



## The Fusions have arrived!

**T**wo brand new Fusion Plus sailing dinghies were delivered to the Club on the first Sunday in July.

At first we were slightly perplexed to see a van with no trailer behind driving across the field. However, we soon discovered that two Fusions and their launching trollies fitted inside the van with plenty of room to spare.

The Fusions were unloaded, unwrapped and put together, with just a little bit of

head scratching and some advice from Mark, who delivered them.

The Fusion Plus is 3.6m in length and can be sailed single-handed using just the main or with the jib when you have a crew (or two).

Jens and Peter were the first two to try them out. There was no wind outside the Club so they had to creep round the corner to sail them. They sailed single-handed but with the small jib still on as that was how they had been rigged.

Peter came back in a while later and took Thomas aboard as the first crew to try them out on the river. Jens swapped with Mike. And later Kate and Joe also put the boats through their paces, whilst keeping a wary eye on the thunderstorms that were rolling around in the distance.



The Fusions will be put to good use during the Level 1 sailing course.



# Strategic thinking

Peter Craggs

Peter shares his thoughts on how wind direction and current affect our sailing area. He has added a list of definitions at the end of the article for those not quite so familiar with the nicknames in use at the Club.

**W**hat links Sydney Harbour and the River Ouse? Not a lot is probably your first thought! Bridges? Sharing the water with all sorts of other craft? Possibly, but the point I'm aiming at is that nowhere is perfect.

Not that long ago a Sydney local was telling me how grim it was to race in the harbour with lots of shifts and other hassles. The closest I've been is a ferry ride to Manly and it looked rather nice. Naturally, I commiserated as best I could! However, no sailing venue is perfect. Some of my favourite locations, Weymouth, North Berwick and Ullswater, can all serve up some truly hideous conditions. We have all stood and moaned about the wacky winds on the river at some time, but despite what you might think some of the weirdness is repeatable and can be learnt and used to gain a leap on those that continue to think it's all very odd.

So, with that in your mind I've scribbled some random thoughts on things I think about before a day racing on our little river. To do this I've split the river up into three areas, which are the main bits of river we use for our racing. I have labelled the water directly outside the Club as **C** (shown in green on the map on the next page.); the area outside the marina, known as '*round the corner*', as **B** (Boats, yellow); and the area beyond Naburn, heading for Acaster is **A** (red). In reality we often use bits of **B** & **C** together and only venture to **A** on occasions but there is some merit in looking at this patch so, as well as making it alphabetically pleasing, I've included it.



Sydney Harbour and its enormous bridge

This isn't a definitive guide and is really designed to get you thinking, so feel free to disagree. This is the first time I've tried to write this down. Some of it didn't make sense until I did and some might say it still doesn't.

*What I have written below is quite lengthy but I can offer three very random tips before you do anything else:*

## Go for a walk!

We can find ourselves at the club with no wind or too much water (or both). Rather than going home to do the garden, take a quick riverside walk. An advantage of a small river is you can get quite close. Most of the sailing areas are within a 10-minute walk and you'll learn a surprisingly large amount just looking! We even have a bridge for an aerial view. If you are very keen its roughly a mile from the club to Acaster, all of which is along the riverbank. If you are less keen on walking *The Ship* car park offers a good view down the *Narrows*.

## Stand on the veranda...

and work out where Naburn and Acaster villages are. You might be surprised!

## Get a compass and/or a map.

It's fine looking at the forecast and seeing that it's going to be a southwesterly

breeze, but if you don't know where that is in relation to the river the rest of this isn't going to make a lot of sense!

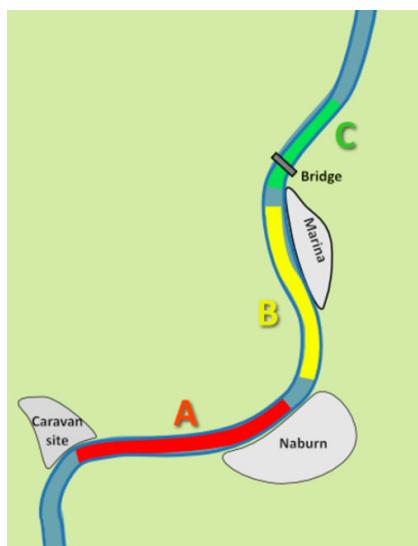
At the time of writing (well finishing, I started this in April 2020!) the year ahead looks more positive for time on the water. So I'd encourage you to try some of these idea and formulate your own theories. Future articles welcome!

## Area C

Outside the club is an interesting spot to sail, with a bridge, lots of trees and a few moorings downstream to provide plenty of entertainment before the wind gets involved. When it's good this area is very good, but it can flatter to deceive from more than one direction!

## Current

The main current here runs significantly off centre down the Naburn side until it's through the bridge when it keeps going in a straight line until it reaches the Bishopthorpe bank before *Ranganui Corner*. This is best understood by watching from the bridge when the river is too full to sail but not flooded (once over the banks it gets more confused) as it's basically on fast forward! Remember the water can't see the corner coming and the river is far from straight even on the bits where you might think



Sketch of the river areas in the article.

otherwise. The current only really comes into play when the river is reasonably full, but it's rarely the decisive factor, so be careful that it doesn't become a distraction.

### **Southwest is best!**

This area is at its best in a southwesterly, when it funnels straight down the river from Ranganui Corner, but any slight variation from a pure southwesterly and the fun starts. In this area a southwesterly is actually a pretty clean wind and gives us probably our best racing with no moorings over most of the area. Sadly, a pure southwesterly doesn't seem to happen that often.

A few degrees away from a pure southwesterly and it gets weird quickly. More west brings it over the banks. The big thing to think about here is the bridge. It squares the breeze off and also compresses it. This has the effect of making a really nice square and artificially windy start line area if we are using the *Club Line*. The windier it is the further this effect reaches. Equally if the wind is forecast to drop the leeward mark can suddenly be in a windless area as the wind tunnel stops working as hard! Wednesday evenings often provide a classic example.

You also need to remember that the nice square breeze off the line isn't its true direction. Once you're through the

bridge the true wind will be coming more off the Bishopthorpe bank. As such the Naburn side of the bridge generally pays, but don't be tempted to creep along the bank. Instead tack and head for our jetties. When you tack back onto starboard and hit the spot you should be lifted nicely along the river and sail away from anyone creeping down the Naburn bank. Once they tack, they'll be headed. This effect is repeatable and easily practised outside racing. Beyond this area it pays to use the Naburn side of the river as much as possible, as the moored boats (on the club side) and trees add a significant shadow. Try not to get too close.

Heading downwind – look for the gust spreading out across the water in the area of *Joe's Gap*. There will be a flat spot before you reach the breeze, try to pick the edge of the gust up before anyone else and use the Naburn side of the bridge. If events force you onto the Bishopthorpe side, consider gybing where the wind tunnel of the bridge has its effect and head to the other bank.

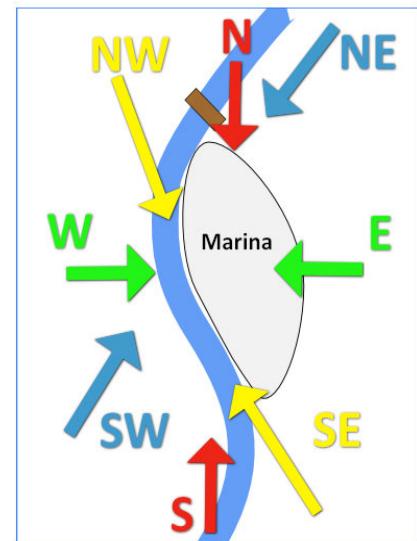
### **Northeasterly**

Lumpy! It arrives as big chunks of breeze followed by a flat spot. I have never worked out a pattern, but this is where being able to sail on auto-pilot whilst looking at the wind on the water is a massive advantage. Keep your wits about you and look for the gusts! The bridge compression effect is reversed but there are no bonus gusts to collect. It can make the downwind leg, complete with the current underneath you, a magic ride if everything falls into place. The leeward mark is often on Ranganui Corner so remember to think about the current and if laying marks take care, a yard or two further round the corner can change the game significantly.

*One word of caution here, the breeze appears in lumps and works its way downstream, a flat spot follows. Keep that in mind when out for a play, everything takes you away from home!*

### **Northerly**

Not ideal but any hint of east added and it will get funnelled down the river,



Wind directions on the river

unless its windy then it will just rag the trees around and be a frustrating and probably cold sail. Any west, head round the corner.

### **Southerly**

Bit of west and it will be OK outside the club. Touch of east, head round the corner.

### **Southeasterly**

This produces a classic bit of river trickery that will confuse many and sometimes leads to marks in almost impossible areas. Short answer is don't race outside the club in a southeasterly, but it is worth watching the breeze here as it does help with overall understanding. A southeast breeze near the bridge will be blocked by the Marina's high banks opposite the club. However a breeze will work its way across the swampy field that sits alongside the cycle track (opposite the Club Line). When it nears the bridge, it will be forced through the bridge and provide a small viable sailing area possibly as far as or maybe slightly beyond *Joe's Gap*. However if there is a decent breeze, then the wind from around the corner will be funnelled along the river towards the bridge. The two winds meet near the first mooring! Here the whole lot goes up in the air and it's impossible to sail.



## Easterly

Fancy some gardening? There are high banks and big trees in the way and it is generally a cold direction. If you do sail in an easterly (or if you have the misfortune to be race officer) don't sail outside the club! **Please.**

## Area B

This area is probably used the most. With moored boats on each bank and the marina entrance it is a busy bit of river. Northwesterly or southeasterly are the two winning directions here. Southwesterly gives you reaching practice with explosive gusts. Area B is often paired with marks in area C to give a beat, a reach and a run. If you must sail in an easterly the patch outside the marina entrance is as good as it gets.

## Current

Having bounced off Ranganui Corner the current makes its way down the Bishopthorpe bank. This has limited effect in normal conditions but be very wary of the next corner (outside the marina café) as the river turns a significant amount and the current can be very interesting around here, particularly in high river levels. (*Hint: to learn what goes on round these parts pay attention when mark laying. It's surprisingly shallow in places and you also find spots where the mark weights will be working really hard to keep the buoy in one place. Worth remembering which bits are which and watch how other boats behave when you're stuck in the rescue boat.*)

## Northwesterly

Generally, an excellent direction, with decent breeze. Prone to be a bit stop start when its lighter but usually a northwesterly gives you good racing and plenty to think about in high river levels when the beat is against the current. It is often completely windless at the club, so beware if it's really breezy. You might get a shock at Ranganui!

Often the lack of space makes the first beat short and it's easy for the mark to be in an area of confused breeze – the wind straightens out on the river, but the mark is often at the area where the wind is

rolling off the field. This requires a good start to get out of trouble as the short first beat will bury boats that hang back.

The chances are the leeward mark will be a gybe mark and it pays to use the proper *wide in narrow out* that you were taught right back at the beginning. Slinging the boat round river style will lose you vital yards and this is an area you don't want to be struggling for power. The current can have a significant effect here and races are often thrown away at this mark as boats hammer downwind on the current, tight turn and slide sideways. There are gains to be made here, think ahead and if the boat on the inside is a slider, be ready and positioned to pounce. This is an area where you can practise and round imaginary marks, if need be. It is back to the five essentials to get the boat going, do the basics right and you'll gain.

## Southeasterly

Possibly gives my favourite river racing conditions. The wind comes straight off the Marina café area and all the way down to Ranganui Corner (and beyond – see the note about the wind clash in area C). When square this gives a bit of everything, but as this reach of the river isn't as straight as you think (go for a walk!) there are gains to be made by thinking strategically. One tack will often be favoured and the best way to establish that is a good old fashioned pre-race sail!

Upwind, just play the favourite side of the river, but don't overdo it or you'll end up in some impossible gap between moorings which is slow and bad. Downwind, watch the gusts form behind. They can be significant and will often close the fleet up so be aware that they are coming. If its light keep out of the current, unless there is more breeze on the Bishopthorpe side as the current isn't as huge a factor (corner aside) around here so the wind is the overriding decision maker.

Any course round here is likely to be a multi-lap event so remember what happens, it's more repeatable than you might think!

## Marina entrance

Just a note on this, it's shallow around the edges which is never quick. But do think carefully about sailing into the vacant gap behind the moorings. The river is wider but it's not unusual for something big to be moored upwind blocking the breeze!

## Southwesterly

Three reasons you'll be racing around here in a southwesterly

1. It's part of a wider course with the main bits outside the club.
2. The river is too high to permit racing under the bridge, so the *grey posts* are the start and the beat is about 10 yards long!
3. Something's gone wrong...

In a southwesterly the breeze is broadly across the river. Between the field and you there are moored boats, so all sorts of disturbances are taking place. Look for the gusts and work out the shape so you sail most of the time in the breeze. It's fairly normal for a mark to be at or near the marina entrance, and it tends to be taken to port. Think about this from the moment you round the corner. You need to get the strategy right so you're not putting three tacks in just to lay the mark. As this is commonly used in high river levels, the current will play a part. Be cautious so you can make the mark, being swept onto it or past isn't quick.

## Area A

We don't sail on this part of the river that often, but it can be a cracking sail in the right conditions. It's also one of the longest 'straights' (it curves gently!) so it's a chance to sail some, by river standards at least, long legs. I often play around down here before open events, trying to replicate the long legs of an open water course.

There are only really two directions in town for this part of the river west-southwest or northeast. I'd



caution against solo practice in a lively northeasterly and racing possibly needs to be contained within Area A alone as the sail to get there can be a bit wacky!

There is also a significant geographical feature. Just downstream of YOSC the river narrows rapidly for a short length and the current comes into play much earlier than elsewhere. Plenty of light wind regattas have been lost in this tight spot.

### **Southwesterly**

In a southwesterly the wind will, to a large extent, follow the river and provide a decent beat all the way to The Ship. There is an area where the trees on the Naburn bank thin suddenly. If the wind is more westerly this often provides a lift on port and a gruesome header on starboard. In anything above a drifter it's visible on the water so try and look ahead.

Sailing past the strange castle building beyond The Ship isn't usually worth the effort as you've probably sailed through better bits to get there and even from half a mile away the weir unsettles me!

It's also a sharp corner. (*When you are mid-way along section A if you were to stand and face 'The Ship' Naburn lock is about half a mile away (as the crow flies) on your left over the fields!*)

To pass through the Narrows, it is just a case of trying to keep the power on (kites up if its downwind!). There's not a lot of space so try and look at what wind is coming and position yourself in as clear air as possible.

### **Beware!**

If sailing solo beware this is a tricky area to sail through if the current is moving and the wind dropping. It's also the best spot on the river to find some chop (started writing waves but...) when wind and current collide. But only venture down there in the right conditions with an exit plan or rescue boat cover. The Ship is broadly 1 mile from YRISC.

In a southwesterly you can work out the conditions as you round *café corner*.



There is a house in Naburn village with a flagpole. If this flag (it switches between the Union, Yorkshire and South

African flags) is streaming constantly towards you as you round the corner into the area I know as *The Pool* (its reasonably wide for our patch) then the Narrows will be good. If it is not lifting cleanly it's not going to be great!

*So there you have it, 3000 words about a little river, written from memory and observations during lockdown walks and runs along the river bank. Some of it is undoubtedly gibberish which works in my head but has limited basis in fact. Some of it might help you figure out why something happens, or you might just enjoy the fact I managed to get a Sydney Harbour Bridge photo in YRISC News and it be almost relevant! Whatever, if you've got this far well done, just go out and try to remember why it happened!*

## **Nicknames**

### **Club Line**

Area immediately upstream of the bridge. Start line using this jetty.

### **Round the Corner**

Tends to cover all of the river beyond the first bend downstream of the club.

### **Grey Posts**

Two poles in the riverbed near Joe's Gap (only one of which is grey!). Common start area in a northeasterly or high river levels.

### **Joe's Gap**

Gap in the trees and moorings just downstream from the club. Less pronounced these days. But before anyone asks, Joe capsized here after being hit by a gust through this gap (in about 1992!).

### **Ranganui Corner**

First corner downstream from the club and the mooring formerly used by *Ranganui* (now unhelpfully moored a few boats further downstream!).

### **Café Corner**

Marina Sales pontoon area, tented café on the bank top.

### **The Pool**

The area beyond the marina fuel pontoon. It was always called this in the 1980s but it is not in use now.

### **Narrows**

Area downstream of YOSC, tends to be used as a general coverall for the reach between YOSC and The Ship, but in reality, the narrow bit is the short section immediately downstream from the YOSC line.

### **The Ship**

Pub in Acaster Malbis, tends to be hidden behind caravans these days. Nothing remotely nautical about it other than the name!

# A dry Ullswater Weekend!

*Back to a bit of normality – camping and sailing at our annual Ullswater weekend*

*Angela Craggs*

**A**fter our enforced break in 2020, our Ullswater Weekend was back on the calendar this year.

About 25 members and friends camped at Ullswater Holiday Park. They brought a selection of boats to the launch site: two GPs, an RS400, an Enterprise, two Toppers, an Optimist, Jens' cat-in-a-bag – and a blow-up canoe.

We have been camping at Ullswater Holiday Park for about 38 years now. (Previously we camped at Park Foot.) We were delighted to discover that they had reserved the top field exclusively for us, especially as the site was very busy.

Friday was dry with some sunshine which was a great start for those who had tents to put up. The early birds had a pleasant sail in a briskish breeze in the afternoon or early evening.

Saturday started rather grey and overcast but brightened up later and there was decent breeze. Steve and Kevin in a GP, Pete and Phil in the RS400 and Mike and I in our GP headed for Howtown before venturing into the middle reach, passing Jens in his cat-in-a-bag on the way. Pete and Phil managed to get to Norfolk Island but both GPs turned back when the wind fell light having got almost halfway down the reach. Others sailed nearer to the launch site, making the most of sunshine and breeze.

We sat on the grass in the sunshine for lunch before heading out again to make the most of the day. In the evening we enjoyed our usual barbecues.

Sunday's forecast was originally for strong winds and rain so we were expecting to take down and pack soggy tents. The revised forecast was for sunshine and little wind and that's what



we got. It was good for packing-up tents but not so good for sailing. The reflections were very nice! Pete and Phil sailed for a while. Steve and Oliver managed to find some wind to practise with the spinnaker before finishing the day with a deliberate capsise. A little bit of breeze appeared after most of us had packed up our boats and some managed a bit more sailing before heading home.