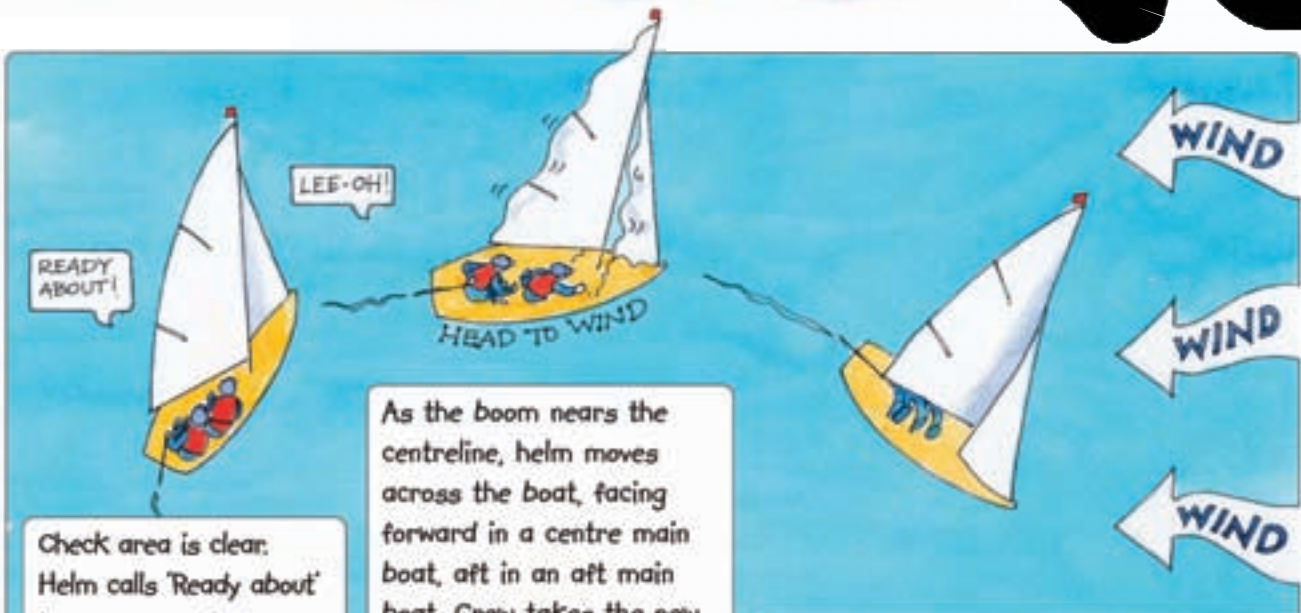
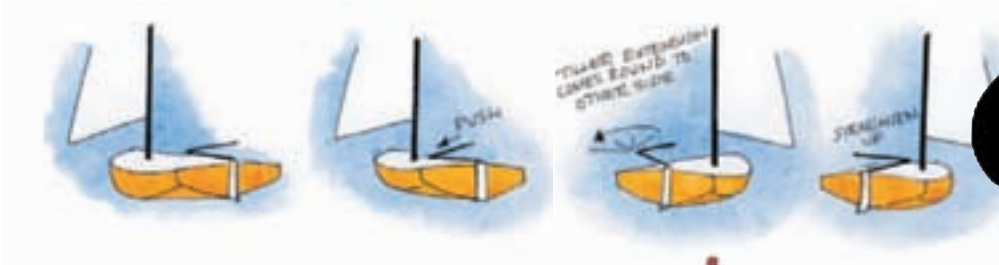
Every time you change direction, even a little

bit, you have to adjust the set of the sails. This is done either by ‘sheeting in’ when turning closer to the wind, or ‘easing the sheets’ when turning away from the wind. How do you know how far to pull the sails in? The simplest way is to pull them in until the sail just stops flapping. If you feel the boat is leaning over too much, then simply let the sail out a bit.



Tacking

Tacking or 'going about' is changing direction by turning the bow of the boat through the wind. Let's look at the basics... here we are turning from starboard tack on to port tack.



Check area is clear. Helm calls 'Ready about' to warn crew. Crew checks area, unclenches jib and replies 'ready'. If it's aft main, helm changes hands (tiller and main sheet). Helm calls Lee-oh and starts the turn by easing the tiller away towards the sail.

As the boom nears the centreline, helm moves across the boat, facing forward in a centre main boat, aft in an aft main boat. Crew takes the new jib sheet and swaps sides. Helm rotates the tiller extension round the end of the tiller.

As the boom reaches the new side, helm sits down and centralises the tiller as the boat points towards its new target and the mainsail fills. In a centre main boat, the tiller is centralised behind the helm's back while he swaps hands (see Tricky Bits on next page)

WATCH OUT
FOR YOUR HEAD ON THE BOOM!

MAKE SURE YOU HAVE ENOUGH SPEED TO COMPLETE THE TACK

CENTRE-BOARD SHOULD BE DOWN





TRICKY BITS things that bother beginners about tacking!

① If the boat goes head to wind and stays there

... you were probably not going fast enough to complete the turn.

... this makes the boat go backwards and turn away from the wind.

OR..... another way to get out of irons is to ease the sail and raise the centreboard; wait for the boat to turn away from the wind. Then sail off!

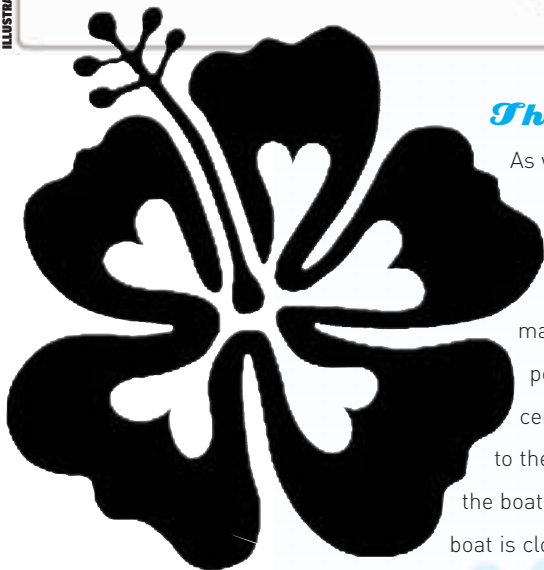
② You've tacked - but now your hands are the wrong way round! Here's what to do

You end up with the tiller behind your back in your front hand and the mainsheet in your back hand....

so how do you swap them? Bring the hand holding the sheet across your body to hold tiller and sheet together...

now the front hand can take the mainsheet while the back hand brings the tiller extension under your arm to the front.

ILLUSTRATION CLAUDIA WYATT-PAVO SAILING



The centreboard

As well as steering the boat and trimming the sails, a sailor has to raise and lower the centreboard or daggerboard to make the boat sail as efficiently as possible. The position of the centreboard is adjusted according to the amount of sideways force on the boat, which is strongest when the boat is close-hauled, but virtually nothing at all on a run.

Balance the boat

Boats sail fastest when upright and flat. With the centreboard down, resisting the sideways force created by the wind and sails, the boat will heel

over. This can be a bit scary for beginners, but it's quite normal. The trick is to use your bodyweight to balance the boat and stop her tipping too far - the further out you sit the more effective your weight will be.

Balancing the boat is important on every point of sailing. On a run this might mean sitting on opposite sides.

Sailing upwind there is more sideways force and the boat will heel in strong winds. You have to respond quickly to balance the boat. Some boats have toe-straps to help you lean out further.

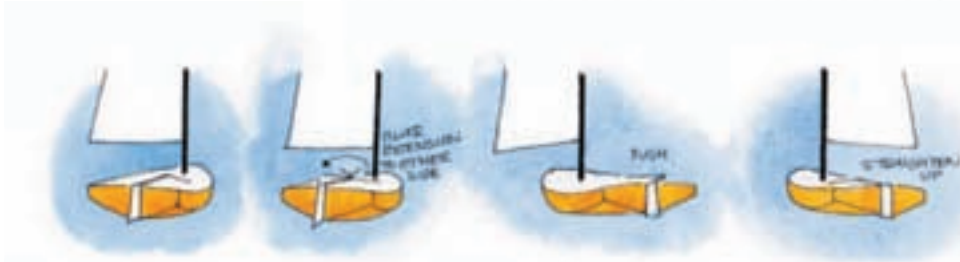
Advanced dinghies might have a trapeze - a wire which you can hook onto so you can lean your whole body out from the side of the boat.



If the wind is too strong and the boat is heeling too much, ease the mainsheet a bit. This will take some of the power out of the sail and avoid a capsize. Heavier dinghies will be less tippy than lightweight boats, but whatever you sail, you'll still need to keep it balanced.

Gybing

This takes the boat from one tack to another when sailing downwind by turning the stern (back) of the boat through the wind. To begin, get yourself on a training run, keep the boat flat and raise the centreboard up about three-quarters...



Aim to gybe from one training run to another

Check the area is clear – especially under the boom. Helm calls 'stand by to gybe'. Crew also checks area and replies 'yes'. Helm pulls in mainsheet to bring boom clear of the shroud. If aft main, helm changes hands (tiller and mainsheet), moves to middle facing aft, rotating tiller extension to other side. If centre main, face forwards, rotate tiller extension round end of tiller and move into the middle. Call 'Gybe Oh!' and start gybe by pushing tiller to windward – to where you were sitting.

As the boom starts to move, helm brings the tiller back to the middle so that helm, boom and tiller are in the middle at the same time. Crew changes jib sheets and moves into the middle of the boat.

Helm sits on new windward side. Crew balances the boat and sets the jib. If centre mainsheet, helm change hands now. (see bit about hand swap under 'tacking')

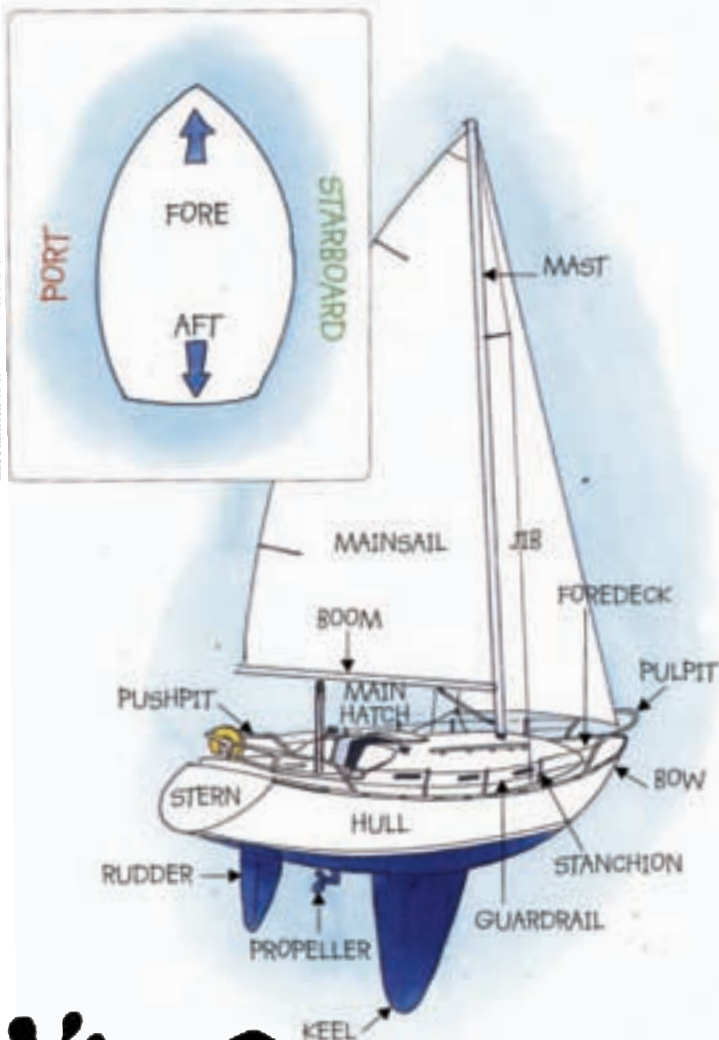
REMEMBER...

CENTRE MAIN...
...face forwards during the gybe and swap hands after the gybe

AFT MAIN...
...change hands before the gybe and face aft during the gybe



ILLUSTRATION: CLAUDIA MYATT, RYA GO SAILING!



WHO'S WHO ON BOARD?

The **SKIPPER** is the boss – whether it's your mum, dad, friend or total stranger they're in charge of the boat.



...not unless you say 'please'!

The **HELMSMAN** is whoever is steering the boat at the time. 'Take the helm' means it's your turn to steer.

CREW – that's you! Learn as much as you can about how the boat works if you want to be an able seaman rather than an unable seaman!



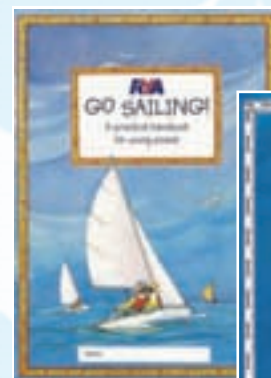
“Whatever size boat you are sailing, dinghy or cruising yacht, the basics are the same”

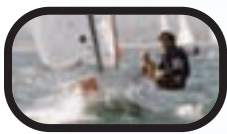
Bigger boats

The basics of sailing are the same whatever size boat you sail, the major difference on larger cruising yachts is that you might have a wheel to steer the boat rather than a tiller, and because the sheets are controlling bigger sails they will

probably have winches for you to wrap the sheet round so you can pull it in.

To find out more, invest in a copy of Claudia Myatt's children's sailing books, *Go Sailing!* and *Go Cruising!* Both books are also brilliant for adult beginners and are available from the RYA (the Royal Yachting Association), see www.rya.org or call 023 8060 4100. Two great activity books are also available, with stickers and fun tasks for you to test your knowledge. _





Get sailing: learning

So, you fancy learning to sail? The good news is that there's a really structured system for everyone, with RYA courses offering something for everyone one from total beginner to near-expert. Whether

you go to a watersports centre or local sailing club, the pathway to learning is the same — just make sure you pick an RYA-recognised training centre and you can be sure of learning in a safe and logical way.



Get started

If you want to have a go at sailing but you're not sure whether it's the sport for you, a great way of getting on the water is to sign up for a 'taster' day. Lots of sailing schools and clubs offer one or two-day sessions for total beginners, while the RYA's OnBoard scheme also run afternoons on the water for school and youth groups — a great way to have a go and have fun with your friends.

Over the Easter holidays Sail Laser, a sailing school in Weymouth, set themselves a challenge of getting 500 kids on the water, over one week, for just £5 each! The subsidised sailing lessons gave hundreds of children from local schools the chance to try sailing for a day, with two groups of 25 going out each morning and

afternoon for five days.

So, what happens on a taster session? First things first, all the kids were kitted out in wetsuits, helmets and buoyancy aids. Then it was straight out to the dinghy park where Sail Laser's fleet of Picos was racked up ready and waiting. The instructors showed everyone how to 'rig up' or tie on the sails, and what the different parts of the boat were called. Next everyone hopped into the boats to practice tacking on dry land, as the instructors pushed the Picos around to show how the wind direction changes.

But it wasn't long before it was time to get on the water — paired in Picos, everyone dragged their dinghies down the slipway, and got afloat. As soon as a few teams remembered how to steer they were soon reaching up and down outside

Weymouth and Portland National Sailing Academy — home of the Olympic sailing in 2012 — and everyone else could play follow my leader. Eight instructors buzzed around in RIBs making sure everyone was having fun and scooping up the occasional capsize, while some more experienced teenagers hopped in and out of the boats to give a bit of extra encouragements. Within an hour of launching it was mission accomplished as every child had got sailing for the first time!

Then it was back on shore for a hot shower and to proudly collect their certificates. So, what was the verdict? A resounding thumbs-up!

Cameron Stickley (11) voted the best bits as going fast and steering, while Matt Dobson (11) and Eddie Fowler's (10) favourite moment was capsizing.

Aimee Johnson and Rachel Boyd of St John's CE Primary in Weymouth also enjoyed it. 'The most fun was when we fell out because the boat tipped and I didn't see the boom coming,' giggled Rachel, 'And I was trying to steer back to her but kept getting blown away!' added Aimee. 'I want to have another go!'





PHOTO GRAEME SWEENEY*



Get learning

If you want to learn to sail properly, the best thing to do is sign up for a course.

This might be at your local sailing club, or it might even be on holiday, but they all follow the same RYA Youth Sailing Scheme. With expert tuition, beginner-friendly boats and full safety cover, learning to sail on a course is more popular than ever. The Royal Yachting Association (RYA) administers all training and qualifications in Britain, with the RYA's National Sailing Scheme.

Designed specifically for under-16s, the RYA's Youth Sailing Scheme was revamped a couple of years ago and now follows a similar path to the adult programme with a sequence of two-day courses. The schemes are designed as an inter-linked series of two-day courses, progressing from your very first sail to intermediate level, after which a number of more advanced courses are on offer providing tuition in cruising, spinnakers, racing and performance sailing.

Each course requires approximately 16 hours of sailing tuition, which can be run over different timescales. For instance a course can be taken over a single weekend, or as eight two-hour sessions which might be run as after-school or evening classes. Another option is to take a full week's sailing tuition which combines two or three courses.

Many parents will wonder how old their child needs to be to start Stage 1? The sensible answer is that 8-12 years is plenty young enough to embark on sailing, when so many years of enjoyment lie ahead. Many sailors do start messing about in boats earlier, but it's best not to try and start kids off too young in case a couple of cold days put them off!

✿ **Stage 1:** No experience required.

Children learn launching and recovery, steering, parts of the boat and basic sailing, usually learning in simple dinghies such as the Taz, Topper or Pico.

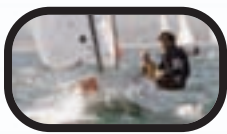
✿ **Stage 2:** This is often combined with Stage 1 on a five-day sailing holiday

or course to provide a greater knowledge of basic principles of sailing. Progresses from Stage 1 (which is required to start Stage 2) to teach collision avoidance and improved boat control!

✿ **Stage 3:** Stage 1 and 2 experience is required to start this course which moves to a higher level, so children can launch and sail a dinghy around a triangular course (beating, tacking, reaching, running and gybing) in moderate conditions.

✿ **Stage 4:** If they learnt Stages 1-3 in a singlehanded dinghy, young sailors can then sign up for Stage 4 and learn to sail a doublehanded boat to become a good crew.





Get better

Having completed Stage 3s and/or 4, under-16s can then take any of the National Sailing Scheme advanced courses: adrenaline-packed performance boats are likely to be teenagers' top choice!

❁ **Start Racing:** All you need to know to get round the course and lay the foundations for winning. Young people who want to learn to race — which is absolutely the best way to improve boat handling skills, maintain interest

in the sport and make sailing friends — should opt for the Start Racing course in the National Sailing Scheme

❁ **Sailing with Spinnakers:** A short syllabus which the RYA claims packs in the most fun of all their courses.

Everything you need to know to enjoy modern three-sail boats — learn to sail with a spinnaker and start dreaming about a 49er!

❁ **Performance Sailing:** How to improve boat handling and confidence in performance boats, helming or crewing, working on smooth, fluent sailing with or without a spinnaker.

❁ **Seamanship Skills:** A direct step from Stage 4 which polishes and tests boat handling skills, learning how to solve problems afloat. A solid foundation to become more confident and self-sufficient afloat.

❁ **Day Sailing:** Great for Swallows and Amazons fans — how to make the most of a coastal location, exploring the area, developing passage planning and decision-making skills for small boat cruising. Basic pilotage (buoys and rights of way) and dealing with windy conditions are also covered.



PHOTOS INGRID ABERY

Get racing

Of course the best way of honing your skills is practice, more practice, and maybe some racing! Racing is a great way of learning quickly, testing yourself, and making new friends. Many clubs have a cadet or novice fleet which juniors can take part in, with safety boats watching out for any capsizes, although most young sailors soon find that you're going quicker than the adults and can start racing — and beating — them too!

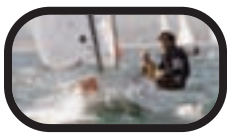
For keen racers, the RYA has a nationwide coaching and racing scheme with regional squads to develop talent. Those that are good enough might even make the national squad and get to represent their country at events around the world. ❁



PHOTO PAUL WYETH



PHOTO GRAEME SWEENEY*



Get kitted out!

When you first go sailing you can probably borrow all the kit you need, but sooner or later you might want your own sailing clothes. Here's a look at some of the basics...



1. Buoyancy Aid

Even if you learn in shorts and old trainers, make sure you wear a proper CE-approved Buoyancy Aid at all time. Crewsaver has a large range, including this Pro Gybe model (£34 www.crewsaver.co.uk), in junior sizes and colourways.



2. Wetsuit

Most sailing centres have wetsuits you can borrow, but a well-fitting one will keep you warmer by trapping water close to your body. Gul make a wide range including this Axis Girls' Junior Shorty in fun pink and black (£40 www.gul.com).



4. Spray Top

A spray top is a really good investment because it will keep you warm and dry no matter what the weather. Trident's Maricano Dinghy Top (£24.95 www.trident-uk.com) has a soft neck and snug Neoprene wrist and waist bands to keep the water out, but plenty of room to move in.



3. Boots

You should never sail in bare feet as it's all too easy to stub your toes or slip over. Proper sailing booties are designed for good grip in the wet — these Junior Dinghy Shoes are from Musto (£14.95 www.musto.co.uk) with Neoprene uppers to keep your toes toasty and are also perfect for playing on the beach.



5

Sun protection...

There are four important stages to protecting your skin from the sun...

1. Sun Cream

Essential as soon as you're outdoors — make sure you choose a high factor (SPF 25+) waterproof formula if you're on the water and look out for kids-specific suncream specially designed for sensitive skins. The Sun Sense Factor SPF 50 roll-on is designed for children as young as toddlers (£7.50 www.muddypuddes.com), while Nivea Sun's easy spray-on is also 50+ (£11.99 chemists nationwide).



2. Hat

A wide brimmed hat is a must-have to keep the sun out of your face and eyes and off your neck — don't forget to tie it on if it's breezy!



What to wear...



6

5. Gloves

Gloves are a really good idea to help protect your hands from the ropes, and also keep you warm in winter. Rooster's Winter Pro Gloves go right down to a size XXXS for small hands (£14 www.roostersailing.com), with grippy palms and Neoprene backing.



7

6. Hat

Rain or shine, you need to keep your head protected. In cold weather you lose most of your body heat through your head so this Team GBR beanie from Gul (£12 www.gul.com) will not only keep you warm but looking like an Olympian.



In the summer you need to protect your face and neck with a wide brim — this fast-drying one from Henri Lloyd is just like the ones pros wear (£15 www.henrilloyd.com)

3

2

8

7. Bag

You need a bag to keep all your wet kit in — this Wet'n'Dry Cylinder bag from Gill will keep clothing inside dry from splashes and wet changing room floors, then you can keep soggy wetsuits and boots in it after sailing, plus it's small enough for little people to carry (£17 www.gillmarine.com).



8. Hi-fits

A pair of waterproof trousers can be worn over wetsuit or shorts to keep the spray away, and are also handy if you're riding on a RIB or going sailing on a big boat for the day. Henri Lloyd's TP1 Squad Trousers are breathable as well as waterproof with adjustable braces (£50 www.henrilloyd.com).



3. Sunglasses

No self-respecting adult sailor goes out without a decent pair of sunnies, and you can now get proper junior sunglasses with UV protective lenses. These junior Julbo UV Sport sunglasses cut out 100 per cent of UV light and fit 3-8 years (£16 www.muddypuddles.com), while Gill's children's Dragonfly sunglasses are perfect for sailing (£20 www.gillmarine.com)



4. Rash vest

A rash vest or UV top is ideal for wearing under a wetsuit, or with shorts or swimsuit when you're on the beach. Gill and Rooster's funky new rash vests are designed specifically for watersports (£15 & £20) while Muddy Puddles make UV protective tops with an SPF of over Factor 50 (£15).



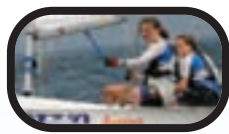
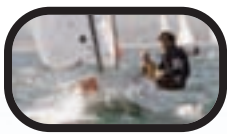


PHOTO: ANDY SERVICE

Get sailing: Having fun!

Sailing games are a great way of learning while having fun, Olympic sailor **Laura Baldwin** remembers some of her favourites.

I started sailing aged 13 and for me it was all about playing games with my friends on summer Sundays — like Swallows and Amazons, pirates and shipwrecks. We'd just sail around the islands exploring and do silly things like

see how many people we could sail with on one Topper!

I didn't realise it at the time but I was actually learning valuable sailing skills at the same time as having fun. I learnt what angle my sail needed to be and how to steer to get where I wanted to go. I was learning how to balance the boat and how to avoid capsizing — when I wasn't capsizing on purpose! So here's some ideas of games you can play that will help you to improve your sailing skills whilst having lots of fun.

Rigging race

The games can start right from the beginning with a rigging race. Tailor your

race depending on the number of sailors and the number of boats that you have — so for example if there are four of you and two boats, then split into two teams and see which team can rig the quickest. The good thing about working with others to rig a boat is that it helps develop your communication skills, which is especially important when sailing a crewed boat. This is a great time-filler when waiting for enough wind to go sailing.

Other onshore rigging races include:

1) Hoist the mainsail, tie or cleat it off, shout 'Set!', then get the sail back down as quick as possible and shout 'Finished!'. The first to finish wins.

2) Hoist the spinnaker, set it and shout 'Set!' then drop it again and store correctly.

Other great games to play when the wind is too light to sail:

1) Learn how to tie all the different knots and perhaps have a competition to see who remembers all the knots and who can tie them the quickest.



2) Draw a diagram of the boat you sail and then see if you can label all the different parts.

Baywatch race

This helps develop your launching and recovering skills. Race to launch the boats, sail around a mark and race back to shore, recovering the boats back onto the trolleys — maybe with the finish line at the top of the slipway as it's good fitness training to pull the boat up the ramp.

Another game with a rescue theme is to drop a plastic toy that floats over the side of the boat and sail back to rescue it. This is an important skill to master in case you ever need to rescue a friend who has fallen overboard!

Rubber ducky balance

Place Mr Ducky on the bow of your boat and try and keep him there as long as possible... if you let the boat tip too much he will fall in, so the idea is to focus on keeping the boat flat. Sailing a flat boat is fast so this is great training for any future racing aspirations you may have — and is good for a giggle!

Ball games

Split into two teams of two or more boats in each team and throw a ball between your team mates, whilst the opposite team tries to catch it mid-air by defending or get to it first when it drops in the water. This is an excellent way of gaining skills in accelerating and boat handling.

You can also play this game with three boats by choosing one boat to be 'Piggy' who is trying to get the ball off the other two boats. When one 'Piggy' successfully gets the ball then the new piggy is the one who throws the ball.

Piggy in the middle

Three boats line up and sail upwind. The most windward boat's task is to try and get the most leeward boat past the 'piggy in the middle'. So 'Piggy's' task is to get past the top boat and to keep the other boat behind. The leeward-most boat's task is to get past the piggy. Once a new piggy is decided the game continues. This teaches attacking and defending skills that are important in racing. It teaches about slowing a boat down by using the shadow your sail produces, and sailing for speed to slip past.

Capsize recovery

Capsize your boats and race to get them back upright and sailing again. Practise dry capsizes where you jump onto the centreboard as the boat goes over so you don't get wet! This is the quickest way to recover from a capsize. Also practise getting the boat upright when it is completely upside down.

Tipping the boat over like this will help you to gain confidence as you realise that capsizing is nothing to fear. After I learned to recover my upturned boat I felt far

happier sailing in stronger breeze and this game soon became my favourite as we were not allowed to swim in the lake where I sailed so this was a good way of overcoming that rule — I'd swim round and round my boat to cool off in the summer!

Advanced games

1) Sail the boat around a course without a rudder! This teaches you how your body weight can be used to steer the boat along with trimming the sails. This is a valuable skill to master because using your rudder to steer actually acts as a brake and slows you down.

2) Sail blindfolded to promote your other senses, mostly your sense of feel. If sailing a crewed boat this is a great way of building trust between the team. One is blindfolded and the other talks the helm or crew through sailing around a course or just whilst cruising around. This is also a fantastic way of working on the communication within the team. 🌸

Below Try balancing something on your boat and see how flat you can sail it — remember flat equals fast!



PHOTO: PETER HENSON



Get sailing: on holiday

A sailing holiday is a great way to get into the sport for the whole family. You can either sign up for a residential course here in the UK, or hop on a plane and learn in the sunshine. There are designated sailing centres, all-inclusive beach clubs with RYA tuition thrown in, or you can even learn to sail on board a yacht with parents or fellow teenagers. Here are a few different experiences...



Child's play

Louay Habib discovered he had two new converts to sailing on his hands on a family holiday to Minorca Sailing, even if they did start overtaking Dad...

Jack and Tom are nine and seven and, like most boys of that age, can get bored easily during summer holidays. So when I suggested we go on a sailing holiday for the first time, they jumped at the chance.

The boys had done a bit of mucking about in boats and really enjoyed it, but it was high time they had some proper tuition. However I didn't want to put them off, after all it was a holiday and the experience had to be safe, warm, fun and friendly.

Minorca Sailing on the island's north

shore is a quiet area, although Fornells is just 3km away with restaurants, bars and a good beach. We stayed in a villa with its own pool, walled garden and barbeque patio.

Minorca Sailing gets 10 out of 10 for the quality and quantity of the sailing. There are over 250 boats and windsurfers; from beginners' boats like Optimists and Picos to asymmetric dinghies like the RS range. The sailing school offers activities for all ages and abilities, including children and experienced adults.

Basically guests choose which type of boats they would like to sail and are then split into classes according to ability. After dropping the kids off with their instructor I would then hook up with my own group, we would meet for lunch and repeat the same for the afternoon session.

Tom was in a beginners' class of about eight children, all roughly the same age, with two instructors. Initially they were taught some basics on dry land and then taken out in two Laser Stratos, encouraged to have a go at steering and trimming, and kept occupied by activities such as a treasure hunt. After two days Tom was on his own in a flotilla of Optimists going through manoeuvres. The instructors were very patient with



PHOTOS: LOUAY HABIB



PHOTO TOPPER

their young class, the emphasis was on fun and the children always came back with big smiles.

My eldest son Jack is a keen sportsman but not as gung-ho as Tom. But, after a while he relaxed and started to sail his Topper really well. I saw a steady improvement in Jack's abilities over the week and like Tom he made many friends in his group.

When you mix kids with water, safety is always a primary concern and this is taken very seriously at the resort; all children must wear helmets and buoyancy aids.

In my opinion, Minorca is a fantastic sailing holiday. But don't take my word for it; check out what my children had to say!

Jack: 'My favourite boat was the Stratos but in the Topper or Pico I did capsize once. I learnt how to tack and gybe and I learnt the capsize drill. I really enjoyed my holiday.'

Tom: 'I had a great holiday at Minorca Sailing, I was a good sailor. I capsized three times and one day we had to get the lifeboat to pick us up as it was a stormy day. It was a shame when we had to go home but I had a nice time.'

The lowdown: Specialist sailing centre in the Mediterranean, catering for all ages and abilities. Check out www.minorcasailing.co.uk

Outward bound

Jeremy Evans and family donned their waterproofs and headed for Wales, for a week of outdoor activities in Snowdonia.

Plas Menai is in a fantastic position on the southern shore of the Menai Straits, which divides the Welsh mainland from the island of Anglesey. It's beautifully tucked away, with the mountain of Snowdon providing a spectacular backdrop.

Arriving at reception, we were surprised to find that virtually all the local staff speak Welsh. Don't worry, they also speak English and are extremely friendly!

Plas Menai runs year-round watersports courses in dinghy and keelboat sailing, cruising, canoeing, windsurfing and powerboating. They also provide multi-activity courses for children, groups and families, which combine watersports with energetic pastimes like climbing up mountains and orienteering. This is all made possible by the brilliant location, with the main sailing area right at the front of the centre, combined with open sea at Pwllheli for those who want waves, plus climbing or white water canoeing in the foothills of Snowdon.

Staying at Plas Menai over the summer half-term, the programme was extremely versatile and could be tailored



to suit a family. My two teenage daughters opted for the RYA National Powerboat Certificate, a two-day course in handling a RIB. Then the girls opted to combine windsurfing with Pico and Laser sailing, enjoyed a tour of the Straits on a Hunter 707 keelboat, and, when the rain took over, got expert tuition on the indoor climbing wall. Meanwhile, my older daughter was off for a five-day cruise on one of the yachts, circumnavigating Anglesey, and finishing with the RYA Day Skipper practical certificate.

We also enjoyed sailing some of the wide range of boats lined up on the slipway. The Oppie, Topper, Pico and Laser provide standard sailing school fare, but there's plenty more to choose from with Laser 2000, 3000, 4000, Stratos and Vortex, RS200, 400 and 800, Feva and Vareo, plus Dart 16s or Hobie 16s. There's even a 'Learn to Sail Everything' course, an excellent recipe for beginners, starting with crewed dinghies, followed by a day apiece in cats, singlehanders and keelboats.

The lowdown: Residential and day sailing, watersports and multi-activity courses in Wales. See www.plasmenai.co.uk



PHOTOS JEREMY EVANS

Clubbing together

Lee Whitehead thought he knew what to expect on a family beachclub holiday, but Sunsail's Club Phokaia in Turkey, still held a few surprises...

There's no doubt about it, Club Phokaia's location is stunning. We'd had a long day travelling but as we glimpsed a view of the sailing area gilded by the setting sun, the weary mood on board our bus perked up immediately.

My first holiday afloat was spent in the Greek islands with my parents aboard a 30ft yacht, but since then I have spent more time on the flip side – as a Sunsail staff member. This time it was my turn to visit as a guest and a parent, bringing five-year-old son Jordan and partner Claire.

I was glad to see that the custom of Sunsail welcome drinks lives on. But much more important than giving Claire and I the chance to mingle, it gave Jordan the chance to meet other kids of his age and generally get excited about Kids' Club.

One of the biggest selling points of a Sunsail holiday is the childcare facilities. There are five Kids' Clubs available depending on age: Jordan being five, he became a Sea Urchin. Jordan was a little

unsure about going so we said he didn't have to stay if he didn't want to. But when we walked into the Urchins' room, he took one look and that was it – gone straight in without so much as a look back. Activities included the usual games and videos but more importantly an hour's on the water sailing tuition each day. I enjoy teaching sailing, but it's not always the easiest thing to teach your own urchins, so having a trained instructor to make it fun while they get on the water is an excellent idea.

One down, two more to entertain. For me it was time to head to the beach front. There are briefings and clinics available daily, race days throughout the week, or oodles of spare dinghies and windsurfers if you just want to go for a sail. The sailing area is safe and large, well protected by a spectacular island that contains the world-famous Siren Rocks from Homer's Odyssey.

Besides the main watersports, Sunsail also offer new optional activities ranging from pilates and aquarobics, tennis workshops and mountain bike trails, through to the 'Phokaia Triathlon'. For



Claire the main attraction of Club Phokaia were the indulgences such as the Serenity spa, gym, and Turkish baths.

As a family, we had a fantastic week and one that managed to keep us all entertained even though we all prefer different pastimes on holiday: me sailing, Claire relaxing and Jordan, well, everything really.

The lowdown: Beach club centres with RYA instruction suitable for beginners and intermediates in Greece, Turkey and Antigua. Visit www.sunsail.com to find out more.



PHOTOS: LEE WHITEHEAD



Teenage kicks

If you dream of big boat sailing away from your parents, then Sunsail has the course for you.

Jeremy Evans investigates.

Are you aged between 13 and 17 with a free week in the summer holidays? Sunsail run an RYA Competent Crew and Day Skipper course exclusively for you, providing qualifications to help you get to grips with handling a yacht.

Competent Crew is very much beginner level and requires no previous experience, though it's fine if you've been on a yacht a few times before. The course teaches basic seamanship and helming over five days, during which you'll cover 100 miles and clock up four night hours on the water. Day Skipper practical course also takes a minimum of five days but goes considerably further — many who take this course already have Competent Crew.



PHOTOS: JEREMY EVANS

Parents are welcome to listen to the first night briefing, although it's best to abandon kids without delay so they can get stuck in. The week is run like a flotilla, with the yachts berthed alongside each other inside Port Solent. Most of the teenagers arrived in pairs or alone, with scope to make new friends and a few opting to swap yachts as the week progressed — boys and girls sleeping apart! Once out of the marina there's continual sailing to Solent hotspots like Cowes and Lymington, interspersed with activities like canoeing, barbecues and a trip to the movies.

Everyone has to sign on for a roster of duties throughout the week and there's no let up from the skippers — all the



teenagers are encouraged to keep working and learning, with most cantering through the Competent Crew requirements and a few more hardcore enthusiasts going for the Day Skipper certificate.

The lowdown: All-inclusive live aboard week for 13-17-year-olds for beginners or intermediates (RYA Competent Crew or Day Skipper courses) sailing out of Port Solent, Portsmouth. Time under sail can also count towards the Duke of Edinburgh scheme. See www.sunsail.com 🌸

Other options

🌸 Crystal Active now offer beginners and intermediate RYA sailing courses at their beach bases in Corsica, Greece and Turkey plus an Austrian lake. Visit www.crystalactive.co.uk

🌸 Active holiday company Neilson offer childcare and kids' clubs plus tuition on a wide range of dinghies at beach club centres in Egypt, Croatia and Greece. Or the whole family can learn to sail living onboard a yacht on a villa-flotilla or

flotilla holiday in Greece and Croatia. Visit www.neilson.co.uk

🌸 All-inclusive holiday company Mark Warner has a wild range of childcare, kids' clubs and options for getting kids on the water, plus RYA tuition and use of dinghies and windsurfers for all ages. Centres in Corsica, Sardinia, Egypt, Greece, Portugal, Mauritius, and Sri Lanka. See www.markwarner.co.uk

🌸 Rockley Watersports offer RYA tuition and use of dinghies and windsurfers at

five sites in France plus Poole Harbour in the UK, with accommodation in modern chalet-style tents, suitable for family holidays and school groups. See www.rockleywatersports.com

🌸 Learn on two hulls, as well as in the usual beginners' dinghies, at the catamaran mecca of Wildwind, which has two centres in Greece. Light airs in the morning followed by breezier afternoons make it perfect for families of mixed abilities. For more info visit www.wildwind.co.uk



Everything you've ever wanted to know about youth and junior sailing, compiled by Paula Irish.

A *Accessibility*

From learning to sail on holiday, to RYA-recognised training centres and sailing clubs with junior and youth sections, it's an increasingly accessible sport for all ages. The RYA also now run the OnBoard scheme, which aims to get half a million kids into sailing or windsurfing over the next 10 years. Visit www.ruob.co.uk.



PHOTO: DAVID WATERS

B *Beer*

While under-18s are technically too young to drink beer, they do get to benefit from its consumption in a round-about kind of way. Every winter Rutland Water hosts the annual Tiger Trophy, sponsored by Everards brewery, to raise money for the John Merricks Sailing Trust. The trust was launched to help young sailors in memory of Olympic silver medallist John Merricks, who tragically died in a car accident in 1997. John loved sailing and having fun while doing it. The Tiger Trophy is held in the same spirit, attracts a high turnout of youth classes, and includes the legendary black tie Tiger dinner. To apply for a grant from the trust or donate, visit www.jmst.org.uk



PHOTO: J. HARRISON/SHUTTERSTOCK

C *Cadets*

The Cadet – designed by Jack Holt in 1947 as a low-cost and easy home-build boat for youngsters – is enjoying its diamond anniversary. Now sailed in more than 20 countries, last year's nationals in Weymouth attracted 118 entries, and more than 200 boats are expected for the 2007 World Championship in Pwllheli from August 1-10. Visit: www.cadetclass.org.uk



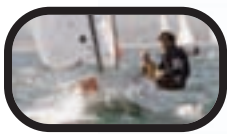
PHOTO: STEVE BELL

D *Down under*

If you want to make it to the very top as a junior or youth sailor you've got to be willing to travel – even to the ends of the earth – in the pursuit of medals. In January, six GBR team racers took gold at the Australian Youth Olympic Festival on the same waters used for the Sydney 2000 games. As team member Claire Lasko said: 'We didn't think we would win it, but we didn't give up. We kept saying to ourselves it's not over 'til it's over.' It's the kind of go-for-it attitude which typifies many of Britain's young sailors. Other far-flung championships visited so far this season have included Uruguay (Optimists), New Zealand (420s), South Africa (Mirrors) and Argentina (29ers).



PHOTO: SHARON JACKSON



E Exams

With every spare minute dedicated to sailing, how do young sailors fit in homework and revision?

Hannah Mills, who has just started a degree in Mechanical Engineering at Bristol University after becoming 420 ladies world champion last summer and subsequently launching an Olympic 470 campaign, says it's all about using your time to the best effect.

'To be honest it's quite hard,' she says. 'It's just very much time management I guess. I do enough and come exams take

a break from sailing and work pretty hard. I made sure I met deadlines. And when it comes to exams I do make quite a strict revision timetable which I definitely try and stick to.'

Hannah found it helpful to tell teachers what she was doing on the sailing front, saying: 'Most schools are quite supportive and help you out as long as you're doing your bit.'

But if your aim is to be a professional sailor, why bother studying at all? Hannah says: 'It's very much a personal thing. For me, I just wanted to make sure I had a degree so if sailing didn't work out, I could fall back on it.'



PHOTO P. TODD/OUTSIDE IMAGES

F 420s

A doublehanded single-trapeze dinghy with conventional kite, the 420 provides a pathway into the Olympic 470 – former 420 sailors include Olympic medallist Nick Rogers. Designed by Christian Maury in 1960, there are an estimated 56,000 420s worldwide sailed in more than 60 countries, with most major sailing nations running 420 youth programmes. Visit: www.420sailing.org.uk

G Games

Games on and off the water help kids have fun and stay keen. One popular warm-up game for boat handling is the catchily titled Creeping Death. Set a leeward mark and then drop in a drifting windward mark – sailors set off at 10 second intervals and race until they are overtaken, or simply can't take any more as the course gets shorter!



PHOTO STEVE BELL

H Hobie

Team GBR's outstanding performance of the 2006 ISAF Youth Worlds at Weymouth came from Hobie 16 sailors Tom Phipps and Richard Glover, who won gold with a day to spare. Tom and his regular crew Jon Cook are now campaigning in the Olympic Tornado class. The Hobie 16 is an RYA-recognised youth boat, providing a twin trapeze multi-hull option for youngsters. The Hobie Dragoon is an RYA recognised junior class for younger sailors. Visit: www.hobiecat.org.uk



PHOTO STEVE BELL

I ISAF Youth Worlds

When it comes to youth sailing, the equivalent of the Olympics is to get selected to represent your country at the ISAF Youth Worlds. Classes competing at the 2007 Volvo Youth Sailing ISAF Worlds in Canada this July will be the Laser, Laser Radial, Hobie 16, 29er, and Neil Pryde RS:X.



J *Jim Saltonstall*

Renowned for his youth coaching, Jim Saltonstall has influenced the greatest names in the sport for sailors of all ages, from under-10s to Olympic medallists.

Jim was at the forefront of developing RYA junior/youth training. He's been a racing coach for over 30 years, firstly while in the Royal Navy, and then as the RYA's National Youth Racing Coach from 1977-2000. He has attended 23 ISAF Youth World Championships as GBR Coach and a further seven as the ISAF International Coach. Jim was also Olympic coach for the

1996 and 2000 Games.

He believes sailing is 'the most challenging sport in the world' and has the following advice for today's young 'ferrets' as he famously likes to call them: 'Time management is important, balancing the number of days spent on training and eventing with time necessary for education.

'Also, it must be fun. If you are not enjoying your sailing you will not do well. Therefore anyone embarking on a quest to win a championship event (however large or small) should have determination, perseverance, controlled aggression and a sense of humour!'



K *Kids*

There's an old showbusiness adage warning actors to 'never work with animals or kids'. Happily this doesn't worry the countless coaches and volunteers who run junior sailing. Alan Williams, Plas Menai watersports centre manager and national Optimist coach, says working with kids is great because 'it's about helping them develop as people through a sport they enjoy.

'We share their highs and lows with them. We learn things from them all the time. And it's rewarding to see unexpected leaps of understanding and improvements in a sailor's performance in a short time. It's great to see kids learning to be independent and cope with challenging conditions on the water.'

When it comes to working with youngsters Alan has the following suggestions:

- ✿ It's easy to forget that young sailors aren't mini adults, they don't think or behave like adults and they need to have plenty of play in their development.
- ✿ Try not to over-coach young sailors. They learn by doing, so organise simple activities high in fun – try not to over-complicate things.
- ✿ A picture is worth a thousand words, kids love pictures and diagrams and they lose concentration very quickly if you talk too much.

'Behind every young sailor is a well meaning supportive parent, so don't be afraid to get them involved, and let them know what you are doing.



PHOTO: SILENBERG/NSP

L *Laser 4.7 and Radial*

The Laser 4.7 is an RYA recognised junior class, while the Radial and Standard rigs are RYA youth classes. With Laser Radials now an Olympic class for women, alongside the Laser for men, the progression of rigs provides a pathway for aspiring sailors as they get older and heavier. The Laser was designed by Bruce Kirby in 1971, and is claimed to be the most popular sailing dinghy ever with nearly 185,000 boats worldwide. Visit: www.laser.org.uk

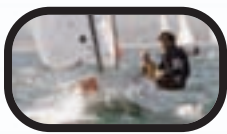
M *Mirrors*

GBR's Anna Mackenzie and Holly Scott won the Mirror worlds in South Africa in January and became the first all-girl team ever to take the title, and the first GBR team to win it since 1997. It was also the first Mirror world championship where new optional all-alloy Bermudan rigs were allowed alongside the traditional gaff rigged Mirrors.

The Mirror was designed by Jack Holt in 1963 and promoted by the Daily Mirror newspaper, with red sails to match its masthead. An RYA-recognised junior class, there are more than 70,000 worldwide. Visit: www.ukmirrorsailing.com



PHOTO: MACKENZIE



N National Squads

Every keen young sailor wants the jacket with the logos that proclaims they have made it into an RYA National Junior or Youth Squad. The squads provide access to world-class training which includes coaching, regatta support, fitness testing, nutrition, and meteorology – laying foundations for a lifelong love of the sport and a chance to succeed at an international level.



PHOTO: OLIVIERA

O Optimists

2007 is the diamond

jubilee of the boat which has introduced more top sailors to the sport than any other. Optimists are sailed by more than 150,000 children in 100 countries and at the Athens Olympics almost three-quarters of medal-winning helms were former Optimist sailors. They included GBR medallists Ben Ainslie (Finn), Nick Rogers (470) and Chris Draper (49er).

The Optimist was designed by Clark Mills in 1947 in Clearwater, Florida. He was asked for a cheap, safe and easy-to-sail dinghy for children. The result was a home-built dinghy costing less than \$50, short enough to be cut from 8ft standard lengths of plywood. Mills was once quoted as saying: 'A boat, by God, it's just a gleamin' beautiful creation. And when you pull the sail up on a boat, you've got a little bit of really somethin' God-given ... there's nothin' else like it!' His enthusiasm lives on. There were a record 361 entries at the 2006 nationals at Pwllheli, and more are expected at the 2007 Nationals in Weymouth this July. Visit: www.optimistsailing.org.uk



PHOTO: OLIVIERA

Q Questions

Teaching kids is demanding. You need to keep asking them questions to keep them awake, focused and involved. Bear in mind they will undoubtedly keep asking you questions in return. Never bluff an answer – kids are smart and will catch you out – and don't try to be cool or funny, unless you really are.

P Parents

Parents are an essential asset in any young person's sailing campaign, providing invaluable support, transport and sponsorship. Stuart Humphreys, dad of Anglesey 29er sailors Huw Humphreys (current European champion) and Tom, who previously sailed Toppers and 405s, provides a parent's perspective.

'In my view all sailing dinghies should be sold with a warning,' he says, 'Beware this boat could, dominate your son or daughter's life, tear up the routines of normal family life, hit the wallet hard, and make free time a redundant idea.'

'Of course I didn't know this when I bought my sons a Topper. I didn't know then I'd just begun to push the sailing snowball down a mountain.'

'Close friends began to doubt our sanity when they learned how almost every other weekend we criss-crossed Britain towing trailers. How we drove from Anglesey to Weymouth, made forays to Europe and packed the boys' dinghies into shipping containers to compete in San Francisco, Spain or Argentina... To an outsider such behaviour seems bizarre – so why do parents do it? Here are my rationalisations:

- ✿ It opens opportunities for one of the best youth sports coaching systems run by the RYA;
- ✿ Competitive dinghy sailing builds great qualities and life skills, which I believe are transferable to the world of work;
- ✿ It gives youths a passion which consumes their time and energy constructively – they seldom have spare time!
- ✿ It gives them a sport that lasts a lifetime and that will help them to make friends almost anywhere;
- ✿ Once you see your child with a real passion it seems negligent not to follow it through.

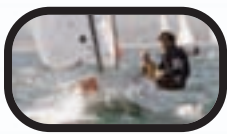
'There is a positive spin off for parents too: you get to know and spend time with great like-minded parents, it stops your diary being totally committed to work, you have a topic of family conversation which generates more than the customary grunt, and you have the pleasure of sharing your

R RS Feva

Designed by Paul Handley/RS in 2002, this doublehanded asymmetric has taken off and saw 60 boats from 10 countries competing at the Worlds at Lake Garda in 2006, which were won by GBR's James Peters and Ben Gratton, while the nationals saw 85 entries. The RS Feva is an RYA-recognised junior class. Visit: www.rs-association.com



PHOTO: OLIVIERA



Toppers

Team GBR Topper sailors took all three podium places at the 2006 worlds. Andrew Brown was crowned champion at Lake Garda, while Bleddyn Môn was second, followed by Michael Wood in third. An RYA-recognised class for juniors, the Topper was designed by Ian Proctor in 1977 and there are more than 50,000 worldwide. The 2006 nationals at Weymouth attracted a record 289 sailors. Lightweight, car-toppable and robust, recent developments have included centre main-sheeting, and a 4.2sq m sail for smaller sailors. Visit: www.gbrtopper.co.uk



PHOTO: JEREMY EVANS

Skiffs

The 29er is set for a huge boost after its selection as the doublehanded boys and girls boat for the Volvo ISAF Youth Worlds in Canada this year, replacing the 420. It has prompted many top youth sailors to switch to the skiff in the hope of getting selected – such as former 420 helms Sophie Weguelin and Sophie Ainsworth (GBR), who are now ladies 29er world champions. Visit: www.29er.org.uk



PHOTO: JEREMY EVANS

University

Many 18-year-olds look for a university or course which will enable them to continue maximising their time on the water – Southampton is popular for obvious reasons. Most universities are linked with the British Universities Sailing Association (BUSA), which runs annual team, match and fleet racing championships, as well as a yachting regatta.

In September, BUSA will send its most talented sailors to the bi-annual Anglo American Championship. BUSA has won the last three championships, and hopes to continue this success, but needs over £10,000 of sponsorship to send its sailors State-side. Email jessica.mapplebeck@rya.org.uk, call 023 8060 4167, or visit www.busa.co.uk

Volvo Champion Clubs

The Volvo RYA Champion Club programme helps clubs to establish or enhance their junior race training programmes – encouraging young sailors and windsurfers at grassroots level. In turn, Volvo RYA Champion Clubs enjoy a series of benefits, including expert RYA advice and support, accreditation as an RYA 'Centre of Excellence', and a part time RYA class coach to deliver free coaching days. Visit: www.rya.org.uk, click on AboutRYA, then Programmes & Initiatives

Windsurfers

For windsurfers, the RYA runs zone and junior/youth national squads in the same way as for sailing. Recognised classes are the BIC Techno for younger windsurfers, progressing to the Olympic RS:X board for older, heavier or more experienced windsurfers. To promote windsurfing at grassroots level, there's Team 15 – a national network of clubs for windsurfers and would-be windsurfers aged 15 and under. Visit: www.team15.org.uk

X-factor

Some kids just seem to have it... look out for them at the 2012 Olympics, or at your own sailing club.



PHOTO: JIMMY HUGHES

Young Sailor of the Year

Katie Miller was awarded the Raymarine Young Sailor of the Year at the London Boat Show in January. Katie, who is studying Yacht Manufacture and Surveying at Southampton Solent University, won for her singlehanded circumnavigation of the UK in her boat 'Elektra'. Her inspirational three-month voyage raised funds for The Ellen MacArthur Trust to enable children with cancer to experience the thrills and beauty of sailing.



PHOTO: ORION

Zone Squads

RYA regional Zone Squads coach junior sailors and encourage them to attend selection events, which feed into the National Junior Squad. There are six Zones for England, plus Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. An annual highlight is the 'battle of the zones' – the Eric Twiname Championship at Rutland SC. 🌸



Events

Let's look at some of the events you can take part in if you like the competitive side of sailing... plus some real-life championship experiences from young sailors of all abilities.

Sailing clubs provide a good base for sailors of all ages, and often have youth sailing sections — sometimes called cadets. Many clubs have strong links with the national youth and junior classes and the junior and

RS Feva worlds, Lake Garda, Italy

Overall winner
Name: James Peters Age: 13
Home Club: Hayling Island SC
Crew: Ben Gratton Age: 13

First all-girls
Name: Alex Poynor Age: 14
Home Club: Emsworth SC
Crew: Holly Tucker Age: 14



PHOTOS DAVID HOLMES*



What do you enjoy most about racing a Feva?

I like the close racing and it is a fun boat when it's windy. I also like the asymmetric spinnaker which is fun downwind, and the tactics during boat-on-boat racing.

A great boat and it's so much fun sailing. There's also good potential for moving up to the RS500, 29er or 420. There are also great socials and the fleet's brilliant.

How would you describe the venue?

The wind was really fantastic and it was nice and hot and sunny. The water was cool though, so if it got too hot you could just jump in. The club was great too and supplied food and drink.

The venue was fantastic. We got up early for the morning winds, which were great for the heavier sailors, but then the afternoon winds were lighter and so better for the lighter sailors.

Which was your best race and why?

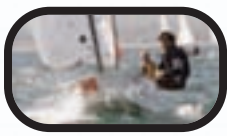
The last race because we knew we had won, but still went out. However, it got light and flukey down the final beat, but we kept our heads and maintained first.

The second race because we got our best result by keeping in clear wind. We also went up the right side of the beat and run.

What will be your best social memory from the event?

It was nice to meet sailors from other countries.

The opening ceremony was so nice having all the countries together and we swapped t-shirts.



“At the very least you will have a lot of fun and make lots of new friends along the way”



Topper nationals, Largs, Scotland

Nell Hardie, Tarbert Loch Fyne, aged 16	Adam Parry, South Staffs aged 15	Bleddyn Môn, Red Wharf Bay, aged 14	Ellie Cumpsty, Chew Valley Lake, aged 8
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What do you enjoy most about sailing and racing a Topper?

A Topper is a simple boat, but is sailed at a very competitive level. You make some great friends whilst on the circuit from all parts of the country.	Huge fleets with close racing and the one-design nature of the boat.	The friendliness and competitiveness of the class.	Capsizing and going fast!
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Which was your best race at the nationals and why?

My best race was the second one in the gold fleet, where I came first. Not many girls win championship races so it was a great achievement to pip the boys at the line.	The first race of the event, where I came seventh.	I was leading the event when we were split into gold and silver fleets. So I was pleased to get second in the first gold fleet race as I was a bit apprehensive.	Third in the last regatta fleet race. This was my best result as previously I had been near the back. So I really improved over the week.
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What were your impressions of Largs?

Largs is a great place to sail, but due to the light winds and the westerly direction it was extremely difficult and unpredictable.	The conditions in the channel were shifty and if you got the tide right there were some good gains to be made. On shore there were great cafés, ice creams and a friendly atmosphere.	It was a good venue, especially because we could park our camper van on site near all of the on shore facilities.	Excellent.
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What is your enduring memory of the event?

The great PRO, Ken Falcon, who ran a smooth event and made some excellent decisions on when to sail in difficult winds.	The social nights, especially the Ceilidh where we all had a great time.	The Ceilidh was great fun.	Having fun with the sailors in the regatta fleet. The highlights were tea on Cumbrae Island, playing football and tug of war in a Topper.
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What are your future plans in terms of sailing?

To continue enjoying my sailing to a competitive level, whatever class I move into.	I am intending to move into the 29er as I am now getting too big for a Topper. I hope to go through the RYA transitional squad and then into the youth squad.	I am intending to do another year in Toppers, in the national squad. Then I will see how I mature before I choose the right boat for me.	To beat my brother Richard.
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youth squads which are run by the RYA.

Sailing club 'cadet' sections often run coaching and racing for young sailors, and you may well be racing against adults as well. At a sailing club you will meet people of all abilities, it's a good chance to learn from those with more experience than you.

Racing makes you go round a certain course, made up of buoys, so you get plenty of tacking and gybing practice, and there is always rescue boat cover in case you get into difficulties. Racing round a set course will improve your sailing, and by trying to go faster and overtake the other boats, you will also improve.

Cadet sections are also very social, with events like barbecues and parties as well as non-racing events such as sailing treasure hunts, particularly over the summer holidays.

Regatta Weeks

Many clubs run a cadet or family regatta weeks or weekends at some point over the summer. These are often open to visiting sailors as well as club members. Regatta weeks tend to be a mix of racing and fun activities.

Many sailing families are attracted to beautiful locations in the UK for a week's holiday, basing themselves at a bed and breakfast or camping while enjoying a week of sailing and socialising.

Open meetings

The next level in competition after club racing is to go and do an open meeting. Whatever class of dinghy you sail, there will be a variety of events organised for the class over the year. As the name suggests, open meetings are open to anyone who wants to enter. It's a chance to meet sailors from other clubs and other parts of the country. These can be one or two days in length, usually with two or three races each day.



Championships

If you are really keen, most dinghy classes have a national championship, which is also an open event. Sailors of all ages compete, often split into different fleets depending on

their ability. For some world championships you need to qualify, but others are open to anyone who wants to enter.

These take place at different venues and tend to be hosted by different countries... no

matter how good you get at sailing, there is always another level to progress to, you never know, one day it might be the Olympic Games! At the very least, you will have a lot of fun and make a lot of new friends. 🌸

Optimist nationals, Abersoch, Wales

Name: Harry Martin
Age: 8 years old
Fleet: Regatta training fleet
Club: Restronguet SC

Name: Anna Burnet
Age: 14 years old
Fleet: Senior
Club: Royal Northern and Clyde YC

Name: Iga Fojcik
Age: 14 years old
Fleet: Senior
Club: Tks Knznia Ryb Nik, Poland

Name: David Grant
Age: 12 years old
Fleet: Junior
Club: Restronguet SC

Name: Aaron Smith
Age: 13 years old
Fleet: Senior
Club: Papercourt SC



What do you most enjoy about sailing an Optimist?

Cap sizing!	The action on the water and beating friends.	I like racing when there are strong winds and big waves.	How much fun they are with lots of wind and how many friends I have made.	All the friends I have met through sailing, and winning!
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What's been your best race at the nationals and why?

	I've had a fantastic week and my results just got better. It's given me more confidence for the worlds.	The first day was the best as the conditions were perfect and I didn't make many mistakes.	The first race of day four was my best as I won and felt I made very few mistakes.	Winning the race on the fourth day as it took me to the top of the leaderboard and kept Phil on his toes!
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What is your favourite memory from the event?

Skimboarding on the beach.	Hanging-out and playing on the beach with my friends.	Participating in the British nationals has been great. Also a really nice British family who looked after me.	I've enjoyed all the racing because of the sailing conditions and my performance, also the rounders evening.	I have had a couple of favourite memories — winning races and hanging-out with friends.
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What are your sailing hopes and dreams?

To sail in the Olympics, but I'm planning to sail my Optimist for a long time yet!	I would like to sail in the Olympics in either a Laser or 470.	I would like to represent Poland in the Olympics or have a career in dentistry.	I would love to get in the worlds team to go to Sardinia.	Winning a gold medal at the Olympics in a Laser.
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Who is your hero?

	Sir Peter Blake and Charlotte Dobson.	Alexander Aleksdar Arian and my parents.	Ben Ainslie.	It's got to be Ben Ainslie!
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A-Z beginners dinghies

If you are in the market for a beginners' boat we've scoured our singlehander, doublehander and multihull listings and compiled one especially suitable for families and newcomers into sailing.

Singlehanded dinghies generally have one sail, a mainsail — although some more advanced designs may have a trapeze or spinnaker. Doublehanders generally have two sails plus a spinnaker. At the bottom end of the range you will find a variety of singlehanders ideal for the beginner, be they adult or child. In fact many sailing schools teach in singlehanded boats, as you are in complete control you learn through making your own mistakes and can build up your skills quickly. The Optimist is a traditional starter boat for children and attracts huge championship entries in the UK when you're ready to race. The Topper, Laser and two-man Mirror are also, long established classes, but there are lots of other options, each with their own strengths.

Buying a boat

Most people will learn to sail either on holiday or at an RYA-recognised training centre. The route to getting more involved in dinghy sailing is then to join a sailing club and either crew for others or buy your own boat. Your choice of boat will depend on what you have sailed previously and found you have enjoyed, your level of competence, weight and who you want to sail the boat with. Many sailing clubs will have particular fleets which are strong at their club and this may also influence your decision, you may wish to have the option to progress further, or want to compete in race meetings. The most important thing is to find a boat which suits you and that you are going to enjoy sailing, and much of that will come down to individual taste.

You can check out past boat tests of any designs which look like they fit your brief at www.YachtsandYachting.com, once you have a



ILLUSTRATION CLAUDIA MATTEIRA

shortlist ask friends, and anyone at your club, for their thoughts. Many of the major manufacturers are also happy to offer test sails.

Governing bodies

The Royal Yachting Association (RYA) is the sport's governing body in the UK, while ISAF (the International Sailing Federation) governs the sport internationally.

The RYA is a good point of call for information, and they also administer the national training and qualification schemes, sail training organisations and instructors. Sailing and yacht clubs in the UK are also affiliated to the RYA, and the organisation runs the squads and selections for international competition both on the youth and Olympic side. The RYA also has legal advice departments, works on behalf of the sport with regard to proposed changes to legislation with the aim of protecting the sport's interests, and works hard on

promoting the sport and increasing participation. It also runs the UK Portsmouth Number system which is widely used for dinghy handicap racing. 🌸

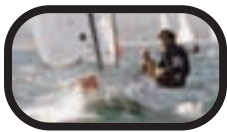
Left There are many books for beginners and specific books on many classes (like the Optimist on the left and the Topper on the right), including the excellent *Go Sailing* (see left £6.99, www.rya.org) for children from the RYA (it also makes a good beginner's guide for many adults too).

Below Optimist Racing (£12.95), *Learning to Sail* and *The Laser Book* (£14.95), all available from Fernhurst Books. Our Start Young supplement is still on sale, subject to availability (£2.50 +p&p). See www.YachtsandYachting.com/shop for more.

Contact details

Yachts and Yachting Magazine: 01702 582245
www.YachtsandYachting.com
Royal Yachting Association: 023 8060 4100
www.rya.org.uk
International Sailing Federation: 023 8063 5111
www.sailing.org





class	crew	level	detail	Y&V test	UK nationals	designer	year of design	construction	LOA m	beam m	weight kg	crew weight
British Moth	1	••			30	Sidney Cherverton	1932	Various	3.55	1.2	45kg	
Byte	1	••		19/07/1991 & 17/12/2004	21	Ian Bruce	1990	GRP	3.65	1.3	45kg	
Cadet	2	••	Youth class		118	Jack Holt	1947	Various	3.22	1.27	54kg	
Comet	1	••			43	Andrew Simmons	1981	GRP	3.45	1.37	50kg	
Comet Zero	2	•	Optional spinnaker	13/04/2001	-	Andrew Simmons	1999	GRP	3.45	1.42	70kg	
Escape 9	1/2	•			-	Gary Hoyt	1997	Polyethelene	2.9	1.2	38kg	
Foxer	1	•			14	David Thomas	1995	GRP	3.25	1.37	72kg	
Gull	2	•		28/05/1996	8	Ian Proctor	1956	GRP	3.35	1.6	72.6kg	
Heron	2	•			22	Jack Holt	1951	Various	3.43	1.37	63.7kg	
Hobie Catsy	1/2	••			-	Hobie Cat	2006	Rotomoulded	3.10	1.66	72kg	
Laser 4.7	1	••			36	Bruce Kirby	1971	GRP	4.23	1.42	59kg	
Laser Bahia	2/3	••			-	Jo Richards	2006	Rotomoulded	4.6	1.8	293kg	
Laser Funboat	1/2	•		21/06/2002	-	Yves Loday	2000	Mettalocene X1170	3.9	1.25	70kg	
Laser Pico	1/2	•		22/08/1997	47	Jo Richards	1995	Techcrothene 109	3.5	1.37	60kg	
Laser Stratos	2/3	•		02/02/2001	-	Phil Morrison	1999	GRP	4.94	2	190kg	
Lymington Scow	1/2	•	With lug rig	05/12/2003	38	Dan Bran/John Claridge	1910	GRP/wood	3.4	1.4	100kg	
Magno	2	••		15/08/2003	-	Ian Howlett	2003	Polyethelene	3.94	1.56	85kg	
Mirror	2	•	Junior class	27/02/2004	112	Jack Holt	1963	Wood/GRP	3.33	1.4	45kg	
Open Bic	1	•	Junior class	28/07/2006	-	Vital Design	2006	Rotomoulded	2.75	1.14	42kg	
Optimist	1	•	Junior class		361	Clark Mills	1947	GRP	2.3	1.13	35kg	
RS Feva	1/2	•		31/01/2003	80	Paul Handley/RS	2002	Polyethylene	3.64	1.42	63kg	
RS Tera	1	•	Junior class, two rigs	19/05/2006	-	Paul Handley	2005	Rotomoulded	2.87	1.23	35kg	
RS Vision	2/3	••		21/05/2004	-	Phil Morrison	2003	PE3 Polyethylene	4.6	1.75	125kg	
Splash	1	••		16/06/1993 & 07/05/2004	14	Koos de Ridder	1988	GRP	3.55	1.53	55kg	
Sunfish	1	•		-	-	A Bryan/C Heyniger	1952	GRP	4.2	1.2	54kg	
Taz	1/2	•	Two rig options		-	Rob White/Ian Howlett	2002	Rotomoulded	2.95	1.2	45kg	
Tideway	2	•	Clinker with rig options		10	L H Walker	1954	Wood/GRP	3.66	1.52	120kg	
Topaz	1/2	•	Four sailing modes	22/12/2000 & 28/03/2003	-	Ian Howlett/Rob White	1998	Polyethelene	3.86	1.45	60kg	
Topaz Omega	2/3	•		27/08/2004	-	Ian Howlett	2004	GRP	4.64	1.98	140kg	
Topaz Vibe	2	••		11/08/2006	-	Ian Howlett/Rob White	2006	Rotomoulded	3.76	1.6	70kg	
Topper	1	•	Youth class		290	Ian Proctor	1976	Polypropelene	3.4	1.2	43kg	
Zoom 8	1	•		11/03/2005	-	Henrick Segerkrantz	1991	GRP	2.65	1.45	38kg	





	crew weight	main sq m	jib sq m	spinnaker sq m	trapeze	PN class supplied	current builder	price £ from 2nd hand	price £ good 2nd hand	new
	44-89kg	8	-	-	-	1173^	BMBA FRP, Godfrey Clark, Brian Skinner	£250	£1,000	£2,800
	54-65kg	5.6	-	-	-	1162	-	£500	£1,500	-
	85-105kg	3.9	1.26	4.25	-	1432^	Lathams Boatyard/Rondar Raceboats	£600	£2,000	£3,940
	50-100kg	6.5	-	-	-	1173	Comet Dinghies	£800+	£1,900+	£2,800
	51-127kg	5.4	1.85	4.8	-	1250^	Comet Dinghies	£1,500	£3,000	£2,950
	140kg max	5.2	-	-	-	-	Johnson Watersports	£500	£800	£1,599
	75-150kg	5	-	-	-	-	Reid Marine	£500	£1,200	£2,200
	102kg	4.9	1.6	5.57	-	1363^	Porter Bros, Emsworth	£200	£1,000	£4,000
	90-130kg	4.78	1.72	6.36	-	1363	Butler Boats/Chippendale Craft	£400-800	£1,000+	£4,000+
	-	3.75/5	0.85	-	-	-	Hobie Cat	-	-	£1,995
	45-65kg	4.7	-	-	-	1175	The Laser Centre	£800-900	£2,800	£3,385
	>460kg	10.5	3.75	14	Opt	-	The Laser Centre	-	-	£5,195
	35kg+	4.8/5	-	-	-	-	The Laser Centre	£500	£900	£1,900
	32kg+	5.1/6.4	1.09	-	-	1259/1263	The Laser Centre	£1,500	£2,000	£2,325
	120kg+	7.34	3.42	12.54	1	1083	The Laser Centre	£4,000	£6,000	£7,400
	50kg+	7	1	6.5	-	1433^	John Claridge Composites	£3,000	£4,000	£5,490
	76kg+	8.12	2.14	8.72	Opt	1200^	Topper International	£2,995	£3,500	£4,295
	80-100kg	3.5	1.9	6.5	-	1386	Trident-UK/Duffin	£500	£1,500	£2,999
	65kg	4.5	-	-	-	-	Ultra Sport Europe Ltd	-	-	£1,899
	40-45kg	3.59	-	-	-	1646	Dinghy Warehouse/Devoti/Ace/LDC	£500	£1,950	£1,950+
	80-115kg	5.5-6.5	2.1	7	-	1195^	LDC Racing Sailboats	£2,000	£2,900	£3,250
	40/60kg	3.7/4.8	-	-	-	1470/1390^	LDC Racing Sailboats	-	-	£995+
	140kg	9	3.2	12.6	Opt	1078^	LDC Racing Sailboats	£3,500	-	£4,250
	48kg+	5.5	-	-	-	1184^	Roel Wester BV Netherlands	£500+	£1,800+	£2,800
	59-86kg	6.98	-	-	-	-	Vanguard Sailboats USA	-	-	£2,029
	63kg	3.98	1.1	-	-	1325^	Topper International	£800	£1,000	£1,475
	90-130kg	5.5	1.7	-	-	1447^	Tideway Dinghies	£1,500	£2,500	£5,250
	44kg+	5.64-7.52	1.09-2.43	8	-	1175-1255	Topper International	£1,000	£1,750	£2,095
	120kg+	11.5	3.5	12.75	1	1075^	Topper International	£4,000	£4,500	£5,995
	76-152kg	6.85	2.21	8.41	-	1185^	Topper International	-	-	£3,995
	32kg+	5.2	-	-	-	1290	Topper International	£500	£1,200	£1,795
	45-65kg	4.8	-	-	-	-	Trident UK	-	-	£2,450

Tests

To order copies of tests previously run in Y&Y contact t: 01702 582245 or visit: www.yachtsandyachting.com/boattests

Mirror

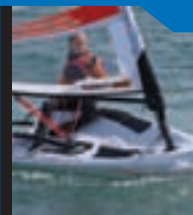


The Mirror is a classic, originally designed in 1962. An RYA Junior class, it attracts large racing fleets for children and parent/child teams. Sailed two-up, it has a small spinnaker. The class rules now allow either the traditional two-part gaff rig or the new alloy Bermudan rig which won this year's world championship. At £4,500 it's more expensive than a rotomoulded plastic dinghy, but has individuality and is more sensitive to sail. It can also be rowed or fitted with a small outboard.

GUIDE PRICE: £2,995/£4,499
PN: 1386
LOA: 3.3m
BEAM: 1.39m
HULL WEIGHT: 45.5kg
UPWIND SAIL AREA: 5.4sq m
SPINNAKER: 6.5sq m

Issue: February 27, 2004

Open Bic

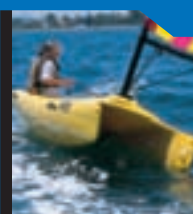


Is this the future of children's sailing? The Open Bic is designed to fill the gap between the traditional Optimist and the more high performance asymmetrics. Tiny – at just 9ft long – but not that light, the chined rotomoulded hull clocks in at 42kgs. The rigid foil is similar to a windsurfer, with a two-part mast and, curiously, optional kicker. Very stable and easy to right. A unique boat that may seem expensive when compared to the Taz or Tera, but could challenge the mighty Oppie's dominance.

GUIDE PRICE: £1,899
PN: N/A
LOA: 2.75m
BEAM: 1.14m
HULL WEIGHT: 42kg
SAIL AREA: 4.5sq m
MAX CREW WEIGHT: 90kg

Issue: July 28, 2006

Laser Funboat



If you're looking for a dinghy that sits in the garden over the winter, but after a quick hose down can give hours of fun off the beach in the summer months, the Laser Funboat could be just about ideal. Plastic rotomoulded construction, and using skegs instead of a dagger board, it's virtually bullet-proof for beach sailing. Add the simplicity of the rig, a high boom and the stability of a twin-hull design and you've found what could be the perfect boat for the kids taking their first steps into the sport.

GUIDE PRICE: £1,900
PN: n/a
LOA: 3.90m
BEAM: 1.25m
HULL WEIGHT: 70kg
CREW WEIGHT: >175kg
SAIL AREA: 4.8-5.8sq m

Issue: May 7, 2004

RS Vision



The only dedicated non-race boat from RS, although would perform reasonably well as a club dinghy. Polyethylene moulded 15-footer with a large cockpit to accommodate all the family and GNAV for extra headroom. Chined hull for stability with relatively small sail area, furling jib and a smooth spinnaker system on the XL version. Tricky to capsize, and righting lines fitted for ease of recovery. Well-mannered and robust makes it ideal for teaching, with an attractive price.

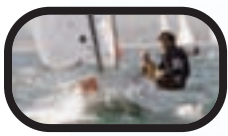
GUIDE PRICE: £3,995
PN: (class supplied) 1078
LOA: 4.55m
BEAM: 1.75m
HULL WEIGHT: 125kg
UPWIND SAIL AREA: 12.5sq m
ASYMMETRIC: 12sq m

Issue: May 21, 2004



PHOTO: JEREMY EVANS

* Combined main and jib Please note: This listing aims to provide a rough guide to the active classes in the UK, prices, for example are only approximate based on our research. A lot of the information has been provided by the classes themselves and has been checked where possible.



Can you name all the parts?

Use all the knowledge you have gained from this supplement to fill in the parts of the boat, and the sails below. For more activities like this see the RYA's Go Sailing activity book available from www.rya.org

