

Cadet News

An early preview for the Junior season, just a taster from me of what we have to look forward to during this year. First your Cadet Committee:

Ian Green (Cadet Officer) Email i.greens@virgin.net

Mike Clarkson **Dave Cumber** **Maria Ellison**

Ben Evans **Chris Forrest** **Andy Ledger**

Jo Way

Your Cadet Representatives - elected by you (remember?) are **Tom Clarkson** and **Emma Biddell**. Tom and Emma will be introducing themselves, if you

don't know them already, in a later issue (when they get around to it!)

Important dates

Senior Cadets start Saturday 3rd May and the Junior Cadets 31st May. The Junior Open will be Saturday 6th September - be there or be ... missed!

Ben has offered (oh yes he did) to fill us in on asymmetric sailing - he also agreed to write the following article for this month, many thanks Ben. More items for the next Cadet News gratefully received - jokes, competitions, what you have been up to (in boats that is).

Until next month - Ian

ASYMMETRICS – ROUTES AND BOATS

All was going well until Ian Green reached the fourth point on his list, 'oh yes' he said, 'I would like an article for the Cadet Newsletter covering types of asymmetrics and good development routes for starting asymmetric sailing to inform Cadets and their parents,' (oh dear, I could see what was coming next) 'and I'd like you to write it for me' he finished. I knew it was a mistake to ring him back!!

So, here, by request, are my thoughts (and I offer no guarantee that they have any link to reality!) on asymmetrics and how to start sailing them. Most of this is written (I hope) with a Cadet bias to meet the brief, however I have added a few other more general points as an overall A-class update.

Before getting on to the main event, I think it is important to address why anybody may choose to sail an asymmetric type boat. The first and foremost reason is, I think, speed and exhilaration! Asymmetrics are fast, they accelerate quickly and (most) will plane upwind and downwind – so if you enjoy blasting along those reaches in a conventional dinghy, then think how much more fun you can have blasting everywhere! The second reason for sailing an asymmetric style boat is to gain new sailing skills. As well as being fast, most asymmetrics are also unstable (I have used this excuse for many years and seem to be able to get away with it!) and are very sensitive to how they are handled, requiring different skills from more traditional dinghies. In other boats, not worrying about fore/aft trim or windward/leeward heel results in a move to the back of the racing fleet – in an asymmetric it is quite likely to lead to a refreshing swim and this seems to aid learning! The third reason for sailing a modern asymmetric/skiff type boat is that both of the first two reasons are true for both helm and crew. The boats rely equally upon skill levels at both ends of the boat and whilst the helm has the fun of steering, the crew has the large spinnaker and (often) a trapeze or wide wings to further spice things up!

That's covered why, the next question is what – as in what do you need to do to start sailing one of these types of boats. Firstly, you need to learn to sail. It is certainly possible to learn to crew on an asymmetric boat, but I would recommend starting off in a slower, more stable boat where you can learn the various skills in a rather calmer and drier manner – plus you have something to look forward to and progress towards. Learning to helm in an asymmetric, with no previous sailing experience, is another matter entirely! This is something I would really, really, really advise against, since the boat instability (key excuse – keep using it) and speed make it likely that:

- you won't be upright for very long; and
- when you are upright you are likely to be a danger to everybody else in the vicinity.

Even with perfect weather, a brave instructor and warm water I would start with a more stable boat first – you will learn faster and are far more likely to carry on enjoying sailing in the future. So, Oppies, Toppers and Mirrors (Hugh tells me half the UK Olympic squad have trained in Mirrors) – all make excellent starting places, whichever direction you want to take your sailing in the future.

Let's now assume that you are in a position where you can sail; you are confident in controlling your boat in the vicinity of other boats; you don't mind capsizing; and you now want to go faster – at this point you may start to think about buying an asymmetric class boat.



Steph Tries An Asymmetric - Fred's 29er
Photo by Andy Ledger

The next question therefore is which – as in ‘which asymmetric should you buy?’ There is really no right answer to this as it depends on weight, strength, skill level and personal preference and thus the best thing you can do is try some! The A-class group will be holding ‘Try an asymmetric’ events on (generally) the first Sunday of every month – but please check your Handbooks/Club notice boards for more details. I will also be creating a ‘crew’ list to match up any spare crews to available helms (or vice versa), so if you would like to try some A-class Club racing please let me know – either track me down in the Clubhouse or use the ‘asymmetrics’ link from the Club website.

Although trying first is always a good idea, I think that Ian will feel I have copped out if I don’t provide some sort of guide as to what is available. So here goes.

I am going to limit my comments to boats that are currently in the Club, or this article could go on for quite some time! The current list of A-class boats (in descending order of PYN) is below (complete with my highly biased views), broken down into ‘Fast’ and ‘Very Fast’ categories:

Fast

- Laser 2000 – a good family boat with no/few vices. It can be sailed by two adults, two Cadets or a mixture of the two. Provides good performance as the wind gets up (F4+) but a little underpowered in the lighter stuff. More of a conventional dinghy with an asymmetric rig than a true skiffy boat. See the Davies’ if you want to know more.
- RS200 – a popular boat that is again most suitable for lighter crew combinations (small adults/Cadets/mix). Looks to be more unstable than the L2000 and certainly seemed to get the Shones ready for a 29er! There will be three RS200s in the Club next year and, thanks to Al Read and the Navy, these will be insured for Club members to use when not being sailed by the Yeovilton guys – please see Al to book a go.
- Buzz – a higher performance boat. Lots of fun. Another good boat for progressing from traditional to skiffy type boats. Fairly easy to trapeze from and thus offers a good ‘learning to trapeze’ boat. One of CCSC’s preferred classes – both Steve Rose and the Wintertons can tell you more.
- Eva Weaver – see Mike Bidell to order your version!
- RS400 – if you are built like a gorilla and are heavy enough to be a front row forward in the England rugby team then this could be the boat for you! I’m not and I don’t and I found it very hard work!

Very Fast

- 29er - The 29er is the RYA youth boat and is ideal for the more advanced cadets who want to move into high performance skiffy type boats. It is the second CCSC preferred asymmetric class; there are already two in the Club and there are rumours that a third is on the way, making it one of the more numerous classes. This class is however only really suited to Cadets or light adults, having a very limited weight envelope. See the Clarksons or Shones for more information.
- Asymmetric International Canoe – looks fun, but a bit of a handful at the same time! A boat for the more expert single hander? Hugh de Longh can fill you in with details.
- B14 – What can I say? Simply the best; a preferred class and three in the Club this coming season. A ‘must have’ boat (this is the really heavily biased bit!).
- RS800 – apparently the easiest of the twin trapeze boats to sail as the main is not fully battened. Worth spending some time in a single trapeze boat first. Al Read has one so see him for information.
- International 14 – A classic twin trapeze boat. A development class so can be expensive to keep up to date. A boat for the more experienced!
- 49er – only buy if supplied with a free frontal lobotomy. Very fast. I look forward to seeing the Shones (especially Serena) sailing it next year!

I would imagine that most Cadets will want to start within the ‘fast’ section, looking at the Laser 2000, RS200 and Buzz in particular. All three can be sailed well by ‘lightweights’ and start to give the feel of the more skiffy type boats in the ‘very fast’ section. Cadet parents (or indeed anybody else) can really take their choice, and that’s probably where a ‘Try an asymmetric day’ may be of real benefit. Choice obviously doesn’t have to be limited to any of the above boats – there are many other asymmetric classes out there – but having multiple boats of the same type within the Club does help the Club racing and is likely to improve your sailing more quickly through the sharing of tips and techniques.

OK, that’s about it. Please do let me know if you wish to be added to the A-class crew list and I will try to match you to a helm. I also look forward to as many people as possible joining in the ‘try an asymmetric’ events – especially when the water warms up!

Ben Evans – Asymmetric Class Captain

(P.S. It was suggested that I entitle this article ‘Cooler than a Scorpion and cheaper than a sports car’ – but I resisted!)