

Welcome to Sully Sailing Club

Information for new members

Sailing Activities

Organised sailing takes place every Sunday from the beginning of March to mid-December. However, some members sail informally on Sunday mornings in January and February when the weather permits. Club racing takes place either at 10am or 3pm depending on tides (see club programme). The racing programme is supplemented by occasional organised cruises up channel to Flatholm or Penarth or down-channel to Aberthaw or Porthkerry. A Patrol Boat, usually the club RIB (Rigid Inflatable Boat), is manned during the racing and for organised cruises, and club members are scheduled to man the Patrol Boat or help on the shore about 4 times per year.

The club uses software called DutyMan to schedule the racing and cruising and the Patrol Boat and shore duties. Members are informed of their duties in February and reminded about 10 days before they are due. It is important that members turn out for their duty and dates can be swapped using the DutyMan software and login details for this are emailed to new members. The sailing programme and duties are also displayed on the Programme page of the club website.

From April to September informal Wednesday evening sailing takes place from about 6pm. There is no Patrol Boat organised except between mid-May and mid-July when the Wednesday evening session is combined with novice coaching for adults and youth/juniors.

Also an annual 'open day' is held in May/June to publicise the Club's activities by offering taster sailing sessions to Sully residents & interested other people.

The Club organises monthly work parties to cut the grass & deal with essential maintenance matters, such as improving sea defences, clubhouse painting etc and you are asked to contribute to these events.

Racing

Racing is organised using a handicap system, based on the RYA Portsmouth Yardstick, under the World Sailing Racing Rules of Sailing.

The course will be set on the club noticeboard and the races are started and finished using lights and flags displayed on the clubhouse balcony. The start sequence is:

- Advance notice (both lights flash) then:
- 5-minutes 1 light + horn
- 4 minutes 2 lights + horn
- 1 minute 1 light out + horn
- Start both lights out + horn

Races normally last for approximately 40 minutes and average lap times are used to calculate the results. 3 races series are run during the year: the ‘Early Bird’ from March to the end of May, the ‘Summer series’ from June to August and the ‘Transom’ series of races from September to December, with a club Regatta in September.

The overall results are split into 2 fleets:

- The ‘Fast’ fleet of under PY 1102 i.e. Lasers, RS400, Dart catamarans etc
- The ‘Slow’ fleet of PY 1102 and over i.e. Mirrors, Toppers, Laser Radials, Topper Topaz, Enterprises, Wanderers, GP 14s etc

Prizes are awarded to the 1st, 2nd and 3rd placed sailors in each fleet who have sailed sufficient races.

See the Sailing Instructions on the website for full details of how the races are run.

In addition there are a number of Trophy Races, and some ‘fun’ activities.

Currently the club has the following trophies, which are competed for annually.

- Sharpe trophy - all boats
- Watler Cup – fast fleet only
- Laser Cup – Lasers only
- Centripump Cup – slow fleet only
- Commodores Plate – a handicap race around Sully island, open to all boats
- Bill Brien Trophy – awarded to the best overall combined result of the 3 series
- The Regatta Shield – presented for the best club performance in the Regatta
- Mirror shield – best overall mirror performance
- Roger Dykes trophy – best youth in the Regatta
- Colin Lake Memorial Pursuit Race Trophy

In addition, there is the

- Driftwood Trophy for the fastest time around Sully Island. This is an honesty trophy as it is self-timed. It involves crossing the club start line, rounding the island in a clockwise direction, and finishing around the start buoy with a hook finish. Times can be entered using the logbook in the club hut and the result will be calculated on PY handicap.
- Jubilee trophy awarded for most launches in a season
- Ken Hughes trophy awarded to the most improved helm during the season.

Club Website

The sailing programme, race results and current information on weather and tides, the Club Rules, Risk assessments, race-day duties, and Newsletters, are published on the club web site (sully-sailing.org.uk/wp) and updated regularly.

General Safety, Club and Local Information

Please make sure that you sign the logbook in the clubhouse, every time before you go afloat. This is for your own safety so we know if you go missing, and so that the club has an accurate record of launches each season.

You must have appropriate third party insurance cover for your boat (minimum £3,000,000), and you and your crew must wear buoyancy aids and appropriate clothing for the conditions (wet-suits, dry-suits etc – see the club rules). Each member is responsible for deciding whether they are competent to sail in the conditions they may encounter.

The club owns several boats, which are available for your use. There are 4 Lasers, 6 Toppers and 3 Topaz dinghies. These are well used, and should be booked via the Sailing Secretary or Bosun. The club also has a larger family boat, a Topaz Argo, which can be booked via the Sailing Secretary although, as it is new, use is more restricted. When using club boats you sail at your own risk and should check gear, especially that the hull drain bung is in place, before launching. Please advise the Bosun of any deficiencies, loss or breakages. There are guidance packs for rigging some of the boats on the shelf under the stairs.

The club compound is small and can get congested, especially before and after racing. Please don't leave your boat unattended with the sails up and flapping. The sails and boom are a head and face hazard.

If sailing on your own, or on club cruises, your boats should be equipped with appropriate equipment such as an anchor, paddles, etc and some means of summoning help in case of difficulties (A VHF radio is recommended, but a mobile phone in a waterproof container would be OK close to shore). If you are on your own and want a radio check, call the Coastguard (Milford Haven Coastguard) on Channel 16. For local advice and information, or to ask them to keep an eye out for you, you can call the NCI (Coastwatch) station at Nells Point (Barry Island) on Channel 65. This is manned from 9-5 in Summer, 9-4 in Winter and 9-9 on weekends during July and August. In emergencies call the Coastguard on Channel 16 or dial 999 and ask for the Coastguard.

Our slipway is long enough to reach low tide on neap tides, and on spring tides boats can be trolleyed over the bedrock for 50 metres, and then a muddy (sometimes sandy) beach appears, which can be firm enough to land/launch from. It is a good idea to check out the condition of the rocks and other obstructions and the limits of any beach at low tide before you venture out below the bend in the slipway. The bend is uncovered halfway between high and low tide and by coincidence this is also when the causeway to Sully Island is uncovered.

Launching/recovery is best between an hour and four hours after high tide. A high tide and a southeasterly through to southwesterly wind can cause waves to build up on the slipway making landing difficult. Generally, if the waves are large at high tide they will have decreased significantly 1½ hours later.

The Wales coastal path goes across the top of the slipway and the slipway and path are often busy, especially in sunny weather. Please be courteous to other users and warn them about the hazards such as flapping sails and swinging booms. Try to ensure that you go down the slipway with the boom on the leeward edge so that people can pass on the other side, but keep a look out for people on the edge of the slipway or on the rocks close by.

If you are sailing in a race or with other sailors, please help the person in front with their trolley. Someone will be on hand to take the trollies up the slipway on a race day but on other days one person will need to hold two boats while the other takes the trollies up the slipway. On a falling tide this can be a few metres to get them out of the way of the next boats launching but on a rising tide this can be a considerable distance. Please leave the trollies overlapping in a line at the side of the slipway, ideally with a wheel over the edge to stop them rolling down. Please make sure that the slipway is as clear as possible for other users.

When coming in you must aim to come in on the slipway not the rocks off the side. Please wait until the boat in front has been removed from the water unless there is no one on shore to help, in which case boats should come in in pairs so one person can hold the boats while the other gets the trollies. If there are other boats coming in after you, please pull your boat a few metres up the slipway to allow them to have room to come ashore.

The tidal rise and fall, in the Bristol Channel, can exceed 12 metres on spring tides, so sometimes the tidal flow in Sully Bay is up to 4 knots, and 6 knots or more outside the bay. Until you are familiar with the tide changes, you are advised to remain in the bay, especially if on your own. On occasion, the RNLI has been called out when members have sailed down channel on a falling tide or visa versa. The basic rule is sail against the tide so if the wind drops you can drift back!

This part of the Bristol Channel is prone to sea breezes, especially on sunny days in Spring and Summer. This can lead to large changes in wind strength and direction, which turn a calm sea into big waves in a very short space of time. Whatever the wind direction beforehand, especially if light or calm, sea breezes can set in from a southwesterly direction and can quickly build to Force 5, sometimes Force 6 or more. Waves off Sully Island and further out quickly build in a sea breeze with an outgoing tide and a warm, calm, sunny day becomes much cooler and exciting or scary depending on your experience and the kit you're wearing. It is vital that you are able to sail competently in the wind you might experience and if you are unsure stay close to the shore and come in before it gets too extreme.

The area around Sully Island is tricky. There can be large overfalls off the up-tide end of the island, and the tide race between the island and Swanbridge can be brisk and rough, especially after high tide. If you sail too close, you also run the risk of submerged rocks and angry fishermen! Further along the coast the sea between Lavernock Bay and Flatholm can be particularly hazardous and develops very big seas. Ask an experienced club member to give you detailed guidance before you sail that way and generally, the basic rule is to check with an experienced club member on how the wind and tide are likely to affect your sailing before setting out, until you are one yourself.

Other information

- On joining you will be given a key to the compound and a key to the changing rooms/showers on receipt of a £15 deposit. If the clubhouse is used mid-week, it is important that it is left clean and secure with lights turned off etc.
- The club publishes a newsletter, which is emailed to all members, currently monthly, keeping you up to date with events etc.
- There is a club WhatsApp group (Random Sailing) which is used to arrange sailing with others. If you want to join it please email the Sailing Secretary with your mobile phone number.
- Your road trailers can be kept in the compound under your boat or locked in the trailer row. If your boat is kept with the mast up it should be secured to the trailer or otherwise secured to prevent it blowing over.
- Occasionally the club holds social events, such as barbecues, a drink at Christmas, and in the winter months talks are arranged on nautical matters. These are publicised via the newsletter, website and email.
- The club is run by a volunteer committee who aim to keep the club running smoothly and organise the sailing programme and other activities. If you have a skill or interest which you think may benefit the club and are willing to contribute, please contact a committee member. A list of committee members, with contact details, is on the club website. If you would like to join the committee there is the opportunity to be elected or co-opted at the Annual General Meeting.
- Our Annual General meeting is held at the beginning of March each year. The running of the club is governed by the Club Constitution which is available on the club website.