

Thorpe Bay Yacht Club

Sandhopper Newsletter

Summer 2009



Sandhopper lift-in - owners and crew, 2009

Welcome to our second edition of 2009!

Lift-in went to plan and was executed to perfection. Many thanks to those "unknown" culprits who tied a lovely thong to the captain's mast, just out of his reach! They will be pleased to learn that they have remained on the mast as "lucky pants", and the results have been great so far this year, as *Windrush* is giving *Squiffy* her annual beating.

Two boats have joined the fleet so far this year. **True Blue** (10), the original prototype, has joined our fleet with new owner **Mark Askew** who has already been on 99% of the races as well as fitting in an overnight trip to Rochester. Welcome, Mark.

We have also seen the return of **Sandhopper** (11) which was driven from Scotland, some 650 miles in 12 hours by **Kevin Kitson-Jones** and has been bought by new owner **Nick Binnendijk**. Nick, pictured right, is just 18 years old, and has been

enthused to join the fleet after racing with his dad in **Squiffy** (41) as well as borrowing any other boat he could just to race in the most competitive fleet at TBYC. Welcome, Nick - I believe this makes you the youngest owner of a Sandhopper ever - even your boat is 21 years older than you are! I am sure that, with Nick's enthusiasm, he will introduce other younger members to our class which will help increase our numbers further.



Young Nick, stripping his Sandhopper

I think that it is a true testament to the Sandhopper that it can be enjoyed and raced competitively by all age groups equally. I've been very lucky to race frequently with my own dad, who is seventy years young, alongside my son who is just twelve. When the three of us race together, it is an absolute joy and one I will always treasure.

It has been great to see an average of fifteen boats starting most races. Even on very blustery days, we are getting eight out, and it certainly is an advantage to sail three-up in those conditions and there seems to be an abundance of crew waiting to be asked to come and play, as it has been too windy for their dinghies!

Glad to see the Sunday trophy being passed around the fleet. I also love to watch the envious looks from our fellow sailors who wish they could join in. It was also nice to see the "golden anchor" awarded for the first time this year. **Phil Crawford** was the lucky recipient, and it was



*Hmmm... I wonder how much I could get for these if I sold them for scrap?
The Red Sand towers as seen on a Sandhopper cruise in September 2005*

awarded for his perfect mooring alongside **Polly**, followed by a leisurely swim, and still managing to come sixth, luckily for *Squiffy* and *Zeus* who sneaked in whilst Phil was being wrestled back in his boat by the very able **Margaret Kennedy**.

The Sandhopper picture screen is also receiving praise from the other sections. If you have any pictures to add, please email them to me (in JPG format only, please) and I will put them on.

Not long now until the Open, and the Nationals are closing in, so get out on the water and practice. I see **Peter Blomfield** has already measured another eight sets of sails this year, that's on top of the seventeen from last season.

There is still a high demand for Sandhoppers, so if you know of one for sale or are considering selling, please let me know.

I hope you enjoy this latest newsletter, and I'll see you on the water !

Barry (39)

...DIARY DATES...DIARY DATES...DIARY

SAT-SUN JULY 11/12	Sandhopper Open at TBYC
SATURDAY JULY 18	Nore Race
SAT/SUN SEPTEMBER 5/6	Sandhopper Nationals at TBYC
SUNDAY OCTOBER 18	Sandhopper Final Fling
SATURDAY OCTOBER 24	Sandhopper Lift Out



Hyde Sails sponsor the prizes for the 2009 Sandhopper Nationals.

I bought *Talitrus* (S46) in 1979, so later this year I shall have owned and sailed the same Sandhopper for 30 years; a lifetime. Is this a record, I wonder?

For those of our forebears whose lives straddled the two World Wars, thirty years was an age many never reached. Those that did faced major challenges, like finding enough to eat and staying alive. Our generation has been very lucky; we just worry about inflation, credit, the cost of new sails and antifouling etc...

On the subject of inflation, when first built Sandhoppers cost under £700. *Talitrus*, second hand, cost me £1,800 in 1979 (that's over 300% inflation!) This year I spent nearly the same again getting the bottom treated - three times the cost of a new boat in the early seventies!

Hoppers have actually held their value pretty well, certainly better than cars or shares, so you can assure your partners that you bought your Hopper as an investment, not just for fun.

When I joined TBYC I was the proud owner of a Zenith. The club committee were iffy about having such a boat in the club, as they were trying to push certain classes and do away with handicap racing; somehow I don't think they succeeded. Thus I bought Jack Sprat and



Talitrus saltator: smarter than your average shrimp

renamed her *Talitrus* - the generic Latin name of the little creature which lives on the foreshore and which most people call a sand-hopper.



The Joy of Sandhoppers

by Peter Blomfield



In the early years, my daughters crewed for me, and we could rig and get off the mooring in 8 minutes. We would then find ourselves sailing with those stalwarts of the club and highly competitive helms such as David Mayne, Dennis Bundy and Daniel Blunden, all desperate to prove they were the best. I just wonder how they would get on against our current best sailors; I think the standard has improved.

The joy of a Sandhopper is that it can be all things to all men. I enjoyed exploring the Medway, and remember sailing up the creek behind Queenborough to the point where it was almost too narrow to turn round, mainly sailing single-handed.

Later, with a healthy young companion, John Evans, the sights were set further afield. We cruised up to Brightlingsea, where the harbourmaster decided we were too small to worry about mooring fees. We cruised further up the East Coast; in at Harwich, so that we could explore the Orwell and the Stour. On arrival at Woolverstone Marina, the manager took pity on us, made us tea and agreed a very favourable rate. The boat ended up staying there for about ten days.

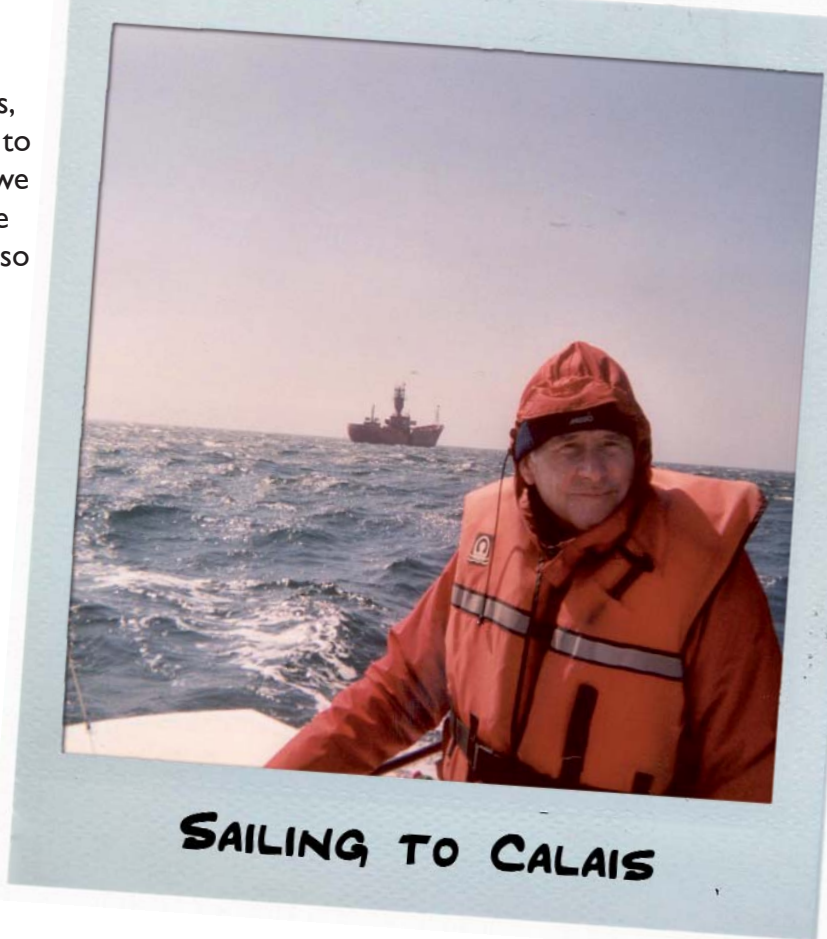
We also had an interesting trip to Calais. David Dane and Bill Brech (and later, Stan Starkey) had made the trip many years earlier, but they went for and with the Calais Rally; John and I decided to do it on our own.

From casting off at the club to arriving at Calais, we didn't see another single pleasure boat, neither sail nor motor. Our first encounter with a pleasure boat was at the entrance to Calais, where we found two chunky yachts under motor waiting for permission to enter.

We have told the story of our crossing elsewhere; suffice to say it was not without incident. John nearly fell out of the boat. I nearly dropped the outboard over the transom. We had a close encounter with a cargo ship. I lost the skin off my bum, and the passage took fifteen hours. (The skin took at least ten times as long to grow back!)

So there you are, lads. Sandhoppers are not just for racing. Could someone else please win the Cruising Trophy this year?

Peter Blomfield

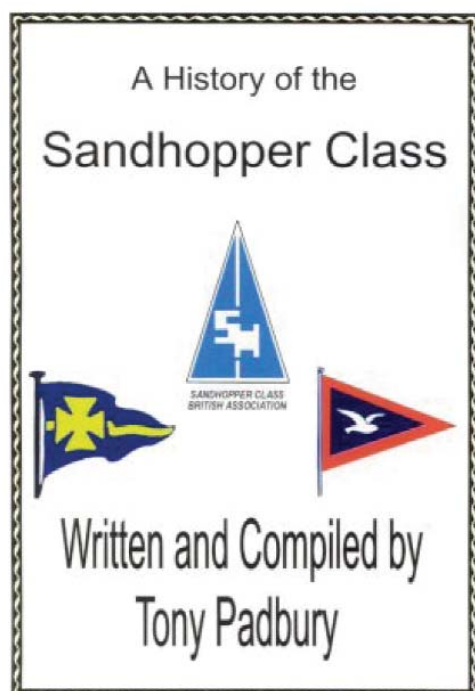


This little book covers the initial conception of the Sandhopper and its development. It is a collection of articles from the archives covering race event reports, long distance passage trips and technical articles.



First published in 2006, this 82-page book is available in paperback and yours for just £6.50 inc. p&p.

Email history@sandhopper.org.uk for details.



Your Pictures



Tom, flying his kite at the TBYC Open



Ray shows off his balloon-modelling skills



Zeus, keeping guard at the rear of the fleet - as usual



"What rule did he scream?"



Jolly, teaching his son premature starts!

We'd love to print your photos in a future edition! All pictures sent in will be returned.

Speak to Barry Duce for details.

absolutely floorless

The Sandhopper Floor Installation Project, 2008/9

Last winter I decided to completely replace the floor in my Sandhopper, Zeus. I was helped along the way by many of you, including Paul Spratt, David Johnson, Chas Gibson, Paul Farrall, Martin Binnindijk, Peter Thompson and Barry Duce. We decided to photograph our work, in order to produce a document which might, in the future, be useful to club members and other Sandhopper owners.

Well, that document actually became a nineteen-page booklet, so rather than reproduce it here we thought we'd present some selected highlights.

You can now download the full guide, in PDF format, from our website.



◆ A quick visit to B&Q revealed this fantastic tool, which vibrates through GRP, epoxy and wood like a hot knife through butter, and is a convenient size to get into tight places. Its main advantage over a grinder is the level of control one has and when you are that close to your precious hull, that makes for some great peace of mind! It also makes a fantastic sander and has other cutting attachments that make it wonderfully adaptable to a

◆ If you look carefully you can see how closely you can cut the floor away from the hull with that Bosch tool. You can also see how saturated and rotten the ribs were at their ends. The construction of these early boats was to paint the ribs, and then stick them in with sheets of chopped mat, on each side, leaving the ends and centre of each rib exposed to whatever was sloshing around in the bilges. It is these parts that were in a bad way and some simply fell apart in my hands, particularly when scrubbed to clean the grease off.



◆ Firstly, feel underneath the floor where it meets the hull for soft wood and/or delamination of the ply. A useful tool in determining the state of the floor is a small digital camera!



Visit the website at www.sandhopper.org.uk for full details