

mainsail

MAGAZINE SUMMER ISSUE 2008



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THE GP14 CLASS INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION

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Cover Image: Ian Wall

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

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Editor's Letter

Dear All,

As I compiled this issue I was supplied with quite a few photos of people looking as if they were really enjoying their GP14 sailing. I've tried to include these even where not strictly relevant to the text – to celebrate what a great sport sailing is and how it appeals to people of all ages and of all levels of experience.

There is a special section on Youth Sailing in this issue. The Junior 12-hour race had a record turnout, as you can read in the report by William Birch which he was kind enough to write almost as soon as the event ended so that he could make our print deadline. Also, Luke Shaw outlines plans for the Howard David Youth training week at Plas Menai in October and the new Youth Coaching Day in August, which will take place at Winsford Flash SC. Check your diaries and get the forms (centre pages) filled in quickly. Then start pestering someone to lend you a boat, arrange a tow, etc.

There's no Technical section this time, as I am assuming you will have your boat on the water at this time of the year, not in the garage. But there are two articles containing interesting tips on how to improve racing techniques – one on light wind sailing by the winner of the Scottish Championship and the other by Mike McNamara. If anyone understands how to make sailing fun, it is Mike!

For the cruising Section, I was delighted to receive contributions from two sailors describing some of the excellent opportunities for cruising GPs in the Blackwater and Colne estuaries. If readers have favourite spots where their local knowledge can help and inspire other sailors, we would be very pleased to hear from them, as I would love to make this a regular feature.

Have a great summer, take lots of photos and please let me have your ideas and contributions for the next issue.

Liz Hall

020 8731 8083

lizhall@care4free.net



Photo: Megan Rogers

Polly Baines and Ceri Rogers at Tollesbury Open, 2007

Irene's Retirement

A year ago, we carried an article about Irene's 30 years' service to the Association. Now that the Association Committee has made decisions about the future of the Office set-up, Irene has finally asked to retire.

Irene Thompson started working for the Association in 1977 as an administrative assistant. Since then she has undertaken all the tasks necessary to keep our organisation going and become a familiar voice to members on the telephone. Her loyal and dedicated service has been outstanding. She has coped with eleven different Presidents, four Honorary Secretaries and nine Honorary Treasurers. She can remember the time when the Association had more than 4000 members and over 200 new boats were registered in a year. So there was plenty of work to be done in the days before computers were able to handle such work.

Irene leaves the Association on 10th July with our very best wishes for the future and our grateful thanks for her sterling service.



President's Piece

Sunday 2nd June at my local club in Sutton. The sun was shining. Wind was blowing Force 2-3 and two young whippersnappers hammered me in a tacking duel coming from behind. They went on to win the race, much to their delight, and also to the delight of the spectators on the balcony. And it brought a wry smile to my face. This is the future. We have young World Champions. We have young sailors who cut their teeth in the GP14 class who have become Fireball World Champions and will challenge for our next World Championship. We have young sailors at club level winning their first GP 14 races. Now who was saying that this is an old person's boat? It is a boat which provides for and is loved by many. The forecast for the future of the class is healthy.

While this is happening on the water and is reassuring to behold, it is being supported by the magnificent effort of our volunteers who keep the heart of our association in strong fettle. Communication through our website and Mainsail continues to be vibrant. Modernisation has brought changes to our office arrangements, which will result in lower costs. However, business will continue to be conducted with the professionalism and friendliness, which has been the hallmark of our association over the years. Thank you to all involved.

In Ireland, we recently said farewell to a good friend, Peter Dunne, who was Chief Measurer for Ireland for a good number of years. Peter, who had been fighting illness for some time, loved boats, people and the sea and would not cast off until the time was right. Our condolences go to his beloved wife Nellie, his daughter Tish and extended family who know that he will be fetching along in the breeze somewhere and all the while enjoying a puff on the pipe.

As I write, entries for our forthcoming World Championship at Abersoch have passed the one hundred mark and I believe many more are to come. Another big exciting event beckons. Ian Sinclair and his team continue to work hard, fine-tuning and tweaking,



*Now who was saying that this is an old person's boat?
Liam Watson and Kate Wakeling at the Welsh Harp*

to ensure we have a wonderful week on and off the water. Let us do them justice and turn out a really big fleet. Do your bit for the class by encouraging someone from your club who has never been to an event like this before and watch them being infected with the fun factor which is unique to events of this magnitude. I am delighted to see young sailors from distant shores availing of the Jack Austin Fund, which assists them with travel expenses in order to compete, and I look forward to crossing tacks with them on the racecourse. Check out the great entry fee deal for junior sailors who take part. Are there any you know who would like to enter?

The time has come to say goodbye and wish happy times ahead to Irene Thompson who has worked in our Office for the past thirty-one years. We are deeply indebted to her loyalty, efficiency, good humour and friendliness to which I have referred on frequent occasions. She has faced many changes and has always responded with good grace to the many challenges presented by the various Association Officers and committees over the years. I'm sure she will chuckle quietly when she reminisces about times past. Irene, enjoy your retirement and thank you.

Hugh Gill

Committee Matters

THE SPEED SAILS GP 14000 FUND

is to be the name of the money raised by the GP 14000 Prize Draw. Co-sponsors Harken and Super Spar fully endorse this title. Approximately 500 tickets were sold at the RYA Dinghy Show bringing the grand total to 4021 tickets sold and raising £8042. With only £500 in expenses, there is £7542 currently in the fund to be used for supporting GP14 sailing.

Richard Estaugh is the generous benefactor of GP 14000. The Committee, Fleet Captains and some GP14 racers who, acting as agents, sold the tickets, and finally, those who purchased the tickets have all played a part in raising the fund. John Salomonson, in his capacity as Midland Area Representative sold the most tickets. The Fleet Captain who sold the most tickets was Craig Hewitt of Budworth SC. However, tickets were purchased from all over the UK, Ireland and even as far as Sri Lanka and Australia.

At the April General Committee meeting, it was agreed that the Speed Sails GP 14000 Fund might be used to subsidise the cost of a Youth Coaching Day. It has since been confirmed that the event will be held at Winsford Flash SC on Saturday 23 August. (See page X)

The Committee also agreed to commence allocating GP14 boat numbers 14001 onwards. Several GPs in the 14000s are now entered for the World Championship in Abersoch this August.

THE GP14 OFFICE HAS MOVED.

The Committee decision to close the Office at Crewe was not taken lightly. This Office has served the GP14 Association exceptionally well for many years. However, Irene Thompson has chosen to retire on 10 July 2008 after 31 years of loyal service as Office administrator. Sue Sinclair has proved to be a worthy successor and has embraced new IT software taking us into the digital age. Sue now works from a home annex. The new contact details for the GP14 Office are:

Address: PO Box 614, Wigan WN1 9GP
Telephone: 0044(0)1257 251222
Fax: 0044(0)1257 251444
Email: admin@gp14.org

Notice that the email address now matches the website address www.gp14.org

The Committee also agreed in principal to scan the all the GP14 dinghy records to save on storage space and long-term costs, though this process is likely to cost the Association a substantial fee if carried out by a commercial company. The Committee stated that the GP14 Association has a rich history that should be recorded where possible and preserved for the future membership. Hugh Brazier has kindly offered to supervise the setting up of the GP14 Archives.

JACK AUSTIN AWARDS

The GP14 Association are proud to announce that 6 young applicants have been awarded grants from the Jack Austin Fund to assist them in travelling to the World Championship in Abersoch in August. Three helms and a crew are from Ceylon Motor Yacht Club in Sri Lanka and one helm and his crew are from Skerries Sailing Club in Ireland. We wish them all a valuable and enjoyable experience competing in our World Championship.

DONATION TO ASSIST GP14 YOUTH SAILING

The GP14 Association is the beneficiary of a £3,000 donation from the Peter Sandbach estate. Peter sailed GP14s for much of his life; he and his wife Dorothy introduced their three children to the joys of sailing. Peter served the GP14 Association as Hon. Secretary from 1985 to 1992 and was instrumental in setting up a computer database of the membership. Those fortunate to have known Peter will acknowledge his wish to see more young people encouraged in GP14 sailing; thus he has stipulated that £1,500 is to be placed in the Howard Davies Memorial Fund for the purpose of coaching a dozen promising young sailors annually. The other £1,500 is to be placed in the Jack Austin Fund to assist young sailors to travel to our World Championship event.

Hilary Davies
 Hon. Secretary

Applying the Racing Rules – The Friendly Way

In the UK, the RYA believes that the level of observance of the Racing Rules can be improved to the benefit of all competitors at all levels of racing.

The reasonable assumption has been made that, if more competitors knew the Rules and if the procedure for sorting out a rules dispute between competitors was simpler, then the degree of Rule observance and resolution of dispute through protest would improve – to the benefit of all competitors.

Many Clubs and Classes this year are adopting some of the ideas in “Rules Disputes Best Practice Version 2008/1”, on the RYA website, in their events for this season.

The Racing Rules will be updated later this year, as is the practice following each Olympic Games. The Best Practice Guide is advisory and does not modify the 2004-8 Racing Rules.

For Club racing where it is often a lack of knowledge of which rules apply in particular circumstances, the Practice Guide introduces an Advisory Hearing.

This is suitable for a boat-to-boat incident where there is no serious damage or injury. It is a slightly more formal equivalent of the bank-side chat between the two helmsmen and a person experienced in the application of the Racing Rules.

The Advisory Hearing can happen immediately after the race, no written notes are taken and the judgement of the Advisor can be accepted or not. The purpose is to spread better knowledge of the Rules, not to penalise competitors.

The second form of dispute resolution is an Arbitration Hearing. Again this is between the two helmsmen and an independent, rule competent person. This can be applied in regatta and championship events, is less formal and quicker than a protest meeting but can result in penalties.

The two helmsmen must agree to Arbitration, must agree to accept the judgment of the Arbitrator and must agree not to take the matter further to protest. The Arbitrator, on hearing a summary of the incident can decide to refer it directly to a full Protest Committee if the incident is complex or serious damage or injury has occurred. The Arbitrator takes notes, decides who was obeying or disobeying the Racing Rules and then applies a penalty of 20% to the Rule transgressor; thus a boat in a 20 boat race would lose four positions in the race.

In some dinghy regattas, the allowance in the Racing Rules that dinghies need not show a red flag has been used by some competitors to claim, in a protest hearing, that they did not know they were being protested, and hence did not take the opportunity to consider whether to do turns. In some classes this claim of lack of knowledge of protest has been used as gamesmanship in a defence at protest.

The GP Class is always keen to make racing popular and fair and has welcomed the RYA initiative. It has adopted the RYA Best Practice suggestions for 2008 and is actively promoting the idea of Arbitration Hearings at Clubs holding GP Championship events.

The Class is also trying for this season to re-introduce the use of a red flag by the protestor when racing by amending the Sailing Instructions for GP Championship events.

It would be very helpful to have feedback from members in Clubs which are using these alternative ways of resolving rules disputes this season in order to see whether the objective of better rule observance is achieved.

David Rowlands

Chairman of Technical & Rules Committee

Honorary Secretary Required for October 2008

In September 2008, I will have served the Association as Honorary Secretary for 6 years. I have enjoyed the challenge and feel privileged to have met so many friendly people, but it is time now to pass the baton on. Therefore I have provided an outline of what the position of Hon. Secretary entails. Please consider working with the Association in this role.

WHAT'S INVOLVED IN THE POST OF HONORARY SECRETARY?

The Hon Secretary is one of the senior, volunteer officers of the Association along with the President and the Hon Treasurer. The Association continues to be fortunate to employ professional administration staff and has office and archive facilities.

The main purpose of the Hon Secretary's role is to manage the administration of member, committee and event organisation matters and to be the first point of contact for links to other sailing organisations and clubs.

Although the list of items below looks formidable, there are many skilled and experienced officers and committee members to do the work which the Hon Secretary monitors and keeps on schedule.

The Hon. Secretary has several executive and administrative responsibilities to uphold the various rules and regulations of the Association. I have attempted to identify some of the requirements and personal qualities desirable to meet these duties.

Main things to do

- Managing regular committee meeting through the year involving setting of timetables, records and Minutes and agendas.
- Understanding the Class Rules and Constitution and good meeting practices
- Writing of letters, replies and publicity articles.
- Communicating on a regular and timely basis with staff, Members, Fleet Captains, Committee members, representatives of International

Associations, Trustees, and externally with equipment manufacturers, event organisers, Governing bodies, financial and commercial services.

- Most of this work is by email and telephone.
- Maintaining a close working relationship with the staff and office base – it is not necessary to visit the office all the time.

It is helpful to have the following skills

- Competence in computing skills for word processing, spreadsheets and databases (Microsoft Office based) is really helpful. The role recently has included development of the web site. IT programming skills are definitely not needed.
- An ambassadorial role in representing the Association at events and functions.
- Diplomatic role – the exercising of tact and diplomacy with people is essential; recognising that many are volunteers with other commitments towards work and family.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The Hon Secretary's position will be elected at the Annual General Meeting in August and there is an opportunity to shadow the current Secretary for a few months. If you are interested in this role, please ask the GPI4 office for an application form and person specification.

Hilary Davies
Hon. Secretary

Peter Dunne

On Tuesday 22nd April 2008, Ireland's GPI4 fleet lost one of its most prominent past members, namely Peter Dunne of Rush Sailing Club. Aged 73 Peter had endured, with remarkable strength and good humour, many years of ill health.



In life his main characteristic feature was his unmistakable all covering beard. We all wondered where he slept, as whenever you visited him he was engrossed in building, repairing or restoring wooden boats, especially GPI4s and Dublin Bay Mermaids in his well equipped workshop, better known as "The Shed".

On 6th August 1966 the first GPI4 he built, called "Phantom", was launched and as far as I know it was the first to be built in the Dublin area. Marguerite Carthy recalls acting as his secretary during the project as they sought help and advice from Bill Sleat of Ballyholme Yacht Club, the then secretary of the Irish

Branch of the GPI4 International Association. Over the winter of 1966/67 Peter oversaw the building of 4 more GPI4s in Rush. In September the club held its first two regatta for the class which was won by Gus Henry of Sligo from an entry of 14. This led to the club hosting their first open event, the Purcell Trophy in 1968 with 27 entries. The winner was Ernie Mawhinney, another famous GPI4 sailor, sailing Ventura No. 796. Ernie unfortunately passed away a few months ago. You might ask what was so memorable about sailing events in Rush, well it was in the selection of prizes they presented, for example; bags of spuds (potatoes), chips of tomatoes, apples, and selections of various vegetables and salads. Peter was always to the fore in organising these.

In the years between 1968 and 1970 when a group from the Electricity Supply Board (ESB) embarked on building GPI4s Peter assisted with advice and measuring. Over the winter of '73/74 he built his second GPI4 which he called "ODZANENZ" because as he said himself he built it from "odds and ends" he had in his shed.

While serving on the Irish Association committee he was elevated to the honourable position of "Chief Measurer". In his VW Camper Van, together with his wife Nellie and daughter Trish, he travelled the length and breadth of Ireland supporting GPI4 events. I remember the one thing that irritated him was when we appeared at events with oversize boats. As he kept reminding us the length of the GPI4 is 14ft plus or minus one inch. He would get very annoyed when we fitted a wire loop extending from the bow to prevent the spinnaker sheet from going under the boat. I remember at one event in Lough Swilly when after a lunch break we returned to our boats on the beach only to find all the offending wire extensions

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2008

The 58th Annual General Meeting of the G.P. Fourteen Class International Association will be held at South Caernarvonshire Yacht Club, Abersoch, North Wales on Tuesday, 5th August at 19.00 hours.

AGENDA

1. To receive apologies for absence
2. To receive the Minutes of the 57th Annual General Meeting
3. To receive the Hon. Secretary's Report
4. To receive the Hon. Treasurer's Annual report and Accounts
5. To elect the Officers:
 - President
 - Vice Presidents, including Branch Presidents
 - Hon Secretary
 - Hon Treasurer
6. To elect five duly nominated members to the Committee
7. To elect a non-Racing representative to the Committee
8. To elect the Accountants
9. Any other business competent to the meeting

The President welcomes discussion after the formal agenda items.

duly bent upright, thus bringing us within the 14ft one inch maximum length. Peter was deeply involved in the measuring of boats at the World championships in Clontarf and Howth.

His greatest sailing achievement in the GPI4 was when he won an Open Event in Mullingar. As I remember it, he finished the first race on the Saturday in his usual position someway behind the winners. During the second race a squall decimated the fleet and all the crews either capsized or retired, at least that was what we thought. As the rescue boats secured the casualties and the committee boat was preparing to weigh anchor and return to shore, a rescue boat approached Peter and his crew Nicky Archer, who at this time were sailing under jib only, asking if they required a tow to which Peter replied "we are still racing". The rescue boat immediately made haste to the committee boat and informed them that there was a boat still racing. Peter and Nicky being the only finishers won the race and with Sunday's racing cancelled he ended up with the least points and so won the event.

In the early eighties Peter returned to sailing Dublin Bay Mermaids but he never lost interest in the GPI4 and was always available to repair or redeck them. Peter, wherever you are, we will always remember your lovely bearded face with its accompanying warm and welcoming smile.

Finally on behalf of his many friends in the GPI4 fraternity we extend our sincere sympathy to his wife Nellie, daughter Trish and family.

Marguerite Carthy and Pat Murphy

2008 Summer Championship Report

Great news: a hundred-plus entries for our 2008 World Championship - a remarkable achievement for our class and your championship committee members, Andy Bury, Luke Shaw, Diana and Bill Webber and yours truly. We have worked exceptionally hard over the last twelve months in the planning and promotion of this year's World Championship and we are now seeing the results of our endeavours - many thanks for the support from our membership. Keep sending your entries in - we will let you know when it is time to stop! Please check the Worlds entry form regarding the cut-off date for entries.

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Ian enjoying his Silver Win at the Southernns



Up-to-date information on our World Championship and all matters relating to owning, using, cruising and getting the most out of your GP14 can be accessed via our excellent web site.

The Scottish Regional Championship took place over the weekend of 3rd and 4th May at Annandale SC. David and Lynn Lawson from Bassenthwaite SC showed the young guns that consistency pays dividends; congratulations to them - a huge win that has been on the cards for several seasons! David and Lynn are keen competitors and are a great example of how well a middle-aged husband and wife team can master the boat and the competition - it's not all about youth and strength.

Poole Yacht Club extended their usual warm hospitality to the GP14 fleet at the combined Southern/Midland championship which took place over the weekend of 7th and 8th June. There were Dorset cream teas to welcome competitors as they came off the water and an excellent meal on the Saturday evening. At the last general committee meeting of the Association it was decided to extend the number of races at regional championships from four to six, and this format worked extremely well at the Southernns. Each of the three daily races was about 45 minutes long for the leading boats, and slick race management ensured that the fleet was on the water for only about three hours in total each day. A report and photos of this event can be found on page x of this issue of Mainsail.

July 12th and 13th is the weekend of the Welsh Championship. Members and visitors alike will compete at Neyland Yacht Club for the title of Welsh Champion and it is probably the final realistic opportunity for serious competitors to do their last-minute tuning and preparation before the Worlds. Neyland Yacht Club is well versed in hosting GP14 Area Championships that have proved so popular with our top helms and crews; I am sure that this year's championship will be no exception.

Moving on to events in the second half of the season, the Grand Masters and Masters Championship being



View from the top deck of SCYC

Photo: Andy Bury

held over the weekend 30th and 31st August will be a knockout event. Craig Hewitt and his team are intending that this year's Masters Championship will be the one that will be remembered for a very long time. Attention to detail is the watchword at Budworth SC, guaranteeing an excellent event. The maximum number of entries is fixed at 50, and more than half of this number have already been received. If you intend to enter, do it today - tomorrow may be too late!

The Inland Championship plans are well in hand - need I say more? This championship could be a real cliffhanger, with the winner of the Grand Prix possibly being decided at this, the most challenging of venues. On the social side of life, we have booked one of Wales's top live bands; they will appeal to all age groups, and have been booked for Saturday night - one not to be missed!

Another keenly contested event will be the Youth Championship, to be held at Winsford Flash SC for the second time in three years, by popular demand. I know the team at Winsford Flash are up for organising another superb championship, and I am sure the

strong youth squad from Winsford will be advising the senior members on exactly what the youth competitors of the GP14 fleet are looking for as far as a great weekend championship is concerned, both on and off the water. A new race format is being used for this year's Youth Championship: see the Notice of Race for details.

Finally, looking forward to 2009, we are delighted that Carnac Yacht Club has confirmed August 16th to 21st as the date for the 'Championnat d'Europe du GP 14'. This will be a laid-back, relaxed championship, with 2 races on four of the five days and a chance to explore mid-week. The wind is consistent, the sailing area only 300 metres from the dinghy park, what more could you want! Put this in your diaries now.

Until my next report, make the most of your GP and enjoy.

Keep sailing,

Ian Sinclair
Championship Chairman

GP14 Class Association of Ireland

The 2008 Season got under way in Ireland with the Purcell event which took place at Lough Erne Yacht Club, on the 17th & 18th May. This event was well attended with some past GP sailors, most notably Raymond Morrison (who won the bronze fleet) taking to the water for the event. Because of the wind direction and the notoriously shifty Enniskillen conditions, most of the six races held consisted of windward-leeward courses. Timmy Corcoran and Brendan Brogan of Sligo Yacht Club began the 2008 Season as they had finished 2007, winning five of the six races, showing remarkable consistency and winning the Championships by 17 points. The overall attendance at this event was well up on last year which bodes well for 2008.

The second Association event of 2008, the O'Tiarnaigh Challenge took place at Swords Sailing and Boating Club, Malahide estuary, over the weekend of the 7th- 8th June 2008. The O'Tiarnaigh Challenge is an event with lots of short races sailed over a number of different courses, and is very popular with youth and junior sailors. With very light winds all weekend, the OD Peter Smith skillfully presented the fleet with a series of courses that constantly challenged the sailors and produced some very competitive racing (sometimes a bit too

competitive!). Tim Corcoran and Brendan Brogan continued their Tiger Woods impression with what seemed like an effortless display of continuity and skill in leading the gold fleet around the courses for most of the weekend. In the Silver fleet, newcomers Alan Blay and John Pearson were showing no difficulty in adapting to the GP circuit. In the Bronze there was more competition at the top but it was Cathal Sheridan and David Coote who were overall leaders at the end of weekend.

Timmy Corcoran & Brendan Brogan SYC ahead of local competitors Chris Scott & Mark Taylor LEYC

Photo: www.creativepictures.co.uk



The next Association event is the Leinster Championships, which takes place in Blessington Sailing Club, over the weekend of the 28th- 29th June 2008. The Leinster Championships is the second event in the Speed Sails League 2008 and a significant turnout is expected for this event.

The other national events in the 2008 Calendar are;

The Association have also run two training weekends, one late last Season at Swords Sailing and Boating Club, and one in April of this year at Newtownards Sailing Club. Between these training sessions 26 boats, 52 sailors, received top class shore- and water-based training under the capable guidance of Michael McNamara of McNamara Sails (UK). Both of these training initiatives were over-subscribed and having just

National Events in the 2008 Calendar		
Ulsters	Sligo Yacht Club	July 26/27
Championships of Ireland	Newtownards Sailing Club	August 29-31
Autumn Open /	Mullingar Sailing Club	September 20/21s
Youth Championships		
Hot Toddy	Sutton Dinghy Club	October 18/19

In 2007, the GPI4 Class Association of Ireland launched a League system for the Season, which was kindly sponsored by Richard Estaugh of Speed Sails. The League system was very successful, particularly towards the latter end of the Season, in attracting some additional boats to the events. It also created a lot of interest and banter within the fleet about League rankings. For 2008 the Speed Sails League 2008 is running again and a special thankyou is due to Richard Estaugh for stepping in to sponsor the League for 2008.

Last year saw a significant change in the fortunes of the GPI4 Fleet in Ireland with a 27% increase in boats travelling to the Association events. It is anticipated that this upward trend can be continued, but perhaps with a more modest growth rate of 15% planned for 2008. To help achieve this target the Irish committee are continuing a number of initiatives for 2008, such as club support days and fleet training, while actively pursuing, attracting and supporting youth sailors within our Fleet.

In 2007 we ran a number of club support days. Essentially this involved Gold Fleet sailors from within the fleet travelling to GPI4 Clubs and giving a day's coaching to club sailors. A number of these are already planned for 2008, in Mullingar Sailing Club and Lough Foyle, which is gradually building a significant fleet of GPI4's. Congratulations to Keith and Ken Loudon who are constantly working away in Lough Foyle. Other Clubs who are interested in Club Support Days can contact Secretary; Ossian Geraghty or President; Niall Henry.

received a further tranche of funding from the ISA we plan to run another training weekend over the summer months.

The GPI4 fleet in Ireland has in the past two years attracted a number of Youth Sailors into the fleet through the revival of our Youth Championships and through significant efforts of GPI4 Sailors at club level who have 'sold' the GPI4 Class to a young people. With this trend the committee have developed a Youth Policy which will be available on our website shortly, aimed at mentoring these new sailors within the fleet. As a part of this mentoring we have organised a training weekend on the July 5/6 for Youth Sailors – no oldies need apply. The weekend is being run by the current GPI4 World Champion, Ian Dobson, at SSBC, Malahide. If you are a youth sailor, or know of other young sailors that might be interested, contact Timmy Corcoran, our Youth Officer.

It is an exciting time for GPI4 sailors in Ireland, with numbers on the national circuit increasing and with a number of Clubs around the country growing their GPI4 numbers. We can look forward to continued success for 2008 and to seeing many of you for the World Championships in Abersoch in August.

For further information or for the contact details of all our committee members please visit our website; www.gpi4ireland.com/

Ossian Geraghty

Hon. Secretary

GPI4 Class Association of Ireland

The Piplers of Poole GP14 Southern Area Championship, June 7/8 2008

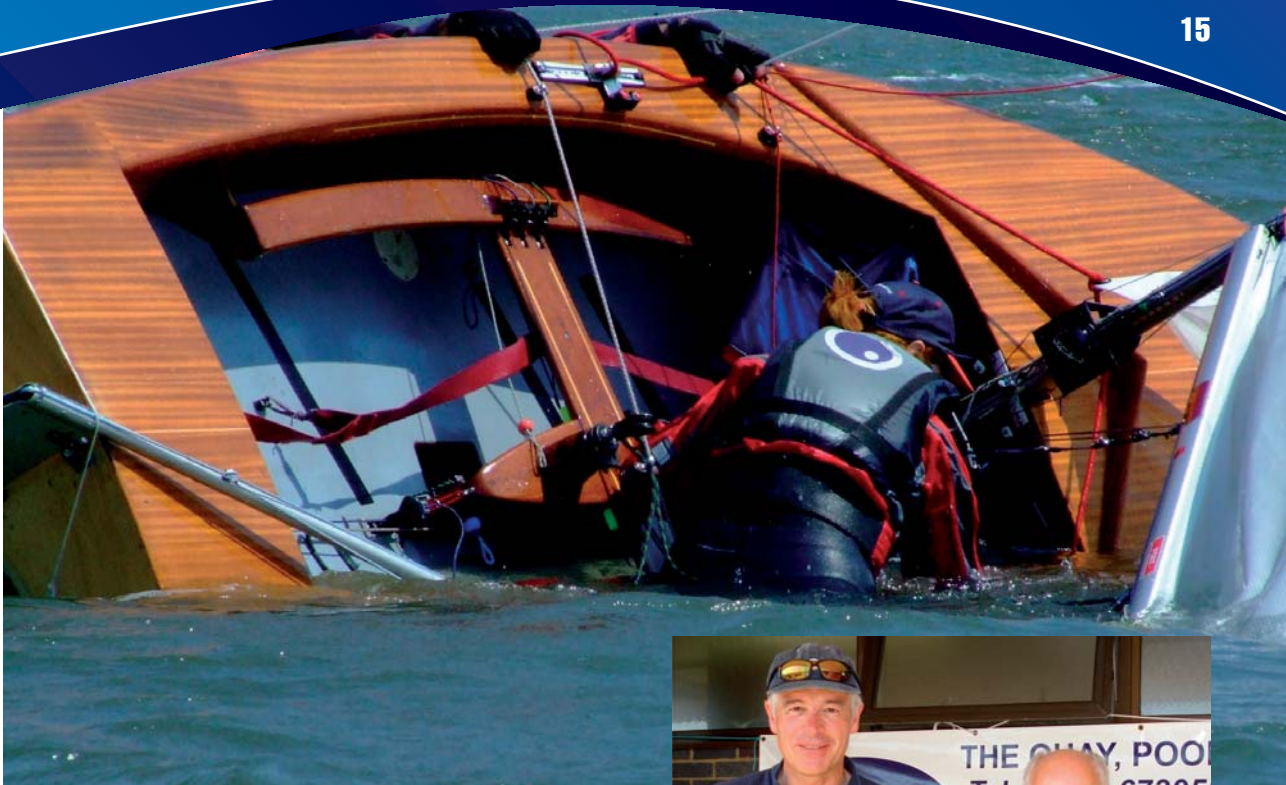
Saturday gave us wind speeds between 5 - 16 knots, with regular 90 degree wind shifts against the 10 - 12 knots northerly forecast.

The OOD had been tasked with a target of 45 minutes per race with one hour between races, and this he managed to maintain. The eventual overall winner Richard Instone, with the help of World Champion crew Steve Parker, proved the simple rule for winning a race - start well - get into the lead - don't let any boats pass you until the Finish - this worked for all the races he won. The last race saw the wind lift from 5 to 16 knots and shift so that generally the fleet was overstanding the windward mark after rounding the leeward mark. The winner of this race, Andy Tunnidliffe of Windermere, and Matt Burge of Poole, who was second, were still in the running after the first day, both with four points from their best two races.



Gold Winners Richard Instone and Steve Parker





Sunday gave us 16 - 22 knots northerly against the 7 knots forecast, but the glorious sunshine made it seem so much better.

Richard Instone cemented his lead with two clear wins as the wind speed saw many local and visiting sailors enjoy the warmer waters and soft mud of Poole harbour - wind shifts and gusts catching them unawares. The final race gave the Burge clan a first and third, as Matt's father Andy crewed for Colin Rainback in Reflection. We think there was a separate competition between those two. Ian Sinclair and Alan Jones "swiped" the silver fleet trophy with very consistent finishing, always in the top eight. James Ward and Richard Whitehill also showed consistency by always finishing in the top half of the fleet, and took the bronze trophy.

For the full results and some excellent photographs, visit our website
<http://www.poolegp14.co.uk/southerns/>



James Ward and Richard Whitehill

Many thanks to our sponsor Piplers of Poole without whose support over the years we would not have been able to host many of our events.

Martin Murphy

Poole Yacht Club GP14 Class Captain

Results

Overall Winner (Gold Fleet) and winner of 1st, 2nd, 4th & 5th races:	Richard Instone & Steve Parker, Chase SC
Second in Gold and winner of 6th race:	Matt Burge & Simon Wheeler, Poole YC
Third in Gold and winner of 3rd race:	Andy Tunnicliffe & Adam Lees, RWYC
First Silver and 5th overall:	I Ian Sinclair & Alan Jones, Bolton SC
First Bronze and 11th overall:	James Ward & Richard Whitehill, Papercourt SC

Light Wind Sailing

I have been asked to write an article on my experiences of sailing, particularly in light air conditions and on flat water.

My first memories of GP sailing were with my father at Bassenthwaite sailing club. My brother and father used to sail together and after racing they would come and pick me up and we would all go out together. So I should not get in the way, I was put up at the front of the boat near the mast, in the days of front buoyancy bags. From here I could see my dad sailing and hear the gentle lapping of the waves on the bow as we went along.

I often heard of tales of how my dad won races on a Thursday night. When the other boats came ashore they wondered why my dad was standing by his boat. Little did they know that he had won the race and was in with the cover on, before they returned. This was how I came to have such a good teacher. When my brother became older I began crewing for him. I believe crewing is a great way to be introduced to the sport and you do not need to go straight into helming. With this experience, I learnt a few of my dad's ideas when it came to light wind sailing.

My dad was always keen on the idea of sailing 'free' in light weather. Remember this was in the early days and sail design has changed a lot since then; there is, however, still a lot to be said for this practice. It is important to keep the boat moving in light airs and you have to sail a little off the wind to achieve this. If you are doing this, it is important to have a twist in both sails. If the wind is really calm the weight of the sail or the boom does not allow this. I remember having to lift the boom up to support its weight and allow the mainsail to twist off slightly. Obviously in such a case the kicking strap must be let off to its maximum.

The crew trim must be as far forward as possible so the transom of the boat is not dragging in the water. I like a little leeward heel so the rudder is more responsive and the sails set under their own weight.

I have noticed a number of sailors using a lot of rudder angle in turning during a tack, almost to the point of pushing the tiller over as far as it will go. This is like putting the brakes on. I would suggest that you need not use more than 45 degrees of tiller angle during a tack, particularly a roll tack.

When it comes to tacking smoothness is the key. When you look at the top sailors, their tacks seem almost effortless - the boat glides from one tack to the other, nothing gets caught, sails fill and off they go. But to achieve this you need to practice! Unfortunately you cannot do this in a race, as we found out when we started sailing together. It is worth taking time out from racing and practising tacking and any other boat handling techniques you might need such as mark rounding or spinnaker hoisting. If possible have some of the better sailors of your club follow behind to point out where improvements might be made. But I bet we have all felt that perfect tack from time to time when the boat glides through the tack, try and visualise what you did right and make it happen more often.

I think one of the main areas to improve light air sailing is concentration. I often hear of helms complaining there was no wind and it was rubbish, a waste of time. This is because they lost concentration, gave up and wanted to get to the bar. I am not saying there is anything wrong with that, but you will not win many races. It is difficult to say just concentrate more, but sailing, as many other sports, is a mind game and you have to work on that aspect as much as others. It also is important that the crew concentrates, because flying the spinnaker in light airs is one of the most difficult jobs going - as my wife will tell you.

With concentration comes looking around to see what the wind is doing. Normally wind is invisible, but we have a clue as to what the wind is doing by



A nice tack roll by Tim Hemsley & Richard Harding
(a bit of weight helps...)

observing its effect on the water surface, particularly on lakes. When a gust of wind is moving over the water it causes a dark patch on the water relative to its surroundings. With this information we can make an educated guess as to where the wind is and even roughly its direction. Hopefully we can use this to our benefit either by sailing towards it or having the boat set up correctly when it arrives.

Lightness is also a key to speed in little wind. This

can be a problem if you weigh too much! My wife and I weigh 20.5 stone between us which I imagine is pretty light. This might give us an advantage in lighter winds, but a disadvantage in stronger winds, so I guess there is a trade off between the two. I would think the ideal weight for a GP would be 22-23 stone which would give you the best of both worlds. This would therefore depend on where you do most of your sailing: if out at sea then obviously



Light wind sailing at the GPI4 Masters 2007. Photo: Mark Nicols

heavier would be better. Small inland lakes, then lighter. But not everyone is lucky enough to have a choice of crews for different situations.

There also seems to be a lot of debate at the moment as to how much wind is needed to sail a race. I know the RS400 put in their sailing instructions 4mph minimum. I hope we do not get to that. I agree there should be enough wind to be able to steer and other fundamental boating requirements. But if we start measuring the wind before we go out I imagine we will spend a lot of our time on shore sunbathing. With this younger sailors might miss out on other experiences of sailing which I enjoyed.

I love sailing because you are always learning; you can never say you know everything. There are a lot of books out there, I have read Paul Elvstroms, and my favourite 'Start to Win' by Eric Twiname. These people are inspirational and go a long way towards helping you understand the little idiosyncrasies of sailing. I know these books are old by now and newer books with newer ideas are available but they are a good place to begin.


David Lawson (GPI3176)



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Dovey Open and GP Week 17 – 22 Aug

We look forward again this year to welcoming old friends and new at the Dovey estuary, home to the Dovey bells and birthplace of the GPI4 (hence the bell on the mainsail).

As well as the beautiful scenery of the Snowdonia National Park and a glorious beach, the Dovey estuary is renowned for having its own microclimate as a consequence of the steep hills that protect it from the north. The Dovey yacht club has an enviable south-facing position on the water's edge, next to the beach.

Last year's weather was marvellous all week, and there was excellent racing and plenty of onshore activity for sailors and non-sailors alike, from quiz nights and beach games to all the attractions of the Snowdonia National Park.

The week coincides with a very well supported junior Topper event with daily races arranged so they do not overlap.

For further details and accommodation see below.

Dovey GP Fleet Captain; William Mack: w_mack@btinternet.com

Dovey Yacht Club: www.doveyyachtclub.org.uk

Accommodation and other activities: www.aberdoveybreaks.com



From the Archives

an occasional series in which we dust off some of the articles published in previous Mainsails. There is a faint clue to the date of publication of this article in the reference to bobble hats and long hair, but otherwise it is as fresh and relevant today as the year it was written - 1984.

So, You Want To Win Races!

By Michael McNamara (edited)

Our aim is to win races. How can we go about it? The first way is to sail faster than the opposition. The second way is to sail a better course. In other words both boat speed and tactics are essential.

In both of these there is no short cut to achieving success. An apprenticeship has to be served where the experience gained gradually leads to an improvement in performance. Go out and aim to round marks, start, tack or gybe. Then, as you practice, analyse what you are doing to see how you can improve it. Remember that sportsmen in other sports do not improve their techniques and skill in competitive conditions - the successful golfer does not practice his swing in a tournament and the motor racing driver his gear change in a Grand Prix. So why should sailors?

Although there is no short cut to this foundation of skill there are several ways that it can be speeded up. You can, for instance, acquire knowledge from others. Read as many books as possible. Find out what motivates Elvström; Oakeley; Mares; Knights etc. It is no good just borrowing these books for a short period. They have to be treated as a reference library and consulted regularly. You can also look at experts sailing. Not while you are racing against them - that gives them an added advantage. Watch from a bank or a boat. Examine, too, the fast boats to try to find out how their gear is set out. Most of all, don't be afraid to ask questions. The good sailors usually love to help.

One thing that has to be realised is that confidence inspires success. If you admit that you can be beaten then you will be. However, do not become so rash that you become disheartened. It will be a long struggle to improve, so, when you are beaten, find out why. If you like, set yourself a questionnaire on each race in order

Gold Winners Richard Instone and Steve Parker





Gold Winners Richard Instone and Steve Parker

to analyse your performance at the start, up the beat, on the reaches and so on. That way, no race is wasted, no matter how poor your finishing position. Do be careful though, not to find complications in which to get bogged down and watch out for the 'Excuse Syndrome'. If you kid yourself and try to hide the real reason for poor performances, then you will never improve.

The best way to encourage your confidence is to have your boat organised. The main point to consider is that although a known fast boat can give you a starting point, it is only a starting point and not something to be followed slavishly. In fact the basics of boat speed factors are fairly well documented. We know that the rig must be efficient so that maximum power can be transmitted to the hull so long as it can be used effectively. Then the power must be progressively reduced to cut down heeling. We know also that the underwater surfaces must be as smooth as possible.

What is often skipped is the ways in which the crew's happiness and therefore their efficiency can be improved. The race lasts for 1 - 2 hours and the crew must be working as hard at the end as they were at the beginning. Look at all the things that can improve their comfort. Look at the shape of the gunwale to make sure that they dig in as little as possible. Look at the toe straps, especially so that the crew can grip them near his ankles. Make sure that they are fastened on to strong

parts of the hull - the water can be cold and a body dragging along in the water reduces boat speed. Hold them in, out, up or down with elastic. Look at the sheets - if they are too thin they cut hands. If they are too thick they won't run easily. Also, they must be just long enough, but no more, for they weigh heavily and soak up water. Can the jib sheets be jammed and released easily? Vertical jammers do this best. Is there a ratchet block on the main, so that the helm doesn't get pulled backwards? What about the tiller extension? Is it long enough; strong enough, easy to grip? The helm shouldn't have to bend backwards at all. Make sure the kicker is powerful enough, for this will bend the mast, the mainsheet should only position the boom sideways.

Incidentally, use a magic marker to mark the sheets and lines at various strategic places - when you find you are going fast. You can then easily repeat the positioning. At the same time mark the mast and boom for cunningham and clew tensions and the position of the spinnaker pole (to save groping around). Above all, make sure that if a thing adjusts one way it must easily go the other way. Aim for a simple boat, yet one which at the same time allows accurate adjustment of the essential controls.

The most successful helms do these adjustments automatically. They can then think clearly about the best tactics to employ. As conditions vary for every race, get out to the starting area early. Then, by beating, reaching

and running, get the feel of the boat. Find out how much mast bend, cunningham and centreboard are needed. Incidentally don't be over-keen with the cunningham for it moves the air flow forward and chokes the slot between the main and jib - a sure passport to the back of the fleet. Don't forget the tacking and gybing practice.

While you're looking at the gear in your boat, take a look at your own sailing clothes. They must be as light as possible and must not absorb water. Don't forget that if they are shiny and slippery you will disappear towards the transom after the first wave. If you want to get heavier as the wind gets up then get the right gear - baggy jumpers and bobble hats (like long hair) add windage. Always wear a life jacket. You can then drive the boat hard without fearing the dangers of a capsize or falling out.

Quite often in a race you will find a boat that is going very fast but which finishes badly - the helm sailed it fast in the wrong direction. Races can be won by sailing shorter distances or by using the conditions (e.g. sand banks to cheat the tide). Unfortunately, for many sailors the choice of direction is largely the result of instinct. So keep asking yourself why am I going this way; or why

am I starting here. Then, if you succeed or fail you will be able to learn by the tactic. You will often decide to go one way and find that the acknowledged experts will go another way. It is then time to decide whether you are right - which is why the boat must be going well, without you having to worry. 'He is always right so I had better follow him' can become a hard habit to break.

It is in this area of tactics and boat handling that you and several of your cronies can help each other. Discuss each race afterwards and find out why a particular direction paid off or failed. Remember to find out why they made their decisions. You don't have to become a changing room bore. You know why you made your moves. The object is to find out why they made theirs. In addition try to arrange friendly races against them, with nothing at stake and no fear of failure. A great learning situation.

Finally, don't forget that sailing in small dinghies is meant to be fun. An improvement in performance increases this fun and adds to the excitement. If it ceases to be enjoyable then there is no point in it and, as a relaxation, it fails. Don't let it fail.

Gold Winners Richard Instone and Steve Parker



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Howard Davies Memorial Training Week 2008 & Youth Coaching Day

What is it and when is it taking place?

The GPI4 Class International Association is pleased to announce that it will once again be helping to provide up to 12 young sailors with a fantastic opportunity to access quality coaching at Plas Menai, the National Watersports Centre for Wales.

The Howard Davies Memorial Training Week is a well established, advanced race training course run over five days. Sailors between the ages of 14 and 20, who actively sail GPI4s are eligible to apply for a place on this heavily subsidised course. This year the course will commence on Sunday, 26 October.

This full board, intensive, fun training week, which ordinarily would cost upwards of £250 per person, is available for just £100. What's more, the GPI4 Class International Association will pay the entry fee for the UK GPI4 Youth National Championship of anyone who participates on the course.

Why should I go?

Former participant Pippa Mitchell, who took part with her brother Alistair when she was aged 15, commented, "we had a fantastic time, sailing all day (weather permitting) and having a great laugh with new and old friends at night...If you ask me whether I would do it again, without hesitation the answer would be a "yes"".

It sounds great...how do I get onto the Howard Davies Memorial Training Week?

This year we are holding a Youth Coaching Day, which will form part of the selection guidelines for the Howard Davies Memorial Training Week 2008.

The day is open to any GPI4 sailor between the ages of 14 and 20 and will be held at Winsford Flash Sailing Club in Cheshire on 23 August. Anyone is welcome to attend, but anyone hoping to go to the Training Week

should attend. You can even make a weekend of it, as Winsford Flash Sailing Club will allow camping on the Friday and Saturday night and you can take part in the first two races at the club on Sunday. If you are borrowing a boat and/or need to persuade an adult to bring you along, then let them know that the bar will be open and a limited range of hot food will be available!

How much are we planning to charge for this Youth Coaching Day? – just £10 per boat! That's a day's professional coaching for only £10 per boat – bargain! Even better, there is no additional charge for camping at the club or joining in the racing on Sunday.

The Selection Guidelines for the Howard Davies Memorial Training Week 2008

Attending the Coaching Day is not a compulsory part of applying for a place on the Howard Davies Memorial Training Week, but will be highly persuasive and is an important part of the guidelines we have set this year for selecting participants.

Potential participants for the Howard Davies Training Week will be assessed according to the following guidelines, but the final decision on who is invited to participate is at the absolute discretion of the course organisers:

1. Participation in the Youth Coaching Day at Winsford Flash Sailing Club on 23 August
2. Any recent GPI4 events participated in as helm or crew, additional weight will be given to major events such as the GPI4 World Championship
3. Participation in other GPI4 coaching/training events
4. Access to a GPI4 of very good racing order
5. Ability to handle a GPI4 ashore
6. Ability to sail (either helm or crew) to good club racing standard in a range of wind conditions,

including planing conditions, and to right a capsized boat

7. A letter of support from the Commodore of the individual's sailing club
8. Availability during the week commencing Sunday, 26 October
9. Full payment received by 31 August 2008/on acceptance for course

Sailors who have previously participated in the Training Week on one or more occasions, but who fulfil the requirements set out in the guidelines will be eligible. However, priority may be given to those who meet the guidelines, but who have attended fewer times.

What do you need to do to book a place on the Youth Coaching Day?

- Arrange to borrow a GP14 and if necessary, persuade someone to get you there

- Make sure you have someone to sail with. At a push, youth helms can sail with adult crews, but we would prefer all youth teams
- Download an application form from the GP14 UK website or request a form from the GP14 Association office; or cut out the form in the centre pages of Summer Mainsail
- Send a completed application form, together with a cheque for £10, to the GP14 Association office **before 31 July**

Pre-booking is necessary so that we can confirm numbers and arrange coaches and safety boats as required.

We hope you agree that this is a great opportunity so what are you waiting for? If you are reading this and you are not a Youth sailor, perhaps you know someone you can help to get involved.

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GP14 NATIONAL YOUTH CHAMPIONSHIP

WINSFORD FLASH SC, 1-2 NOVEMBER 2008

Winsford Flash SC is once again proud to host this Championship that traditionally follows the Howard Davis Memorial youth training week at Plas Menai. Camping will be available on site (for those hardy enough!) and the clubhouse will be open on the Friday evening to welcome early arrivals with a hot meal and hot shower, not to mention a cold beer at the bar for over-18s. There is a good range of B&Bs locally and the club is within easy reach of major roads, for those who wish to travel daily.

The Championship will consist of five races over two days and a great programme of entertainment is planned for Saturday, after the day's racing. Prizes can be won off as well as on the water! The club is endeavouring to provide excellent value for money at this event for both competitors and spectators and would very much appreciate early entries where possible.

Lanes plc, past major sponsors, will again be supporting this premier youth event in conjunction with Speed Sails.

2007 midland Championship at Midland SC

Photo: Nigel Spur



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Southport Sailing Club. National Junior 12 Hour Race 2008

The twenty-third Junior 12 Hour Race started in winds of force 4 gusting to force 5, with twenty-eight teams competing for the nineteen trophies available. This has been the highest number of entries in the entire history of the event.

With the wind coming from the southwest the GPI4s were able to make full use of their spinnakers when sailing the leg on the eastern side of the lake.

From the beginning there were three teams in close contention for the overall winner's trophy, there being very little difference between their average lap times. At the end of the twelve hours there was only three-quarters of a lap separating Budworth SC, the overall winner with 63.75 laps, and Royal Windermere YC in second place with 63 laps, and Merchant Taylors School (in an Enterprise) also with 63 laps but with an average lap time of only 1.8 seconds higher. Bolton SC was fourth.

Budworth SC were also awarded the trophy for the first GPI4 and the fastest first two laps by an under-eighteen team, while Royal Windermere SC won the award for the fastest first two laps by an under-twenty



1st Overall – Budworth SC

team. Merchant Taylors School were awarded the trophy for first Enterprise and also the trophy for the fastest last two laps. The trophy for the first Bosun was won this year by Newcastle under Lyme School.



Budworth team receiving their trophies



Combined teams, South Windermere and Glossop, 10th overall

By mid morning some teams had shortened sail, but the younger and less experienced helms found the conditions difficult and kept the safety boat teams busy throughout the race, there being many capsize but fortunately only a few collisions.

The Southport boat had been consistently lying in fourth position until the late afternoon, when gear failure resulted in a drop of two positions and a final sixth placing below Bolton SC in fourth and West Lancashire YC in fifth positions. WLYC also won the trophy for the best aggregate result over the past three years, having been in third place in 2006 and second place in 2007, their closest rivals being Merchant Taylors School and Royal Windermere YC.

During the mid-afternoon the wind moderated slightly and some sail changes took place. However the wind strengthened again, just in time for the Under-Fourteen Race at 1800 hrs. The U14 race was won by Toddbrook SC, closely followed in second place by Chester Sailing and Canoe Club who had entered a ten year old helm.

The Glossop SC team had arrived full of enthusiasm and were eager to sail. Unfortunately the Glossop boat failed to materialise. Their disappointment was ended by the kind offer from South Windermere SC to allow them to merge with their team to form the joint team 'South Windermere and Glossop'. This team gained a creditable 10th place out of the 28.

A full list of results can be viewed on the SSC website www.southportsailingclub.org.uk

The event gave junior members of sailing clubs, scout groups, schools and other youth groups the opportunity to practice and hone their sailing skills, and meet socially with others with similar interests. Feedback has been very positive with competitors stating how much they had enjoyed the event and many promising to return next year.

Our thanks to our sponsors MCK Partnership and Rowland Homes, and also to the many volunteers who made the event possible.

William Birch



Bolton SC (4th) trying to catch Budworth



2nd overall – Royal Windermere YC

Training

NANTWICH & BOARDERS DAY

Keen to start the season fully trained and finely honed, an intrepid band of GPI4 sailors met at Doddington in the early hours of Saturday 15th March. It was actually 09.00 but it seemed barely light at the time. Our captain and mentor for the day was Luke Shaw (an RYA coach recommended through the GPI4 Association). On the promise of a free lunch he had willingly accepted a challenge which, at that point, he did not fully realise the magnitude of.

The size of this challenge became apparent to him when he witnessed the pale faces and shaking heads of his audience as he explained that the best way for a crew to tack a GP was facing backwards. In a few short sentences he had set himself a tough mission for the day. Undaunted, he pressed ahead with what sounded in theory like a well reasoned argument and then sent us out for some practice.

After a short while (during which even he probably had moments of doubt) he produced a camera and, with some skill, managed to film while Steve and John Lewis rode the stern waves to give him the best angle. The unedited film was shown during the morning break. Ian and Simon managed an impressively professional tack whilst Bill and Cara produced something more akin to Captain Pugwash.

After lunch Luke moved on to rounding marks and then set us triangular courses which allowed us to continue practising tacks and mark rounding. The emphasis was on boat handling close to the marks. This proved very useful in showing how to put into practise those things that become sloppy or get forgotten. We finished with a few short races.

The weather was kind to us by providing sufficient wind and remaining dry all day. Luke encouraged and advised us on a multitude of topics, as and when they arose. Many thanks to him for an enjoyable, instructive day and for rekindling our enthusiasm ready for the new season, also thanks to Steve and John for looking after us in the safety boat.

Bill Gilmour-White

TRAINING AT WINSFORD

Enthusiastic members of the GPI4 fleet at Winsford Flash SC assembled at the club on 12 April for the first of two planned coaching days with Association Coach, Luke Shaw. There was an air of expectation as Luke had coached at the club during the 2007 season. The training last time had been put into practise and the participants were keen to learn more skills to improve their sailing performance even further.

The emphasis initially was on boat handling, working on stopping the boat, accelerating and controlling the position of the boat, leading up to using these skills on the start line. The force 2-3 wind was a little gusty at times, and it was a challenge to remain within the "box" designated by marks that Luke had set out: boat handling certainly improved very rapidly. The starting exercises proved to be good fun – many surprised themselves when they got it right and shot away from the rest of the boats. The next challenge was to get to the windward mark first and back to the line, to do it all over again... Working out where on the line was the best place to



Ian and Tom Foulkes sort out twinning lines with Luke



Mark and Claire Bainbridge discussing pole height and angle with Alastair Mitchell

start was the next step, Luke working hard to ensure that the pace kept moving and that we were all enjoying ourselves. The banter between boats certainly kept everyone amused!

The second day of coaching in May was not blessed with such favourable conditions – in fact very little and then no wind at all, good day for roll-tacking practice then! Luke hopped into everyone's boat at some point to demonstrate individual improvements in technique that proved very helpful. After a brief spell on the water we decided that a coffee break seemed like a good idea. Luke had received requests to do some spinnaker work so after checking that boats had been set up properly he did some land drills during which everyone picked up useful tips. As the day progressed, and became ever more still and hot, the emphasis switched to boat set-up and the use of the different control lines. Sharing knowledge and experiences between everybody greatly improved understanding. And as the day came to a close and the bar opened the cold drinks improved our sense of wellbeing!

Feedback from the participants was very positive on both days, but the best response was the increase in the number of boats taking part in racing, the improvement in the racing itself and the camaraderie of the fleet. We had a lot of fun and appreciated the difference it made to our sailing. It was an easy decision to organise further training, and to keep the momentum going we are holding an informal day just between ourselves to get some more practice. No doubt the bar will be open again by the end of the day...

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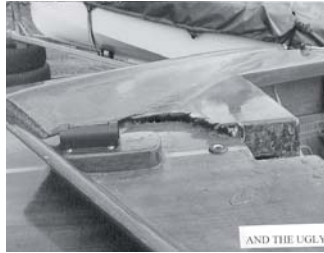
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Letters to the Editor



Dear Editor,

This weekend I had a major failure of the starboard shroud in a good blow when beating, which resulted in a broken mast and substantial damage to the front deck and coaming, ripping apart the ply and breaking woodwork. The mast broke 4" below the deck where there were several holes in the mast. The mast then prised up the deck on one side and levered it down on the other, as it went down whilst still in the gate.

The cause of this catastrophe was a broken "T" piece at the top of the shroud where it is bent to go into the mast. On inspection of the other "good" one this was found to have a deep crack on the inside of the bend. I thought that it would be a good idea each time that a mast was taken down an inspection of the inside of the bend on the shroud "T" piece took place as this is an obvious place for a stress fracture to take place.

Ray Drury, GPI2511

Trimpley SC

Liz,

I contacted my friend John Fenn-Wiggin about the article in the last Mainsail concerning the first Championship. He thanked me very much for letting him have a copy. His Mother is still going strong at 97 and does remember the event. She was an expert helmswoman, born in Yorkshire but brought up in Weymouth. The family had some substantial dayboats. The Fenn-Wiggins were founder members of Shropshire Sailing Club with a Firefly 853 (Snippet) bought in 1951.

Some of our cruising members will remember John F-W and his trimaran accompanying them on the Cruising Week of the last Worlds at Abersoch.

I have, of course, also known Cubby Acland a perfect lakeland gentleman who gave his home and garden to the National Trust and, indeed, I have raced against him in the past. His funeral coincided with a General Committee meeting which was therefore held in Windermere. Naturally I also knew Howard who deserved the title 'Mr GPI4'.

Kind regards,

Graham Knox

In Memoriam,

It is with regret we have to announce the passing of an old member of the Association, since its inauguration in 1950 and one who helped start our Dovey Yacht Club. He was Arthur Tomkins of Birmingham, aged 95, whose GP was no. 39; he was one of the few who built his GP from a set of YW GPI4 plans.

He launched and sailed his GP at Aberdovey throughout his sailing life with his family.

He did nothing in his sailing life regarding winning awards, but was a keen supporter of the YW GPI4 class of dinghy. I believe his family still have his original dinghy and I believe they still sail it.

It is with all the more regret that I have to announce his death, as he was a great friend of mine and of course of a similar age as myself. I'm sure several members of the Association will be sorry to hear this sad news.

Searson J. Thompson,

membership no 15498,

retired MD of Bell Wordworking Co. of Leicester

North West News

Five events have been held to date in the Northern Bell Series, each attracting a good number of visitors and providing good, competitive sailing. Martin Brennan and Alistair Knott, Hollingworth Lake SC, started the defence of their 2007 Northern Bell title in good style at Combs, winning the event with a race to spare. They went home with a laden trophy bag as the prizes for the 2007 competition were presented that day. Many thanks to Neil Platt, Omega Sails, for his continuing support of the Series - the spinnakers he has donated as prizes have all seen action this season (some more than others – Martin has been a little rough with his and it's not as pretty as it was!).

A good turnout of 24 boats at Bolton faced light, shifty winds (and a lot of rain) and Mark Platt used his home knowledge to good advantage to win the Open in a very competitive fleet. Light winds – but plenty of sunshine – greeted sailors at Burwain, where the home boats of Innes Armstrong and Stephen Graham came first and second respectively. The club made everyone very welcome and included lunch and afternoon tea in the entry fee – very good value for money!

Home advantage also held good for Matt Mee, crewed by Andy Tunnicliffe, at Hollingworth Lake the following week in an extremely strong fleet – is it the upcoming Worlds enticing the top of the fleet out? Neil Marsden and Derek Hill arrived in characteristic laid-back fashion – but at least they did arrive. It has been some time since they have visited Hollingworth but Derek was confident he knew how to get there as he had consulted a map and found such a place with a blue dot,

which must mean water... Eventually they reached the Hollingworth Lake and proceeded to rig, all going well until they checked the spinnaker and decided that the traditional way of rigging was probably better than Derek's innovation of securing it upside down! (there's never a camera handy when you need one.)

Mark Platt's win at Budworth bucked the home advantage trend, and the competition for second and third places was extremely close between visitors Ian Platt, Martin Brennan and Innes Armstrong. Julie Waddington, Bolton SC, was on form and took the honours in the Silver Fleet, whilst Pete Bramwell, with crew Dave "Dangerous" O'Callaghan on his first outing of the season, won the Bronze Fleet. However, Budworth sailors, Bill Kenyon and crew Ben Ditchburn, maintained their overall lead in the Northern Bell. At just over the half-way stage of the 2008 series it is proving to be a very close contest.

At the time of writing there are still four events to be held: ever popular Bassenthwaite, the racing format at West Kirby is once again attracting great interest, and West Lancs YC is back on the circuit after a break and is a starred event – the best result of a starred event plus three other Opens is all you need to qualify for the Series. Finally, but by no means least, Royal Windermere is host to the Northern Championship 2008, a great venue both on and off the water.

It is becoming increasingly expensive to travel to events as fuel costs soar, but I hope that the venues and racing opportunities offered by the Northern Bell provide incentives to take part – if you have views on what is currently on offer or on what else you would like, please let me know.

Mandy Mitchell



Two of our promising youths: Charlie McNamara and Nathan Thorne

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Neil Platt (GP 13904)

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Package and postage approximately £20 on the UK mainland and £40 to both Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland.

Contact Neil Platt on 0151 428 4625 or 07738 169857 mobile
Or e-mail neil_platt@btinternet.com



Scottish Area Summer Report

Team Racing at Arran SC (Coming Event)

Arran SC are planning to host another team racing weekend this year, it is scheduled for 30th & 31st August – talks are in hand to move it back one weekend to avoid the clash with the Masters (watch this space).

Last year was a great event with eight teams competing from across Scotland and North England and an excellent social evening on Saturday. We're hoping to match last year's success and invite interested teams to contact myself or Angus Campbell Campbell.Hightrees@btinternet.com for the latest details.

Training Weekend at Castle Semple SC

Castle Semple Sailing Club, now the home of GP14000, was host to a race training weekend for sailors looking to improve their skills in time for the GP14 Championship of Scotland.

Seven boats from clubs across Scotland were treated to great sailing conditions ranging from flat calm to 25 knots+ winds; torrential rain to scorching sunshine. Well, it is Scotland!

Expert coaching was provided by Mark Greenhalgh, a gold fleet sailor from Annandale SC, and the theme

for the weekend was "Back to Basics".

The weekend started with the first session to evaluate the teams' skills on the water, but in 25 knots the most frequently demonstrated skill was recovering boats from a capsized.

After an onshore debrief and coaching session, the teams sat down for lunch. The afternoon session concentrated on the perfect start with several short races resulting in some very close encounters and some battle scars. Late afternoon saw some "one to one" coaching in the boat with Mark. This completed a perfect day's sailing. Saturday Evening was spent with thirty club members at the local golf club for a 3-course meal and a few drinks at the bar.

By contrast, Sunday morning offered a flat calm loch, but this gave the opportunity for an in-depth talk on the finer points of sail-setting and roll tacks. The wind started to increase and the boats headed to the water for some synchronised tacking and gybing. After lunch a series of short races put the new-found skills to good use.

Mark's knowledge and enthusiasm inspired all who attended the course, and without doubt everyone took away skills they did not possess before the weekend. A fantastic weekend and everybody is



already looking forward to next year's training weekend.

Scottish Championship at Annandale SC

The Scottish Championship took place at Annandale sailing Club on the weekend of May 3/4.

Twenty-two GPs, including fourteen visitors from as far as Chelmarsh in the south and Arran in the north, competed for the Championship of Scotland on Castle Loch.

The south-easterly wind was not as strong as predicted, but fluctuated from force 2 up to force 4 and five of the six races were sailed in ideal conditions. After a heavy shower, the wind faded to nothing just before the final race which, after a short postponement and two general recalls, was sailed in light airs.

Starting was a problem throughout the weekend with only two races getting off to a clean start and the black flag making frequent appearances.

The wind blowing the length of the loch made for a long beat with various reaches and runs back to the leeward mark, with up to four gybe marks in the courses.

David and Lynn Lawson from Bassenthwaite proved the value of consistency, scoring four second places to take the title despite winning fewer races than the teams in second and third positions.

Andy Tunnicliffe and Adam Lees from Royal Windermere enjoyed the perfect day on Sunday winning all three races, which split the tie for runners-up spot in their favour.

Adam McGovern and Chris Robinson from Hollingworth scored great results on Saturday to lead overnight, but didn't quite match that performance on Sunday and finished in third place.

Mark Greenhalgh and Ross Gingles, in fourth place, were the first home boat. These four boats were regularly at the front of the fleet and demonstrated great sailing skills as they enjoyed some extremely close racing.

Winners of the silver fleet were Mike Fairlamb and Eric Smith from Bassenthwaite. The leading lady, Ann Penny from Derwent Reservoir was also the winner of the bronze fleet with her crew Justin Smith.

Duncan Greenhalgh (3226)

Scottish Area Representative

North Wales

Here at Llandudno we are now looking forward to the next National Championships in 2009, which of course is the GPI4; we have already arranged camping at Bodafon farm overlooking the bay and just a short walk from the club.

It is also very pleasing to see that the entry for the worlds at SCYC is so buoyant and I personally am looking forward to meeting up with friends old and new.

As I write this article, we at Llandudno we are just finalizing our team for the 12 hour junior race at Southport. It's still touch and go whether we take one boat or two, as we now have so many promising youths who are keen to attend.

Straight after the Worlds it's off to Pwllheli for the Oppie Nationals - 400 entries so far and I know that one or two GP sailors are taking their youngsters along. Maybe we could organize some GPS out on the water or on show at the event. Please get in touch with me if you are going.

Cheers,

Andy Mcnamara

GPI 3943



Two of our promising youths: Charlie Mcnamara and Nathan Thorne

News from the Southern Area

Ian Campbell, our Area rep for several years, has decided that work and travel commitments make it impossible for him to do the job any longer – so we are on the lookout for a volunteer. Please contact me if you have any ideas for likely candidates for this crucial job.

Communication is probably the most important aspect of being an Area rep – to act as a channel of information between the General Committee of the Association and the members in the Area, and between individual clubs. There are three General Committee meetings of the Association a year, held in Crewe, which give the Area rep a chance both to represent the views of sailors in the Area and subsequently to keep them informed of decisions and projects agreed at the meetings. The Southern area is huge geographically and is second only to the North West in terms of membership, but there are not very many active GP clubs, so the job is not so daunting as it might sound, especially with the communication tools offered by email and the website and, of course, Mainsail. Mike Abbott will continue to organise the Travellers Series and collate the results.

The Travellers Series began at the end of March with a successful Open at Papercourt, won by xx. There were 13 boats, many of them from Frensham Pond SC. The Venetian Trophy followed soon afterwards at the Welsh

Harp in April, with 26 entries, sadly only 2 of them visitors. The winners were Frank Pearce and Val Swingler, followed by James Ward and Richard Whitehill from Papercourt.. By the time Summer Mainsail comes out there will have been two more events – the Victor Trophy, also at the Harp, and the Bramble Bowl at Lee on the Solent. Full results will be on the GP14 website. Can I take this opportunity to remind you of the final events in the autumn, which offer a great variety of locations – the wide open spaces of Tollesbury on Sept 20, the charm of the River Thames at Hampton on Oct 5 and complex courses set round the lake at the last event of the season at Frensham Pond on Oct 12 (followed by the fleet captains' meeting).

The highlight of the racing season so far has been the joint Southern and Midland Area Championship held over the weekend of June 7/8. Thanks to a great turnout of 14 GPs from Poole YC there was a respectable entry of 24 boats, but it was disappointing that there were so few boats from the rest of the south



Close quarters at the last mark of the Ten-Hour Race - the winner calls for water. Photo: Andrew Mott



Racing at Tollesbury SC.

Photo: Megan Rogers

(5) and the midlands (3). The shallow water was the undoing of some of the visitors - George Rogers from Tollesbury was particularly unlucky when his boom was wrecked while the boat was being pulled out from the mud after a capsize on the wing mark. However, the winning team of Richard Instone and Steve Parker from Chase were unfazed by any little local difficulties and won in convincing style. You can read a report of the event by Martin Murphy on page x.

The Welsh Harp offers a couple of light-hearted events to counterbalance the cut-and-thrust of club and championship racing. The popularity of the Single-handed Race, held in June does rather depend on the weather – this year, the sun shone, the wind was moderate (though a bit strong for single-handed spinnaker flying, as Roger Walton found out!) and there was a record turnout of 26 GPs – several of them sailed by people without a great deal of experience who nevertheless relished the challenge of doing something different.

Another great event is the Ten Hour race, which has been an inter-club tradition on the Harp for years,

started by Seahorse SC – same sort of rules as the more famous northern version, but shorter and much less intense. It is a fantastic way of involving sailors of all levels of experience, mixing and matching them in ways that would never happen in normal club racing. This year there were six teams, including two female and one youth team, involving about 40 sailors altogether. The wind was unpredictable and blustery (with a midday gust registering 40 knots on the wind meter) so there was plenty of excitement, but it is interesting that the first two teams came in within 8 seconds of each other! BTYC was delighted to be able for the first time to invite members from the other clubs into their new clubhouse – still not quite finished, but looking great.

The social nature of these events is almost more important than the racing, and we hope that many sailors will visit Poole on August 2/3 for the annual Round the Island races – Brownsea Island, that is – with dinner in Poole YC followed by a relaxing Sunday of sailing, picnics and messing about on the beach.

Liz Hall



Winning team leader Alistair Lambert enjoying the race

Photo: Andrew Mott

Cruising Corner

OVERSEAS CRUISERS

I must apologise that this edition's Cruising Corner is a little below the standard that I would normally wish; a few days before Press Date my computer blew up, and I temporarily lost access to almost all my files. In particular I apologise to anyone who has recently emailed cruising news to me that I have been unable to pick up and include.

The headline forthcoming event is of course the National Cruising Week at Abersoch. At the time of writing we have some entries in, but we would dearly like more; the handful of us who have already booked would like company! We are confident that we can offer you a highly enjoyable week of day cruising in company, with a convivial social side as well, so we would warmly encourage all the regulars and also any members new to cruising to join us there.

As well as that event, we also have Ivan's weekend at Bala (July 5/6), my Anglesey Cruising Week (last complete week of August, 25-30), and the Weir Quay Weekend (August Bank Holiday weekend, 23-25).

And the hardy and experienced minority are warmly invited to join me on a "reconnaissance cruise", sailing from Abersoch to Aberdovey and back, over a period of a few days, during the week following the National Cruising Week. Apart from being (I hope) an enjoyable cruise for its own sake, I am exploring the possibility of putting this on as an official event in two years' time - celebrating our historic links with Aberdovey - for our 60th anniversary year in 2010. This is, however, a serious open water cruise, and is only for individuals who feel that they are sufficiently experienced, and whose boats are sufficiently well-found.

For myself at least, this season has got off to an exceptionally slow start, owing in large measure to the unprecedentedly poor weather in the early part of the season. Easter weekend kicked off at my home club with force 9, no less, overnight, and force 5-6 in the daytime while the tides served, and with air temperatures of only 3-4°C and water temperatures not much different. Not only did we all decide that

discretion was the better part of valour, but very exceptionally on the Saturday I officially cancelled all sailing for reasons of safety, and I later drove home through sleet and hail! And it was not until several weeks later that we actually had some weather that was enjoyable for sailing.

So there was absolutely no temptation to take the boat over to Anglesey or the Lakes for a few days in the early part of the season. And more recently, A Level examining duties have prevented any question of doing so now.

A capsizing in mid-May pointed out a couple of salutary lessons. The occasion was a Wednesday evening when I had a session of my regular shore-based Seamanship Course, and the tide was convenient to take the trainees sailing rather than having a classroom session. I was sailing a yacht, and I had lent my GP14 A Capella to one of the trainees who many years previously had sailed dinghies with us for several seasons, but who was now a little rusty. He managed to capsize her, and when he subsequently crewed for me in her about a fortnight later and commented on how stable the boat was I couldn't resist the riposte that it all depends on how she is sailed! He took that in good part.

At first I attempted a rescue with the yacht. That was an interesting exercise in boat handling, but although we succeeded in putting her - under sail - stationary alongside the masthead of the capsized GP so that we could lift the end of the mast, for some reason the dinghy would not come up, even though we were lifting hard enough to be able to see the mast bending under the strain. With the timely arrival on scene of a RIB and with a slight risk of hypothermia becoming a concern the two dinghy sailors were then rapidly ferried ashore, and the GP was left for recovery later.

We then sailed the yacht back to her mooring and subsequently used a RIB to recover the GP. By that point the dinghy had been capsized for an hour or more, and although this time she came up perfectly easily we found that the forward and underfloor buoyancy was badly flooded. Towing her home, we eventually managed to empty the cockpit via the self-

bailers, and I could then see small horizontal fountains of water cascading out from the underfloor tanks into the self-bailer sockets. The lesson here is that, even with a virtually new boat, one needs to check buoyancy for leakage on at least an annual basis, if not more frequently. Hatches need particular attention in these checks.

Next time I came to sail her I found that the mainsail (brand new last summer) was jamming at the bottom of the track, making it very difficult to lower or reef sail, and particularly difficult should it be necessary to do so at sea. The lesson here is that a bad capsize may strain sails or other equipment, and it all needs a careful check over afterwards. Both these problems have yet to be sorted out.

Part of the reason that these two problems have not yet been sorted is that once the season got underway I have spent far more time sailing yachts than sailing the GP. That has been a delight, and arises largely because we have a number of new members who are as yet beginners and who have bought yachts as their first boats, and several of them are delighted to have an old hand who is willing to sail with them and show them

the ropes. Indeed one of them has even given me my own key to the yacht, and an invitation to borrow her any time I like.

The magnet is insidious, and I confess that I have at last capitulated. In retirement I originally very deliberately downsized back to dinghies, albeit with considerable reluctance, because I no longer wanted the cost and labour of upkeep of a bigger boat, but I have now decided that once I can release the necessary capital (from an impending house move) I will be looking for another yacht. I may however, for the first time in my life, go for Tupperware rather than the traditional wood that I love so much, for ease of upkeep. When I told my godson that I was starting to look towards yacht ownership again, his only surprise was that it had taken me so long!

However this time I shall not make the mistake of parting with the GPs, and I shall continue to sail both.

CRUISING LOGS

With the somewhat delayed UK summer now approaching, at last, we can hope that there will be a lot of cruising activity over the next few months. So a



reminder to all that you are warmly invited and encouraged to write up some of your more interesting and/or more enjoyable cruises and enter for this year's Cruising Log Trophy. Now that we have got this off the ground it would be good to see the entries increase year by year, and this seems an appropriate time to put in a plug for the competition.

We would also welcome more cruising logs for the website. I am periodically told that members greatly enjoy reading the ones that are currently up there, but we really do need to keep up the supply of new material. It would also be helpful, and interesting, to see what the rest of you have done, rather than the overwhelming preponderance being my ones.

While on the topic of logs, there were some excellent cruises in the early days of the class. Some young members cruised a GP from Lee on Solent to Dungeness in one cruise, and to Weymouth in another; others crossed the English Channel and the Irish Sea, and there were several other notable cruises. Accounts of at least some of these were printed in the Handbooks of the time, and I am about to start scanning these so that these accounts also can be put of the website.

Watch this space!

MERSEY TO DEE CRUISE

This event, run by my home club, but with an open invitation to members of the GPI4 Class Association, was an ambitious undertaking: a weekend cruise of around 30 miles in each direction, sailing two major estuaries and a substantial length of exposed coastline between them, and overnighing at Dee Sailing Club. It was the first time we had attempted to run anything on this scale, and the entry list attracted a mixed fleet of

yachts and dinghies and dayboats, although, when the time came, not all boats actually made it to the start.

In the event, the weather was such that we took the decision to shorten course, and make it just a one-day cruise staying within the Mersey. Winds were NNW 4, and the stretch of coast between the two estuaries is very shoal, and in those conditions it becomes a very exposed and potentially dangerous lee shore; an hour before we finally took the decision the water there was reported as being a mass of white horses. So I decided that the seamanlike decision was to remain within the Mersey, and instead we sailed just to New Brighton, at the mouth, and then back on the late afternoon flood tide. Even that, with wind against tide, gave near-vertical walls of water in the Garston Channel, and almost everyone not only reefed but was very thankful to have done so.

Everyone who took part seemed to thoroughly enjoy the day, including in particular our visitors from the Association (and members of Dee S.C.), Rob Barlow and Pete Beardsmore, who reckoned they had had the sail of their lives. Certainly it is an event that we will try to programme again in future years, when we hope that the weather may be kinder to us.

MARINE VHF

The Dee Cruise and an earlier upriver cruise, in addition to the capsized and rescue reported above, all amply demonstrate the benefits of most boats having marine VHF aboard. It was immensely useful to be able to communicate with the safety boats, and indeed with the other sailing boats, so that all involved were aware of what was happening to individual boats, and so that the cruise leader could liaise with the rest of the fleet.

I have lost count of the number of cruises over the last couple of years when this has been most useful, and with handheld sets now starting at under £50 (indeed I think under £40) it is something which I continue to strongly recommend. Those who don't already have an Operator's Licence (the Short-Range Marine VHF Certificate) do need to do the course, but it is only a one-day course, and it is well worthwhile. While I put it no higher than a recommendation, I would like to see this become as much part of the accepted standard equipment for cruising boats as anchors or oars or personal buoyancy.



everyone not only reefed but was very thankful to have done so.



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CRUISING LOG TROPHY

Alert readers of our website will have noticed that at the beginning of May we announced that the first ever winners of the new Cruising Log Trophy are Rob and Gill Paul, of Bolton Sailing Club, for their log Cruising Virgins, which described their first foray into cruising at last year's Abersoch Weekend.

We had originally intended to present the trophy at the Dinghy Exhibition, but unfortunately for very pressing reasons the winners were unable to make this date, so we presented it instead during the Prizegiving for the Northern Bell meeting at their home club on 27th April.

At this first time round there were unfortunately only two entries, despite our extending the deadline, the other one being also excellent, Philip Hoath's log Bala or Bust. The judges, a panel consisting of the President of the Association, the current Cruising Representative and his immediate predecessor, felt that both logs made very good reading and both very nicely illustrated the enjoyment of a cruising event. We also felt that both would enthuse others, and that they successfully shared the enjoyment of the event with the reader and conveyed the impression that the author/s would want to repeat the experience.

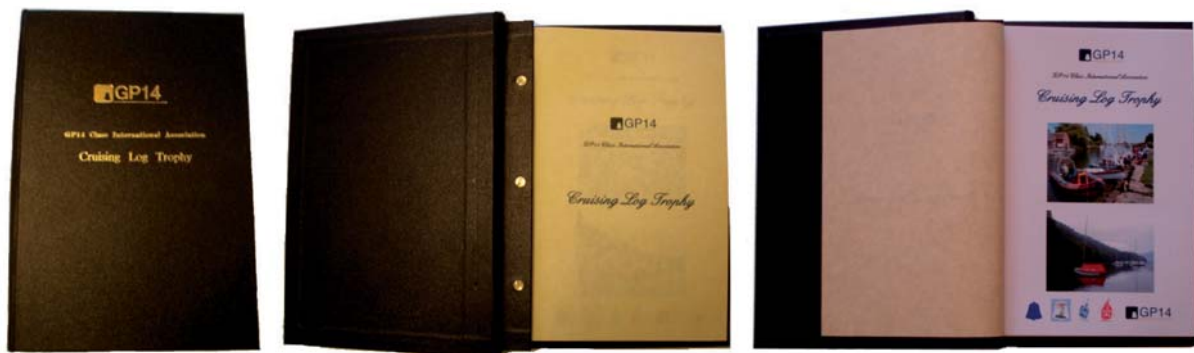
It was a narrow decision, and partly swayed by the fact that the winning entry related to cruising in 2007 whereas Bala Or Bust related to an event in an earlier year. We had said from outset that we would accept and indeed encourage entries relating to earlier years, but that other things being equal we would give preference to logs pertaining to the current year. We felt that this tilted the balance, and that Cruising Virgins was an excellent and enthusing report of an event that, with a lucky break in the weather, was a great success:

indeed Ivan (who had organised it) commented that they even convinced him!

Many of you will have already read both accounts; Cruising Virgins has already appeared in Mainsail and both are also currently posted on the website. If you haven't yet read them I can commend them both as being well worth a read.

The trophy itself is a perpetual book, in which the winning log each successive year will be written up in hand done calligraphy. We are very fortunate in having secured the services of an excellent calligrapher, and everyone who has seen the final result has been most impressed with both the quality of his work and with what an attractive trophy has been produced. We hope to be able to "borrow" it back from the holder in order to show it to participants in the UK National Cruising Week and also have it on display at the Prizegiving for the Worlds.

My only anxiety for the future is that said calligrapher is now well into his eighties and is a little frail, so we don't know how long into the future he will be able to





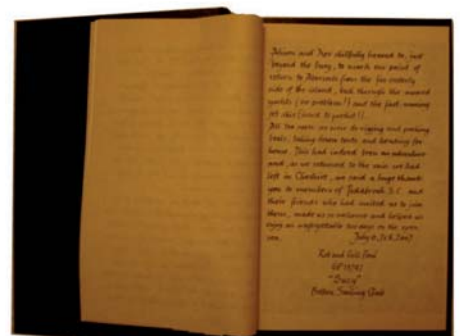
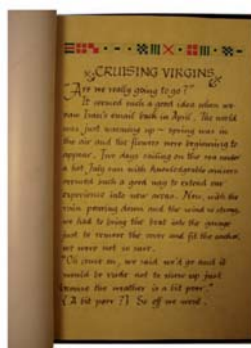
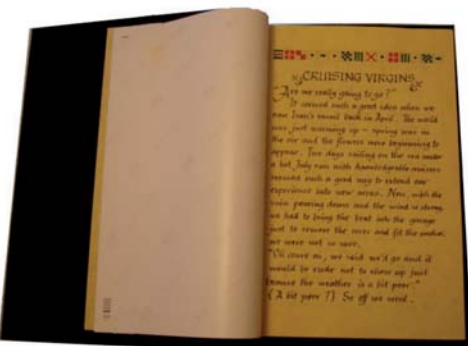
continue, but we will cross that particular bridge when we have to!

Finally may I use this space to put in a “plug” for the present year’s competition. I would warmly encourage all members who use their boats for cruising to enter, even if it is only occasional day cruising when there is no racing available!

Anything that enables the reader to share your enjoyment of your cruise is an excellent start; anything that is at all adventurous (by your own standards, that is, as opposed to actually adventurous in the manner of Frank Dye) is even better. Likewise anything that adds some further interest to your account would put you

well into the running; a family day-sailing holiday with children, combining a sailing holiday with some other interest (bird-watching, painting, photography, you name it . . .), or whatever. This year’s winner happened to be an account of an organised cruising event, and clearly that is entirely suitable, but logs of your own private cruising with just a single boat are equally acceptable.

We really would like to see this competition take off now, with an increasing crop of entries each year, and we would also like to see this help to stimulate interest in cruising. And that includes perhaps suggesting cruising as an additional and hugely enjoyable sailing experience even for the dedicated racers!



BLACKWATER CRUISING IDEAS

The Blackwater and Colne estuaries with their associated fleets, creeks and sailing clubs is one of the finest sailing locations in the UK and ideal for the dinghy cruiser. Arnold Bennett wrote in the log of his yacht 'Velsa' about the Blackwater: 'it is a noble stream, a true arm of the sea; its moods are more various, its banks wilder, and its atmospheric effects much grander. The season for cruising on the Blackwater is September, when all the village regattas take place, and the sunrises over leagues of marsh are made wonderful by strange mists.'

Running broadly east-west, the shallower northern shore is unspoilt, but has very few access points. Launching and parking can be problem, so contact with one of the clubs is always a good option. Many of the smaller clubs' slips are tidal, so one is looking at an outing between tides of a minimum of 8 hours (max 16 hours). The exceptions are Brightlingsea on the Colne, West Mersea, and - on the southern side - Bradwell and the Marconi and Stone sailing clubs, which have access at all states of the tide. The latter club at St Lawrence, being central, is possibly the best starting point. The tide runs strongly on the deeper southern side, but it is easy to use this to visit the pubs at Maldon or Heybridge basin or for a picnic on Osea Island beach. The upper reaches are accessible only at high tide and the ebb is then useful to bring you home. You need to be aware that at high tide beaches are rare and the waves on the concrete-covered sea walls can be very unforgiving; for this reason, visits to the pub at villages like Goldhanger would need to be planned.

My home club Tollesbury is another good cruising base - parking and launching 2 hours either side of high water is easy. It is possible to take the flood up to Stone, then return on the ebb past Bradwell and then perhaps pay a visit to West Mersea for a great seafood lunch at the renowned 'Company Shed' or for other refreshments. But although West Mersea does have access at all tidal states via a public hard, it can be very congested with boats and cars. Continuing on the ebb tide, East Mersea Stone has a shingle beach even at low tide but no access or facilities. However, opposite East Mersea is Brightlingsea creek - another prime destination with excellent fish and chips and plenty of pubs! Fully restored, one would then take the flood back along Mersea Island and into the Tollesbury fleet. My preference however, being a mere racer and not having yet fitted the Ikea futon, is a quick dart to the café at Mersea on the tide for an all day breakfast!

Visiting Rowhedge or Wivenhoe on the Colne would be possible by leaving West Mersea or Brightlingsea at

Haldon Hythe Quay

Photo: Julia Slack





half tide and taking the flood up the Colne. Both of these villages have tall quays, fascinating ship buildings, histories and waterfront pubs. A good guide is Jack Cootes – ‘East Coast Rivers’ – probably well out of print now but worth finding; alternatively club web sites (eg www.tollesburysc.co.uk) will have plenty of information. Cruising visitors will be made very welcome here at Tollesbury, it is also the only club on the Blackwater with an active GPI 4 racing/cruising fleet.

George Rogers, Tollesbury SC

And from a slightly different viewpoint, here are a couple of good cruising ideas from Steve Browne of Leigh on Sea SC:

I have raced GPI 4s for about 25 years, but have also found some great places to cruise from on the East Coast. This area has lots of small creeks and rivers – perfect for exploring in a GP.

My first suggestion is to cruise from Brightlingsea to Wivenhoe. You can set off from Brightlingsea hard, sail out of the creek and turn right into the River Colne. It’s best to start on an incoming tide. Keep going north until you get to Wivenhoe – where you might see a Thames barge on the Quay. You should be able to follow the ebb tide out.

My second cruise is round Mersea Island. This is a long sail, but not hard to navigate. It may be best to go in company with another GPI 4. Brightlingsea SC has good launching.

The weather will play a big part in when you come to plan your trip.

Stephen Browne, GP 13823

Haldon Hythe Quay

Photo: Julia Slack





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