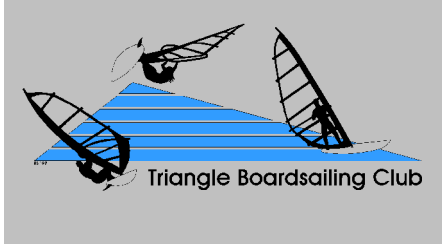


May 2009

Send your newsletter contributions (stories, pics, suggestions, sale items) to Debbie Hage at dehpt2@yahoo.com

Visit our website at www.triangleboardsailing.com



Call Debbie (919)923-7230 if you need a membership form!

May 30th Picnic & Sail at Jordan Lake

Bring the whole family to this kid-friendly event at Shelter #1 Ebenezer Point, Saturday, May 30th, 10am-2pm. Bring your picnic lunch, and TBC will provide drinks & charcoal for grilling. Lessons will be provided, if interested (or know someone who is), contact Randy@triangleboardsailing.com. This area has a playground, swimming beach & volleyball court, as well as being our normal sailing site. Remember to bring \$5 cash (not check) per carload, for park admission. Pray for wind!

Winter Party Report

Good food & good conversations at the Moorman's. Thanks for hosting Chris...you have the perfect party house! We had a showing of ~25 TBC'ers & a lot of enjoyed going through some old photographs that Mark K. had brought along.

Club Trip Report

Spring 2009

The wind determines the trip and it blew like stink all week. This was one of the windiest club trips I've ever experience. Not only that, it blew out of the southwest all week. The biggest sail I used was a 6.8. On two days I suffered an "inverse skunk"—too much wind for me to sail comfortably—but others went out on low 4's and even 3.somethings. For much of the time the pictures hanging on the wall rocked gently as the wind shook the house. The water temps allowed us to wear shorties most of the time.

To have a really good sailing week at Hatteras you need to be ready to go when it blows. I had one great session after dinner on a 6.8, slightly overpowered (and violating the often breached principle 'Don't drink and jibe').

We had some of the usual sharing and comparison of gear. I always enjoy hopping on different gear to see what I can do with it. (Of course it's not so much fun when your buddies are faster on your gear than you are—that's the risk.)

Participants: some of the usual TBC gang, including Dawn and Joel Battiste, Tom Patterson, John and Judi Harper, Dana Thalheimer, Debbie Hage, Joyce and John Rutledge. New this year was the "Greenville contingent", made up of Eric Mullett, Dan Warren, and Joe Giampappa. (Joe actually drove to the coast from Columbus, Ohio!) The Greenville guys used to rent a house on their own, but gradually members of their group fell out for various reasons, so they joined TBC for a very successful club trip. Adlai Niggebrugge and Randy Dunn sailed with us a couple of days.

We stayed in Surround Sound in Mirlo Beach, a very comfortable, large house with good rigging areas and a pier leading to the water. Since the wind was southwest there was never a problem with the water getting too shallow—unless you ventured too far north. No communal meals this time though because people just weren't interested in cooking.

Sad to say, but kites far outnumbered windsurfers at Mirlo Beach (and Canadian Hole too, from the one time I drove by the Hole). I counted 36 kites to 6 windsurfers. Seen on a bumper sticker: If windsurfing were easy, they'd call it kiteboarding. What else can you want on a week at Hatteras? Hot tub, outdoor showers, beer? We had it all!

Thanks to Debbie Hage for coordinating the Club Trip this Spring.

Personal progress: Tom continued to work on his beach start. Dawn got individual instruction in the beach start. (The debate raged as to whether it really makes sense to teach the beach start before the uphaul.) Dana purchased a high-wind board; John Harper also got a high-wind board, a used Mistral Edge for a very good price. Debbie purchased a new 3.5 Aerotech. Equipment purchases of course count as progress. Joe rode 110 miles on his road bike in one day!

Swap Meet Report

Excellent turnout for the swap meet, and I even witnessed money changing hands! Thanks Howard, for hosting! Looks like lots of stuff is still for sale. Don't forget to check the classifieds on the TBC site!

The Depiction of Windsurfing in Bel Mooney's *The Windsurf Boy* (1983)

John Rutledge

(Note from author: I had forgotten about this novel until Charles L. raised the question on the chatboard about favorite fictional windsurfers. Then I got curious about it and checked it out of a library. Disclaimer: Normally a discussion of a literary text should be based on a "close reading" of it. What follows is based on a loose reading or skimming. Bel Mooney is a British novelist and author of young adult fiction.)

Book Review:

The story is set in England in the early 1980s when windsurfing was young. It depicts the sport to an audience that might not have known much about the sport, although, clearly, describing windsurfing is not an important goal of the novel. Rather, the author uses the symbolic value of windsurfing is clearly used to facilitate her intentions. From evidence in the novel we can only speculate about Bel Mooney's knowledge of windsurfing, although how much Mooney knew or didn't know does not matter much. Some other sport or activity could easily have been substituted. *The Windsurf Boy* tells the story of a middle-aged English woman named Anna who is on vacation at the family's waterfront cottage (called "Wendy") and is caring for her dying mother. She has been abandoned by her husband, and has a seven-year-old son named Tom. This is a season of discontent in Anna's life.

Tom is the first to spy the "windsurf boy." The narrator of the novel—the storyteller who knows just about everything—novel describes their first glimpse of the as yet unknown windsurfer, viewed from a distance. The narrator emphasizes the effect the view has on Anna, although it is not presented in her own words:

"In the distance, floating effortlessly amongst the moored boats and gliding out and away from the shore with perfect freedom, was a small blue and white sail. It caught the sunlight, glittering. At times it seemed to become part of the river itself, breaking its dancing surface, and Anna caught her breath at the silence, the beauty. She could see a tiny figure, like a black speck against the light yet clearly defined, which appeared and reappeared as the little windsurf board cut to and fro in the bay:"

The next viewing brings Anna closer to the "windsurf boy" (The character "Anna" knows that "windsurfer" is the correct term, but throughout the novel the term "windsurf boy" is used perhaps to stress the youth and sexuality of the character). She sees him closer this time:

"It was closer this time, so that they could see the brown figure, arms spread out, leaning sharply back towards the water as the white platform cut through the little waves."

Soon afterwards Anna gets her first glimpse of the windsurf boy up close: his face was "[almost] arrogant in expression, [but] still beautiful, rather as a starkly modern piece of furniture has its own angular beauty. ...the kind of face you associate with Californian beaches. ..." His legs were tanned and muscular; he moved with "compact grace." (51)

Not long after that Anna meets the windsurf boy, Matthew, who is a mere 15 years old and the son of friends of hers. In conversation about windsurfing he describes the jibe to her. This is one of the rare moments of humor in the novel and likely an accurate depiction of how windsurfing terminology sounds to the uninitiated:

"Turn the thing round. You have to swap sides. What happens is—you go forward on a beam reach, rake the sail forward sharply and bear off. If you don't spill wind by sheeting out you can be thrown off balance by a sudden gust. So you pull on the boom to drive the stern around, then let go so's the wind can flip the clew the opposite way. Then you pull the sail round, grab the boom, and get underway." She smiled. "Clear as daylight." (71)

What is Anna's view of windsurfing? She is completely unaware of—and uninterested in—any technical aspects of the sport. "It's pretty hard I should think.... You must have to be strong" (48). Anna describes windsurfing to her aged mother: "It's sort of standing on a water-ski which has a sail, so you're almost part of the boat yourself." Technical discussion of windsurfing gear is elsewhere

described as a “litany”, by which term the author presumably means a “boring list”. (But does her knowledge of the intimate connection between sailor and board suggest a greater familiarity with windsurfing than Anna legitimately ought to have?)

Matthew volunteers to demonstrate windsurfing to Anna and her son. If there were enough windsurfing literature for there to be “commonplaces,” then every windsurfer’s fantasy of demonstrating rigging and sailing to an eager and admiring audience would be one of them. “Matthew appeared...dressed in a black wet suit that removed all the grace from his body and turned him into a comic fish-like figure.” (Anna was evidently not into rubber.) Matt’s board looks like a “flattened dinghy” or a “fattened ski.” He explains the rigging in a stream of “incomprehensible jargon.” The narrator continues: “A gust of wind rippled along the nylon sail....” (But surely it was dacron, not nylon! We now must begin to wonder how much the narrator really knows about windsurfing and how much difference there can be between his views and Anna’s.) “Anna thought it beautiful and delicate, like a patch of sky.” (104)

What is the appeal of windsurfing? “Because it feels exciting,” says Matt. When Matt speaks about windsurfing, he gushes: “Because it takes you away from everything, you’re on your own, no one can get at you, you haven’t got to think about anybody because there isn’t time, and you feel great—in control.” (119) Anna’s effort to delve further into the windsurf boy’s psychology gets nowhere. Anna accepts the appeal of windsurfing as self-evident.

Anna watches his launch until he is off in the distance: “Soon he was a miniature black figure in the distance, his sail a toy sail, or (thought Anna) the wing of a tiny, unusual butterfly, struggling against an alien climate yet preserving its extraordinary grace. Here the narrator is careful to separate any objective reality from Anna’s views. It is possible to see in this metaphor of butterfly in an alien climate a projection by Anna of her own situation in life onto the butterfly.

People on the shore begin to notice the lone windsurfer out on the water (a river, by the way): “Whew, it’s fantastic, isn’t it?” (Comments such as this would be another “commonplace” in windsurfing fiction, if such a thing existed.) Grace and beauty repeatedly characterize windsurfing as it is depicted in the novel.

Anna’s interest in the boy grows and she invites him to tea. Anna’s son worships him as hero and role model. The visits become regular and a kind of relationship grows between Anna and the windsurf boy. Anna develops a romantic interest in the boy which she can barely admit to herself.

Next we need to examine the windsurf boy himself as an emblem or representative of the sport. The boy is not doing well in school. He argues with his parents (who are boat owners, obviously). He dreams of going “out to Hawaii, where they have the races and you can do wave jumps. ... You can get custom-built boards, and really fly! I’d like to do some distance freesailing too – you wear a harness for long trips.” (164)

Too soon the conflict between the sweet dream that is windsurfing—the perfect freedom and harmony with Nature mentioned in the first glimpse—and reality raises its ugly head. The windsurf boy as Peter Pan: “I don’t like thinking about the future, really. Growing up, and all that. I hate the thought of changing, getting old and not wanting things.” “I have all these dreams of being a champion windsurfer....” Windsurfing represents not just grace, beauty, harmony with Nature, physicality, but also careless insouciance, immaturity, and perhaps an unwillingness to face reality.

But this is a relationship that can go nowhere and, in fact, physically it never gets beyond an awkward touch of her breast by the boy. The age difference is too great and Matt’s immaturity are the obstacles. One afternoon Matt takes Anna and her son out in a dinghy in rough weather, loses control of the boat, and has to be rescued. Three lives have been put at risk. The novel ends with Anna’s realization of Matt’s childishness. Anna is brought back to her weary reality, but there is a hint of reunion during summer vacation next year.

This is a vision of windsurfing offered to the British reading public in 1983. All the reader is given comes from the narrator (who may know a fair amount) and from Anna (who may know more than her character should). The sport of windsurfing sinks or swims, as it were, with the character Matt, the windsurf boy. No one else does it; no one takes it up or learns the sport. Windsurfing seems to be an individualist, solo activity. (Tom, the son, expresses an interest in learning it, but is not encouraged). Ultimately the depiction of windsurfing here does the sport scant service because it is completely merged with the character of Matt, who though beautiful, is brashly puerile and dangerous.

Pic: L to R John Rutledge, Eric Mullett, Joe Giampappa, John Harper & Dan Warren



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