



International GP14 Class
Association

MAINSAIL

www.gp14.org



SPRING 2016

**RULES IS RULES!
AREA REPORTS
TWO BLOKES AT THE BACK
.....AND MUCH MORE!**





Subscriptions 2016

We are pleased to advise there is no Subscription increase in 2015. They are:

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Associate members: £22 (£20)

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International Association**

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Cover: **Just returned from racing in
Dunsborough (3.5 miles south of
Perth), Western Australia by Bruce
Quail**

Editor's Letter

Well this edition has proved quite a challenge for Julie and I, so please forgive me if you spot any errors. The schedule to meet the printers has been tight, but hopefully you'll agree, there is plenty of information about the coming racing and cruising season. Of course with Barbados being foremost in the minds of a tenth of our membership, it seemed particularly important to get this edition out early.

By the time you receive your copy of Mainsail, the Dinghy Show will have been and gone. Those that managed to get to the show would have found us in the West Hall on a much smaller stand, this was not an intentional move, but an error, I hasten to add, not of our making! You will have to wait until the next newsletter to find out if the change of hall had any impact upon our visitors and also to see photos from the Show. As always the Show gives us the opportunity to showcase the boat and the strength of the Association.

Promoting the Class, is an important part of helping the boat remain a popular choice. A BIG thank you to the Promotions Committee and also to Michelle Evans for her help with the design of the car sticker. With the expertise of Sam Watson the GP14 leaflet has also been updated. Please continue to encourage non-members to join the Association and help advertise by putting the stickers in your car. As part of the advertising campaign a film maker is now lined up to create some footage.

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Packing for Barbados in Ireland
Photo by Laura & Garth McFarland

Also a big thank you to Phil Green who is doing sterling work researching the history of championship boats to create an informative archive. Eventually this will help us create a log book and help with the retention of both boat records and also increase Association Membership.

We have a couple of trips down memory lane in this edition, which I hope you will enjoy. This edition also spotlights Alastair Duffin and his accomplishments as not only a boat builder but a plane maker! The boys from Derwent have their final pre-Barbados interview.

This year there will be some changes to the Committee, with Duncan stepping down after his term of office as President. The AGM will be held at the Nationals in Wales. During Duncan's presidency he has sought to develop sub-committees, which help spread the workload. If you are interested in helping in any capacity, your help would be greatly appreciated.

As always thanks to those people who have contributed articles and letters.

I look forward to seeing you somewhere on the circuit and soon I will see many of you in Barbados. (I'll be the one with the umbrella!)

Here's to steady winds and a great year of sailing.

Ann Penny - Vice President and Editor: 07702 307371 vicepresident@gp14.org

NB Umbrella!



President's Piece

Welcome to an early edition of Mainsail in 2016. I'm sure you will all realise why it is being published early this time; a large number of us have our boats packed and on transit to Barbados with a record number of sailors from all over the world anxiously waiting to follow for our much talked about International World Championship. I am sure you will read more about it in this not to mention on the website, social media and the press as the competition progresses.



Mainsail

This will be my last 'Mainsail Piece' as your President after a very quick 3 years; where has the time gone? It was a very great 'unexpected' honour and privilege to be asked to take over the vacant position in 2013. I took on the position with much trepidation and fear for what lay ahead not just with the challenges of the position but various issues facing our Association at that time. In spite of a few sleepless nights and timeless days I needn't have been concerned with such a strong team that provided a reliable and stable platform around me – just like the boat we cherish. There are too many people to mention here however I owe a deep debt of gratitude for all the assistance received by so many people - thank you.

There is a great year lined up and I hope you will join me at some of the events to enjoy your GeeP on the water whatever your sailing interests:

For the racers, when we return from Barbados, we'll be full of enthusiasm to get our boats unwrapped for the New Super Six Series put together by the Championship Committee, which kicks off with the Southern Area Championships – hopefully I will see you all there again to reminisce about the exploits across the pond. I have been told to watch out for the 'Special Offer' to get the End of Seasons entry fee free yes 'free' look on the website for details.

For the cruisers and racer/cruisers which I consider includes myself, a full programme of events is being developed including weekends on Rutland and Ullswater, as well as a Cruising Week at Pwllheli, taking the opportunity to enjoy the organised social scene at the Nationals - hope to see many of you at these for; 'Sail-Picnic-Pint-Chat-Repeat'. There are lots more details to be found in the following pages and as ever on the website and in the electronic Newsletter.

Over the last three years the Committee has made some significant initiatives to put the Association on a much stronger footing. This work goes on and you can be assured there is a strong team in place on committee and around the various subcommittees which

inevitably do most of the day to day effort. This pool of people are doing an amazing job for you and they also importantly provide succession for Committee posts. Please let us know if you are able help the Association in any way, many different skill sets are required.

A new subcommittee created last year has spearheaded a transformation of the website; anyone regularly using it will immediately recognise the speed improvement. There is still a lot of work underway to bring all the content and information up to date, please call in if you have any information or can help with this ongoing task. What is needed on the website now are regular updates to keep it alive and fresh – this is where you as members can easily do your bit by sending in reports, pictures, forum debates, news articles etc, it's over to you.

The Association finances are on a healthy balance, thanks to a carefully managed cost cutting project and efforts to turn round the decline in membership from where a significant proportion of our income is derived. This is an ongoing challenge in which your assistance is appreciated by being positive about the class and promoting membership to fellow sailors in the boat parks and club houses.

We are working away on new initiatives to promote and develop the class, you will start to see these come to the fore very soon. It is intended to keep the class profile on a high as the leading double handed adult general purpose boat. You can be assured benefits such as mainsail will continue.

It was good to see the youth training continue in Ireland hosted by the new Youghal Sailing Club. It was very encouraging to see the results of this at the Irish Nationals where most of the youngsters turned up at Newtownards for their first event. There was also a very successful training weekend at Llandudno last year. It is planned to repeat all these and in addition there is a programme to expand training in the UK this year with sessions in each area, a Ladies weekend and a Howard Davies Youth Training week. All these are subsidised by the Association and being organised as a result of your requests, so watch this space and please take advantage of what is on offer.

Woah I'm Going to Barbados in the sunny Caribbean Sea. Woah we're going to have a great time. Woah if you're not coming, don't know what you'll miss. Woah follow this link to find out what we'll be singing soon.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GaEIHOEHjIs> Woah Cheers!!!

It has been a tremendous experience to be your President. I hope you will join me at the AGM during the Nationals in Pwllheli to wish the new President and Committee my very best wishes.

Duncan (3226, 13819) - (Your President) president@gp14.org

Treasurer Talk

Accounts to year end 30/9/2015

The accounts are now finalised, signed and posted up on the website under Member's Library for members to view. These will be proposed to the 2016 AGM for adoption. In summary there is a surplus of £8339, arising mainly from a reduction in costs, some of which were planned savings, and some because planned activities didn't take place. Income was down by £4239, and costs were under plan by £11,179 compared to the previous year. I will post up a more detailed commentary on the accounts on the website before the AGM.

A key concern for the class is declining Association membership, whereby members leaving the class, often after a lifetime of membership are not being replaced by new members. The Committee spends a lot of time working to promote Association membership and providing value for money, against a difficult backdrop of general decline in dinghy sailing. The Association has been successful in cost control, especially in areas which do not affect the provision of member's services and we are now actively looking at ways to invest in enhanced membership offers, for example training for club sailors, and continuing to invest in Youth membership

One specific area of improvement has been the Association's web presence and with our new web hosting partner, lbex Creative, we now have a stable and flexible platform to continue developing information and services for members. The website now operates at a much improved speed, has a large database of useful information and offers improved opportunities for advertisers to promote services to the membership. The website is only as good as the content posted, so we encourage anyone with interesting GP14 related stories, good photographs or information valuable to members to get in touch.

Paul Bowmer, Hon. Treasurer – treasurer@gp14.org



Secretary Stuff

Notice of 2016 AGM - AGM and Forum – Tuesday 23rd August, Pwllheli Sailing Club

The 66th Annual General Meeting of The GP14 Class International Association will be held at Pwllheli Sailing Club on Tuesday 23rd August 2016.

The meeting is scheduled to start at 8pm, but may be delayed to ensure it does not begin within two hours of the last boat coming ashore.



The business to be transacted thereat shall be:

- (a) to receive the Secretary's Report
- (b) to receive the Annual Report and Accounts
- (c) to elect officers
- (d) to elect accountants
- (e) to consider a motion to change The Constitution
- (f) any other business competent to the meeting.

Motion to Change the Constitution

This idea to change to the Constitution was proposed from the floor of the 2015 AGM and I agreed to present a motion for consideration at the 2016 AGM.

Revision of Rules for Setting of Maximum Equipment Prices

It is difficult for the Association to set and police maximum equipment prices and in some cases, for example where there is strong competition, it may be unnecessary. This motion allows the Committee to set maximum equipment prices where it sees fit to do so.

Additionally, as we own the design there is no need to seek approval for changes from the owner of the copyright.

Motion

Item 2 of the Constitution shall be changed from:

- (b) From time to time to determine (subject to any necessary approval by the owner of the copyright) the maximum cost and the specifications of the hull, sail plan, weight, spars, rigging and fittings of the Boat.

to:

- (b) From time to time to determine the specifications and if appropriate the maximum cost and of the hull, sail plan, weight, spars, rigging and fittings of the Boat.

Mark Collingwood, Hon. Secretary – secretary@gp14.org

Obituaries

Jack Kenyon

It is with great sadness that a life member of the GP14 Association, Mr Jack Kenyon, passed away on 3rd December last.

Initially purchasing a Firefly dinghy on his release from the Navy in 1948, Jack embraced his love of sailing close to home by joining Northwich Sailing Club (now Winsford Flash Sailing Club) and competing further away at Open meetings whenever the opportunity allowed.



In the 1960's, with a growing family, Jack sold the Firefly and purchased a Moore's of Wroxham (See article on page 31) GP14 numbered 9181 for the princely sum of £395.75. The GP14 was a popular class of dinghy both at Winsford Flash and across the North West, where he continued to have sailing success. The GP14 enabled him to sail not only with his wife, but also to introduce the sport to his young family - now two sons and daughter.

Jack was very pleased that from the age of 3 years, his eldest son, Bill, was always keen and eager to sail with Dad – an especially good crew to have in very light winds!. Increasingly however, the growing demands of Jack's thriving business meant that his time for sailing away at Open meetings became curtailed in favour of his home club. An all familiar tale, eventually juggling business and activities of a teenage family meant that the GP was mothballed but his enthusiasm for this craft was never forgotten.

Jack was very proud when son Bill eventually got the GP back into the water and took over the helm with great success both at Budworth Sailing Club and at Open Meetings across the UK. Jack was always the first to phone for the low-down on results and race tactics at GP events. Jack never lost his love of sailing and

revelled in receiving his quarterly Mainsail magazine where he could keep up with the latest news and events. He will be greatly missed.

Greg O'Brian

We are saddened to report Greg O'Brian has lost his long battle with cancer on Monday, 14th September. Our condolences go to Jane his wife and two daughters. Greg will be fondly remembered by many members for his long association with GP14 sailing, Speed Sails and more recently Crewsavers. John Hawes

Allan Cochrane

Pat Cochrane contacted the office to sadly inform us that Allen passed away on the 9th October 2015. Allen hadn't sailed his GP14 12764 "Sealgair" for many years at Dalgety Bay Sailing Club, however still enjoyed leafing through the Mainsail and keeping in touch with the association. He maintained his membership until his death at the age of 75. Our condolences go to Pat and all the family.

Roger S Thompson

It is with regret that I am writing to inform you of the death of my husband, Roger S Thompson, of 1, Abbey Gardens, Natland, Nr Kendal, Cumbria LA 9 7SP, a long standing member of the Association. We enjoyed many happy years sailing our various GP's on Windermere, and only health issues in recent years stopped us doing so.

Roger was a past Commodore of the Royal Windermere Yacht Club, amongst many things always supporting and promoting the Southport 24 hour race. He always said that the crew's job (me) was to keep the helmsman dry! Our GP has now been sold, and will probably go faster in the new joint owners' hands.

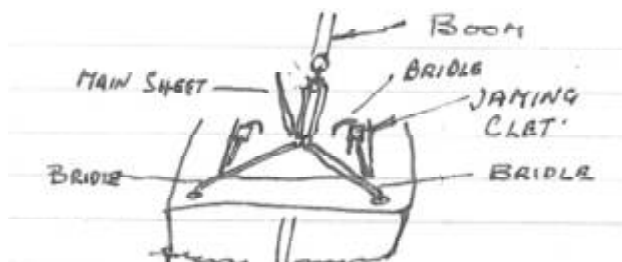
Vickie Thompson

Dear GP14 Association

RETRO FITTING TRANSOM SHEETING

I tried centre main sheeting in the 1980's and just did not like it. I asked Richard Estough about going back to the Transom, he commented about 40% still have transom sheeting.

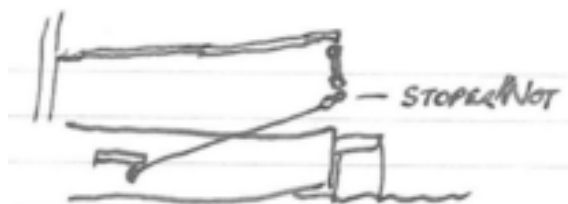
What I inherited from 'Don Marine' was a bridle.



The Bridle could be adjusted in a way to bring the Boom closer to the centre of the boat if required, being rope was simple and light.

In the main sheet I put a stopper knot so the boom was off the shrouds when fully out. This stopped the boat from turning violently, jibing was more controllable.

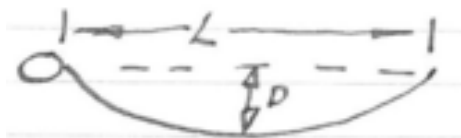
The end of the sheet was secured under the thwarts. The sheet then laid on the toe straps which did keep tidy and easy to pick up.



The other small point with this set up your hand on the tiller is nearest the stern. Using the other hand, reach over, you can pull five feet of sheet, the tiller hand finger can trap the sheet while you repeat the operation and trim the sail which is quick.

With centre sheet it's 1 to 1 for the very strong. With Transom sheet it's 2 to 1 for Mr Average, but you do handle more rope, which I preferred.

Page 18 shows a black line. I put my own black line on the boom to show me '13° camber' ie: length of sail ÷ into depth of sail x 100 = 13°. I chose about 2 to 3 feet up from the Boom. You may be able to improve trim but you have a good starting point again if it goes wrong.



$$\frac{D}{L} \times 100 = 13^\circ$$

13° camber about the best for our boats ensure the 'Bolt Rope' stitched in the luff of the sail and its foot have not shrunk. These can be freed off by a sail maker.

I am a Club Sailor and buying new every year was not possible so I reasoned out how to go around marks, minimum fuss from ropes jamming etc and get the boat sailing. This never was perfect every time, but was an objective for me.

The one thing is, which I was told would be out of class, 'To stop the sheet hooking itself on the deck/transom?'

Now I'm unable to handle sailing and sit on the bank, but this area of how to sort out main sheets was always there. Always looking at dinghies and seeing what's been the new idea and thinking.

The centre main idea was explained in the 1980's. It would pull the centre of the Boom down and flatten the sail? Might be for National Champions, not me. I did think the split sheet was a good idea but did not go down that route.

Boat tuning guides had rig tension figures of 400lbs, 350lbs, 300lbs, I read a book by a 1949 World Champion who stated he set his rig with 9 inches of play in his rig, which allows the mast to go forward on a run and sheeting in the main pulls the mast back. I know things have changed but he was the World Champion?

Andy Chapman

Rules is Rules!

GP Fourteen Class International Association (1974)

In 1974, Eddie Ramsden became vice-president of the GP14 Class and, as was normal in those days, also became chairman of the Technical and Rules Sub-Committee. It was normal then for the vice-president most likely to move into the top job of President to be "tested" in the fiery cockpit of rules and their enforcement. Often becoming unpopular at championships with rules "benders" or faced with late night phone calls from club bars about rules issues, it was seen as a means of trying the mettle of the person likely to lead the association in the future.

As part of that, Eddie wrote an article about the GP Fourteen Class rules and their enforcement that was never published. Running across it when sorting out old papers at home, he has re-typed the yellowing old copy and it is reproduced below.

THE RULES - WHAT DO THEY MEAN?

Some time ago I discussed with a number of the early members the origins of the Association, and it became quite clear that no-one at the beginning really anticipated the growth and popularity that eventually attended the GP14. In addition, the original concept did not envisage a strict one design racing class (Jack Holt certainly didn't!) and even intended quite wide variations in the basic design and use of building materials. The result has been that the history of the rules is one of haphazard growth which, in association with a number of plan revisions, has produced the relatively close 'one-design' controls that we have today (sic).

Is it really any surprise that the most biting criticism of the Association technical operation over the years has been the inconsistent interpretation of the rules. It is in an attempt to clarify and assist a more uniform application of the rules by officers and measurers that the following notes are set down. Interpretation - Who is responsible?

The officer responsible for day to day interpretation of class rules is now generally accepted as the chairman of the Technical and Rules Sub-committee, although nowhere is this documented! He (she!) may give an opinion on the meaning of a rule, or state a known interpretation of a rule.

The Technical and Rules Sub-committee may make interpretations of the rules and these are written in their minutes. Once confirmed by the International Committee these become mandatory, just like a rule.

The sub-committee may also recommend rule changes to the International Committee who may then, by resolution, make, or alter rules, but must at a subsequent meeting

confirm them. This ratification must take place at least eleven weeks after the first meeting, the custom being to do so in October each year. The International Committee is the sole and final body of appeal on scantlings and measurement under the IYRU (ISAF) Rules.

Interpretation - Bending the Rules?

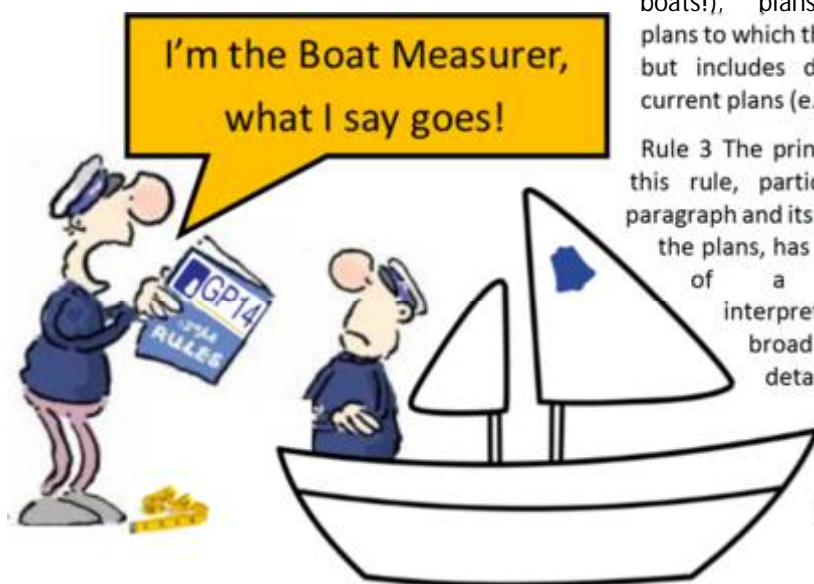
It is important that boat owners and measurers, together with any adjudicating protest committee, should read the rules and interpretations literally and simply, without any unusual use, or application, of the words or any unusual interpretation of what is being read. The legal maxim, "what would the ordinary reasonable man understand by these words?" is not a bad guideline. Anything which is not understood should be queried with the GP14 Association Committee, not be subject to an unauthorised interpretation.

Interpretation - Rule by Rule

Rule 1 This is similar in many respects to the opening rules of other classes. It establishes the importance of the measurer, not only is he required to complete the official measurement form but is also to report any departures from the design itself. Note that under 1.3 tolerances are not intended to be 'used' during construction. The boat should be built to mean measurements. (see also note to rule 20.)

Rule 2 "Plans", in the case of wooden boats means the current plans and the effect of this rule will be altered by alterations to the plans. In the case of GRP (now all FRP boats!), "plans" includes the plans to which the boat was built, but includes details from the current plans (e.g. Rudder shape)

Rule 3 The principle included in this rule, particularly the first paragraph and its relationship with the plans, has been the subject of a variety of interpretations, both in broad principles and in detail. The following are the main decisions that have affected this rule.



3.1 Committee decision dated 6th November 1958 "the centreboard slot in keel and hog may be reduced to three quarters of an inch (19 mm)

Special Committee meeting of 11th July 1959 considered a protest against Jacqueline M (s.n. 2694). Decision that boats must use the size, number and spacing of fasteners shown on the plans.

3.1 Technical sub-committee meeting 6th January 1963, decided tapered king planks are acceptable but they should be rebated as shown on the plans.

T&R sub-committee meeting 10th April 1964 - as a result of an enquiry from Australia, it was agreed that a 'tenon' joint at each end of the centre-board case, into the hog was acceptable.

T&R sub-committee 9th January 1966 - expressed an 'opinion' that the inclusion of glass fibre buoyancy in a wooden hull is not precluded by the rules, but a glass-fibre centre-board case is not permitted. (note - this was only an opinion; the full committee did not feel sufficiently sure about this item to make a definitive interpretation and would probably base any decision on the actual arrangement in each case).

T&R sub-committee meeting 4th March 1967 agreed to the fitting of inspection hatches in buoyancy tanks of GRP boats. (note: Rule 14 does not include

"inspection hatches" in the list of permitted fittings (it does in current rules!).

Rule 3.2 Committee meeting dated 16th July 1955: at the request of a member GRP surface finish for a wooden boat was considered but unanimously rejected. It was subsequently officially allowed for rudder blades and centreboards.

Rule 3.10 Committee meeting 10th July 1959 determined the maximum size of a drainage socket to be 1.5 inches (38 mm), which must be kept permanently closed when sailing. (Subsequent rule changes allowed the use of transom scuppers in addition).

Rule 5 Whilst not specifically stated in this rule, it is implicit under rule 3.1 that the profile of the centreboard shall be 'as plan', with the modifications specified in 5.1. Additionally a T&R sub-committee meeting of the 31st October 1964 recommended that the length of the centreboard handle should be optional. This was ratified and agreed by the full committee on the 15th November 1964.

On the 11th November 1964, in response to a query from the North American Branch, it was agreed that the use of 'Permalite' (a form of resin impregnated wood) was not excluded by the rules.

Rule 6 This rule has never been questioned nor has it caused any difficulty.

Rule 7 A T&R Sub-committee meeting on the 6th April 1968 clarified item 7.4 as follows: "All parts that are not welded to the mast are fittings subject to the general rules governing the class. (see also rule 14)

Rule 8 No committee decision has been made on this rule, but it has been generally understood that 8.3 prohibits the use of any form of shroud lever. It has not yet been decided whether the adjustment of the genoa halyard, by use of a lever or 'magic box' also contravenes this rule

A number of individual opinions on the meaning of 8.1 have been given by successive Chairmen of the T&R Sub-committee. A forestay must be capable of supporting the mast in an emergency, if the genoa halyard breaks. It is a matter of judgement in each case.

Rule 9 The only important point to remember is in respect of 9.1. Wooden booms that are round in section have been rejected when the five or six inches at either or both ends become square in section.

Rule 10 Has not caused any interpretation problems.

Rule 11 Whilst it is clear that the boat shall be constructed 'according' to the plans and the dimensions, and therefore sails must be constructed in accordance with this rule, nowhere do the rules or plans specify the method of rigging sails. An enquiry from the Port of London Staff Club asking whether it is permissible to rig a loose-footed sail by securing the mainsail only at the tack and clew was considered by the committee on the 28th October 1956. The committee decision was that sails must be rigged "as shown on the plans".

A meeting of the T&R Sub-committee dated 6th January 1963 defined "square yard" (para. 4) as meaning "9 square feet".

Rule 12 At the 1972 World Championship scrutineers held that small headboards on spinnakers were "battens" and prohibited them. The T&R Sub-committee have recently considered this further.

Rule 13 Following an enquiry from P.F.Nickless, a committee meeting on the 11th November 1962 agreed that this rule (at the time rule 14) "is capable of the widest possible interpretation". They reinforced this view, at the same meeting, by agreeing that an adjustable clew outhaul arrangement on the mainsail was considered to be running rigging under para. 1. A meeting of the T&R Subcommittee on the 31st October 1964 agreed that Para.1 covered the use of a Cunningham hole in the mainsail including necessary blocks and jamb cleats. A further meeting of the sub-committee in 1976 held that Para.1 also covered the use of an adjustable tack arrangement or Cunningham hole in the genoa.

The reading of Para.3 was extended further to include the use of a dead-eye or thimble in lieu of and in the same position as a halyard sheave. Meeting of the Committee dated 5th February 1961.

Rule 14 (Formerly Rule 15). This rule causes more technical queries than any other. Certain holes of specified size are allowed under 14.4 but otherwise structural alterations are prohibited. Structural additions to enable location of fittings are not acceptable (e.g. Straps between mast chock at deck level and the mast step) T&R Subcommittee meeting 15th November 1969. It has been accepted for many years that small pieces of timber may be used to support and angle fittings. Nowhere has this been authorised and it is a question of fact in each case as to what is a "structural" alteration. Some of the take-off blocks for centre sheeting arrangements look very close to the limits! (see also 3.1)

Rule 15 A committee meeting of 25th January 1964 agreed that expanded polystyrene could be used in place of buoyancy bags. It is a question of fact in each case whether such buoyancy is adequate and is properly secured.

As a result of an enquiry, a committee meeting dated 14th February 1969 agreed in principle that built in side buoyancy could be used on wooden boats but must not involve alterations to the original wooden structure. (e.g. Frames, stringers, seat knees etc.) At least one such boat has been built in South Africa. (see also Rule 3) Rule 16 Has not caused any interpretation difficulties.

Rule 17 Para. (c) prohibited weight jackets and (d) prohibited trapezes.

Rule 18 Has not caused any interpretation difficulties.

Rule 19 Has not caused any interpretation difficulties.

Rule 20 Considerable alterations were made to this rule in 1976 (following the 'Knight & Pink issue) and the committee now have an absolute discretion over the issue or withdrawal of certificates.

A Committee decision on the 2nd October 1954 made all certificates invalid on the first January 1955 with immediate re-issue under new rules.

In the case of GP 289, a decision was made on the 27th October 1957 that an alteration made to a boat after issue of a certificate must be restored exactly. (In other words to the mean measurement, the tolerances only allowing for minor measures in so doing)

Rule 21 Has not caused any interpretation difficulties.

(c) Eddie Ramsden MBE 2015 & 1974

Two Blokes Near The Back

Across the UK and Ireland final preparations are being made for the GP14 World Championships in Barbados. Earlier this week our reporter Russ T. Cleats made his final visit to Derwent Reservoir where sailors Adam Vaughan and Phil Pethybridge have been putting the finishing touches to their boat, and getting 'race fit'.

Cleats: "It's well known that racing at championship level can put a strain on the body. How are you both preparing for the physical stress?"

Pethybridge: "Russ, the winter months have seen us ramping up our fitness regime. As crew, I'm used to doing all the hard work. I've had my sofa fitted with toe-straps and have been hiking in and out to Davina's 'Body Buff' DVD."



Vaughan: "As helm, I'm used to a more sedate pace, but I'm not taking my rudder-wagging for granted. I've been going to Tillerise classes which are all about focus and worshiping my inner Admiral. Mental preparation is as important as the physical."

Pethybridge: "Yes, the mental strain of coming near the back in every race can take its toll, but we've developed visualisation techniques to keep our spirits up. Mostly we imagine what it would be like to be first back to the bar."

Cleats: "Is your boat race ready too?"

Vaughan: "There isn't a part of the boat that hasn't been polished! We've repainted the decks with non-slip deck paint too..."

Pethybridge: "...and since we had 4.5 litres left over, we painted the hull, rudder, centreboard, boom and mast too. The boat is so blue nobody will spot us in the Caribbean until we hit them broadside!"

Cleats: "So do you fancy your chances of making an impact in Barbados?"

Pethybridge: "Our race campaign has been months in the planning and we're as ready as we'll ever be. We're certainly aiming to make a dent in the rear end of the Bronze fleet."

Vaughan: "And if that isn't enough of an impact for you, wait until you see us on the beach in our Derwent Reservoir embroidered man-kinis!"

With that unforgettable image in our heads, we wish good luck to all the competitors travelling to Barbados. May you have fair winds, calm seas and sore heads.

END



A diagonal advertisement for "Paintcraft Insurance Repairs". The background is split into blue and white sections. The word "Specialist" is written in white on a blue diagonal band. Below it, "INSURANCE REPAIRS" is written in large, bold, blue letters on a white background. Underneath that, in smaller blue text, it says "Wood and G.R.P. topped up with a special paint sprayed finish". At the bottom, the word "Paintcraft" is written in white on a blue diagonal band. To the right of this, contact information is listed: "Nigel Potter", "01159 754302", "www.paintcraft-boats.co.uk/", and "paintcraftinsurancerepairs@hotmail.co.uk".

Training

THE GP14 LATE-SEASON TRAINING WEEKEND

As part of the general preparations for the GP14 World Championships 2016 in Barbados at Easter, the Association's Training Committee thought that it would be a good idea to round off 2015 with a race-training session that might appeal to those of us who usually occupy the lower orders of the fleet. A venue that resembled Barbados in April would have been nice but in the end we had to make do with Llandudno in late October, not even close!

Notwithstanding low expectations for the weather, the attendance was remarkably good with around 12 boats participating, including yours truly and Pete Craggs with our respective crews, the two Phils. Sea Willow was still in major surgery so Hugh very kindly offered us the use of Daffodil and needless to say Phil and I jumped at this, promising to return her unblemished.

The weather did not disappoint, absolutely chucking it down on Saturday morning and making arrival and rigging very unpleasant for those who did not have the luxury of a Friday off. Phil and I had sailed at Llandudno in the past and we recalled that we rather liked the place. But as we stood in the rain watching a short, steep sea crashing onto the boulder-sized shingle at the foot of a new and very steep concrete slipway we began to have second thoughts!

'What happened to your nice user-friendly timber slip and pontoon?' We asked the Commodore.

'We lost the whole lot in the gales of 2013' he replied

'And we are very unhappy with the set-up that the Local Council has insisted on installing by way of replacement, it makes launching in these conditions very tricky!' He added ruefully.

Not an encouraging start, particularly as we were risking Hugh's boat as well as ourselves! After some deliberation, the organisers decided that the wind strength was safe (if not ideal for training) and that the sea would reduce during the morning. So after a briefing in the Training Room we were let loose.

To say that launching was tricky was an understatement but with the help of a small but greatly appreciated band of club volunteers, we all finally made it through the surf and headed to the sailing area. In truth the wind was too strong for on-the-water training and none of us was able to follow (or even remember) the exercises that had been laid out and seemed so easy when we sat in the comfort of the Training Room! However we did our best and after several hours of chasing about on the ocean we headed back to the shore to find the tide low and the surf long. By the time all the boats were out of the water and back up the slipway everybody was cream-crackered!

Hot showers beckoned but as we stripped off the wet gear Pete mentioned that his right big toe was hurting, having been crushed by the boat during the launch. Removal of the wet-boot revealed a 'right black toe' and the need for a trip to casualty! Not a good end to their day.

For the rest of us there was a de-brief in the training room where our coaches played back their on-the-water photography and used this to demonstrate very graphically which of us was sailing in a manner that would get the best of the boat in heavy air and where some of us were getting it wrong. It was mostly about up-wind technique and although one can read about this in books, there is nothing like having it explained with a felt pen on a projected image to get the points across.

After a short rest and spruce up at our hotel, Llandudno SC laid on an excellent social evening with great food and a quiz. This was open to all the members and very well supported and soon aching limbs were forgotten in the warm atmosphere of good company.

Sunday dawned bright and clear with light winds and flat sea, a total contrast to Saturday and ideal for coaching. At the briefing it was suggested that we should concentrate on down-wind spinnaker work and jibing technique for the morning session and then try some short-course racing in the afternoon.



We all agreed enthusiastically before we realised that the wind was blowing off the land, and that the coach's pursuit of perfection in our spinnaker drill would not therefore be restricted by running out of water! So it was that after running with the kite (hoisting and dropping and jibing on command) for over an hour, Llandudno was no more than a speck on the horizon! By now the wind was freshening and a sea was picking up, making the jibing rather nerve racking for the over 60s crews so we were very relieved when our coaches signalled 'time up' and we turned for home. The wind continued to build and the beat home was seriously hard work, but we did at least try to practice what we had learnt on the previous day!

Phil and I decided to duck out of the afternoon session and instead get packed up and ready for the long haul home. We stayed on to help the keen participants come ashore in the gathering dusk. Once again it was the de-briefing that turned out to be the most useful part of the exercise with lots of on-the-water photography and felt-pen scribbling.

What did we learn? Lots of small tips but for me the two main items were understanding exactly why it is so important it is to sail the GP14 'flat' upwind and how best to achieve this, and how to execute the perfect spinnaker gibe (without even moving the rudder, otherwise known as 'putting on the brake'). But whether Phil and I will remember any of this and demonstrate it successfully at Barbados remains to be seen!

The GP14 Association will be arranging more coaching and training in 2016 and if you would like to take part just let me know.

Steve Parry, vicepresident@gp14.org



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2016 Training Update

We are still putting together our 2016 training programme. So far we can confirm:

Date	Event	Venue	Comment
7 May	Open Training	Bolton SC	This is the Saturday before the BSC GP14 Open Meeting on 8 May. This event is open to all members of the Association
9/10 July	Youth Training	Welsh Harp SC	This is the weekend before the 2016 GP14 Youth Championships on 16/17 July
30 July	Ladies Training	South Staffs SC	

We are working to add more Open and Youth Training events to the list. Following the popularity of last year's training at LLandudno Sailing Club we are also looking at the possibly another Sea Training event there. We will post more details of these events on the website. In the meanwhile, as places will be limited, please register your interest with Julie in the GP14 office: admin@gp14.org or call 01204 590325.



Exe Sails are once again generously providing the Association with a genoa to raffle. The draw will be made at the Dinghy Show in March. E-Raffle Tickets available NOW online or call office on 01204 590325



GP14 World Championships

This is the 19th World Championship in the 63 year history of the GP 14 Class. The first that the Class organised going back to the first in 1967, held in Canada at Stormont YC prior to the creation of Lake St Lawrence as part of the St Lawrence Seaway. The Club is situated on Lake Sault about 80 miles west from Montreal.



We are lucky to have this year at the event 3 Past World Champions of the GP 14 Class and it will be a momentous and unique occasion to see them together. Neil Marsden crewed by Derek Hill winners in 2003; Ian Dobson crewed by Andy Tunnicliffe 3 times winners in 2006 at Abersoch; 2011 in Sri Lanka; 2012 Looe and most recently in Ireland Strangford

Lough 2014 and here to defend his title. We are also thrilled to have the winners of the first World Championship in 1967 Jack Hoad and his crew Bill Temporo both of whom live in Barbados and are looking forward to seeing the boat and its development over the years and meeting many other Class members.

So I thought you would like to hear a bit about Jack, whom I met whilst out in Barbados early last year and the following is an extract sent to me by his daughter, who is sailing the Championship with her brother in law. The following is taken from an article written for a Barbados publication.

JACK MARTIN ALBERT HOAD, was born in Barbados on 16th May, 1933 to John Julian Seibert Hoad and Olga Hoad (nee Toppin) and received his secondary education at Harrison College and The Barbados Academy.

On leaving school, he joined H. Jason Jones and Co. Limited and retired in 1993, having served for over forty years. Mr Hoad was a pioneer in the manufacture of quality building products in Barbados and, to this day, his windows and doors feature in homes, hotels and commercial buildings, including the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. He now holds the position of Chairman of the Board of Directors of the parent company, Kensington Court Limited.

Mr Hoad has rendered outstanding service to Barbados in the field of sport, and especially yachting. Under the tutelage of his father, he started sailing at the age of five and skippered his first race at nine years old, in a locally built sailing, fishing boat. Over the next seventy five plus years, Mr Hoad helmed a wide spectrum of boats, from dinghies to 'round the world' racers, winning numerous prestigious regattas. Racing the Fireball dinghy, in Barbados, he holds the record of fifty-two consecutive wins and was undefeated in the GP14 dinghy, in numerous Grenada Easter Regattas. In 1986, Mr Hoad skippered the Beneteau First Class 10 "Blazin" to victory, in the Petit St. Vincent Regatta and, in 1988, won Racing Class in the prestigious Antigua Sailing Week Regatta. With Mr Hoad at the helm, this yacht dominated the Caribbean racing scene for more than a decade, including winning several Barbados Mount Gay Regattas and Tobago Race Week in 1989 and 1990.

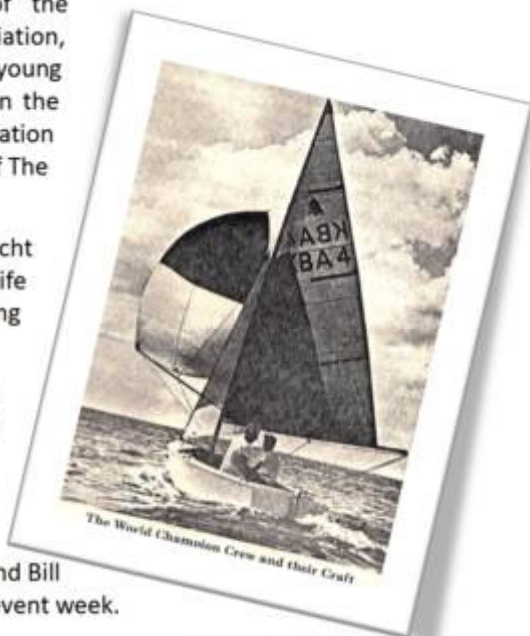
Mr Hoad put Barbados on the map for international sailing and became a legend in Barbados and the Caribbean sailing circles when, in 1967, with Bill Temprow as crew, he won GOLD at the GP14 World Championship Regatta in Ontario, Canada. To date, this is the only Gold Medal won by any Barbadian at a World Class sailing event.

Mr Hoad has taught, encouraged and mentored many of today's Barbados sailors and was instrumental in the formation of the Barbados Yachting Youth Training Association, which has trained thousands of young Barbadians. For many years, he served on the Committee of the Barbados Sailing Association and was elected to serve as Commodore of The Barbados Yacht Club from 1985 to 1988.

Mr Hoad is a Trustee of The Barbados Yacht Club and in 1999 was awarded Honorary Life Membership for his long and outstanding service of over forty-five years.

Mr Jack Hoad recently celebrated his sixtieth wedding anniversary with Mrs Jeanette Hoad and they are the proud parents of four girls, grandparents of six, and great grandparents to two.

I am looking forward to seeing both Jack and Bill at the Opening Ceremony and during the event week.



Gill Beddow

Exe Sails

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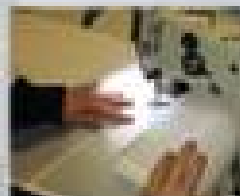
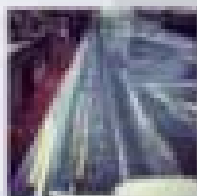
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- **SPBOATS** info@spboats.co.uk
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BARBADOS FACTS

GP14 fleet – the largest dinghy event to date on the island and the highest entries ever achieved at an away Worlds so I thought you would like some Facts and figures

-  95 boats entered so far
-  29 Female crews
-  Oldest boat so far entered built 1961
-  36 boats Packing at Aldridge
-  27 packing at Poole
-  9 Packing at Wigan
-  22 packed at Belfast
-  21 built by Speed Sail
-  36 built by Alastair Duffin
-  16 built by Dave Winder
-  9 SP boats
-  2 Boon boats
-  4 Don Marine
-  1 Holt
-  1 Nissen
-  1 Tim Harper
-  1 Evans
-  1 Home built

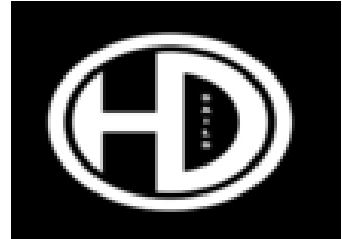
What a great cross section!

Thanks to Andrew Davies and his team for all the hard work in preparation. Hope you all have a great time!



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Area reports

Southern Area Report

Well Southern travellers I hope you have your GPs tucked away, or well secured with strong fixings with the gales we have over the UK.

The time as arrived for the 13 or so Southern GP14s to be packed in Containers for shipping to Barbados for the Worlds at Easter. I am pleased to see that our current World Champions, Ian and Andy, have come first in the Sail Juice Series 2016, well done. With some excellent boat handling in I think topping over 30 knot gusts in the Rutland, John Merricks Tiger Trophy, finishing 6th on the Sunday only with 3 race finishes.

Well back to the 2016 Super Six Series with our Southern Area event at Stone Sailing club, a lovely setting on the river Blackwater and a well-run club, we last visited them back in 2013. I hope that some of you will be taking part in one or more of the series



2nd April—Welsh Harp (Venetian)

9th April—Papercourt

7th May—Leigh-on-Sea

14th/15th May—Stone*

23rd July—Tollesbury

6th/7th August—Poole

4th September—Erith

9th October—Frensham Pond

16th October—Hampton

5th November—Welsh Harp (Victor)

(*Super Six – Southern Area Championship)

Stephen Browne
stephen.browne40@yahoo.com

arranged by Gill Beddow and her team with some excellent clubs to race at, from Bala Lake in North Wales to the Isle of Arran in Scotland and back to the Welsh Harp in London for the Masters and Youth Championships, also the National Championships at Pwllheli sailing Centre In North Wales .

I wish all the Southern sailors good luck in Barbados for the Worlds, I hope that you have an event that you will look back on in years to come and I hope those of you who aren't going to the Worlds will make our first open of 2016 at the Welsh Harp on Saturday the 1st of April. See you on the water this year.

Stephen Browne,
Southern Area Representative

Scottish Area Report



North West Area Report

Winter is almost over and I've still not fettled my boat for the new season. Unfortunately it's not in a container on the way to Barbados. But, that means we will get to take advantage of the clocks going forward at the end of March signalling the beginning of the evening fleet racing at West Kirby. So I have another 6 weeks to make White Rabbit sparkle.

Even though I'm not going to the Worlds, there is no shortage of big fleet sailing in the championships with the Inlands, Nationals, Northern and End of Season all on the doorstep of the northern fleets. And Arran for the Scottish sounds so good it's got to be worth the drive.

If you're planning your pick of the Northern's and End of Season championships you are already half way there to qualifying for the Northern Bell, so you may as well rock up to at least two of the other opens.

With the boats not due back from the Worlds till the end of April, we've not got our usual early season opener at Combs, which is always one to blow away the cobwebs and makes you wish you had done a bit of exercise over the winter. But don't worry they will be back on the circuit next year.

The Northern Championship this year, part of the "Super 6 Series", is being held at my own club, West Kirby, and will be a slightly different format to the usual 5 races over 2 days, with a sprint series, still over 2 days. We are going to take advantage of the tide early Saturday afternoon with 3 quick races. This will determine the three medal fleets and once allocated, boats will then be racing on the marine lake in their fleets for the top prizes, over a further 6 races split across Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning, coming in somewhere in the middle for something to eat and a few beers. We are currently scouring the area for a real funky band to keep the energy levels up and we hope to offer a really great weekend for everyone.



Tim Harper is the reigning king of the northern circuit and I hope he will be out on the water to defend his title during the year, he has also offered to take over as the sponsor for the series which is very much appreciated. We must therefore offer our utmost thanks to Neil Platt and Omega Sails for his years of support to the Northern Bell and hopefully he will be out sailing with us on a Thursday night and with a bit of encouragement at a few of the Bell.



So for those going to Barbados I wish you all well and I can't wait to see the photos and the results, watch out for the sharks, and I hope to see lots of you safe and sound back on our local waters.

Happy sailing, **Martin Stanley - Northern Area Representative**

Midlands Area Report 2016

By the time you read this the sailing season will be underway again and we have a full Midland Bell program to look forward to, but starting in May rather than March as most of the usual travellers will be in Barbados (or at least their boats will be in containers!). See program below. We have reverted to the low points scoring system for the series results and re-introduced the starred and non-starred event distinction to encourage traveling to the smaller clubs. There are eleven events in total including the "Super Six" Midland Championship at Chelmarsh on Oct 1st/2nd. Qualification is minimum 4 events, 2 Starred and 2 Non-Starred. Plenty of other events are easily accessible from the Midlands including the "Super Six" Inland Championships at Bala on 21st/22nd May and the Masters at Welsh Harp on 16th/17th July and not forgetting the 50th Southport 24 hr race in September.

GP14

Midland Bell Series 2016

Saturday May 7th—Shustoke

Saturday May 21st—Tamworth

Sunday June 5th—Chase*

Sunday June 12th—Nantwich

Sunday June 26th—North Staffs

Sunday July 23rd—Trimpley

Sunday July 10th—Staunton Harold*

Saturday Sept 10th—South Staffs*

Sunday Sept 25th—Nottingham

Sat/Sun Oct 1st/2nd—Chelmarsh*

(*Super Six – Midland Area Championship)

Charles Saunders

07554 432649

charles.saunders@talk21.com



Apart from the "Super Six" Area Championship all the Midland Bell events are single day, so there are no overnight expenses and the distances between the various clubs are quite modest (often less than an hours travelling), so what better way to improve your sailing and have a lot of fun in some lovely locations, than to join us on this friendly circuit.

I know not all clubs can sail over the winter but it was good to see more GP14 representation in the Sailjuice Winter Series this year including the winners, Messrs Dobson and Tunnicliffe clinching the title in the Midlands at a very windy Tiger Trophy on Rutland Water and the GP14 being the most represented symmetric spinnaker 2-hander in the series. Well done to all who braved the conditions – got to be good for our class.

**Charles Saunders,
Midlands Area Representative**

Cruising in '16

Have you noticed that there are never enough weekends in the year? So to help you prioritise your sailing calendar, these are the important dates for you to consider.

May 21/22 – Sailing alongside the Inland Championships at Bala join the oldies, the ancient and newbies. It is recognized there is a huge number of GP's (99%?) of non-racers amongst us that would never aspire or even want to join in with the big boys in a National event. So no matter the age of your boat (or you) join us at the back of the fleet, avoid the shouts of STARBOARD and WATER and instead listen to the birds twittering and discuss the finer points of life with your fellow sailors. Definitely for the non or semi-competitive, if there are sufficient numbers we might even get a separate start. In fact, we might not even do all the races and go for a cruise instead.

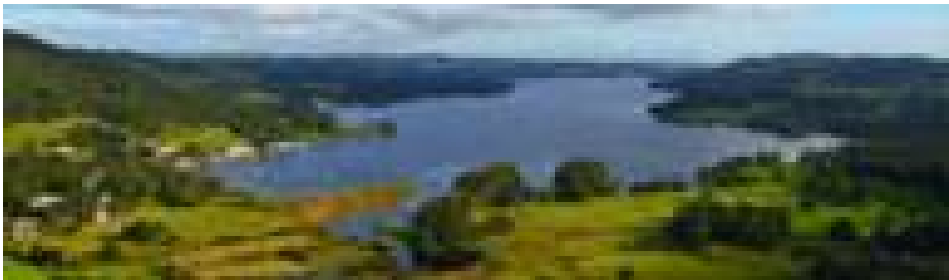
June 24/26 – Ullswater. An invitation from YORK RI to join in their camping weekend at Ullswater SC. Take it from me this is a great place to sail with the most wonderful scenery. Cruising or vintage boats welcome.

August 20/27 - Phwehlli – Muscling in on the GP Nationals again. Following on from our successful joint meeting at Brixham you have an invitation join the GP Cruising Sections, annual cruising week. This time no racing – and strictly for the 'cruisers' so we do expect you to have some sailing experience. It would be reckless of me to state now, what the programme will be but in the past we have had a couple of 'full day' cruises and 3-4 half-days.

September 3 - Rutland Water – Simply a one-day cruise. Suitable for all abilities. Sailing out of WHITWELL on a 'day ticket' explore the north arm in the morning, return for lunch (BYO) then a longer sail in the afternoon followed by a BBQ (BYO) before going home. Cost of a day ticket last year was £11, no booking required but it would be nice to know if you are coming! Don't tell the Mainsail Editor – but even if you don't have a GP14, you will be welcome.



September 10/11 - YORK RI – The Round Holes Trophy up for grabs again at the York RI Sailing Club GP14 Classic & Vintage Open Meeting. In GP14 terms, 'Classic and Vintage' means Series 1 boats, specifically boats lacking underfloor buoyancy, and more loosely defined as boats with round holes in their transoms – all at least 20 years old, and some considerably older. Racing on the River Ouse in spring, with the weeping willows along the riverbank just coming into leaf, the swans and ducks preparing for a busy breeding season, newly arrived swallows swooping low over the water, bright sunshine and (with luck) steady breezes – what could be better?



October 15/16 - Windermere - Finishing off the year as we started, this time joining in with the 'End of Season Championship' sailors. Because Windermere is such a good place to sail we will probably not take part in the racing but seek out some shore hospitality. The Royal Windermere YC are excellent hosts having met there a few times before. Vintage or cruising boats welcome.

What next? Simple! Drop me an email and register your interest. I will ensure you are then kept up to date with times/places etc. I will be at several other events throughout the year including Dinghy Cruising Association meetings and CRVDA so if you see an 'old git' in GP No.28 do give him a bottle of whiskey and he might even speak to you!

Stewart Elder. cruising@gp14.org



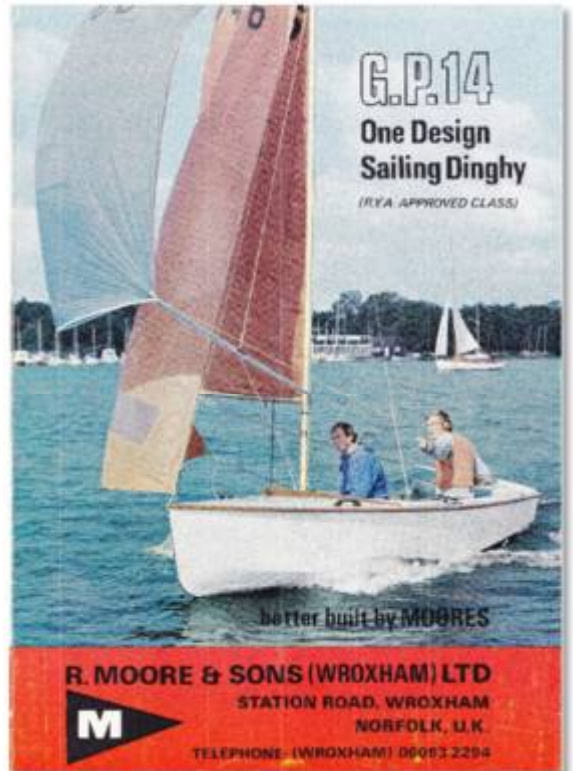
A Trip down Memory Lane

The purchase price of a GP14 from 'Moore's of Wrexham' includes class registration of your boat and your first year's membership subscription.

The registered sail numbers of the GP14 are now over 10,000 and its popularity as a family boat continues. This boat has a high freeboard, good stability and a relatively high boom position making it a safe boat on inland waters and the sea.

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GP14

After enjoying the hospitality of Eddie and Jean, whilst researching through his numerous archives, Eddie started to tell Ian and I about the GP145. Enjoy the read... (Ann Penny)

Together with Paul Rowan, it was at the 1979 'Worlds' in Perth W.A., that I first met the redoubtable Warren Elliott. I was GP14 Class President whilst Paul, as Vice President, was responsible for Technical & Rules. Talking about 'Australian' GP14's and straight to the point, Warren addressed us something like this; "... you ***** poms are out of touch, all dinghies today are being built cheap and light with stitch and glue. You need to do it with the GP14 if it's going to have a future in this country".

Of course at that time this thought wasn't new! Following the explosive success of the Mirror dinghy, "Stitch and Glue" became, during the 60's and 70's, the cheap and easy means of boat construction. A number of examples came from the 'Mirror' stable itself, then others saw it as a way forward, including, briefly, the GP14 Class Association. I recalled lengthy discussions into the wee small hours at the Crewe Arms and some experimenting with models that had taken place.

"Can't be done; forming the GP lower panels at the bow is a real problem with stitch and glue", I replied to Warren. Anyone who had constructed a GP hull would recall their favoured tricks to twist and form those uncooperative lower panels into a smooth fit. including boiling water on the ply, use of 'Spanish windless', lots of cramps and their own favoured sequences of inserting fasteners. But copper wire? No chance! One idea to take this forward, coming from the fertile mind of Derek Baker, was to manufacture those difficult bow panels in pre-formed GRP to be stitched into the remaining plywood panels! Quickly dismissed when the differential movement between plastic and wood was considered.

So the response to Warren was "can't be done!"

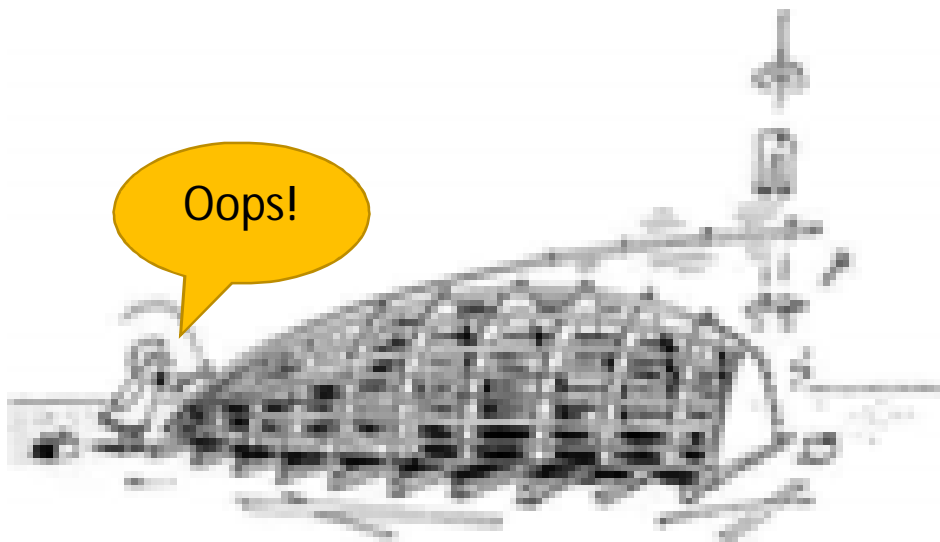
If I had known Warren better in 1979, I would have realised it would not stop there. Warren was (?is - where is he now?) a redoubtable character with a ferociously competitive business background. After coming to 'the mother country' after WWII, and taking his degree at Oxford he had started to work for ICI, meeting Jean, his wife and lifelong close companion in her home town of Stockton on Tees. After marriage they moved to Australia, Warren to manage a new office in Melbourne for ICI. Indifferent results with chemicals encouraged him to set about a personal investment and real-estate business that made him a wealthy man, enabling retirement whilst still in his early forties.

Obviously not the sort of man who would easily be deterred by “can’t be done”. His response was “I’ll show you...!” Returning from Perth to Melbourne after the 1979 Worlds he was determined to build a stitch and glue GP14, although no-one, not even the Australians, thought it possible!

Within a month I had a letter from Warren, saying that only two weeks after leaving Perth he had the prototype boat on the waters of Rye Yacht Club, complete with GP14 rig and layout. But what about those forward lower panels? Warren had the good grace to admit we were right and he had been forced to change the outline design up front to avoid the problem, resulting in an increased length overall to 14’7” (4.47 M), but the weight was down to around 165 lbs (75 Kilo’s).

He had quickly discovered that the changed boat was unbalanced with the original GP14 rig, so had designed a replacement with a Mainsail of 8.8 square metres and a jib of 3.5 - not far away from the GP total, but with a different balance between sail sizes. A spinnaker of 10.7 square metres was also specified - somewhat bigger than the GP14; the small size of which was another source of irritation to Warren.

It was of course by then a new boat, although inspired by the GP14, and was named the “145” alliteratively based partly on the “14” of “GP14” and also on the “125” a smaller & highly successful Australian class at that time. We corresponded on details, particularly the new class rules and constitution, based once again upon the successful GP14 organisation.



Influence by the "125" was not confined to the name, the troubled bow shape of the new boat was made very similar to the smaller boat, with chines sweeping up from midpoint to stemhead, the stem itself being quite dissimilar to the GP14.

Buying and building a 125 was somewhat like applying a dress pattern. The plans were supplied with full size paper patterns for the plywood panels, together with step by step building instructions. Parts were traced onto ply sheets, then cut, stitched and glued. It was a simple means of marketing that did not require a boat-builders yard, and was quickly adopted by Warren to promote the new 145 class.

A storm of interest resulted and by 1982 Warren was to write to me to claim the 145 as the fastest growing dinghy class in Australia. And, all of this achieved by an individual at that time then in his early seventies, without a professional background of any sort in boat design or boat building, but simply wouldn't take "can't be done" as an answer!

So what has happened since? One chilly day during the late 1980's at the Guildhall in Swansea, where I then worked as Environment Director, my startled P.A. announced that a strange man, dressed in shorts, was demanding to see me! Yes, it was Warren (and his wife Jean)! Restless with life in Australia since the 145 had taken off, despite having a 'hobby' farm in the Blue Mountains and buying several thousand acres of land in New Zealand as an investment, they had taken a year off to learn to ski, in the French Alps. Renting a chalet for a year, they had bought a ubiquitous CV2 and a couple of bicycles so, whilst waiting for snow, they thought they would look us up and perhaps visit 'rellies' in the North-East of England. Thus we had the great good pleasure of the company of Warren and Jean, plus their French supermarket bikes, for three days ("... friends are like fish", said Warren with a wry grin, "they stink after three days") and thus they moved on, leaving me with a 145 Class handbook and a sales promotion 'flyer'.

It was the last time I should see either of them, although letters continued for a while, then even the Christmas cards stopped. I heard from a mutual friend that age had finally caught up with them both and they had stopped sailing, only for Warren to move onto the Australian bridge circuit, with some success!

A remarkable, irascible personality, I was fortunate to count Warren Elliott amongst my friends, and his blue sky thinking could have been invaluable to the GP14's, if only he had been right!

The 145? Unlike the 125 and GP14, both of which continue with some success in Australia, it seems to have almost disappeared from the sailing scene. An internet search reveals only a handful of old boats in Australian club handicap fleets as a fading reminder of that long ago discussion in Perth. One was for sale last year (good condition) in Victoria for \$A1,000! Any buyers?

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SPOTLIGHT FEATURE:- Alastair Duffin

Alastair Duffin is renowned for building GP14 'flying machines' but now he is actually building a flying machine.
Photograph by Bob Torrens

ALL 'PLANE SAILING' FOR ALASTAIR

From sea to air, a Newtownards boatbuilder and woodworker says he has been enjoying building a replica of the first aeroplane to fly in Ireland.

Alastair Duffin, from Teal Rocks in Newtownards, has been woodworking for the past 40 years and has mastered building boats of all shapes and sizes, but most notably, he is best known for making GP14 dinghies. And, being a keen sailor, he admitted that it is more than just a job. "I'm one of the lucky ones," he said. "My job is my hobby."

However, Alastair's latest construction project is a far cry from his usual seafaring work, which will instead see his creation take to the air.



Alastair in his Belfast workshop looking over the plans of the Ferguson Monoplane



Harry Ferguson in the cockpit of his plane

The BBC has commissioned Alastair to recreate the monoplane that Harry Ferguson first built in 1909, and who would go on to become the first Irishman to fly. While his name is synonymous with tractors and motorcars, the engineer became enamoured with the exploits of the Wright brothers, who had successfully flown an aeroplane in 1903.

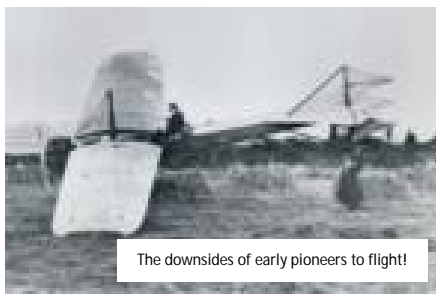
After hearing about their achievement he visited exhibitions and air shows, where he jotted down a number of designs. He then returned home to the garage he and his brother Joe ran and they embarked on building and flying planes. After making many improvements, and a few unsuccessful attempts, one of which was at Magilligan Sands, the Ferguson monoplane

took to the air from Hillsborough on 31 December 1909. However, while his attempts at Hillsborough and Magilligan are well documented, it is also believed that Ferguson tested his plane at the site of what is now Ards Airfield.

When the BBC approached Alastair about a year and a half ago with their idea of filming a documentary about Ferguson, which would include flying a replica of the original plane, he recalled how he felt about the prospect. "Strange," he said. "It's wood and I said, so long as you're only involving me in the wood part. They had a drawing at that stage so I knew roughly what was involved. It's not that unsimilar to boats. You have frames, you stick them together. There are advantages and disadvantages. When I'm building boats I go on automatic because I don't have to think about it. With the plane, it's a bit like billiards. You have to look at it and say, I'm doing this, but what is this going to affect further down the line? It's interesting; it's something different. And, I must say, I'm quite enjoying it."



Although, Alastair admitted there have already been a number of challenges. The first, and most basic of that was getting the right wood, which, after some discussion, was provided to him.



However, once he started working on it, he soon discovered he would have to use his initiative. "There are no original plans," Alastair said. "From what I can gather, Harry Ferguson marked it out on the floor and said to the men, right, there you are, build it. It must have been a marathon job for the person who drew these." It will be 22 feet long, with a wing span of 32 feet. The plans were drawn up using a model at a museum as its basis.

However, Alastair pointed out that that model was never meant to fly, and so he had to make a number of changes, which included not only gluing the pieces together but screwing them together too.

The frame took Alastair around four days to complete and he will spend the next week constructing the wings. The steelwork for it will be made Crosby's in Holywood and the linen will come from Lisburn. Once completed it is hoped the plane will fly this April.

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