

International GP14  
Class Association

# Mainsail

[www.gp14.org](http://www.gp14.org)



Autumn 2019

## Life at the Sharp end



## Subscriptions 2020

Full members: £33 (£31)

Associate members: £25 (£23)

Youth members: £16 (£14)

Non-European: £10

Temporary Member: £12

The figure in brackets is the discounted subscription rate for payment by direct debit. Direct debit payments 1<sup>st</sup> collection January. (2<sup>nd</sup> collection) will be collected on or shortly after 1 April 2020.

The views expressed in this magazine are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the Committee.

**Published by the GP14 Class  
International Association**  
Albert House, 42 Seymour Road  
Astley Bridge, Bolton BL1 8PT  
T: +44 (0) 1204 590325  
E: [admin@gp14.org](mailto:admin@gp14.org)

**Cover Crews: Leanne Pilkington,  
Sam Watson, Michelle Rowley,  
Richard Whitehill, Joel James,  
Donal McGuinness, Dale Knowles,  
Phil Pethybridge, Michelle Evans,  
Jens Kuhn, Phil Hodgkins**

## Editor's Letter

Welcome to the autumn edition of Mainsail.

I decided to dedicate this edition to those, like myself, who sail at the sharp end of a GP14 and so invited crews from all fleets to pass on their insights, tips and enthusiasm. The response as you will see was amazing, so much experience. I certainly learned a lot and you will too. Michelle Evans sums up her piece by asking what makes an ideal helm...well that could be something to consider for the future!

Another article I am pleased to be featuring in this and future editions is a GP14 self-build project. David Rabbetts has kindly agreed to write up the process with photos and hope this could be a solution for our international members who find it difficult and costly getting hold of new GP14s.

Thanks to all who have contributed to this edition. If you have something to say, advice to pass on, an interesting story to tell, please send your articles for the spring Mainsail due out in March 2020.

Also a big thank you to our advertisers and Championship sponsors, your continued support is really appreciated.

See you on the water

**Julie Courtney**  
Editor

[admin@gp14.org](mailto:admin@gp14.org)



# Contents

- 2 Editor's Letter  
4 President's Piece  
5 Treasurer's Talk  
6 Obituaries
- Cruising**
- 14 Cruising Corner  
15 Cruiser Training
- Technical**
- 20 GP14 Self-Build – David Rabbetts  
25 Training
- Championships**
- 33 Survived the season
- Area Reports**
- 38 Midlands Area report  
39 North West Area report  
39 Scottish Area report  
40 Southern Area report
- 24 Hour Race**
- 45 Reflections on sailing 24 hrs for charity
- Spotlight Feature**
- 47 Andy Thompson

## Features

- 8 **Get good with the colourful sail**  
Phil Pethybridge
- 10 **Pimpernel's Progress**  
Steve Parry
- 11 **Expectations of the crew**  
Joel James
- 12 **A view from the front**  
Charles Saunders
- 18 **Notes of lightweight crew**  
Michelle Rowley
- 24 **Crewing the Old Yellow boat**  
Jens Kuhn
- 27 **Communication is Key**  
Seonaid Young
- 31 **Pointy end of the boat**  
Donal McGuinness
- 36 **Compatible Crewing**  
Richard Whitehill
- 41 **Tips for aspiring crews**  
Michelle Evans



**Sam Watson & Andy Thompson  
National Champions 2019**

# President's Piece

A few days ago Julie reminded me that one of the delights of being President is preparing a short article for each issue of Mainsail. Our Class magazine is very thoroughly read in many households and reaches a much wider audience than an emailed newsletter simply by being there. Reading old copies can also be fascinating!

I've just returned from the World Sailing Annual Meeting which was held this year in Bermuda\*. As well as representing the GP14 Class at the Classes Committee I am also the Classes Committee representative on the Equipment Rules of Sailing Committee which meets twice (once closed then an open session two days later). Unfortunately the classes have very little input into the final decision making, with only one member on the council and above that the Voting Members are the Member National Authorities (MNAs) with no input from any Class organisation. This annoys a lot of Classes: as an example the Optimist Class is believed to contribute more (royalties and fees) than all but the two largest MNAs pay in their dues!

World Sailing is of course in turmoil and in the middle of undertaking a major governance reform. The first version of this caused great unrest (the Classes Committee became a third tier committee with no direct input to the decision making process) and many submissions have produced a new version which separates the Olympic side of World Sailing's work from all the other parts. In this version the Classes do get a greater input to the decision making process but I suspect the overhaul of the process has some way to go.

I think we will hear more of this during the next year. I believe it is important that World Sailing give the same time and energy to "ordinary" Classes as well as the exotic foiling boats and super fast big boats for the super rich.

In this issue there will be two notable obituaries. The first is Jack Hoad our first World Champion who I had the pleasure of meeting briefly in his home country Barbados during the 2016 Worlds. The second is John Salomonson who will be well known to many in the UK and Ireland, a tireless advocate for the Class, a fine sailor and sometimes a little controversial!

Finally I'd like to acknowledge the amazing contributions to our Class made by our retiring officers. Ann Penny has been a superb ambassador for the Class and a fine example to us all both on and off the water. Steve Parry carried on the line of superb secretaries the Class has been lucky to enjoy as well as his enthusiasm for vintage boats. Our Class is becoming well known for its contribution to training (particularly outside the youth and pathway Classes). Thanks to Mark Collingwood for his efforts.

Finally I hope you enjoy this fine edition of Mainsail. Make sure it can be read by as many people as possible.

**Curly Morris**, International GP14 President

*\* Editor: Just in case any of you were wondering, I'd like to point out that Curly financed the whole trip to the World Sailing Annual Meeting himself and is not a Class expense.*

## Treasurer's Talk

### Subscriptions Due 1st January 2020

At the last AGM it was proposed and carried that the subscriptions for membership of the International GP14 Class Association from 1st January 2020 will be ;

- Full member - £33 (or discounted to £31 if paid by Direct Debit)
- Associate member - £25
- Youth Member - £16
- Club Membership - £33
- Non-European membership - £10 (unchanged)
- Temporary event membership - £12 (unchanged)

This is the first time since 2011 that membership fees have increased. Your committee felt this was essential to continue to provide the services that members have come to expect from the GP14 Association, and we believe that it continues to provide excellent value for money. If you wish to pay by Direct Debit, please contact the Association office for a form.

**Paul Bowmer**, Hon. Treasurer

# Obituaries

## MIKE HEANEY

Mike and myself were both members of Chase Sailing Club during the 1980's and 90's, and then again for a period during the 2000's. We sailed a GP14, Mike being the helm and I was the crew. We sailed together for close to 30 years in total. And were active participants on the midland bell traveller circuit during this time. We also attended a great number of Area, national, masters and World Championship events over the years. Our first trip out was to a freezing cold Bala inland Championship weekend event, in the late 1980's. Capsizing so many times I lost count. I do however, recall some wag renaming our boat, 'Oh shit'. No prizes were won, but it did snow, so a very nearly nasty bout of hypothermia was our only reward. I don't think either of us owned wet suits at this point.



I shall miss him dearly, because he wasn't just my older brother, who introduced me to the highs and lows of GP14 dinghy sailing. He was my mate as well.

Paul Heaney



## SEARSON J THOMPSON

In his 108th year. He was Commodore of Dovey Yacht Club for two periods of service. In the early days of the GP14 Class, and it's starting home at Aberdovey, he became involved with Bell Woodworking Co. Ltd in Leicester, in due course as Managing Director of the company.

Always closely supportive of the Class and interested in it, he played a major part in ensuring the strength of the Class Association.

## **EDDIE RAMSDEN**

It is with great sadness that we announce the death of one of our Past President's Eddie Ramsden, who until his demise was also a Trustee of the International GP14 Class Association. Our thoughts are with his wife Jean and all the family.



## **JOHN SALOMONSON**

John passed away peacefully at home with his family around him on the 4th October. As many will know, Solly was a huge fan of GP sailing since joining the fleet in the late 1960's and was incredibly successful on the open & areas circuit (in one year winning all Area Championships bar 2 in the days of large turnouts & 8 areas).

He was originally a member at Chase but can also count South Staffs, Manor Park & Aldridge in his family of clubs, was fleet captain at all and served as midland area rep and consequently sat on the Association Committee in the past. His last event was the Aldridge open earlier this year when he came 2nd.

## **JACK HOAD**

Many of us who were fortunate enough to take part in the Barbados Worlds in 2016 will remember Jack and his crew Bill Temporo, our first World Champions, gracing the event with their presence. Starting sailing at age, 5 Jack was an amazingly successful sailor in many Classes as well as the GP14. Never beaten in his GP14 in Barbados he was a worthy winner of the 1967 Worlds at Stormont Y.C. in Canada.

Our thoughts and prayers are with their families.

# Get good with the colourful sail



I was late to sailing. My brother-in-law taught me how to sail when I was at the ripe old age of 30. Well, actually, he told me how to crew. I was given the stick a couple of times but the water at Derwent is really cold so eventually this stopped happening. Each Wednesday we would rig up his battered but charming 420 and head off to race against...ourselves. We eventually saw the GP14 light and clubbed together to buy the world's toughest Don Marine GP.

My overriding memory of that boat (I moved to Thailand in 2017) is bruised thighs caused by on-deck genoa cleats. It was, and probably still remains (because let's face it, it will outlive all of us) the single most sharpest boat I've ever sailed.

## **Top Crew Tip No.1: Refuse to get into a boat with on-deck cleats.**

But what I quickly learnt from sailing a GP14 was that the crew is by no means just ballast. The genoa is a pretty big sail and getting it wrong really does cost; places and pride. So after I had nailed my first job as crew, namely "WEIGHT OUT!", I quickly moved onto the second part of a crew's job: trimming the genoa. The slightest of adjustments makes a huge difference to the shape of the sail so working on nailing this took some time. I would say this is of huge importance on reaches; getting all 3 sails working in tandem - or at least the 'feeling' that they are - takes a lot of practice.

## **Top Crew Tip No.2: Don't wait for the helm to bellow; and take responsibility for your sail.**

When we first started sailing a GP14 we started off with spinnaker bins. We then took them out and put in dividers. We then put the bins back for a while. Then we put the dividers back. And as far as I know, that's the current set up.



**Top Crew Tip No.3: If you use spinnaker bins, then dividers are better. If you use dividers; bins are better. You cannot win.**

As I got more confident as a sailor, I started offering some opinions about tactics and trim. These were not asked for, but the conversation had lulled and we *were* the only boat on the left side of the course; so I ventured an opinion. Luckily, my brother-in-law is a really nice guy so I survived. In all honesty, we soon learnt that for the boat to be sailed quickly then the helm needs to concentrate on doing just that (admittedly, this took us a while to work out!). This means a large part of the crew's job is being the eyes for the boat and relaying information back to the helm. Good teams work together and make decisions together: if we make a bad call, WE make a bad call. If we make a good one, always give it to the skipper.

**Top Crew Tip No.4: Only offer opinions and tactics if you are related.**

**Top Crew Tip No.5: Close calls are always the other boat's fault.**

No discussion about crewing on a GP14 would be complete without mentioning the spinnaker. With just two sails, I always felt like the balance of responsibility in the boat was 40% crew, 60% helm. However, as soon as the spinnaker went up, I always felt that this was reversed. On a windy day there is no better feeling than having the pull of the spinny and the genoa in your hands and the boat fizzing off the waves. We would often swap roles then, especially after I gained more experience, and I would be calling to the helm about either coming up or bearing off depending on gusts and the feeling in the sails. It worked most of the time and the use of the spinny is what I think is one of the key markers between good crew and great crew.

**Top Crew Tip No.6: Get good with the colourful sail.**

Since moving overseas and away from GP sailing, I have started sailing Lasers. It's only now that I really see the difference between crew and helm. It's great having the stick and feeling the boat being balanced - moments that are too few and very far between - in my Laser. But what I appreciate now is the freedom that crewing (a GP14) gave me. You really get to concentrate on so many aspects of sailing without having the inconvenience of actually having to steer the flipping thing too. I learnt about trim without having to avoid other boats and marks. I learnt about routines and timing in manoeuvres, without having to worry about under- or over-steering. And I got really good at 'feeling' the wind in the sail and reacting to it, without having to worry about lay-lines too much.

**Top Crew Tip No.7: Appreciate what you have and be careful what you wish for.**

GP14 Crew: **Phil Pethybridge**

## Pimpernel's Progress: The Final instalment

Well folks, we're there at last: deck fittings on, new 1950 style floorboards in place and buoyancy bags secured. The wooden mast and boom have come up really well and the rigging has been attached. A genuine 1950's rudderstock and tiller, complete with extension, have been found and refurbished. A slightly later spoon blade has been fitted and it looks the part. The mast has yet to be stepped, mainly as it is in storage away from the boat but we shall be having a topping out ceremony in November.

Pimpernel's first outing will be to the Dinghy Show at the end of February, where she will be appearing in her early 1950's fashion, with cotton sails (including a spinnaker) and of course the reclaimed wooden spars. All the fittings on the boat belong to the same period, thanks to a number of kind donations and almost all screws and bolts are brass. Needless to say, there are no jib cleats! The buoyancy bags are not the original but they are of some age do look acceptably 'vintage', particularly as we have been able to reuse the original straps and brass fixing points for the side bags, (interestingly, the straps are fitted with brass eyes that allow them to be tied or shackled to the fixing points). Heavy duty cotton webbing has been used for the toe straps and the fore and aft bags.



If you have not already seen it, I recommend that you take a look at the remastered cine film that Chris has up-loaded to our web site, featuring two GP14 events at York RI Sailing Club (formerly BTYC York Division). One event is the 1964 BTYC inter-divisional Watkins Trophy, and the London entrants must, I imagine, be from the Welsh Harp. The film has been extremely useful in confirming the early set up on GP14s and several of the boats featured match exactly with the archaeological interpretations that we have made with Pimpernel. The truth is that things were VERY basic!

The question now arises as how best to use the boat on the water. The cotton sails are very tender and the wooden mast would, I fear, not cope well with strong winds. We still have a perfectly serviceable metal mast and a set of Terylene sails so providing one can cope without cleating the jib and applying very much in the way of rig tension, all should be well. We shall run some river trials next season and the boat will be available for use at our GP14 Open Meeting on 18th April. You would be very welcome to come and try her out.

**Steve Parry and Hugh Brazier**

---

## Expectations of the crew

At the sailing area myself and my helm, John Hayes will discuss some various factors that will affect the upcoming race. For example, looking for any areas up towards the windward mark with more wind, checking the tide tables at the current time so we can sail into or out of the current to gain an advantage and finally a practice beat making note of the compass bearings for a future reference in the race. If at this point, we don't feel overpowered (unlikely) we will put in a chock.



**Duffin Marine™**

# A WINNING TREND

Boats available from bare hulls to ready to race.

CONTACT Alastair Duffin 2A Manderson Street Belfast, BT4 1TR  
EMAIL [duffinmarine@gmail.com](mailto:duffinmarine@gmail.com)

CALL 079 8997 0116 028 9045 7381

Shortly after we've done this routine the 5-minute signal will be sounded, and I will then make sure I sync my watch to 4 minutes using the flag alone, to help my helm keep track of time I will announce every full and half minute the time; starting a full countdown at 15 seconds.

Now that the race has begun, I focus entirely on keeping the boat completely flat, occasionally checking for rogue port boats, this is all in order to achieve our own clear lane to sail the beat exactly how we want. Once everything has calmed, I will still work to keep the boat flat while checking for any changes in the compass and checking the boats around to give a sense of our position in the fleet.

**GP14 Crew: Joel James**

# A view from the front

Of the boat that is, not the fleet! “You've got to bring Jenny every week, so you might as well jump in the boat” - with those words, I was introduced to the delights of GP14 sailing in 2006. Our son, Jonathon, had been Darrell Sleep's regular crew since completing the dinghy sailing course, with me, at Staunton Harold and was now off to university, complete with a second-hand Blaze (he's 6' 7”), so Darrell needed a new crew - me. We also knew each other as our respective daughters were chasing each other round the lake in Toppers each week, so it wasn't entirely a shot in the dark. Fortunately, the relationship worked, and I found crewing more satisfying than helming a single-handed dinghy (rather badly) and we sailed together for 11 years. I have crewed for a number of other people in GP14's including a Youth sailor for two seasons and other boats, as well as crewing and skippering yachts.



So here are some observations/musings on the role of the GP14 crew from, shall we say, a Bronze fleet perspective. Just as all crews are different, so are all helms and their expectations of the crew's role and activities vary. Perhaps the principle rule of sailing - “to maintain a good lookout at all times” is the most important and never varies, with potentially disastrous consequences if concentration slips. Though this applies upwind, particularly on port tack, on the downwind legs it's keeping the spinnaker full and pulling or the tell-tales flying if it's a two sail reach, that takes priority, while helping to balance and trim the boat at the same time. Apart from handling the genoa and spinnaker sheets the crew's role with the other sail controls can vary a great deal from very little – helm doing nearly all the adjustments, to regular requests for more or less kicker/downhaul or outhaul. If the outhaul is on the boom, then it will almost always be the crew's job to set it to the helm's satisfaction. In strong conditions or crowded mark roundings the helm may be out of reach of the controls or too busy plotting a track through the mayhem to adjust

the sail controls and will call on the crew to include that in their activities – rapid adaptation to the circumstances is key.

Launching and dropping the spinnaker is an area where absolute understanding and coordination of actions is vital so a shout of “2, 3, go” is helpful on the launch and just “go” when ready to drop can avoid embarrassments like a spinnaker sheet dropping down the stem and heading under the boat. Should this happen, then rapidly hurling oneself full length on the foredeck, reaching into the water and pulling it back up can avert disaster, but the helm needs to know what you're doing and look after everything else (especially balancing the boat) while you do it – so tell 'em! Another area of coordination is swapping the pole to the other side of the boom in anticipation of the next hoist – ask first, the helm may have other things in mind – a need to tack for example that makes it the wrong time to go for it.

Spinnaker pole systems vary and while I prefer the modern set-up, I have also crewed a boat rigged with the “Chase system”, where the pole is stored on the seat attached to the pole downhaul but is hooked onto the uphaul each time it is used. It took a circuit of the course to get the idea, but after that it was fine with us passing the pole between us at the right moments – fortunately the helm (a teacher) was wise enough to remind me each time, what was required.

Tactics – ah tactics! Articles in more august publications by Olympic crews talk of providing the helm with a flow of information and some prefer more than others, but too much can be distracting, and helms need time to think and weigh up the options. Some helms, who mostly make all the decisions occasionally ask for the crew's view, usually when the answer isn't obvious and surprise, surprise this crew couldn't tell either! The important thing then is that a decision is made and you both accept the outcome and move on to the next thing – no post-mortem debate until you're back on shore! Other helms may want more in the way of opinion from the crew, especially if they are relatively inexperienced, but as they gain confidence need less opinion, but keep up the information flow. Equally the helm can provide the crew with timely reminders of what's required or where they are lacking, but a constant barrage does not make a happy boat – I've never had that!

So, to conclude, I have found crewing to be a very rewarding aspect of sailing and more successful (for me) in terms of prize winning, than single handed sailing. The social aspect of sailing with another person is also important, in my view.

GP14 Crew: **Charles Saunders**

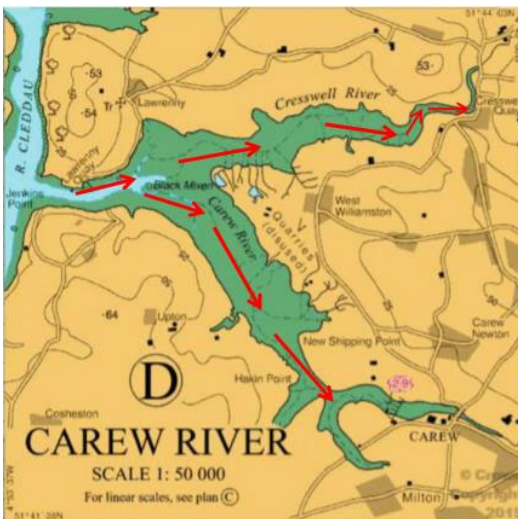
# CRUISING: Cruising Corner

## Cruising Week

A small but select group met for a week of day-cruising in the upper part of the Daugleddau estuary, a.k.a. the Milford Haven Waterway, which is a splendidly scenic estuary within the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park. We had 2 GP14s plus my trailer-sailor yacht, plus on one of the days a RIB. The chart plotter insisted that we were exactly in the channel, but channels in the upper reaches of estuaries do sometimes move, and once we dried out, we saw that we were perhaps thirty metres to one side of the channel, and on a bank which at that point was a couple of metres higher than the channel bed. However the GP14s were in no danger; they were well found boats with competent skippers, and amply capable of sailing back to base without a safety escort.

That incident apart, it was an enjoyable and varied week, with a mix of old friends and newcomers who fitted in very well indeed. Peter James and I go back to Poole Cruising Week in 2005, while Richard Moore and I go back a full 50 years, and I have known his daughter Tamsin since she was a small girl. By contrast, Anne Rushton and her family were newcomers to the Cruising Weeks.

On the Tuesday we started the day tweaking the rigging arrangements of both GP14s, in deference to the wind strength at the time. We then set off up the Carew River, intending to reach the head of navigation, this time at Carew, where there is a tidal barrage and tide mill, and also Carew Castle.



The rest of the week included a sail up the main estuary to just above Llangwm for a picnic and a sail downriver to the village of Burton, for a picnic and a drink at the Jolly Sailor pub, plus two non-sailing days (Force 9 gales), when we enjoyed varied activities ashore. Plus an excellent and even more convivial dinner party given by Tamsin and fiancé Tom at their home.

# CRUISING: Cruiser Training

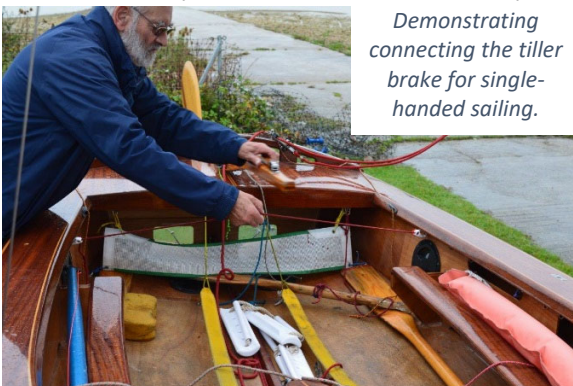
When I was previously in office as Cruising Rep, I suggested from time to time that training or coaching for cruising was just as valid and just as worthwhile as that for racing, and that we really ought to offer it. However that never got off the ground because all our established coaches were racers and did not necessarily have the rather different skill sets for cruising. Then early this year we had a request from member Charles Clayton for a cruising weekend with the emphasis on training and I realised, at that point, that if proper cruiser training was going to happen, I probably had to run it myself, although independently of that development Paul Collingwood organised a Cruising and Boat Handling training weekend at Bassenthwaite in August. Both new initiatives this year.

The **Advanced Cruiser Training course** was held at Graffham Water over the weekend October 12/13. It was intended from outset to have a mix of on-water and shore-based training, the latter being both practical and theory. A major topic was reefing; setting up the system so that it works well, and then learning and practising the techniques for doing it, both ashore and afloat, so that one can safely and reliably reef the boat at sea in whatever conditions may arise and produce a good efficient sail shape to the reefed sails.

Other topics planned included Man Overboard recovery, picking up moorings, anchoring, passage planning, charts, sources of information (tides and tidal streams, weather forecasts, navigational warnings), communications and distress signals, tiller restraint systems (particularly useful when single-handed), the dangers of lee shores in heavy weather, and much else.

The level of attendance was very encouraging, as is the number of members who would have liked to attend but could not manage the particular dates and asked to book on next year's course. And as an unexpected bonus, because we put the entire

on-water training onto the Saturday and did the planned shore training on the Sunday (in deference to the weather) the



*Demonstrating connecting the tiller brake for single-handed sailing.*

RIB hire element of the bill from the club is only half what we had budgeted, so I think we made a profit.

Thanks are due to Charles Clayton for handling all the logistics of arrangements with the club, etc.



### Reviews from the participants:

**Charles Clayton.** *My personal favourite was the undercover that had been modified to fit around the trolley cradle rather than under it. After a strenuous ten minutes fitting my cover it was instructive to see Oliver fitting his without effort in a couple of minutes.*

**Gordon and Deborah Grose** *We acquired our GP14 only earlier this year and joined the class association in our quest to learn more about the various attributes of the boat. This early link has kept us informed not only of what is going on generally, but also on GP14 history, and in particular the wealth of information on care, repair and useful advice. This course will be a boon not only to anyone interested in cruising, but also to other sailors wanting to sail in stronger winds at their local club.*

**Frank Whitley** *I spent the whole drive back to Shropshire with ideas whizzing around my head about some serious cruising in Scotland.*

**Martin Davies** *Oliver educated and entertained us all with his cruising experiences from his many years of sailing. I really enjoyed the course and found all the presentations that he gave (and sent us) extremely informative.*



**Anne Rushton** *I sail on the 'safe waters of the Marine Lake Southport', where there are no tides, no currents and if you should go over, the water is only chest deep. So the opportunity to sail from Lawrenny Quay, near Milford Haven, with GP14 Association cruisers, and all the challenges of a river without the exposure of big waves on the sea, plus picnics and pubs to navigate to, was irresistible. The family holiday was duly organised for Pembrokeshire.*

Carew River-Anne & Andy Rushton



I have now successfully interested my own club in running a second version of this course next year, on the intensely tidal waters of the Mersey. I am intending that we offer it for our own members plus members of this Class Association, plus indeed all comers. I am considering a full three days (most probably Friday – Sunday), and include a day-cruise upriver on either the second or third day.



---

## Cruising Week 2020

We have two headline options, and I have been canvassing what people would like, but to date I have had only limited feedback.

- 1) **Skerries:** Same date and venue as World Championship and could involve a Vintage Boats Regatta with a mixture of cruising and racing (on our own course), together with a Cruising Week for all.
- 2) **Fal Estuary:** Richard Moore happens to be Rear Commodore of Restronguet Sailing Club. He has offered to host next year's Cruising Week at his club.

**Informal voting:** Currently 2 members with vintage boats have said that Skerries is a "must"; Steve Parry (with *Pimpernel*, no. 2) and Gareth Morris (*South Bank*, no. 7, *Red Shank* or no. 8). Two others are potentially interested, Stewart Elder (*Aeolian*, no. 28) and myself (*Snowgoose*, no. 64). Two participants at the recent cruiser training course said they preferred going to Falmouth. So we have:

- Skerries - definitely – 2 Possibly - 2
- Falmouth definitely - 2 (but could be 3, my own vote is in the balance)

Something of a dead heat! We need to make a decision reasonably soon now so that we can start planning in good time – please contact me at [cruising@gp14.org](mailto:cruising@gp14.org)

**Cruising Log Trophy** - No entries received yet, but if you could get back to me by 31<sup>st</sup> January.

Oliver Shaw [cruising@gp14.org](mailto:cruising@gp14.org)

# Notes of a lightweight crew

“I sailed a GP at the weekend and I’m half thinking of getting one, would you crew?”, Graham, a friend of mine asked me one day. In my mind GP crews were male rugby player type hiking machines. Weighing in at 50kg and female I didn’t think I quite fitted the bill but I was persuaded to give it a go! Coming from a Team Racing background, with some Enterprise and J24 racing, I didn’t have much experience in this class of dinghy. For a start, it had kite! How was I going to manage the guy and sheet and at the same time hike out? As it happens I did manage and have loved it ever since!

After sailing with Graham I joined forces with Katie. We’ve been sailing together for the past five years and have been mixing family with lots of sailing. Living close to our local sailing club in Sutton helps a lot. You can nip off for a couple of hours sailing without it being an all-day affair. Compared to other crews we are very much on the light side and that has meant that we’ve had to do things a little differently to suit us.

When we first got our boat everything was to the minimum and designed for a crew that were stronger and a lot heavier than us. I couldn’t even put the pole on the mast on land let alone in the middle of a race! We simplified this system and pretty soon after that we also added ratchet blocks for the jib. The jib is a bit of a monster and adding ratchet blocks just made my life so much easier. Next was the rig. Being lighter we found that we needed to adjust the rig a lot earlier than most to be able to handle the strengthening conditions. After that we also installed a new spinnaker hoist system. This has turned out to be an inspired addition. We were having trouble “popping” the kite at the weather mark and were losing places before we could even begin to capitalise on what should be our strength - the off wind legs. These tweaks and a number of other adjustments have allowed us to get to grips with our boat and to be more confident in handling it.

On the water we have very clear systems for each manoeuvre whether that is tacking, doing hoists, or gybes. In each of these cases we’ve worked out strategies that work to our strengths. For example, when gybing we have very different roles depending on whether it is gybing run to reach or run to run etc. In these cases we focus a lot on the weight transfer and distribution to keep the boat balanced. With practice we have become very familiar with these systems and it has allowed us to deal with unexpected events - often at the leeward mark - with much less drama than previously! Essentially manoeuvres have become automatic to us and it has

allowed us to focus more on the race. I think practising these skills does not need to be too onerous – spending 15 minutes practising before the start of club racing or an hour on the water every so often will pay dividends.

Fitness plays a huge part in my sailing. We are typically hiking far earlier than most crews and to keep that up I find it important to keep sailing fit. I used to run quite a bit, marathon distance, as well as hill running. Having this background has helped me in the endurance aspect of sailing. Now I run about 5-10km, 2-3 times a week and also do some gym work. I think this is a reasonable schedule to keep you sailing fit. My upper body strength has never been great, but I have worked on core strength as this is vital for hiking as well as keeping your balance in the boat. Being fitter also means you become less tired and that means you are able to focus more on the race and less on the pain in your legs!

After five years sailing together we are still tweaking and finding better ways to do things and I guess that won't change any time soon. The advice and support we have received from members of the class has certainly made this a much easier and enjoyable journey. We have had so much fun sailing our boat and despite our lightweight status we are still fairly competitive!

GP14 Crew: **Michelle Rowley**



## Technical: GP14 Self Build (Gingerboat kit)

Drawings for the build were obtained via a pdf from the GP14 Association-*thank you Julie*. I then got these printed up to A-O size for easy reading, although not to scale.

### March 2019

First job is to make a build frame, but realising I would be tripping all over the place with a frame on the floor I decided to make a build box 4.8 mtr long x 60 cm wide and 50 cm high. It would also save bending over too much (dodgy knees). The only disadvantage to raising the building process was the need to climb up onto the boat to plane the ply skins flat ready for the keel.

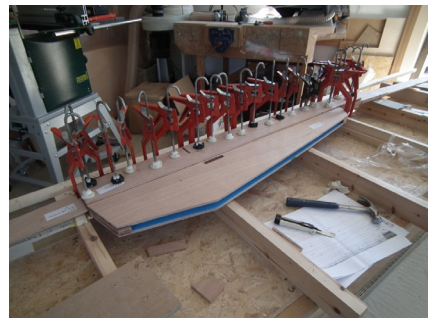
Using the dimensions from the drawings I proceeded to fix timbers across the build box at all station positions.

The Kit was purchased from Phil Hodgkins of Ginger Boats at Nichol End Marina Keswick. We picked the kit up in the middle of April 2019.

Phil offered the Kit in various stages of finish which would leave me with doing less or more of the finishing to the hardwood sections. Not being from a sailing background and even less familiar with the terminology I decided to go for a flight cut Kit. Phil is always at the other end of the phone or email to help with the build from start to finish also providing photos from some of his builds.

I soon realised that not all the bulkheads fix to the positions as mentioned on the drawings. Check with the Kit supplier for any deviations in positions of bulkheads. You also need the set of measurements given to the kit supplier when his boat was first measured by the GP14 Association.

At each end of the build box I decided to fix a timber already marked off with every keel to



baseline measurement. These were fixed to one side of the centre line so a string line could be pulled between and bulkheads lined up.

I started using a laser level fairly early on in the build and this negated the need for the string line.

### **April 2019**

Before fixing any bulkheads in position I decided that assembling the Plate case and splines would be best done now as the build box could be marked up with all the necessary measurements

Finishing of the internal face of plate case was best done by Gingerboats as an extra.



### Transom First on

I decided to make temporary bulkheads for the positions where the floor bearers are fixed using measurements, I calculated from the Kit's finished sizes given by the GP14 association.

All bulkheads when in position are then braced given a very sturdy build platform for the Floor bearers (FB), Spline and Plate case then Hog, chine and gunwale stringers.

### **May 2019**

### Floor bearers on



## Plate case and splines next followed by the Hog



**June 2019**

Before shaping the hog I fixed the skin stringers into position as they help to achieve the correct angle when planning the hog to shape.

So far, no screws have been used in the actual construction of the dinghy apart from some temporary ones to hold the Hog in position while the epoxy sets. All holes are filled with slithers of cedar and epoxy.

The fitting of the stringers at the Stem is done with care, nibbling a little at a time until a good fit is achieved. I found the Japanese Hassunme Crosscut Saw to be ideal for this purpose.



Up until now, no steaming has been required on any of the timbers

With all the stringers fully fitted and planed to shape came that pleasant feeling of achievement now the shape and size of the dinghy can be clearly seen.

Summer is upon us and the garden takes over from the GP14 build not to mention visits from the twins.

Next instalment: "How" many cramps do I need?

**David Rabbetts**



# GINGERBOATS

**Repair Revitalise Replace**

We are passionate about boats. From our small workshop in Newcastle we use our years of experience to combine traditional methods with the latest in modern design and construction techniques.

- ❖ **Repair** - we can repair any form of damage including wood, GRP, epoxy foam sandwich and carbon. Small repairs could be done on site at your club.
- ❖ **Revitalise** – we have years of experience refurbishing, re-fitting, rigging and tuning a huge range of boats. We also hold in stock a selection of spares.
- ❖ **Replace** – we pride ourselves on our attention to detail when building your new race winning GP14. **Bare hulls from £3600 and complete boats from £9995.** More details can be found on our website.

Please contact us to discuss your requirements. Follow us on Facebook and Twitter for any upcoming projects and offers.

**sales@gingerboats.co.uk ~ www.gingerboats.co.uk ~ 07800896818**

# Crewing the Old Yellow Boat

Asking me to write an article about crewing a GP14 is maybe not the same as asking any other crew in the circuit. After all, crewing for Steve Parry in the Old Yellow Boat isn't like crewing any other GP14. Among the key differences you will find a rather archaic spinnaker set-up, including a spinnaker that lets air through (Steve will deny this of course, but I know it for a fact...) and the somewhat severe implications of capsizing, as being a series one with no self-draining capabilities, this normally means the end of the race and the beginning of another exercise...bailing out what feels like 15 tons of water while slowly sailing back to shore under genoa alone.



So, you may ask, why am I doing this? Steve's old crew retired and he asked me if I was interested to take his place, I jumped at the opportunity mainly to get to sail in and see different venues around the country.

Probably still being somewhat of a cruiser at heart, I feel that I sometimes struggle to summon the same competitive eagerness that I see in other sailors. In the first few races I admit I didn't really get what was going on - particularly on some of the more notorious lake style cat's cradle courses. But then again, we are really never in a position where we actually need to know where to round next, as we tend to have plenty of boats to follow. I also used to suck at tactical suggestions, even though that has changed since we started to sail on the sea more. There I discovered that I can use my old cruising skills of proper navigation to hit a lay line rather well - as long as there are nice landmarks for bearings. I'm still working on Steve to install me a compass though.

Even though the Old Yellow Boat, her proper name is actually Sea Willow, is really proper old, everything is actually set up rather state of the art. All controls are led back to the helm, which leaves me with surprisingly little to do, particularly in light winds. Putting up the perforated spinnaker with the loose pole setup is rather interesting though, and it took us a while to work out a system that can be considered almost efficient. I might still one dark night sneak into the dinghy park with a rivet gun and change the set-up, having given up on Steve to ever do it himself. But then again, you never know, he has actually mentioned centre sheeting twice during this season, so stay tuned on that front.

Would I secretly want to rather helm though? Probably not in a big racing event. I do enjoy helming, but I think I prefer to single hand in that case, and not in a race but simply to sail along and forget everything about the rest of the world. That's what attracted me to sailing in the first place back when I was a student in Sweden, and I do sometimes miss the long hours of cruising along in the archipelago all alone with the sea, the wind and my thoughts.

GP14 Crew - Jens Kuhn



# Training

I am excited to announce that a 2 day Sea Training event has been arranged prior to the National Championship at Weymouth and Portland Sailing Academy. The dates are Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> June and Friday 26<sup>th</sup> June. A perfect opportunity to refresh your sea sailing skills with the Nationals to follow starting on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> June and of course later in the Summer at the World Championship based at Skerries Yacht Club. The coach will be Neil Marsden. The cost of the 2 days £20 per person per day i.e. £80 per boat for the 2 days. Book through the shop on [www.gp14.org](http://www.gp14.org) from Monday November 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Gill Beddow**

## E Howard Davies Memorial Fund GP14 Youth Coaching



On September 7th/8th Blessington Sailing Club held a GP14 youth coaching weekend. The event was led by recently crowned British National Champion, Sam Watson who was assisted by Colman Grimes.

The sailors arrived Saturday morning and were straight into rigging. Sam gave a quick land session and the sailors headed out onto the water. The weather conditions were perfect. The sailors worked on perfecting their basics and

performing as a team with the guidance of Sam. After a long day on the water the sailors headed back in where a hot dinner was waiting for them that had been prepared by the club committee volunteers. The day was finished off with a few board games and lots of laughs.

The next morning the club made the team a lovely breakfast then it was straight back to the classroom for a land session where Sam shared his top tips on the sail controls while they waited for the wind to fill in. Once the wind picked up they launched the boats again to explore the lake guided by Sam's coaching. The youth sailors stayed out into the late afternoon to take part in the Blessington Annual Regatta, giving the Blessington sailors a run for their money.

A big thank you to Sam Watson, Colman Grimes and everyone at Blessington sailing club for a great weekend.

**Jane McClean** GP14 Youth Sailor, Sutton Dinghy Club



# Communication is Key

I'm Seonaid (Shona) Young and I have been crewing GP14s since I learnt to sail back in 2000 at South Staffs Sailing Club doing club racing and then out on to the Midland Bell circuit in 2004 and finally to my first major GP14 championship in 2008. These days I can be found in the front of either my Dads or my husband's GP14 and my crewing style does vary considerably depending on who is helming the boat.

However, no matter what level you sail at or who you are sailing with, communication has got to be the most vital aspect of crewing any dinghy and knowing what to say and when can make a huge difference. In order to do this effectively though it is important to understand before stepping in the boat what you both believe is the helms responsibility and similarly what you believe to be the crews responsibility upwind, downwind without the spinnaker and downwind with the spinnaker. These roles are not totally set in stone (they are quite likely to vary with wind speed for example or the number of boats around you) and if things are going wrong help should certainly be offered if possible! What it does achieve is outlining what you both believe the other should doing and raises awareness of jobs that neither of you believe is your responsibility ahead of time.

For example, as the crew I would expect to be looking for boats whenever the spinnaker is not up and feeding that information to the helm but once the spinnaker is up I believe that role transfers to the helm. That doesn't mean I can't mention an approaching boat that I'm not sure the helm has seen or suggest a course of action when the spinnaker is up but it does set the expectation ahead of time that my main focus is the spinnaker and I'm unlikely to know what is going on behind us.

Also try and agree on phrases to use for certain situations and make sure you both know what they mean. Talking in full sentences wastes time you might not have if you are about to hit something or end up in the water and they are easier to misinterpret although as most of South Staffs will tell you what I do when all else fails...just scream APPROACH!

I recently stepped in a boat with a different helm and he did not have a clue what any of my phrasing meant and I'm fairly sure he still doesn't as trying to explain what you mean and find new terminology mid race is nearly impossible when you have got used to a system.

I've also found myself on the receiving end of this situation when just hearing the word "wait" by someone I had never sailed with before. Well I froze in the middle of the boat fairly confused as to why anyone would want me in the middle of the boat as it is tipping over just to hear it 2 or 3 times more followed by "What are you doing? I really need you up here!". Turns out the word was actually "weight" and my helm wanted me on the

*weight..weight...WEIGHT!!!!*



side of the boat! That is the sort of miscommunication that can lead to you both taking an unexpected dip in the water!

The other aspect of communication that I haven't mentioned is tactics and this is the part that I found extremely difficult to get to grips with. As I was learning to sail I was totally focused on getting the functional side of things

right and I would say this continued as I started club racing. When I started racing on the local circuit, I was quite young and sailing with people who knew far more about sailing a GP14 than I did and to be honest I was terrified of saying something totally stupid! I would point out when boats around us had tacked and maybe gybed if I happened to see it but that was about it.

I knew this approach wasn't really going to work and that I was going to have to start answering the question "So, what do you think?" rather than hoping the question would go away. I was able to helm myself (albeit rather averagely) and make decisions then but I still didn't feel confident enough to voice my own opinion and worried about potentially throwing away positions in the race.

This is the point when I started trying to look much more at what was coming towards me wind wise on the beats, observing what happened to any boats in front of me and point that out as the same was likely to be coming our way. It was a step in the right direction but became problematic when there were no boats in front! So I began to watch the patches of wind on the water and try and work out what I expected them to do but not tell anyone (still didn't want to sound stupid) and then see if I was right. Over time I started learning what to expect and as I started winning this game I began to voice my thoughts on it only to learn that just because your opinion was asked for and you've spent all this time trying to make sure you get it right doesn't mean your advice will be taken!

It took me quite a while to learn not to take it personally when your advice is ignored. The crews advice is to aid the helms decision making and sometimes you will agree and other times you won't. Over the years I have offered advice that have helped to win races and certainly offered advice that cost positions in important races (sorry Mark).

Hopefully this article shows that, at any level, improvements in communication can have a big difference on the water whether it is defining roles and responsibilities, agreeing on phrasing or gradually learning to offer advice. It is a gradual process and I certainly wouldn't recommend trying to change everything in one go but over time it is rewarding to see your input making a difference to your results.

GP14 Crew: **Seonaid Fleming**

NOT ON  
COMPARISON  
WEBSITES!

The Specialists

  
craftinsure.com



## The Official: GP14 Class Association Insurance Scheme

- NEW for OLD Cover
- Cover for use in Continental Europe
- Third party liability cover of £5,000,000 included
- Multi-boat insurance discounts – insure two or more boats for less
- 24 hour claims help line and simple online claims tracking
- Includes Third Party liability insurance cover when borrowing a similar boat
- Underwritten by Navigators & General (a trading name of Zurich Insurance plc)



UK and Irish  
Event  
Sponsors

*Created by boating people for those who love their boats!*

[www.craftinsure.com](http://www.craftinsure.com)

or call: 03452 607888

Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority

# Pointy end of the boat

The tap on the shoulder for this article has, I suspect not arisen because of any particular expertise that I might have as a crew but simply because I've been around so long that I have become part of the GP14 class furniture.

When my older brother John and I got our first GP14 at the ages of 17 and 16 respectively, I hadn't planned on being a crew it just happened that way. Campaigning in our first World Championship in 1988, hosted by Howth Yacht Club, we agreed that rather than both of us alternating helming at the events, that for this year, I would go into the pointy end of the boat and John would become the #### on the stick. Thirty years later and countless GP14s later, I'm still in the bow and he's still at the back.

I have been asked to give a few crewing tips. One such tip is not to replicate a pact that we once entered into with the then equally fledgling Fekkes brothers who joined the class around the same time as we did. One stormy day, both teams agreed before going afloat to remove our spin sheets so as not to be tempted to deploy our kites in what we then considered to be extreme conditions. Thankfully, that little session of wimping out wasn't repeated and the Fekkes Brothers went on to win the Worlds in Cape May, New Jersey in 1991. Our achievements have been substantially more modest than that.

When it comes to tips from a crewing pro, I suggest you call Andy Thompson (a.k.a. Shandy) who has been around almost as long as I have but has racked up an impressive list of World and National titles in a number of different classes including the GP. But for now, here are a few things that I have picked up along the way, that I think are important:-

## **The start**

- When starting, feed as much information as you can in between counting down, such as, telling your helm about the boat sneaking up from behind eyeing up the space to leeward that your helm has been jealously guarding;
- Make sure that your chine is down if stalled, so that you can accelerate fast when you power up;
- When the helm calls for power at the start, resist the urge to draw your jib in too quickly when trying to accelerate;

- Make sure you haven't overdone the kicker or cunningham and flattened the sail too much;
- Hike, hike, hike.

### **The first beat**

- Hike hard and keep the boat flat;
- While your helm is busy maintaining speed and keeping lane on the first run out, your job is to look to weather and let him/her know when a tack is possible and more importantly if you recommend it;
- Adjust the kicker in the gusts;
- Call the headers and let the helm know how big they are on the compass;
- Watch the fleet and try and feed information about early gains/losses as the case may be;
- Watch for boats on the opposite tack.

### **The weather mark**

- On the approach to the weather mark, make sure the kite is ready to go, the leeward twiner should be let go and the weather one wound on;
- Guide your helm in if coming in on the port lay line, telling him/her where the gaps are so that you can tack and which sterns to take or bows to tack on;
- If you are sure you are laying the mark on the starboard lay line, put the pole on.
- Kicker off, board up;
- I tend to ask the helm to delay the hoist until I say go as if the kite is pulled too soon it can hinder the crew in attaching to the gooseneck.

### **The reaches**

- Balance the boat;
- Concentrate on one thing- keeping the kite flying at optimum and let the helm worry about the rest of the fleet and where you are going;
- Slight trim on the kicker;
- Trim the jib in tandem with the kite. Don't let it choke the mainsail.

### **The run**

- If the weight ratio between you and the helm allows it , trim from the weather side while the helm sits to leeward;
- Keep the helm informed of drops or increases in pressure;
- Call the shifts and let him/her worry about the rhumb line;
- Tell him if he is too close to leeward boats;

- If it's a breezy day play the leech a little less as you might induce a tumble by overplaying it;
- If breezy keep stay as low as possible in the boat in the take down, as standing tall can induce a roll.

### **The finish**

- Determine which end of the line is closer;
- Identify any threats to your place and keep the helm apprised of their position;
- Shifts are just as important in this last leg, so watch the compass and the boats close to you and feed the information back;
- Feed tactical information back to the helm so that you can keep the starboard tack advantage on a photo finish.

One final tip; the GP is a difficult boat to hike in and quite frankly, an ergonomic disaster zone, especially for the crew. So, if you want to stay in the game a little longer, engage your core as much as possible while hiking and don't let the default posture of letting your lower back fall out of normal curvature become the dominant position.

That's all I have to offer for now and after 30 something years in the sharp end. Have good winter and hopefully I will see you at the 2020 Worlds in Skerries.

**GP14 Crew - Donal McGuinness**



**Winder Boats**

**Order Your New Championship Winning GP14  
With New Deck and Improved Hull Mould**

Contact Us either by email [david@winderboats.com](mailto:david@winderboats.com)  
or phone 01535 604980  
[www.Winderboats.com](http://www.Winderboats.com).



## Championship: Survived the Season

Well, having been in post for a year I hope that the learning curve is levelling out!

The Super 7 Series this year was sponsored by Craftinsure – many thanks to them! There were 91 participants and 5 qualifiers. Many thanks to all the clubs for hosting and all those who have enabled these events especially those who have given up their own sailing to enable ours. It was a clean sweep for Sam Watson and Andy Thompson who won all the Championships they entered. Well done lads – which of you are going to try to keep them off this spot in 2020?

Bristol Corinthian hosted the Harken Inlands with a turnout of 15 boats. Whilst the Midland Area Championships at Staunton Harold had 16 entrants and shared the water with the Miracles. The Welsh Championships at Llandudno SC as part of their open series, was interrupted by Storm Helena and this allowed some competitors to arrive and sail on the Sunday and some decided not to travel. 12 boats were helped into the water by the beach team, allowing certain females to have dry feet for a few more minutes and the spectators to giggle quietly to themselves.



The Northern Areas were in the fine setting of the Pennines at Hollingworth Lake SC which can be poised between the different weather patterns of east and west and so it was for the weekend of 11/12 May. The event was also part of the Super Seven and Northern Bell Series. Thus, it was also the characteristic race officer's nightmare for course setting and Bruce Mager and his team rose well to the occasion for the 18 boats that entered. Following confusion about where the course was led to some retirements!! The results show that everyone had allocated themselves into the correct fleets with a tidy banding of gold and bronze sandwiching silver between them in the results.

The Scottish Championships were part of East Lothians Yacht Club's Regatta and had 9 entrants - Andy Smith and Phil Hodgkins won this event.

At the other end of the country, 13 boats took part in the Southern Area Champs at Leigh on Sea. Eleven visitors joined two local boats to wait for the tide to cover the mudflats and float the committee boat. While waiting the Leigh hospitality was on form with tea, coffee and bacon rolls from the galley consumed while boats were rigged and assembled on the beach.



The biggest event of the year was the Nationals sponsored by Allen Brothers, which made a welcome return to South Caernarvonshire Yacht Club after 8 years. 56

boats competed across the 3 fleets. Unfortunate weather conditions throughout the week meant only six out of the scheduled nine races were completed. However, there is probably no better place to find alternative things to do when racing is cancelled, sailors were found surfing, cycling and sightseeing across northern Wales. Full reports from each event can be found on the website and on Yachts and Yachting.



Although the Association events are over until April there is plenty of opportunity for racing over the Winter - the Seldon Sailjuice Series is always popular with GP14's as well as several Icicle and Frostbite series across the country. Let others know whose doing what via our social media.

Looking into next season: 2020 is the 70th Anniversary of the first GP 14 and there is a lot in the planning to celebrate this. Events planned for next Seasons Championships overleaf.

The Nationals are at WPNSA on the 27th-29th June – this will be an 8 race champs. The first race will be on Saturday at 1pm followed by race 2&3, with 4,5,6 on the Sunday and 7,8 on Monday allowing for an early prize giving and departure.

The Welsh Championship is at Dovey on the 13th-14th June, home of the GP.

Watch this space for further developments about the events in 2020.

**Vanessa Devereux**

**2020:**

**February:** 29<sup>th</sup>-1<sup>st</sup> - RYA Dinghy Show

**April:** 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> - Midland Area Champs  
Chase SC

**May:** 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> - Inland Champs  
-Northampton SC

**June:** 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> Southern Area Championship  
- Brightlingsea SC

13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> Welsh Championship

• Dovey YC Home of the GP14

•

27-29<sup>th</sup> National Championship WPNSA

27<sup>th</sup> 12 hr Junior race Southport SC

**July:** 25<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> World Championship Skerries YC

**Sept** 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> Master and Youths -

Staunton Harold

19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> 24hr Race WLSC

**Oct** 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> End of Season Championship

- Royal Windermere YC

# Compatible Crewing

Having learned to sail at school I have been sailing for more years than I care to remember. My current GP, bought from new, is *Scooby Doo* and she is now 24 years old. For most of that time I have crewed and James Ward has done the helming. We have found this arrangement suits us both well.

Over his 50 plus years in sailing, James has crewed for 10 years or so. This means that he appreciates what crewing feels like which I think is a definite benefit to our relationship in a boat.

Making my excuses for our sometimes poor performance I should also explain that James and I are now quite 'senior sailors' with a handicap of combined crew weight of 26 stones.

However, we do find that there are advantages to having sailed together for such a long time not least a confidence in keeping the boat upright. We also have a lot of set routines. For example, on the spinnaker hoist there is a set routine which not only incorporates who does what but importantly boat weighting during the hoist. Generally, I would say that between us there are relatively few surprises as regards the things we can control – clearly there are a few things we don't control, such as gusts of wind, gear failure or the behaviour of competitors. So we both usually know what is happening next, so far as this is possible.

As southern sailors will know, we have done a lot of travelling over the years. In fact we only travel and don't do club racing as such. This means we need to have a slick routine for boat packing and unpacking. James has his jobs and I have mine. We have never really discussed, it just happens and leads to a slick setting up and packing away.

My main jobs as crew, apart (obviously) from setting the genoa and the spinnaker, are start timing, checking the course and bringing anything that might be relevant to James's attention during the race. In the latter category would be wind shifts (this might be controversial in some boats but James is normally tolerant) and starboard boats. I get particular enjoyment from fast down-wind sailing with an added bonus of surfing down big waves especially when flying the spinnaker and passing other boats. James is heavier than me so it can be difficult balancing the boat downwind at times. Tolerance, discussion and a willingness to try different adjustments however normally get us through. Recent Association sponsored coaching has shown dividends this year with improvements in and greater satisfaction with our downwind sailing.

Although I have owned the same boat for many years, this does not mean that there have been no developments. We were probably late in converting to carrying our spinnaker pole along the boom. But that is the only way to do it. And, quite recently, Ian Dobson came to Papercourt Sailing Club and explained how to tack with crew facing backwards and, other than in survival weather, that is what I now do. It is truly a quicker, more efficient way to tack. Thank you, Ian!

Sailing and in particular racing a dinghy successfully is definitely a team effort between the helm and the crew. They must be on the same wavelength, not only in the physical terms of easing, sheeting and boat weighting together at the right time but also in terms of social compatibility. The sometimes blue air around Scooby Doo is most often a sign of mutual frustration at something not being slick rather than a falling out between us. I have seen a few boats which seem to have little social compatibility and wondered how they manage at all. In reality, few of these relationships seem to last and it seems that the boats are generally not over successful in the results. Crewing a GP suits me well. Fellow competitors are generally a friendly bunch and on our travels some fleets are pretty hot whereas others may be less so. It's a mistake to think that a small fleet is going to be easy to crack; sometimes only fast boats turn up and the missing boats are the slower ones. You never know.

GP14 Crew - **Richard Whitehill**

**Specialist**

**INSURANCE REPAIRS**

Wood and G.R.P. topped up with a special paint sprayed finish

**Paintcraft**

Nigel Potter  
01159 754302  
[www.paintcraft-boats.co.uk/](http://www.paintcraft-boats.co.uk/)  
[paintcraftinsurancerepairs@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:paintcraftinsurancerepairs@hotmail.co.uk)

# Area Reports

## MIDLANDS AREA REPORT

Despite it being a “non-worlds” year, it has been a pretty good season on the Midland Bell circuit this year with overall entries being 137 compared to 140 in 2017. All events were able to be completed, though some took place in very light conditions. The overall winners and new holders of “The Bell” trophy counting just 6 points, are Mark McKeever and Kevin Hopkins from Midlands SC, pursued down to the wire by Chris Martin and Tom Temple (also from Midland SC) and Ian Willis/Keith Dutton (last year’s series winners) from South Staffs. Pete Jacques/Michelle Evans of Chase SC completed the Gold fleet qualifiers in 4th place, having attended 9 of the 11 events – well done. Silver fleet winners were the late John Salomonson (competitive to the last!), crewed by Dominic Clayton (Aldridge SC) and the Bronze fleet was won by Keith Budden/Ben Roberts of Trimpley.

We were all saddened to hear of the death of John Salomonson at the end of the season – a doughty competitor in the Midland Bell almost from its inception, and many more prestigious competitions besides, Midlands Area representative for many years and a source of sage advice – he will be much missed.

The Nationals at Abersoch saw many Midlands sailors in attendance, and a Midlands sailor won it, congratulations to Sam Watson, superbly crewed by Andy Thompson of course! It was an interesting week, with races cancelled due to too much wind and also too little wind on consecutive days, though we all had a great time.

The planning for the 2020 season in the Midlands is well underway with the Area Championships to be held at Chase SC on the weekend of 28th/29th March. Most of the clubs on the circuit have offered dates for next year and all will be published as soon as the calendar has been finalized. I hope that as many of you as possible will keep sailing over the winter so that you are all fit and your boats are ready for next year.

Finally, a big thank you to all the clubs and their officers and volunteers for hosting all the events in the Midlands, running the races, the safety boats and galleys and thus keeping the circuit going – without you, it wouldn't happen.

**Charles Saunders**

## NORTHERN AREA REPORT

There were seven races in the 2019 Northern Bell series, with a total of 130 helms and crew taking part. The series started at Burwain on 31st March in the spring sunshine and a nice F3 wind. This was followed by Hollingworth, Budworth, West Lancs, Windermere and West Kirby. The series finished after the summer break at a somewhat rain sodden Bolton on 29th September, where local flooding made the visiting sailors wonder if they should drive or sail home.

The Northern Bell trophy was won by Mark Platt and Sam Platt/Michael Critchley of Bolton Sailing Club, with fellow Bolton sailors Zena Martin and Leanne Pilkington taking the bronze fleet trophy.

Dates for the 2020 series will be announced shortly and will include a River Race at York RI Sailing Club.

**Adam Chaplin**



*West Kirby SC Open*



*Bolton SC Open*

## SCOTTISH AREA REPORT

2019; A Good Year. The Scottish & Borders Bell has enjoyed the hospitality of Annandale SC, Castle Semple SC, East Lothian YC and Largs SC, with some of the highlights being surrounded by puffins near the Bass Rock off North Berwick, the Saturday night dinners at each event, and the long race around Great Cumbrae Island during the Largs Regatta Festival. Mixing it with the rather large yachts when rounding the cardinal mark was entertaining. As you'd expect we have had a good variety of weather. ELYC for the Scottish Championship becalmed us to start off with but threw everything at us on the Sunday. Numbers of boats there were boosted by



a fleet from Royal Windermere YC. The well organised event, the marvellous facilities, and the beautiful seaside surroundings mean that we will have to return to take part in the ELYC Regatta again.

We had another training day in June, and the GP's were just the right size to take visitors out for their first ever sail on sunny summer days. An Adopt A Boat scheme where old GP's have found new homes has been useful. Do contact me if you want to know more, or if you have any news about racing or cruising your GP on Scottish waters.

**Arthur Logan** [arthurlogan@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:arthurlogan@hotmail.co.uk)

## SOUTHERN AREA REPORT

The season in the SE Area is coming to a close for the Travellers but we have one more left on 9 November at the WHSC - NOR due out shortly. Other than that it has been a great season with mixed conditions. WHSC managed to pull off a good End of Season event despite being a small puddle in north London whilst Leigh on Sea proved to be a great Championship venue. Dates are pretty much sorted for 2020 so we hope to see more travellers on the circuit next year rather than events being a WHSA away day!

**Helen Allen**



**EOS Winners**  
**Ben & Sam Pickering**



**Silver**  
**Keith Street & Hannah Liptrott**



**Bronze**  
**Adeel Khan & Yasir Ansari**



# Tips for aspiring crews

When I was asked by the association to write an article about crewing, I did wonder what I had to offer on that front. I'm still relatively new to sailing compared to a lot of the fleet and not the most accomplished. Therefore, this is an article about a triumph of energy and enthusiasm over skill and experience. My message to any crews out there that feel like they have plateaued, and have aspirations to improve, is that anything is possible you just have to be prepared to put the work in.

To give the reader some context, at the 2016 Barbados Worlds I was sailing around at the back of the bronze fleet trying to avoid a triple figure finish. Skip forward to 2019 and I now sail in the gold fleet and occasionally enjoy some quite decent results.

Outside of sailing I work in project management, so in 2016 I decided to apply some of that thinking to improving my sailing. My three top tips for this are:

- 1) set yourself SMART targets (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time bound) and constantly review and refresh them
- 2) focus on the process and not the results
- 3) set an aspirational stretch target – you will never be the best if you don't aim for it.

**1) Set Targets** To start this section, I wanted to share the slightly tongue in cheek list from Eric Twina's 'Start to Win' as to what qualities the ideal **Crew** would have:

- #1 - Unquestioning obedience**
- #2 - Doesn't mind getting wet, cold and bored**
- #3 - Doesn't bruise easily**
- #4 - Doesn't complain when bruised**
- #5 - Strong, silent and agile**
- #6 - Enjoys being blamed for things that aren't his/her fault**
- #7 - Has a bent towards telepathy**
- #8 - Impeccable timekeeper and recorder of course**
- #9 - Naturally good eyesight for spotting distant boys (desirable magnification on ordinary eyes 4 x 30)**
- #10 - Likes winning**
- #11 - Very good when losing**
- #12 - Preferred hobbies: sewing, woodwork and swimming**



If I had have gone with Twiname's list, even in 2016 I think I would have already been the ideal crew, bar the good eyesight. It is good to seek different opinions on what 'good' looks like, but I have found that requirements vary helm to helm. Your starting point should be on what kind of crew you want to be. Identify your strengths and look to maximise them and work on minimising your weaknesses.

Back in 2016 I decided my strengths were my ability to be flexible and adapt to different helms, my ability to learn (albeit slowly at times!) and put the effort in and then my mechanics in terms of tacking, hoists and gybes. My weaknesses were far too many to list but initially I wanted to improve my understanding of beats and endurance on longer beats as it turns out they are a lot longer on the sea than they were at South Staffs! And my first stretch target was to sail in the Gold fleet.

To do this I approached Frank Nickless who I had met in Barbados to ask if I could do a club race with him at Chase SC which was the next closest club to where I lived and a bigger piece of water. It went well so we committed to doing the circuit together during 2017 and I got a PT to put together a training programme for me to ensure I felt confident in my fitness. We had a plan and it paid off as we won the

Super 6 Silver Fleet that year gaining promotion into the Gold fleet and achieving what I thought the year before was a stretch target.

For 2018 I wanted to improve my wind awareness and tactics. To do this I bought a load of books, watched hours of YouTube clips as reluctantly took Frank's advice to learn to helm to improve my crewing. Although I am still an awful helm, I did find that being in my laser I had to start thinking about where the wind was, what my approach was to the first beat, where the other boats were. I also liked how quiet it was in a single hander! My enthusiasm was also ever present and the Chase membership were very generous with their time and crewing tips as well as encouraging me on. Where in the past I may have felt not good enough to sail with the top sailors my confidence had started to improve coupled with the likes of Adam Froggatt gently encouraging/forcing me out on the really breezy days that I have now come to believe really are 'fun'.

Over the past two years my newfound confidence, coupled with more opportunities, has led to some nice problems to have. The main one being an abundance of helms to juggle. Having sailed with 24 different helms during this period (14 from Chase alone) I have picked up something from each of them.

For 2019 I wanted to improve my tactics, work on a shoulder niggles and improve my sea sailing. In terms of sea sailing the only way to do this when you live in the Midlands is travel so I did all the Super 7 sea events as I could as well as going over to Ireland for a couple of events. This is something I would definitely recommend to any English GP14 sailors as the Irish lot are very friendly and welcoming and because they do most of their events on the sea or big lochs the standard is fantastic.

For the tactics I was fortunate to be able to do quite a lot of sailing with Pete Jacques from Chase this year who, with so much experience at the front of the fleet in GPs as both a helm and crew, has improved me no end. Although I am sure I have tested his patience at times as well as breaking his finger! (not entirely my fault but as the crew I naturally accepted responsibility).

To summarise, wherever you are with your sailing there will always be something to improve on, you will be surprised how easy it is to do that if you take that first step of trying and not being afraid to make some tough decisions. Identify what it is you want to achieve, develop a plan, set your targets and just go for it!

## **2) Focus on the process and not the results**

This is just my reflection, but I find sometimes you sail really well but just don't get the result you want from it. Other times you may sail poorly and get lucky. I find if I

am on the water focusing on the result needed, I am not fully focused on my sailing. You have to trust your prep and your ability, enjoy the racing, do your best. Focus on the process and the results will come. And if those results don't come but you are happy you sailed your best you will have hopefully at least enjoyed the day.

### **3) Set an aspirational stretch target**

Setting your SMART targets is all about being realistic and gives you that feeling of achievement a sense of how you are improving, predominately in the short term. A stretch target is all about trying not to limit your potential achievements and thinking longer term. Think big, be positive and you never know what opportunities you might get.

As I started with the ideal qualities for a crew, I thought I would finish with my reflection on what makes an **IDEAL HELM**:

- #1 – Able to do the crew's job better than them so that they can constantly remind them about how it should be done (especially flying the kite)**
- #2 – Prone to falling over mid-tack and dropping the tiller to keep the crew entertained**
- #3 – Good sense of humour (so that they remember to laugh at the crew if they slip over)**
- #4 – Enjoys the odd pop to the head with the spinnaker pole (directly proportional to how much then enact #1)**
- #5 – Poor sense of direction to make the crew feel vaguely useful and occasionally smug**
- #6 – Comfortable asking a female crew how much they weigh and then remarking on how well the boat will go in the breeze as a result**
- #7 – Enjoy 'perching' on the side of the boat during windy weather to give the crew that valuable opportunity to get a work out in**
- #8 – Keeps the crew well fed and watered (super important!)**
- #9 - Comfortable taking all the glory**
- #10 – Comfortable always being right. About everything. All of the time.**

GP14 Crew: **Michelle Evans**

## Reflections on sailing 24 hrs for charity

One month on from sailing the 53<sup>rd</sup> West Lancs YC 24 Hour Race on their own and two brothers from The Chase Sailing Club have raised over £1,700 for charity.

Eden and Josh Hyland are more usually seen racing single handed in Blazes but pooled their efforts for this year's event to raise money for a charity that is close to their hearts, as well as fulfilling a childhood sailing dream.



Josh explains how they settled on their chosen charity: “We have had problems with mental health in our family, so we wanted to pick an organisation that doesn't get much funding and helps those with mental health issues. So, the one we chose is POhWER which provides advice, support, and advocacy to people who experience disability, vulnerability, distress, and social exclusion. I don't think we could have finished the full event if we didn't have it in the back of our minds that we were doing it for such a good cause.”

Attempting the full 24 hours has been a dream of Josh's since he joined Chase 14 years ago but usually the lure of the bar has restricted their stints to a couple of hours at a time, until they bought a £500 wooden GP14 earlier to refurbish for the iconic sailing event.



“We did the GP14 Worlds last year in a borrowed boat and really enjoyed it so had started to think about buying a boat to do up,” explains Josh. “As soon as we found one, I suggested doing the WLYC 24 hour race to Eden as I have always wanted to do it. The boat is Duffin number 13196 and it needed a lot of work! We completely stripped it down and re-painted, varnished and



re-fitted it which took us a lot longer than we thought it would but thankfully it survived the full race and nothing broke. Thanks to Allen and English Braids for helping us with the fit out.”

Speaking on behalf of the Chase Sailing Club, Commodore Stuart Green said: “With various blocks and ropes still being fitted the morning of the event and Josh and Eden’s naturally relaxed approach to organisation we did wonder at times if they were going to make the start let alone complete the full 24 hours but they did themselves and the club proud, as well as raising a lot of money for a really good cause.”

Not only did the brothers complete the race but they finished 11<sup>th</sup> overall, exceeding their own expectations, even if it did come at the expense of not being able to sit down for the week after!

When I ask the pair one month on how they felt about the experience Eden says: “We really enjoyed the first six hours, it was perfect sailing conditions in the context of the length of the event, with a gentle breeze and sunshine. Then at around midnight the breeze kicked in which woke us up, but we really enjoyed sailing in that kind of wind.”

“The hardest part for me was the last three hours,” continues Josh. “It was the realisation that we had been sailing for so long but still effectively had an entire days’ club racing at Chase to go. And by that point our bums were in bits!”

Before the race we just wanted to finish and maybe come in the top 30 so we were really proud to finish where we did. In general, it was a lot harder than we expected but remembering why we were doing it and the encouragement, sausage rolls and red bull provided by our club on the shore kept us going. When we did eventually finish with everyone cheering and clapping was quite emotional, and we are both amazed and thankful to everyone who supported us and donated.”

**Michelle Evans**

# SPOTLIGHT FEATURE:

## Andy Thompson



Usually called:	Shandy/Irish /Andy
Date of Birth:	20 May 1972 old!!
Marital Status:	Single
Children:	None, I hope!
Started Sailing:	A long time ago
First Boat:	Optimist
Favourite boat class:	The GP14 but love the Fireball no hiking
First Sailing Club:	East Antrim Boat Club
Championship History:	GP14 Worlds 2000, Nationals 2015/2016/2019, Fireball National 2003
Other boats sailed:	Fireball, Scorpion, 505, Dragon, Flying Fifteen
Most proud of achieving?	GP Ulster's this year in my dad's old boat
Who do you admire and why?	Jim Hunt he said he would beat me up if I didn't
Favourite Event & Why:	Barbados GP14 and Fireball worlds both epic!!
Best memory of a sailing event:	Durban 2000 Worlds first win
What makes a good sailor?	Commitment time on the water
Tips for new sailors:	Stay away from me at the bar. But seriously have fun out sailing and buy me beer.
Future Plans:	GP14 Worlds and Nationals Fireball Worlds and a few Scorpion events.
Burning Ambition:	GP14 Worlds win would be nice again

# SP BOATS / ELITE SAILS



## NEW MODEL SP2 COMING 2018

The new SP2 will use the old Boon moulds and be flatter on the transom with a more open deck layout than the SP1.

Production of the SP2 will start over the winter, please contact us to pre-order.

Sailed throughout the fleet, the SP1 is a proven winner. Built, developed and raced by Steve Parker, SP Boats is the largest builder of GP14 boats. Wide range of customisation available with boats built in epoxy and polyester, any colour available.

W W W . S P B O A T S . C O . U K

## RACING BOATS

Brand-new race spec SP1 and SP2 boats are £8,300 and include: Allen fittings, Selden mast, English Braids rope, CNC Moulds mounded foils, and a full set of Elite Sails.

## ALL SERVICES

- New race spec boats & sails ■
- Training boats ■
- Boat repairs ■

07884 363109



Steve Parker Boat Builders & Repairers