

READING SAILING CLUB

Information for New and Prospective Members

ABOUT THE CLUB

Reading Sailing Club is located on a 60 acre lake at Sonning Eye, on the Oxfordshire side of the Thames near the lock at Sonning.

We aim to be an informal, family oriented and friendly club for people of all ages and abilities who enjoy wind-powered watersport. Members are welcome to join in the regular racing or just cruise on the lake if they prefer. The club operates all the year round.

The Reading Sailing Club website address is www.readingsc.org.uk, this has up to the minute club news, race results, contact details and a member only section.

FACILITIES

The sailing water covers the area from the clubhouse across to the line of orange buoys delineating the rowing strip and south to the far bank beyond the island. The buoy line must not be crossed.

The clubhouse has a clubroom including a galley area with cooking facilities and a small stock of refreshments. The changing rooms have hot showers and heated flooring.

A boat park is available for member's boats and there is a lawned area for rigging, picnics etc.

Members are free to use the club at any time. Keys to the clubhouse are available for a small deposit. The gates on the track have combination locks, the codes for which are given to members.

A limited number of guests can be accommodated. To prevent overcrowding, a guideline has been adopted suggesting an annual total of 8 guest-days per membership. Members must sign their guests in and are responsible for their conduct while at the club. There is a charge of £10/day for guests bringing their own boat to the club.

HOW TO GET THERE

The club is situated at Sonning Eye and is signposted from the roundabout on the B478 Sonning Road. Access to the lake is by a gated private track and there is ample car parking space.

SAILING

Racing

Racing take place throughout the year on Sunday mornings. Apart from the winter series, there are 2 races, the first a pursuit where the fastest boats start last, the second being handicap where all boats start together and times are adjusted after racing.

From Easter to mid-September there is also a race series on Wednesday evenings. Special one-off cup races are held on Bank Holidays and at other times.

We encourage everyone to join the racing as it is an excellent way to develop skills. Beginners can follow at the back of the fleet and try to negotiate the course, improvers can judge their progress against others and experts can compete for the trophies.

Cruising

Cruising covers all other sailing on the lake apart from racing. It might be sailing with the family or friends, getting in some private practice, testing out new rigging or simply having fun on the water. There is no set time for this; during the summer there are likely to be some boats on the water during most of the weekend and on some evenings.

Members may cruise on the lake at any time except during some special events. When racing or training courses are being held, cruising boats should keep clear of areas being used. A power boat may be available to offer assistance but this is not guaranteed.

There is a social sailing group which meets on a Monday afternoon.

Pink Days

On the second Saturday each month; this was originally intended as a ladies informal training session but has now developed into a fun sailing event in its own right and has become very popular. Cooked breakfasts are available and afterwards everyone stops for a chat.

Oppies and Youth and Juniors

Running on a Monday evening, Oppies cater from beginner to improver levels and children can start from age 7. Youth and Juniors runs alongside and caters for those who have some basic sailing knowledge and everyone works through the RYA scheme progressing all the way to racing and even becoming a qualified instructor

Pirates

This is a fun session on a Thursday evening for young people who have basic sailing skills. The session is supervised by club volunteers and parents and often includes fun games and challenges on the water.

Sailboards, Canoes

Although primarily a dinghy sailing club, members who have sailboards or canoes are free to use them on the lake. Sailors whose main interest is windsurfing are welcome to join the Club but no organised events are held.

Model Yachts

A section of the club sail radio-controlled model yachts currently on Tuesdays and Fridays. See the separate notice board in the clubhouse for details.

SAIL TRAINING

The club is accredited with the RYA and offers dinghy training courses to RYA standards for both adults and children, with a certificate on successful completion. Training courses are only provided for members of the club. Course fees include the use of club boats and all other safety equipment is provided. Club boats may be hired after the course to allow practice of the skills learnt.

Training is organised into youth and adult classes, with beginners and intermediate courses; each usually running over two successive Saturdays. The beginner's course covers the basics of sailing with the wind coming from different directions allowing a triangular course to be negotiated. Also included is boat rigging, simple knots and appropriate clothing. The intermediate course builds on the basic skills to teach efficient sailing and includes capsizing drill and close-quarter maneuvering around buoys, jetties and other boats.

Training courses are generally run during May - July although a course may also be run in September given sufficient demand. Early reservation is essential. Download the separate training handout from the website for more information.

POWER BOAT TRAINING

The club is keen that as many members as possible are confident in the use of the support boats. We run a fully accredited 2-day RYA Level 2 training course for which a fee is payable.

CLUB BOATS

We have a small fleet of various dinghies that members can hire for £10 per half day (some boats are more). Boats can be booked in advance on the sheet on the notice board, but only one reservation can be active at any one time. To prevent damage, club boats cannot be used in strong wind conditions. Certain boats are limited to use by experienced sailors only and may not be used for racing.

Training courses usually require most of the Club boats to be used and it is unlikely that any will be available for hire on those days, which are marked on the booking sheets. Anyone wishing to take out a club boat on these days must check its availability with the training organiser beforehand.

For new members in particular, hiring is a good alternative to owning your own boat, at least initially, as it allows a variety of boats to be tried out to decide on the type that suits you.

SAFETY

All water sports are potentially hazardous. It is the responsibility of the member whether to it is safe to sail, depending on the weather conditions, experience, availability of assistance and any other relevant factors. Although members may sail at any time, when a support boat is not available "buddy sailing" must be arranged between members, where two boats can keep watch on each other.

Buoyancy aids or life jackets must be worn when afloat in any craft and these must fit correctly. Children and non-swimmers should wear buoyancy aids on the jetties also. The club has a limited supply of buoyancy aids that can be borrowed for guests. Between 1st November and 31st March wetsuits or drysuits must be worn when sailing.

Parents/guardians are responsible for the safety of children while at the club, particularly in ensuring correctly fitting buoyancy aids are worn when on or near the water. Children may not be left at the Club unsupervised. Member's and guest boats must be insured against 3rd party risks both on the lake and in the boat park.

RUNNING OF THE CLUB

The club is kept running only by the voluntary efforts of its members, there are no paid staff. Apart from the minimum duties below, many members regularly come to the club to help with running training courses, youth sailing, club boat maintenance, cleaning, gardening and the many other tasks that need doing to keep the club functioning and to improve the facilities.

It is a condition of RSC membership that you undertake the following minimum duties: -

1. Assist in running the club's racing events under the guidance of a senior club member. This will involve 3 duties per year, on Sunday mornings, Wednesday evenings or on Bank Holidays, and includes timekeeping or crewing the safety boat if capable.
2. Join in working parties for specific tasks or general tidying-up. These are held on the first Saturday morning of each month.
3. Keeping your boat-park space tidy, if you have one.

The rota for racing duties are published regularly and members must attend or arrange to swap dates with another member so that cover can be ensured.

For those confident in the use of the power boat, there is a voluntary roster to provide support cover for cruising sailing at weekends or Monday afternoons. Sign up on the list in the Clubhouse if you can take a slot, either as driver or assistant.

MEMBERSHIP

The membership year starts in April. There are reduced fees for people joining from November onwards. Family membership includes partner living at the same address and children under 18. Regular crew outside of a family membership are expected to join the club.

HOW TO JOIN

New members are always welcome and there is currently no waiting list. If you would like further information, come down to the club on Sunday mornings or on most weekends during the summer. Alternatively, contact the Membership Secretary, Sylvia Bohnenstengel via email membership@readingsc.org.uk. Other contact details are on the website.