

Introduction to Sail

Friday 27th July Wind SE 2-3 Clear Blue Skies

“Hello Ivan, You're a bit late for sailing the tides been going out for over an hour” was my greeting from the crew-cutted youngster stood at the top of the slip. “Do you fancy ten minutes sailing with me on the Laser?” was my reply to Ted.

The smile on Ted's face will remain in my memory for a long time, his face just lit up “Oh yes” came the instant reply.

Ted rushed away into the clubhouse clutching a sailbag. I quickly extracted the Laser from the road trailer, a small voice interrupted my efforts “I'm ready Ivan”. Ted had returned in double quick time fully kitted out in a smart new shortie wet suit and buoyancy aid - talk about speed and enthusiasm.

After a quick safety check, fully rigged, we pushed off from the slip, Ted nimbly and eagerly climbing aboard. After a few rather speedy reaches, tacks and gybes Ted quickly adapted to the conditions and the few comments to help him. In no time at all he gripped the mainsheet, his small feet under the toe strap, hiking out quite naturally and he had never set foot in a dinghy before!

We tacked and gybed, slaloming up and over the waves - to ted they probably looked like blocks of flats! we soon found ourselves off Sunderland Point, the prudent move was to head back against the now fast flowing ebb tide. The wind had veered round to the west, a pleasant force 2-3 on our stern.

By this time Ted was moving about the boat without any instruction from me. After numerous exciting broad reaches and an interesting run we just made the last of Glasson slip, Ted jumping ashore at exactly the right moment (a tacky move even for an experience dinghy sailor).

I checked the watch, we had been out well over an hour, you know something, I enjoyed the hour more than any I can remember, Ted's smiling face, his enthusiasm, not forgetting his natural ability, made my day, I know it certainly made Ted's.

If you meet Ted in the dinghy park, you can't miss him, he just loves talking sailing - and he's only 9 years of age!

I'll tell you something, not many years from now Ted and his pals, Paul, Peter, Glen, will with your help and encouragement will probably be at the front of the dinghy fleet, who knows, they could be future Olympic contestants, give them all the help you can, they are the future cornerstones of the club.

Ivan Haslam