

Introductory Guide to *PlainSailing* (free software for club management and accounting)

Matt Gardner, SmoothPay Ltd



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Introduction

PlainSailing is free software for managing club memberships and accounting, and is provided and supported by :

Matt Gardner
Smoothpay Ltd
P O Box 20019
Palmerston North 4448
New Zealand

+64 6 3536462
ps@smoothpay.co.nz
<http://www.smoothpay.co.nz/club.html>

After a long period of using cobbled-together systems, code and processes to manage the Ruahine White Water Club (RWWC), Matt decided that a simple, comprehensive and portable system would be more appropriate - and would engender consistency in processes, auditing and day-to-day management of the club, and make it much easier to transfer the club's data from treasurer-to-treasurer (and any other officers of the club who need access, say for emailing members easily, producing newsletter labels etc).

And *~viola!* Here it is.

We'd really appreciate your feedback and suggestions so that PlainSailing can meet, if not all then at least most of your requirements.

Getting started

Note: *PlainSailing* is available for both PC and Mac users - and the database it uses is completely cross-platform (SQLite) and can be accessed using ODBC if you need to so you can access the internal data very easily.

Installation

Install *PlainSailing* from our web-page dedicated to everything *PlainSailing*: <http://www.smoothpay.co.nz/club.html>

Run the downloaded installation file and just follow the prompts.

Mac users - we suggest you create a shortcut by dragging the application (*club.app*, from the *Applications/PlainSailing* folder) to your dock.

PC users will have an icon created on the desktop automatically.



Updating *PlainSailing* software

To install the latest version - just re-download and run the install program from the website - your data is quite safe, it won't be overwritten.

From time-to-time, updated versions of *PlainSailing* will be released.

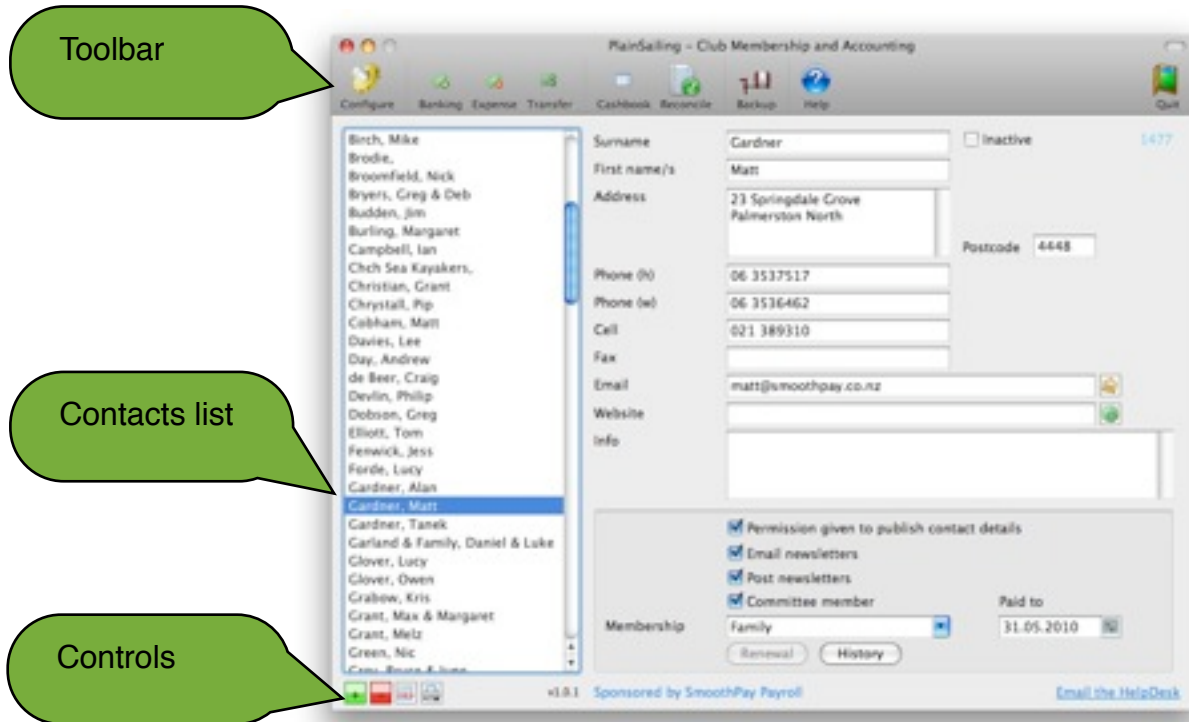
If we know you are using PlainSailing (there's no obligation to register or provide any details, but an email to us would be nice), we'll send you an advisory email.

A quick tour

This quick tour provides an overview of where things are in PlainSailing, and the basic operation of the software.

The "ControlCentre"

When you start PlainSailing, the ControlCentre will be displayed:

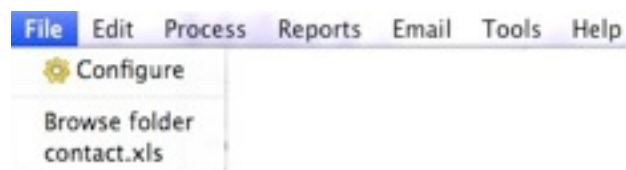


The **toolbar** is where you can configure *PlainSailing's* options, prepare a bank deposit, enter expenses etc - all these topics will be covered in this document.

The **contacts list** is where all your contacts are displayed, and to the right of the screen is where you can edit each contacts details and membership status, renew their subscription, view subscription history, or send an email (by clicking on the email icon beside the email address field).

The **controls** provide for adding a new record (in this case a contact), deleting a record (if permitted), showing or hiding inactive records, and printing a variety of reports - using the appropriately labelled button for each task.

A system menu is also displayed,



which provides access to all of the options available in the toolbar, as well as a few extra options, such as:

Menu item	What it does
File..Browse folder	Opens up the folder that PlainSailing is installed in - handy if you want to email the club.db file to someone...
Reports..Renewal notices	Prints subscription renewal notices and an audit report showing who was sent notices, and who was made inactive (<i>happens automatically to members who have not renewed within 3 months of their expiry date</i>)
Reports..Treasurer	Lets you reprint any previous Treasurer's Report, or to create a new one
Email	Provides a quick way to communicate with members of the club
Tools..Restore	Lets you restore from any previous backup or archive provided from another source (<i>eg. when moving computers etc you might find this useful</i>)

Configuring PlainSailing

This section deals with establishing and maintaining settings that suit your particular organisation, such as the club name, address, membership categories, accounting and bank accounts and opening balances.

Club settings

Choose File..Configuration (or click the Configure tool)

The screenshot shows the 'Configuration' dialog box with the 'General settings' tab selected. The fields are as follows:

- Organisation name: Ruahine White Water Club Inc
- Abbreviation: RAWC
- Address: C/o P O Box 20019, Palmerston North 4448
- Financial year ends: May
- Subscriptions a/c: Subscriptions
- Bank a/c: Cheque account

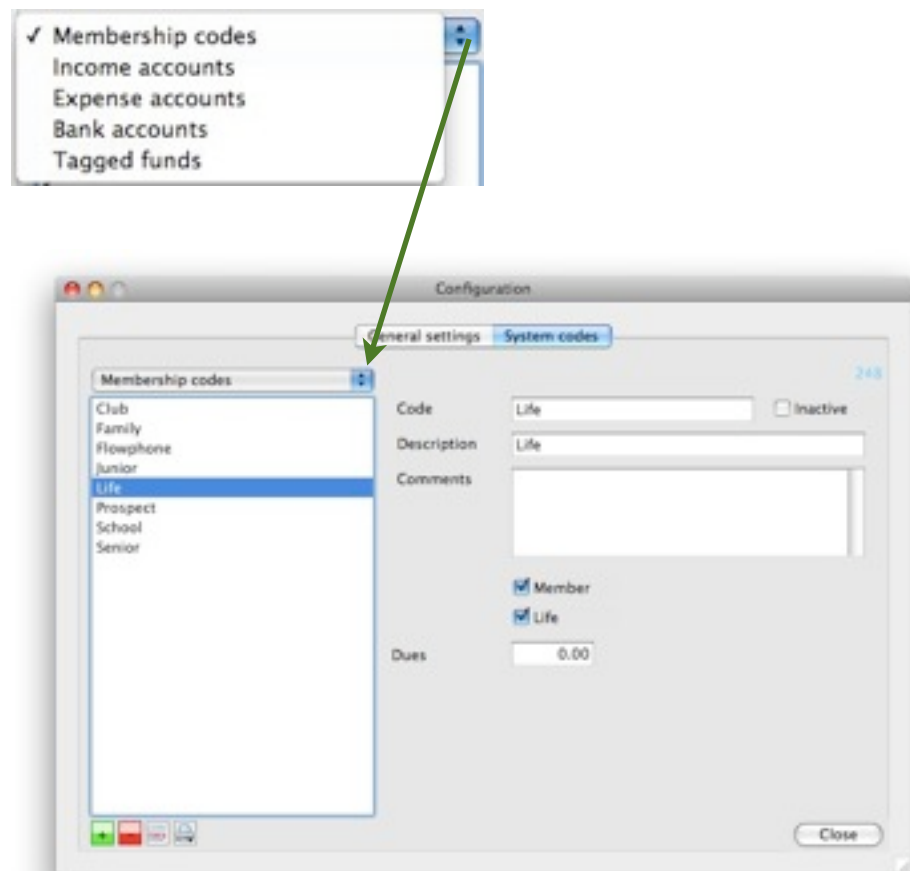
Fill in the details as appropriate for your organisation.

System Codes

These codes provide for your membership categories, receipt, expense and bank accounts, as well as a special section for “Tagged funds”, which can be used to specify a kind of *internal account*, tagged for a specific purpose (such as River Conservation etc.)

PlainSailing is supplied with a default set of codes - simply amend these to suit your requirements.

Note, you cannot delete a code that has been used in deposit or expense transactions etc., however you can make it Inactive if you don't want it to be used anymore.



The code groups and settings should be relatively self-explanatory, however we'll cover them all briefly, as well as setting up your bank accounts and opening balances to be sure you get things set up correctly.

Membership codes

You can create as many membership categories as you like, marking each as member, life and specify the amount of dues (if any) as required.

These can be used for non-membership associations too - just untick the Member flag.

You can print a report of all contacts in each category from the report control.

Income accounts

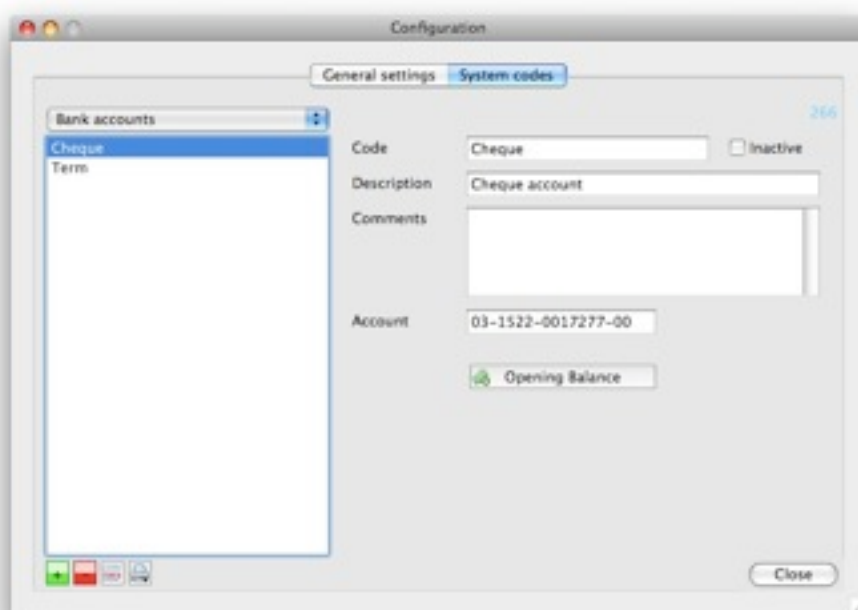
This is where you establish the income categories you want to use.

Expense accounts

This is where you establish the expense categories you want to use.

Bank accounts

This is where you establish your operating account and any investment funds belonging to the club:



Note that this category provides an option to enter **opening balances**. You should use this when setting up each bank account to record the closing statement balance at the end of the previous financial year, plus any unrepresented income (*bank deposits usually*) and unrepresented expenses (*cheques that haven't been presented, yet were issued prior to balance date*).

Opening balances

To enter opening bank balances and unrepresented items (you can do this any time, but I recommend you do it when you set the system up), click the Opening Balance button for the bank account you're setting up:

Opening balance and unrepresented transactions

Cheque account Balance date: 31/ 5/2009 Statement \$: -572.83

Unrepresented income

Deposit Capture	Reference	Deposit
1.3k Transfer	Amount	85.00
	Comment	Capture

Unrepresented expenses

184471 M Grant	Reference	184471
	Amount	27.96
	Comment	M Grant

Close

The balance date is set automatically to the last day of your previous financial year (*though you can change it if you want to*). The system knows when that was because you set it in the configuration screen...didn't you?

Enter the closing bank statement balance for the account, as well as all unrepresented items (*they'll appear on bank statements eventually, and you'll be able to tick them off as having been presented then.*)

You're off to a good start - all you need to do now is re-enter all the transactions that have taken place since then, process your bank reconciliations, and you're good to go.

If you can't complete all the entries in one go (missing info etc.), that's OK - your work is saved as you go and you can edit it any time you like.

Note, the opening balance amount will be automatically recorded against bank statement number ZERO, and all the unrepresented items will all be regarded as belonging to the first Treasurer's Report - this is good, this is normal, there is nothing to worry about.

Tagged funds

This is where you establish any tagged funds you want to use.

Tagged Funds can be used to specify a kind of *internal account*. (without having to have a separate bank account) tagged for a specific purpose (such as River Conservation etc.)

This isn't operational just yet, but will be in due course :-). If you ask for it, then it might happen sooner.

Accounting processes

It's a very good idea to have a set procedure, written down, that can be followed by your incumbent Treasurer, and any who follow in his/her shoes.

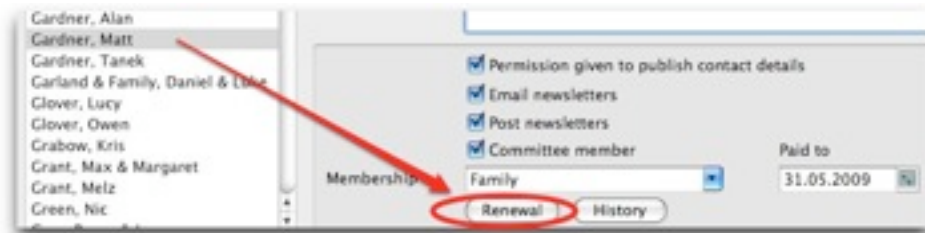
This means you'll have consistent presentation of accounting information, a set procedure for taking and processing revenue, expenses and transfers between bank accounts.

Subscription renewals

As each member's renewal date approaches, you'd usually produce a renewal reminder (you can have the same "club anniversary" date for everyone, or as we at RWWC do have a rolling anniversary date - just like a magazine subscription).

Renewal notices would normally be run at the start of each new month - select *Reports..Renewal notices*. You'll get an audit trail showing who's getting reminders, and it also shows members who have become inactive because they're 3 months or more over their expiry date.

When the member sends in their dosh (cheque, direct credit etc.), then all you need to do is select the member's name in the contacts list, click the Renewal button, enter the renewal details (making any adjustments as required):



Subscription renewal for Matt Gardner

Receipt #	Receipt date	Amount
<input type="text" value="248537"/>	<input type="text" value="20/ 8/2009"/>	<input type="text" value="50.00"/>
Account	<input type="text" value="Subscriptions"/>	
Comment	<input type="text" value="Matt Gardner"/>	
Renewal from	<input type="text" value="1/ 6/2009"/>	Expires <input type="text" value="31/ 5/2010"/>
Membership	<input type="text" value="Family"/>	
Payment method	<input type="text" value="Cheque"/>	
Bank+Branch	Name on cheque	
<input type="text" value="123456"/>	<input type="text" value="M L Gardner"/>	

The **receipt number** is generated automatically - it's handy for tracking transactions and you should write it on the members renewal form (if they sent it in with their payment)

The **receipt date** defaults to today's date - change it to suit.

The **amount** defaults to the membership dues amount set in membership codes

Make sure you enter only the amount related to dues (even if the payment was for more than that), as you can easily add the difference in during the Bank Deposit stage.

The **comment** is automatically set to the member's name

The **renewal date range** is automatically set based on their expiring subscription date - again, use your own judgement as to whether this is appropriate, as often a number of months or years may have elapsed since dues were last paid, and you might need to set new dates.

The **membership level** is taken from the member's record - if you change it then it'll automatically update the member's subscription type.

Payment methods are: Cash, Cheque, Credit card or Direct Credit. In this example we've specified Cheque, and entered the bank+branch and cheque name (this is important, as these details will appear on the bank deposit schedule - *that's right - you don't need to manually complete cheque deposit schedules anymore!*). These details will also be stored so you don't need to re-enter them next year, unless they change.

Choose OK - the amount and details will be fed automatically into the Bank Deposit section. The entry will also be added to the member's subscription history.