

Tales from a couple of Masters

Last Thursday saw the Club full of members and many visitors from the Cruising Association for Tom Cunliffe's 'Hurricane Force' talk. What an engaging and entertaining evening. Tom is a master of both seafaring tales and traditional practical sailing. Against the backdrop of promoting his first novel 'Hurricane Force' he regaled the audience with large parts of his sea exploits over his life. There were just so many intriguing insights. Just three are pulled out below:

- Sailing from Brazil to Barbados using a sextant and no chronometer, so they sailed north until they hit the right latitude, which they could measure, then simply sailed west until they arrived at the island.
- When they had a chronometer, they had a set of celestial plots that produced the tightest possible position's circle of certainty (known as a cocked hat in traditional navigation).
- Having sailed for decades with no guard rails and no engine on many occasions Tom realised that SAFETY is a state of mind not a piece of equipment.

Club member and yachting journalist, John Roberson (aka Robo), was so nearly the Grand Master of La Baule. Read the account of his adventures below.



Saturday saw Squadron 13 out enjoying the light airs and sharing the slipway with the rowing club who were running their Two Piers Regatta.

Last weekend was a great day by all accounts. Phil delivered so great Race Officer work giving everyone an enjoyable sail and some racing. In Ian's words "Awesome sailing by everyone today in tricky light wind conditions. Big well done to the single handers (Tera and Qba), some of you was the first time solo sailing. Also to the boys in the Quest, great teamwork by you all and super leadership by Peter and Finn showing everyone the ropes."

Half Term Courses: Ian and Duncan have organised level 3/4 dinghy courses for half term week. Places are fill in quickly and might be full by the time this is published. If you are interested please phone the Club (01803 292006)

Next Session - Saturday morning, 10 October 2026 TBC

Keep a close watch out for announcements on the WhatsApp group.



Club Racing: Sunday, there was just one cruiser, White Tiger, and the SB20s racing. Great to see Finn Houlihan's new SB20 'Betty' racing and WKD skippered by its new owner Ann Ashworth performing well.



A Master at La Baule: LASER MASTERS EUROPEANS.

If there's one place you don't want to be after a long day on the water, it's in the protest room.

If there's one place you REALLY don't want to be after the last race of a regatta, when you should be in the bar celebrating, it's in the protest room!

Sometimes these things are just beyond our control.



By John Roberson

Picture this scenario, final day of the Laser Masters

Europeans and in the first race of the day I'd had my best result, with one race to go the championship was still winnable if all the cards fell the right way. The conditions were just right for me, fully stretched hiking, but not over powered, a nice even wave pattern that was easy to handle upwind and gave some good surfs downwind.

It was less than three minutes to the start of the last race, I'm reaching away from the committee boat on port gybe getting ready to tack behind a group of starboard tackers to go for a committee boat end start.

Suddenly there is a huge bang and my boat is in danger of luffing into the oncoming starboard tackers and I can't steer away from them. I look around behind me and my rudder had come off, then I realize that I have been hit by a French boat who had ripped the rudder off, breaking both the gudgeons on the transom!

There is no apology from the Frenchman, he just tacked away and headed for the start. In the protest room he said he didn't realize he'd hit me!

It was a pity to end what had been a good regatta on such a bad note. La Baule is a great venue for big events, very similar in many ways to Torbay, only bigger. The club is friendly and like Torquay there is no shortage of places to eat and drink. The only downside is that it's beach launching and you get sand in everything.

The upshot of not being able to do the last race was that the Frenchman got disqualified and I got redress of average points for the regatta. I was a bit surprised that when calculating my redress they included my discard in the results they averaged, which was unfortunate because I was discarding a "black flag".

Because there were only four of us Legends (over 75) we started with the Great Grand Masters (65 – 74), which was the most competitive fleet, stacked with Olympic Gold



Apparently Robo is just to leeward of the boat DOM 214770

CLUB SAILING UPDATE 06.10.2026

Medallists, past world champions and rock star French round the world sailors. It was very easy to lose twenty places as the result of a poorly picked layline.

This event also used a different scoring system from the Worlds in Athens earlier this year. Instead of scoring us Legends separately, they included us with the GGMs and just took our position in their fleet without re-calculating. Had they scored us separately I would have finished second.

Nearly time to head back to the waters of the Indian Ocean off Fremantle.

RIB and other TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Club Courses

Our schedule of courses has been updated and is published on the club web site [Training Courses | Royal Torbay Yacht Club](#).

There will be more to follow including ones for anyone wanting to help with club race teams for both club and championship events.



The current published courses include:

- First Aid Course Friday 11th December
- First Aid Course Monday 8th March
- PB2 Monday Tuesday 15th 16th March

RYA Race Management Courses

Apart from the RYA courses we run as an RYA Training Centre, the RYA also run a series of race management courses with venues around the country.

As well as Race Officer Courses, they include ones like mark laying. Even if you do not want to become a full RYA accredited Race Officer or Mark layer attending these will help understand what happens on the committee boat and how racing is run.

Currently there is a Race Officer's course running at Ply Yacht Club on 7 & 8 of November. Full details and link to booking form are here:

<https://www.rya.org.uk/events/rya-regional-race-officer-course-november-2026/>

From the RYA:

This week's pick from the RYA newsletter:

	Paignton Sailing Club announced as winners of Funding the Future Club receives £6,000 to support its 'Mums on the Water' initiative. FIND OUT MORE
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CLUB SAILING UPDATE 06.10.2026

Britain's rising stars prepare to represent their country

British youth sailors selected to fly the flag at 2026 Youth Worlds.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)



It's Not All about Motor Yachts

When it comes to maintaining boat engines, the task can be as simple or as complicated as you make it. As a skipper, your relationship with that oil-filled pump lurking in the shadows could be as detached as having total reliance on the nearest engineer, or it could be as involved as digging out your tools and conducting a strip-down and rebuild.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

Duty Rota Update & Upcoming Schedule

As a reminder, per our updated Sailing Instructions, racing will NOT happen for any class (except IRC and Cruiser) unless a safety boat is on the water. If you cannot make your assigned date, you must arrange your own duty swap via the club WhatsApp groups and notify the Sailing Secretary or Rear Commodore Sailing.

October Duties:

Day	Date	Series	Results	Race Officer	Safety Crew
Sun	11-Oct	AUTUMN - SUN	Tina	James Clapham (From a Rib)	Cuban Cruise
Sun	18-Oct	AUTUMN - SUN	Alan	Michael Currie	Spaggerwocky
Sun	25-Oct	AUTUMN - SUN	Jan	Bob Penfold	YaYa
Sun	1-Nov	WINTER – SUN	Alan	Michael Currie	Bewitched

• Safety RIB Reminders:

- If you are operating the club RIBs, please adhere strictly to these rules:
- There must **always** be both a helm and a crew member on a safety RIB.
- Helms **must** be Club members and hold a valid **RYA PB2** accreditation. Crew must also be Club members.
- Buoyancy aids or life jackets **must** be worn at all times when afloat.
- Check the craft's fuel levels *before* leaving the harbour and upon return. Always replace used tanks with full ones at the end of a duty.
- Notify the sailing committee (Michael Currie / Amy Roberts) of any faults on the ribs by email (rearcommodoresailing@rtyc.org / sailing@rtyc.org)

Reminders:

Our Club - Our Newsletter – Your Articles:

Thank you to Robo for his article next week. Who's got something for next week?

I know it's been a very busy season for everyone, not just championships. Have you got a story of a cruise, memory of some experience, seen something funny, or involved in some different RTYC club sailing or racing? Then please drop me a little report, help is available and happy to support anyone with tidying things up, (with a photo or 2 if you have them) and I would love to include your article/report. Constructive feedback is also welcome. I can be reached on 07976 131505 or email rearcommodoresailing@rtyc.org.

Contact the editor: If you have any questions or feedback about club sailing or this newsletter I can be reached on 07976 131505 or email rearcommodoresailing@rtyc.org.