

## Cadet News



### **RYA SOUTH WEST LASER TRAINING 2004-01-18**

**OR**

#### **What have I done ??? An account of the 1<sup>st</sup> training session of 2004**

Its 6.30 a.m. on Saturday 3rd January 2004 and there are bells ringing in my ears, is it a dream or the effects of a hangover (as I am 16 it can't be the latter!!!)? Then I hear dad's voice confirming that it is neither of the above, its reality - the first day of the RYA South West Laser training 2004.

7.15 a.m. and we're in the car waiting for the ice to clear from the windscreen – great! Onto the A37 towards Yeovil and we're driving through falling snow – even better! Ah well it will be o.k. at Bristol Corinthian Yacht Club I tell myself. As we drive further north the snow keeps falling and seems to be pitching, ideal training conditions??

8.30 a.m. and we catch up team Shone at Axbridge in the form of John and Hugh, dad's navigation course last year has obviously paid off.

8.35 a.m. and we are at the Reservoir – for the uninitiated Bristol Corinthian Yacht club is located on Axbridge reservoir which is a large saucer shaped piece of water approx 1 mile across at the bottom of Cheddar Gorge in Somerset.

Between 35 and 40 Laser sailors plus parents looking at each other, the lake, the snow on the hills behind, all wondering what are we doing here and are the bacon sandwiches ready yet??

Boat rigged by 9.00a.m. and in for the briefing and registration, formalities over by 9.45 so it's on the water for a couple of races to sort out the skill levels from the mixed full, radial and 4.7 fleets with ages ranging from 12 to around 45. The snow has melted but its dull, cold and only 5 knots of breeze. I have grown a bit! so it's the Radial for me this year.

On the water for the first start with Nick Muller and Pete Walsh (RYA coaches) full of advice as ever at 105 decibels (without the aid of a megaphone). Huge cheer and applause as the first start is a

general recall, all that start practice last year paid off except we are obviously rusty, as we couldn't keep behind the line. Races over and its back to the clubhouse for a quick lunch and sorting into coaching groups.

Back on the water and 15 minutes spent sailing around the RIB in groups to practice close company boat handling. Next it's upwind and downwind sailing between 2 marks no more than 50m apart, instructions are that there should be at least 10 tacks or gybes per leg depending on direction. Some serious capsizing going on as roll tacking is taken beyond the limits of balance. All back together after an hour for another race, lots of black flags and shouting but wind dies and makes result a lottery.

Back to the clubhouse for a shower, debrief and evening lectures on rig setting in varying wind conditions.

Sunday dawns bright and windless in Clevedon (my bed for the night) but foggy and windless on the reservoir. Standing on the dam and no water in sight even though it is only 10m away, but hey its only 8.15 am so there is plenty of time for it to clear. Wrong, fog cleared at 9.00a.m. As wind filled in from east, wind dies and fog returns even thicker at 9.15 as wind fills from south.

No sailing for the time being so coaches decide on a lecture and even worse a run around the lake followed by 100% participation of a warm up routine. Warm up?? More like wear out, t lasted over an hour!!!!. This was followed by a talk called the role and personal view of the Race Officer by the man who will be doing all of the major Laser events this year, it included hints on how not to upset a race officer and how to avoid being picked out in a crowd!

Talk over and the decision has been made, play is over for the weekend – still no wind, still no visibility.

12.30 and we are packing up to go home. A stop at Burger King for some good wholesome food and a sleep, well I have got to get some calories in to replace those lost on the run!!

That's it then - training session 1 over, 4 more to go. Next one is at Bristol again, hopefully with more breeze, before we go to Cornwall for sessions 3 and 4 and then at Castle Cove for session 5 in March.

Looking back, it may not have been the best weekend ever but I still learnt a lot and got back into the groove of being at the blunt end.

***Mike Robbins (Laser 173741)***