

Little Ship Club website - Creating a blog

There are different types of content on the club website, and a blog is what a member should normally use to publish information or tell a story to other members, either as a one-off, or as a regular journal. Each member may create blog entries, and they are visible to other members who are logged in to the website, and also to web users not logged in who may therefore not be members. The information is not protected from “web trawlers” which scan the web looking for email addresses to use as spam, so don’t put email addresses in blogs. If you want to put in a link to allow people to contact you, you can use the contact facility via the website (more later). If you are publishing information which remains relevant over time, such as your personal profile or background on your boat or sailing preferences, your profile page and sailing pages are more appropriate. There is help for building your Profile, Sailing, and Skippers and Crew pages here http://littleshipclub.co.uk/files/images/crew_or_berth_request_help_v3.0.pdf and here

<http://littleshipclub.co.uk/files/images/profile%20%26%20sailing%20pages%20help%20v2.0.pdf> .

By far the best way to put your text in a blog is to type it directly into the website on line. (If you already have it in another form, it is possible to transfer it, see later in this document, but this tends to cause more problems than typing it in directly). You will probably want some pictures to add interest, so you should prepare these in advance by copying them in to a folder on your computer and knowing where they are, and by making them a suitable size.

You can put pictures in your blog in two ways.

The “Main picture” always sits at the top left of the blog, wherever it is displayed, and all blogs should have a main picture. These pictures make them much more eye-catching and therefore more likely to be read. Blogs can also be displayed on other pages in the website (e.g. Sailing News, Home page etc.), and virtually all items on these pages have main pictures.

A blog can have a gallery, which is a collection of pictures which appear at the bottom of the text. Here they are displayed as thumbnails, that is small versions which a user can glance through to see what interests them. If they click one, it is displayed at full size, and they can then scroll through them as a slide show. Uploading them is a simple and robust process, much more reliable than inserting them into the body of the text, as was done previously. This is still possible, but it is discouraged unless there is a compelling reason to put them right beside the text.

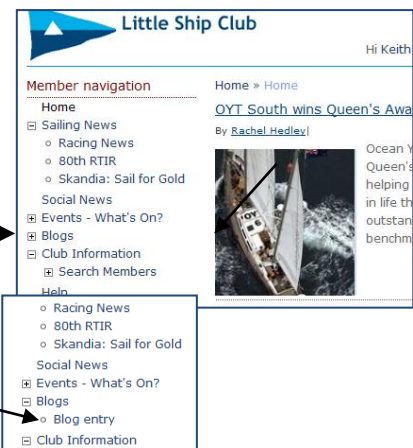
You should prepare your pictures for uploading to a gallery by resizing them and saving them (or a resized version of them) in a folder on your computer and noting where they are saved. For galleries, 640 pixels wide by 480 pixels deep is a reasonably large size, big enough to display most photos adequately. 1024 wide x 768 deep is the maximum you should ever need to use, and then only for images which need a particularly large display.

There are different ways to change the size of a picture, including software such as Photoshop, but if you are not experienced at doing this, the simplest (and free) way is to use the online facility at <http://www.picnik.com/> . There is a help document for using Picnik here http://www.littleshipclub.co.uk/files//images/Photo_resizing_using_Picnik.pdf .

Your blog will be accessible to users who look for it specifically, but other pages of the website (e.g. Sailing News, Home page, Skippers and Crew etc.) can contain links to it (subject to the discretion of the editors of those pages). These links are called teasers, and contain the first few lines of your text, plus the main picture you upload with your blog. Clicking these teasers brings up your full blog.

So if you've decided what you want to say, and got your pictures ready, log on to the website and get started.

From the Members Home page (which you get when you log on), click the + sign beside blogs, and click Blog entry



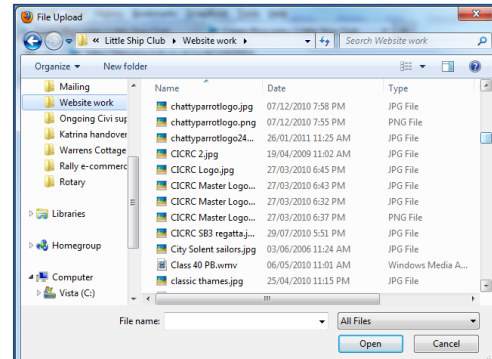
You will get a screen like this.

In the Title box, type a title for your blog. It should be descriptive, and encourage interest in your blog, but concise is best.

Then choose a picture to go at the top left of your blog. Make sure you know where it is stored on your computer. You don't need to worry about its size in this case, as it will be automatically resized as it is uploaded. But it is quicker to work with files that are not too large.

Click Browse.

A window will open showing the files on your computer. Navigate to where your picture file is stored and double click the file, or click it and click Open.

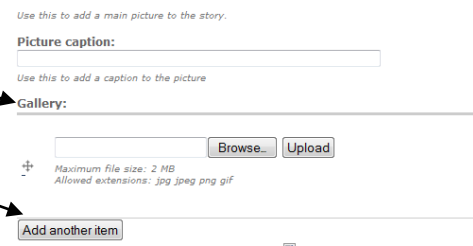


The file name will appear next to the "Browse" box. Note that this file must be a picture file – it must have an extension (the bit after the dot) of jpg, jpeg, png or gif.

Now click Upload and type a caption for the picture in the Picture caption box.

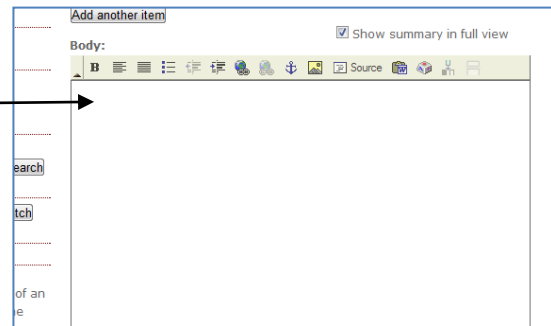
Now you can add pictures to the gallery. These will appear as thumbnails (small versions of the pictures) at the end of the text of your story. Clicking any one will open it in a full size version, and a user can then scroll through all the pictures in the gallery by clicking forward and back arrows. This is the recommended way to display pictures in a story. Make sure you have prepared your pictures on your computer and resized them if necessary. (As stated above, 640 pixels wide by 480 pixels deep is a reasonably large size, big enough to display most photos adequately. 1024 wide x 768 deep is the maximum you should ever need to use, and then only for images which need a particularly large display.)

The next box down is labelled Gallery. Follow the same procedure as for the main picture (above) to upload a picture file and enter a caption.



If you want another picture, click Add another item, and new Browse and Upload boxes will appear. Repeat the process as many times as you like until you have uploaded all your pictures for the gallery.

When you've finished uploading pictures, you need to enter the text of your blog. In the next box down called Body, type your text.

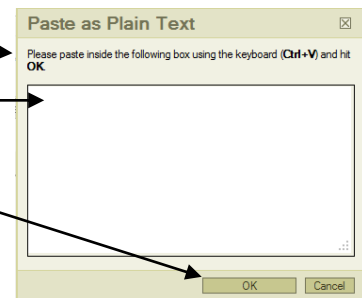


IMPORTANT If you have prepared your text in Word, or you have text taken from an email programme such as Outlook or Outlook Express, and you need to copy and paste it in, don't paste it in directly, as this causes problems with the display of your blog and any other content on the same page. Instead follow this procedure:

First copy the text in your Word or other document (Select and CTRL-C, or Select, right click and click Copy). Now click the 'Paste as plain text' icon (4th icon from the right) in the bar across the top of the 'Body' box that looks like this.



A window opens like this:



Put the cursor in the blank space in the middle of the window and click CTRL + V. Your text will appear. Then click OK, and your text will be pasted in to the 'Body' Box.

If you need to include links etc. in the text, don't try to copy them in this way. Just use this to copy the text, and put links in separately.

So now you have your basic text in the box. You can edit it in the usual way, plus there are some editing tools to help. They are lined up across the top of the box.



The first three (Bold, Left Align, Centre and Bulleted list) are like Word or other editors. Select the text you want to edit and click the tool.

TIP In this editor, when you press ENTER in normal text (not bulleted or numbered lists), you'll get two line spaces. If you only want one line space press SHIFT+ENTER
 The next two tools indent text (move it away from the left margin).....

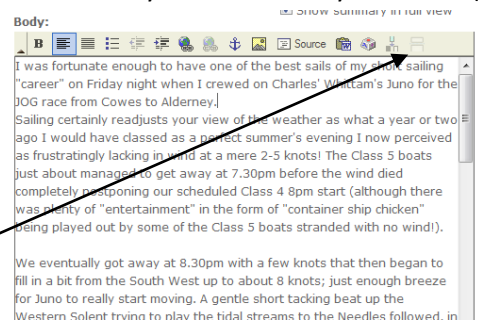


and de-indent it (the opposite). Put the cursor anywhere in a line and click one of these. You can use them repeatedly to increase or decrease indents.

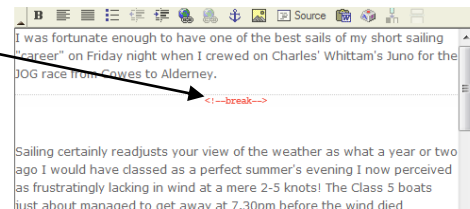
The next few are for links and pictures which are described later.

Blogs can be seen by users who look specifically for them, but links to them can also be put on other pages of the website to attract the attention of users who may not know about them. These links are called teasers. We sometimes talk about putting blogs (or stories etc.) on certain pages, but this is not really what happens. A link (the teaser) is put on another page (such as the Home page, the Sailing News page, the South Coast page etc.) and when a user clicks the teaser it opens the blog. So you need to control what will appear in a teaser to your blog if it is placed on another page.

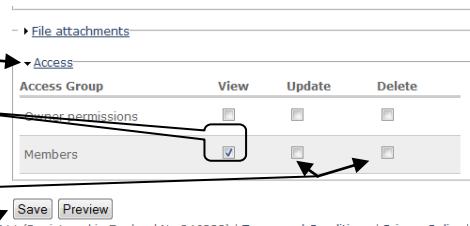
The teaser is made up of the Main picture plus the first part of the text you have already entered. (It should not be too long, or the teaser will take up too much room on the page. So you should write the first paragraph of your text in a way that attracts attention in as few words as possible) You need to define the cut-off point where the teaser text finishes. To do this, put the cursor in your text at the point where you want the teaser to finish, and click the "break" icon.



This will insert a red "break" mark at that point. It will appear to insert blank lines in the text, but does not in fact do so. When viewing the full text, there is no gap.



Now you need to set whether your blog can be read by members only, or also by other users who are not logged in to the website. Blogs are normally open to all, but if you want to restrict access to members only, click on Access near the bottom of the page to open the box, then tick the box opposite Members, under the heading View.



If you see other headings such as Update or Delete, or a row called owner permissions, **untick these or leave them un-ticked.**

Finally click Save and your blog will be displayed.

If you want to go back and edit it further, click the Edit tab at the top when you view it, and you will go back to the screens described above. If you want to find it from another page, click blogs in the main menu as at the start, and look down the list.



You now have a blog entry with a main picture and a gallery. You can add links so that a reader of your blog can obtain more information from other sources by clicking on part of your text. One way to do this is to download an additional document you've loaded on to the website. The best format to use for such additional documents is pdf, which is most commonly read by Adobe Acrobat Reader (freely available to download). If you can get (or create) pdf versions of the documents you want to make available, almost anyone can open and read them. Other formats such as Microsoft Word etc. require users to own that software and not all do.

To set up this pdf download, please go to the following link on the club website, download the document and follow the instructions.

http://littleshipclub.co.uk/files/images/Uploading_a_pdf_D6.pdf

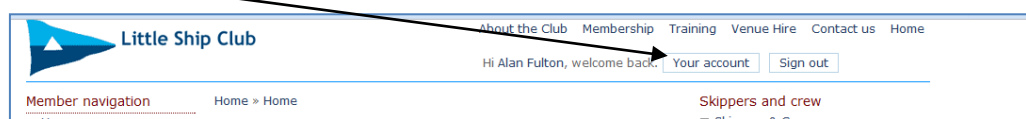
Clickable links in your text can also take readers of your blog to another website (e.g. one belonging to a harbour authority, a weather site, a restaurant etc.). If this is what you want to do, please download and follow the instructions in this document.

<http://littleshipclub.co.uk/files/images/Inserting%20a%20link%20to%20a%20web%20page%20D6.pdf>

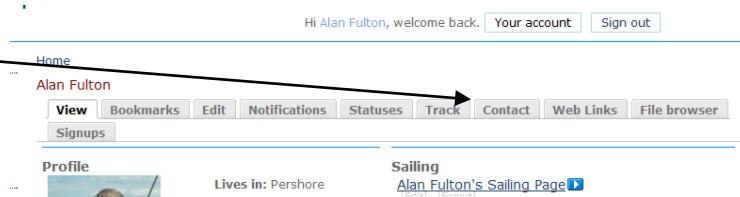
If you want to put in a link to contact you or another club member, don't insert your/their email address in your event (except in the signups data box, which is OK), or include it in a pdf document to download. They are not protected from trawlers looking for spam addresses. The right way is to insert a link to the contact page of your/their user profile, which protects their address. Follow the help in

<http://www.littleshipclub.co.uk/files/images/Inserting%20a%20link%20to%20a%20web%20page%20D6.pdf> .

The page you are linking to is the contact page of the member's personal profile. To find your own, click the Your account box to the right of "Hi [Your name], welcome back" at the top of the screen.



In your profile page which comes up click the Contact tab



This will take you to a page where someone can write an email to you via the club system. Copy the URL of this page, and use it as the link (help doc here

<http://www.littleshipclub.co.uk/files/images/Inserting%20a%20link%20to%20a%20web%20page%20D6.pdf>)

If you want to link to someone else, find their profile page by using Search Members. Click Search Members under Club Information, just below blogs in the main menu. Fill in one or more of the boxes to help find their profile, and click Search. When you've found them, click Website profile on the right opposite their name, then you'll see their profile. Click the contact tab on their profile page and copy that URL in the same way as above.