

# mainsail



Bumper edition: read about Mike Senior's new boat



## 2012 subscriptions

We are pleased to say that for the second year running there will be no increase in subscription rates next year. They are:

<b>Full Member</b>	<b>£29</b>	(£27)
<b>Associate Member</b>	<b>£22</b>	(£20)
<b>Youth Member</b>	<b>£14</b>	(£12)

The figures in brackets are the amounts after deduction of the £2 discount applied to all subscriptions paid by direct debit.

The Direct Debit payment will be collected on or immediately after 1 January 2012

## Online shop

The web team is pleased to announce a new online shop feature on the website. At the moment the shop enables you to join the Association, renew your membership and buy a small amount of GP14 merchandise. In the near future we will be offering online entry to major events and increasing the number of items of merchandise in the shop. This is the first of a number of exciting projects to improve and enhance the Association's website and electronic communications.

Cover: Simon Potts and Chris Robinson at the Nationals, with Colin Midgley and Justin Smith close behind.

photo: Andy Bury

## Editor's letter

Autumn is the time to look back over the summer and to make plans for next year. On the whole, 2011 has been a good season for the GP14 as you can see from the reports of the Area Reps and from the sections dealing with Racing and Training – the latter including a report from the youth sailors who attended the Howard Davies training week. Fixtures planning is well in hand for 2012 and Matt Thursfield has written an article to give a flavour of Looe, the venue for next year's major event, the World Championship.

Looking back over the season's racing will inevitably tend to highlight the winners, but one of the good things about dinghy racing is that it's enjoyable and exciting even if you are nowhere near the front of the fleet. Check out Phil Green's *A severe case of wind!*

It's even more fun, some say, if you don't race at all. The cruising section is expanded in this issue to include a report from Josh Bennett, one of the younger sailors at the Bala weekend, and an amazing account by Stewart Elder of his summer of cruising, which included a trip through the Caledonian canal – quite an achievement!

Most Mainsail readers are racers, however, and there are several articles to help you gain a competitive edge – a review by Hugh Brazier of a book you might want for Christmas, an account by National Champions Stuart Bithell and Christian Birrell of their experience of sailing the new Boon GP14, and another in Ian Dobson's series of tactical sailing notes, *Alarm Bells*.

Mike Senior's fascinating account of his new boat and the changes he has made so that it will go even faster than his previous one is a must-read for racers, but will also intrigue anyone interested in the technical aspects of how a boat works. Why was I amused to note that he goes for a very stiff mast? Take a look at Alan Butler's reminiscences of boat development in the 60s to find out!

I hope you enjoy this Mainsail. Please keep your contributions coming in.

Season's greetings

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narrow streets between quaint fishermen's cottages in Looe, which hosts the Worlds in 2012



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

design: Tamasin Cole, www.harperandcole.co.uk

## President's piece

2011 was a sailing season overshadowed in the North of England, Scotland and Ireland by extreme weather which curtailed many enthusiastic plans for a season of competitive racing or cruising. However, our boat-builders have used 2011 as a year to consolidate their efforts to ensure they have the best possible products for the 2012 season.

Steve Boon of Boon Boats completed the moulds for his new hull last February, these moulds being used by Ovington Boats for the production of the Ovington/Boon GP14. The prototype was shown to the public for the first time at the dinghy exhibition at Alexandra Palace last March and attracted huge interest from the visiting public and the yachting press alike, one comment on the Yachts and Yachting forum declaring Steve's offering to be 'the boat of the show'.

David Winder of Winder Boats has made exciting improvement to the Winder GP14, with still further modifications in the pipeline (see his ad on page 22); these will be completed ready for the start of the 2012 season. Ovington and Winder are renowned for the quality and consistency of their construction, both builders being recognised as being the best epoxy dinghy builders in the world. I feel very proud that they have chosen to invest so heavily in our class – I wish them well for the future and hope that sales will be buoyant in the forthcoming seasons.

Current world champion builder Alistair Duffin continues to make further improvements to his outstanding wooden hulls with changes to the foredeck area around the mast gate and modifications around the aft deck – all will be revealed at the 2012 dinghy exhibition at Alexandra Palace!

All three builders have taken a major title in 2011, Alistair Duffin's boat lifted the World title, the National Championship went to Steve Boon's 14091, whilst David Winder's offering, raced by Hollingworth Lake SC, won the 24hr race for the second year in succession. This victory followed a

head-to-head battle with the second-placed team of South Staffs SC racing a Duffin. Flat out racing over 24hrs and only metres in it at the finish, a testimony to the crews of each club and to the competitiveness of both wooden and epoxy hulls.

The 2011 Endeavour Trophy 'champion of champions' regatta was another memorable event in the dinghy world. Our National Champion, Stuart Bithell, sailed with top crew Matt Johnson for the weekend, the pair producing an outstanding performance and finishing 5th overall,

Your committee has spent much time and effort considering the best ways to promote our Class and Association at club level. Training was agreed to be one of the most effective ways of focusing the Association's benefits to our members at club level. Phil Hodgkins stepped into the role of training co-ordinator and, with senior coach Adam Parry, has demonstrated what can be done with effort and commitment. I am sure there will be much more written about their efforts elsewhere in this Mainsail – from me it's a resounding well done to Phil and Adam for a magnificent effort.

Part of the training coordinator's remit is to organise the Howard Davies Youth Training Week, previously held at Plas Menai North Wales. For the first time this was held at Crosby Water Sports Centre, Marine Lake Crosby, Liverpool. The £10 million centre offers water sports, activities for young and old alike, a fitness suite and fitness classes, first-class conference and meeting suites plus the fantastic Lakeside Bar and Bistro, as well as overnight accommodation. You can read an account of this very successful week on page 29.

Many of this year's racing and cruising events have been very well covered both online and in Yachts & Yachting. We can now receive statistical feedback on how many hits we have had on GP14 reports posted on Yachts & Yachting online; it all makes for some very informative reading.

photo: Liz Hall



The 2011 Nationals at Abersoch

From the information received it is clear that every report we publish in Yachts & Yachting is read by many hundreds of GP14 followers and the sailing fraternity in general, confirming that our postings are valued by the readership and are an excellent way of promoting our class and its activities – all for free!

Congratulations to Matt Thursfield for his brilliant contributions covering each day's racing at this year's National Championships at Abersoch and more recently the Inland Championship at Blithfield. These reports, combined with the excellent photos from Andy Bury, made the coverage of our premier championships the best of all classes. I think we may have broken a record or two having results, reports and photos on our site and on Yachts & Yachting in a matter of only an hour or two following each day's racing at the Nationals. One unique feature was the provisional result of the championship being posted on Twitter within a minute of the winner crossing the finishing line – by the time Stuart arrived on shore and picked up his phone there were a number of emails and texts congratulating him on his victory! Definitely a first for Stuart, all down to the handy work of Andy Bury and Twitter.

Whilst talking about Andy Bury, congratulations are in order as he has taken over as Hon Sec from Peter Guest. I would like to take this opportunity to wish Andy all the best of luck in his new role; I am sure that he will be a huge asset to the Association and I look forward to working with him over the forthcoming months. I would also like to thank Peter for his support over the

last three years, and wish him a long and happy retirement with more time in the future for his gardening and his avid support for Manchester City.

The Championship Committee, under the leadership of Gill Beddows, is doing a sterling job, with excellent Championships in 2011 – the high spot being the National Championship, an all-round top-class event both on and off the water, rounded off on the Friday night by a brilliant evening's entertainment. It was the icing on the cake to see the dance floor packed, the entire party on its feet dancing to DJ Connor McNamara (age 17) – what an end to the evening! How much more can the foundations of SCYC take? A question: is Connor booked for 2012? The Championship Committee report will be found elsewhere in this Mainsail. There are one or two changes planned for next season, so make sure you study Gill's report. A huge thanks from me and the rest of the committee for all the work this sub-committee is doing to keep our championships at the cutting edge of dinghy racing.

On the cruising front, Oliver Shaw is working hard arranging cruises for our enthusiastic cruising fraternity – his report is on page 43. Oliver intends to retire at next year's AGM after many years service as Cruising Representative: this will be a sad loss and his enthusiasm and knowledge will be sorely missed. Fortunately we have a willing volunteer to take over from him – Edward Washington has volunteered for General Committee duties for this year and will take over from Oliver next August.

### The Association is looking for a new treasurer – can you help?

I would also like to single out Sue, our Admin Secretary, for doing an absolutely fantastic job. Sue is the voice at the end of the GP14 phone line and the person who makes the initial response to all emails and copes with all the problems, big or small – well done Sue and thank you for doing a brilliant job.

Each member of our very enthusiastic committee has given excellent support to projects in the last two years which have taken our Class Association forward. Communication with our membership via our outstanding Mainsail magazine and brilliant website has boosted our membership and support for our Class Association.

Statistics show that the constant haemorrhaging of our membership numbers over the last twenty

years has been well and truly stemmed; I believe this is even more remarkable when you consider the financial situation in the world. I am rather disappointed, however, that there are still sailors who exploit the good nature of the Association by competing in our events without being members of the Association. If these sailors paid their dues we could even see a slight rise in our membership figures! Each time a competitor enters an event or championship they sign a declaration that they are members of the GP14 Class International Association and we will be tightening up our procedures in 2012 in order to put a stop to any abuse of the system.

All the best for Christmas and the New Year,  
*Ian Sinclair, President*



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 Windermere LA23 3DH  
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Andy Bury, the Association's new Hon. Sec.

### New Hon. Secretary

Andy took up sailing quite recently, in 2003. Sitting on the beach at Abersoch with his family, waiting for his friend Gary Deigham to come ashore, he had one of those life-changing moments and decided 'I must get into this'. He joined Bolton Sailing Club and Gary taught him to sail and to crew for him. His organisational talents and interest in the GP14 were quickly spotted and he was appointed Fleet Captain after a couple of years.

His involvement with the running of the GP14 Association began when fellow member Ian Sinclair, who was Championship Chairman at that time, asked him to stand in for him at a General Committee Meeting. One of the features of that particular meeting was a brainstorming session to investigate how the GP14 Association could improve for the 21st century. When the subject of the website came up, Andy offered his services and has been responsible for it almost ever since. He has worked very hard to make it one of the Association's most important promotional tools, communicating more effectively with our members and attracting new ones.

He sees the Hon Sec's job as complimentary to what he does already and works in close co-operation with Sue Sinclair, the Admin Secretary on the Office as well as members of the sub-committees. He knows the fleet well and hopes to get around to as many venues as possible this year.

We wish him all the best in his new position.

### Association Treasurer

After six years as Treasurer, I intend to stand down at the next AGM. We are, therefore, seeking a replacement to take on this vital role.

Contrary to what people believe, you do not have to be a financial genius to do the job – after all I seem to have managed OK. Neither do you need to be an accountant since most of the job involves making online payments once a month and producing income and expenditure returns three or four times a year for the F&G (Finance and General Purposes) Committee and General Committee meetings. It doesn't involve any book-keeping since this is done by Sue in the office.

The specialist work such as producing annual accounts and tax returns is done by the accountants who also provide valuable support when needed.

The position also involves being an Association officer and, as such, being part of the five-person F&G Committee, which meets via telephone conference approximately once per month, and the General Committee which meets two Saturdays per year. Lately we have been meeting in Wigan.

In addition to the meetings, the job probably requires approximately one hour a week and is not particularly demanding. You need an ability to handle figures, be computer literate (most work is done on the computer) and, although the annual accounts are produced by our Accountants, an appreciation of profit and loss accounts and balance sheets would be helpful, but can easily be learnt to the necessary level.

It would be ideal if someone were able to share and learn the job prior to the formal handover next August. If you would like to discuss it with me, please contact the office.

*Maurice Cooper*

# Racing

## Championship committee report

So, another Championship year over. It takes a tremendous amount of work and manpower to put it together, and I would like to thank all the Clubs who hosted events during the season.

It's been very busy for the Committee, starting with a request for us to review the Fleet allocation after the Grand Prix season had started. I think on the whole our ideas were right but a review and tweak will be needed over the next few weeks preparatory to next year's series.

The Grand Prix Series of ten events this year was well attended, but overall we had fewer entries and only a similar number of qualifiers to 2010. Disappointing really, and clearly we haven't got the formula right yet!

Speed Sails were our title sponsors and provided a complete set of sails which were won by Andy Wadsworth in a free draw. Mike Senior, Matt Thursfield, Andy Wadsworth, and Sam Blocksidge were the winners of the free entry prizes to the World Championship 2012.

### The Nationals Abersoch 2011

It was obvious from the word go that we had our work cut out getting the numbers for this event. You were all tired of the venue and for those who did go we had to make you feel wanted (as one competitor said to me). In the end, 52 boats entered and I was very pleased with that number.

It proved to be much easier than I anticipated to make everyone happy – a beer and a hot pasty at tallying each day, and I instantly became very popular – the best thing since sliced bread. Good news, you may think, but now I have the problem of satisfying all the customers at the Worlds next year – what will I do I wonder? The race officer did a good job on course setting and there was some spectacular racing. A nail-biting finish as the last race had to be sailed to determine the National Champions, Stuart Bithell and Christian Birrell.

Our sponsors for this event were Allen, Steve Parker and Elite Sails, Chloe Brennan, Nuffield

Health, P&B and bestforsailors.com. Many thanks to all of them for the daily prizes.

Dates for all major Championships are shown overleaf and details will be on the website.

Many of you have responded to our request for feedback on any of the events and some valued comments have been made and acted upon. I hope that many more of you will keep us informed of your feelings about both the good points and more contentious issues.

Finally, thanks must go to my Committee for their unwavering support and ideas.

*Gill Beddow, Championship Chairman*

## Grand Prix Series 2011

The Grand Prix concept of a nationwide traveller's circuit, where the fleet meet up at each of the area championships, at a nominated open meeting for each area, as well as at the two national events, is still in its early days. To encourage participation this year there were four prizes on offer worth almost £200 each: entry into next year's Worlds in Looe for each of the fleet winners, as well as for first youths. Speed Sails sponsored the series which gave an additional incentive that all qualifiers stood the chance to win a suit of Speed Aeroweb sails. To get into that pot, a helm had to sail a minimum of four events, at least one of which had to be the Inland or the National Championship, with no more than two scores from the nominated Open meetings.

It was at the Welsh Harp that the ball started rolling with the Southern nominated event in early April. A fleet of 39 sailed in a steady force 2–3 breeze with three different race winners – Mike Senior/Connie Hicklin in race 1, Rob Janering/Charlotte Cotter in race 2, and Richard Lord/Lorna Davies in race 3. Mike and Connie took the event from Sam Blocksidge and Chris Cook who were consistently up there without taking a race.

photo: Andy Bury



At the Nationals 2011

Next on the circuit was the two-day Northern Areas at Hollingworth Lake. A windy forecast proved accurate, with some serious gusts coming through, especially on the Sunday where plenty of crews tested the water temperature after being battered by the Westerly breeze. There were 30 boats challenging for victory; with race wins for Mike/Lizzie Senior, Rick Cornes/James Goodfellow and Matt Thursfield/Sarah Froggatt. The event was taken by Mike and Lizzie, giving them early control of the Series, the other two race winners being silver-fleeters who were able to sail well in the higher wind speeds.

Next, the fleet travelled up to Annandale for the Scottish Areas, the second two-day event on the circuit, where 23 boats battled for supremacy in a perfect force 2–3 breeze giving great racing throughout the weekend. Race winners here included Dave Young/Seonaid Fleming, Andy Tunnicliffe/Chris Robinson, Dave and Lynn Lawson. Winning the event with a race to spare were Andy and Chris, ahead of the Lawsons.

Back to the northern area for the fourth event, on the marine lake at West Kirby for a day of two halves: wind in the morning, calm in the

afternoon. Morning champions were Lee Thomas/Stuart Whiteside, who however saw their great results fall away after lunch when Pete Jacques/Pete Tait came to the front in the light airs to take the event, Innes Armstrong/Dan Wood claiming second place.

Back down south again, criss-crossing the country to Brightlingsea in Essex, where Ross Kearney/Ed Bradburn showed their metal, taking the victory ahead of Dave Young/Seonaid Fleming.

It was the Nationals week next, one of the two must-sail events for qualification into the Speed Sails Grand Prix. Of the front runners in the Series, it was Mike and Lizzie Senior who cemented their position at the front of the fleet; in silver and bronze no-one really helped their cause as the standard of the gold fleet was such that the top 15 spots were taken by sailors who were not in their qualifying group.

South Staffs followed the Nationals, the first of three events in the Midlands. A huge fleet of 39 on a relatively small piece of water saw Mike Senior continue his dominance in the congestion around the racetrack. Richard Instone/Jim Toothill

Any ideas about how to get more qualifiers for the Grand Prix Series? Let us know at [www.gp14.org](http://www.gp14.org)

took a race win to take second overall, with Matt Thursfield gaining a 5th place here, to take some control of the destination of the silver fleet.

Next, a brief sortie out of Staffordshire up to Arran off the west of Scotland, where David and Jackie Gebhard took the event ahead of the Lawsons, in light airs with a strong tide.

Back to the Midlands for the penultimate events of the Grand Prix, the re-arranged Midland Areas, held at Manor Park. Paul Owen, crewed by Steve Parker won the event against 14 other boats in light fickle airs, ahead of Andy and Rob Smith.

The final weekend of the Grand Prix took place at Blithfield in the middle of October. A strong fleet battled over two days in great GP weather, with the race officer setting fantastic courses. Mike

Senior, crewed on this occasion by Chris White, took the event and with it the Speed Sails Grand Prix. Pushing them all the way were Richard Instone & Jim Toothill.

Overall Silver fleet winners were Matt Thursfield crewed by Sarah Froggatt, just beating top youths Sam Blocksidge and Chris Cook; leading the bronze fleet were Andy Wadsworth and Helen Allen. The latter were also the lucky winners of the draw for the suit of Speed Aeroweb sails.

There were 19 qualifiers in the traveller's circuit. If anyone out there has any recommendations on how we can get more people to qualify, email your ideas to the committee using the 'contact us' tab on the website.

*Matt Thursfield*

## World Championship Looe 2012

Plans are well ahead for this major event in the GP14 Calendar. The Championship Committee have just returned from a weekend of meetings and preparations with Looe Sailing Club to give you an event to remember, a spectacular week of sailing and socialising.

Maximum numbers are 130 and to date there are 49 entries with a lot of interest both in the UK and in Sri Lanka and South Africa. Keep those entries coming in, as I am intent on a full entry; it's only £30 to get your name on the list, the balance of £160 due by the beginning of June

2012. The appeal of a World Class event to sailors of all levels is the excitement of the large fleet and the gate start – such an adrenalin rush! Remember youth helms have a 25% discount on their entry fee and all-youth boats have a 50% reduction on entry fee.

We are not forgetting the family in Looe, as there are lots of local attractions to visit nearby, and many enticing things to entertain the children. Two lovely beaches, rock-pools, crabbing, pedalos at nearby Mill Pool, a narrow gauge railway up the valley to Liskeard and boat trips from the quay.

## Major Championships 2012

Inlands	Northampton SC	5–7 May
Masters Championship	Newquay SC	30 June/1 July
Irish Nationals	Balleyholme SC	21/22 July training day 20 July
Worlds	Looe SC	11–17 August
Youth Championship	Bolton SC	27/28 October



photo: Dan Stokes

The Inlands at Blithfield

## Grand Prix Series 2012

Inlands	Northampton SC	5–7 May
Scottish Area Championship	Largs YC	19/20 May <i>tbc</i>
Northern Area Championship	Derwent SC	14/15 July
North West Nominated Open	Bassenthwaite SC	28/29 July
Southern Nominated Open	Poole YC	5 August
Worlds	Looe SC	11–17 August
Midland Area Nominated Open	South Staffs SC	2 September
Welsh Area Championship	Llandudno SC	29/30 September
End of Season Championship	Royal Windermere YC	20/21 October

As you will see, the 2012 Grand Prix Circuit is looking very exciting, with some fantastic venues. There will be a few changes for the new Series, one being that the Inland Championship is moving to earlier in the year and is to be a three day event over the Mayday Bank holiday.

At the time of going to press, some dates are still to be arranged or confirmed, but we hope that the Area Championships will be fairly evenly spread over the six months, with four Nominated Open events to complete the Series.

The series will culminate with an End of Season Championship in October, a two day event with four races, hosted by Royal Windermere YC. This will be a standalone event with prizes, and on the Saturday evening there will be a Dinner and Prize Giving and a celebration of the year.

Just as we did in 2011, we are encouraging the youth element of our Class by giving any boat

helmed and crewed by youth sailors a 50% reduction on all Grand Prix events, while a youth helm will have a 25% reduction on entry fees. This is subsidised by the Association.

Please note that at all Grand Prix events, anybody sailing under the age of 18 will be required to bring along a form signed by their parents which will be a declaration and appointment of a Guardian if a parent cannot be present for all or part of the event, plus a Disclaimer of Liability. This is in line with procedure in other Classes and with RYA recommendations. Only a parent's signature will suffice. The form can be downloaded from the GP14 web site and there will be a reminder with each NOR. Failure to provide this form will result in the competitor's entry being rejected.

We look forward to an exciting and well-supported Grand Prix Series.

*Gill Beddow, Championship Chairman*



## Visiting Looe

In August 2012, just after the Olympic closing ceremony, the GP14 fleet from around the world will descend on Looe, Cornwall. By then the British squad potentially including the current GP National Champion, Stuart Bithell, will hopefully have won their fair share of medals in the Olympic regatta, just along the south coast at Weymouth.

Looe is accustomed to holding large sailing regattas, including the 2011 Enterprise Nationals as well as many other major events over the last few years. Located on the eastern edge of Cornwall at the mouth of the East & West Looe rivers, the place is geared to tourism and as you'd expect, there is a great range of accommodation available; from camping, caravanning, self-catering houses/flats and B&B's to first class hotels. A selection of accommodation websites can be found below. The recommendation from the GP14 Championship Committee is to get your accommodation booked as early as possible.

As far as self catering in Looe itself goes, the town is split in two, East and West. Both sides offer a range of places, many within walking distance of the sailing club on the East side. Car parking in Looe is a challenge, the town being made up of narrow streets between quaint fishermen's cottages with a plethora of eating places and shops aimed at the tourists and locals alike. The sailing club is located near the mouth of the river on the East Looe side of the town, access to which is through the narrow streets. There is only permit parking near to the club which means the week needs to be as car-free as possible. As far as launching is concerned, there are two wide slipways, one into the river, the other onto the beach, which will allow the large fleet to leave and return to shore easily.

The dinghy park is right next to the main beach of Looe, as well as the promenade which will be centre of boat storage for the duration of the championships. Sailing families will undoubtedly appreciate the fact that the sailors will be leaving and returning to the heart of Looe, pulling the

boats up the safe, sandy beach within a few metres of the clubhouse. For the more energetic, there are various coastal footpaths and inland walkways, with fantastic views of the racing area, as well as the choice of boating and fishing trips around the local coastline.

The surrounding area is definitely worth a visit; Bodmin Moor and the notorious Jamaica Inn are a short drive to the north, while 30 minutes drive to the east, crossing the river at Torpoint, takes you to the historic and busy naval city of Plymouth. This offers a chance to shop and visit the National Marine Aquarium. Head west and within 30 minutes of Looe you will find the Eden Project, where Tim Smit brought his inspirational ideas to reality in a disused clay pit, to highlight our relationship to the plants around us. The highlight of Eden is a platform high above the Tropical Rainforest biome where you stand way above the tallest trees, taking in the humidity and panoramic view. Also westwards are the fishing villages of Mevagissey and Mousehole as well as the county town of Truro.

Looe's Tourist Information office can be contacted on 01503 262072. You can find good accommodation information on the following websites:

<http://www.looeandpolperroholidays.co.uk>  
<http://www.cornishcollection.co.uk/>  
<http://www.looedirectory.co.uk>  
<http://www.looe.org/>

There is now a dedicated GP14 Worlds website, [www.gp14worlds.com](http://www.gp14worlds.com) on which all the latest news is being posted. To date there are already 49 entries towards the limit of 130 boats. Early entry helps the organising committee plan the week, as well as your wallet, saving almost 15% off your entry fee. Entry forms and further details can be found on the Worlds website. It really promises to be a great week.

Be part of it.

*Matt Thursfield*

## Winning the Nationals

We were offered the use of the all new Epoxy Boon Boats GP14 early on in 2011 for the National Championships at Abersoch. Although neither of us has spent much time sailing a GP14, both of us were keen to put the new product through its paces. We collected the boat on the Friday before the event and were very pleased with the build quality, finish and layout.

The boat has clearly been thought through from day one, with some very nice design features and a nice neat functional layout. As a crew, I particularly liked the extra cockpit space provided by the curved foredeck, and the removal of the washboards also gave the boat an open more modern feel, with all controls falling to hand. The through-deck sheeting leading to adjustable cars worked superbly, with very little friction and excellent access for adjustment. The non-slip floor provided an excellent grippy surface and remained dry at all times, thanks to the very efficient central bailer at the rear of the case.

We had no pre-conceptions on what were the 'correct' or 'fast' numbers in terms of rake, tensions, pre-bends etc given that the package was brand new in the class and a bit of an unknown quantity to us. Therefore, all the settings we used to win the Nationals were developed from our own feel for the boat, and by changing the setup until we thought the rig looked correct; they were not based on any existing tuning guides. This was a process of evolution over the week, and the following guide represents our thoughts at the end of the week. Consequently, some of the following guide could well be different to the class norm.

### Equipment

Hull: Boon Boats Epoxy GP14  
 Foils: Boon CNC Epoxy foils  
 Sails: Goacher laminate  
 Spars: Selden Cumulus



Stuart and Christian

### Static rig setup

Mast foot position: As far aft as legally possible (2830mm from transom to aft face of mast).

Rake: 22'0 feet (note that this is specific to Boon boats and accounts for the difference in transom shape).

Tension: 425lbs (Measured using a Harken digital gauge). This tension was established by applying tension until all the luff sag was removed. In extremely light conditions, ease tension to encourage a small amount of luff sag.

Pre-bend: 30mm (note this was only our static setup, see chocks section).

### Chocks

Chocks are effectively a tool for powering up or depowering. Chocks in front of the mast straighten the rig, creating a deeper, more powerful mainsail shape. Conversely, removing chocks or back-chocking bends the mast, thus flattening the mainsail.

We set up our mast with a base setting of 30mm pre-bend, which effectively gave us more options than those who set up with a straight mast. We used a large chock (15mm) to straighten the rig to around 5mm of pre-bend in any conditions between 6–18knots.

In conditions below 6 knots we removed the chock, which gave us 30mm of pre-bend and thus a flat mainsail and open leech which is desirable in very light winds (back-chocking would be an option if your spreaders were set with less pre-bend). If you are struggling to get the leech of your mainsail to fly open (i.e. the top



tell-tale won't fly), remove the chock in front of the mast which opens the mainsail leech. Similarly in +18 knots, we again removed the chock to flatten the mainsail. As a basic rule, if you are consistently over-powered, remove the chock.

### Kicker

Try to control leech tension by using only mainsheet tension for as long as possible and never use kicker until you are over-powered. Pulling on the kicker has the effect of bending the mast, and thus opening the leech which has a negative effect under 8 knots. The kicker should only be applied once you start having to ease the mainsheet to keep the boat flat. The more mainsheet you have to ease, the more kicker you need to apply. If you pull on as much as you can and the mainsail is still 'ragging' pull some Cunningham on.

### Jib car

On a Boon boat with a Goacher jib, set the jib cars so that the block on the track is just in front of the block which is screwed into the boat (about ¾ of the way back on the track). If you follow the line of the jib-sheet all the way to the jib luff, it should cross the jib luff about ¾ of the way up.

Some people adjust the jib cars to control the leech tension of the genoa in varying conditions. We didn't. Instead, we used sheet tension to control leech tension, which we believed was more than effective enough. The only possible exception to this rule would be in 20+ knots to assist in opening the leech when the boom was a long way off centre-line (speculative, as these were conditions we didn't experience).

### Inhaul/tack-line

Avoid using the supplied pin to hold your mainsail tack in place. Use a piece of rope to tie the tack around the mast (maximum of 10mm from the aft face of the mast).

### Steering

Upwind: As soon as you are over-powered it is all too tempting to pinch your way upwind, and depower through steering high. We found that all our speed gains came from depowering the rig more and steering a lower angle which was faster forward. This delivered a much more effective VMG (although it does require a bit more hiking!). Keep an eye on the waves at all time and try and steer around them as much as possible. Look for flat spots in the waves which will allow

Stuart and Christian pull away from the fleet

you to sail a higher angle without sacrificing speed. Due to the shape of a GP14, it is absolutely essential that the boat is sailed completely flat upwind.

Downwind: The helm has to be active in moving his/her body weight around to keep the helm balanced whilst steering around the waves. If you feel like the rudder keeps loading up, it will be because you aren't being active enough with your body weight in keeping the boat flat. Your aim is to keep the boat pointing downhill at all time. This is achieved by surfing waves for as long as possible. Try to steer in a way which allows you to avoid hitting the back of the wave in front of you. Be as active and versatile as possible with your steering. There are no hard and fast rules, just be inventive!

### Race strategy

Our primary aim for every start was to ensure we popped out the gate when we were lifted. If the pathfinder was lifted, we were happy to allow them to sail the lifted tack for us. Once we had popped out the gate, we always looked to maximise our options right up to the windward mark. This basically means staying in the middle of the course and on the long tack unless there

were any obvious gain features (e.g. tidal or geographical effects). In Abersoch, the long tack and the middle of the course was often heavily influenced by the strong tide. There were many tide lines in Abersoch which created big differences in tidal effects across the course, and this played a big part in our strategy. Generally, unless you have good reason to do otherwise always sail the lifted tack, and when you see a mean number on the compass sail towards the middle of the course.

### Summary

During the Championship week at Abersoch we had a wide variety of conditions from flat and light to breezy and lumpy. We found the boat performed equally well across the board. Given the weight and displacement of the GP14 we found this new design light and responsive to our input and quick from day one. All in all, a very stiff, well built and thought-out package, with pace on all points of sailing. Hopefully a step forward for the class.

Thanks Steve!

See you at the Worlds 2012 in Looe.

*Stuart Bithell & Christian Birrell*



## Youth Championships

Congratulations to the sixteen competitors and their crews who took part in the Youth Championship at Nantwich & Border Counties SC.

The event was won by Sam Watson/Andy Hunter, with Sam Blocksidge/Chris Cook second and Connie Hicklin/Adrian Walker third.



photos Edward Washington

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## A severe case of wind

### Phil Green

The yellow boat has once again been on its travels – this time we visited the Rochdale Riviera at Hollingworth Lake Sailing Club in order to take part in the GP14 2011 Northern Championship. The event took place over the weekend of 22–24 May.

It's only an hour away from York and so a short morning drive over the border and we were soon there. The forecast was for strong gusty winds with Saturday being the quieter of the two days. The boat was soon rigged, hellos were said to many old friends and acquaintances and we were treated to a gripping Race Officer's briefing.

By this stage the adrenalin junkie who sits towards the stern of the yellow boat could barely contain his excitement. It was his birthday – I think he is 19 again – just like a boy racer on speed. The more cautious chap who slumps towards the front of the yellow boat was much more subdued, having realised that many of the top GP14 sailors in the country were here and it was quite windy. They do say that adrenalin is brown.

The programme was for three races on the Saturday and two more on the Sunday. We were one of the first boats on the water – Steve was raring to go by this stage – getting out of the sheltered harbour with little water in it was interesting, but once out of the harbour mouth the wind hit us and we were off.

The course is displayed on the stern of the Committee boat – a series of letters which guides you around the course marks on the Lake, but as Alzheimer's is starting to set in with both the helm and crew this is more than challenging because you have to try to memorise the course. We were given paper maps of the lake which lasted about 5 minutes with all of the water and spray flying about.

It was a start with just one capsize on the line out of the 29 boats on the water – Dave and Anne Pugh turned up late and set off five minutes after the rest of us. We had a good start but quickly

settled into our usual position at the back of the fleet. The wind was not too bad and the crew was bullied into using the spinnaker. It's amazing how windy it gets at the gybe mark as soon as you hoist a spinnaker, and the crew was quickly regretting not having three shredded wheat for breakfast.

As usual at these events you quickly spot all of the other duffers at the back of the fleet and of course we set about trying to beat these boats. We soon realised that the trick this weekend would be to stay upright and sail past everyone who had capsized, broken their boat or who had a revolting crew. Survival was the name of the game!

We inevitably have our worst result in the first race of a championship and, being slaves to tradition, finished 25th out of 30 boats. There were three boats that did not finish the race and therefore it was a bit lonely towards the back of the fleet.

The first race showed that being as fat as possible was going to be a great asset this weekend, and so it was back to the club house for a cream tea and a ton of sponge cake. I love Hollingworth Sailing Club because the food is fantastic, they provide endless cups of tea and do not seem to mind you leaving huge puddles of water everywhere.

Races two and three followed on full stomachs and, as the wind was getting stronger by the minute, we were both thankful for the extra weight. We were lucky enough to have four casualties and a disqualification in the second race, which gave us a 24th followed by ten casualties in the 3rd race which gave us a very respectable 19th. The fool at the front of the boat refused to use the spinnaker after lunch and this proved to be the sensible option. It is still surprising how fast a GP14 will go when it is blowing hard across open water – it's just a shame that yellow boats do not seem to go as fast as the boring white ones do.



photo: Mike Shaw, fotoboats

The yellow boat

A return to shore showed the damage caused by the collisions and capsizes after the days racing – our president had a plate-sized hole in the side of his beautiful Duffin wooden GP – it's ironic that the last time we talked he was celebrating being promoted to the Gold fleet – the ups and downs of racing!

It was then back to the B&B across the road from the Club House for a shower and a lie down. We had the same room as we had for the Masters two years ago and thankfully the shower has fully recovered from its prostate problems.

The Club had laid on an evening BBQ for the competitors and we had a great night catching up with old friends and making new ones. The wind did cause problems for the BBQ as the heat got nowhere near the beef and lamb steaks. This was fine providing you could put up with the fact that the meat was still alive and swimming in a plate full of blood. However, I have to say that the rest of the food was fantastic, tons of it, wonderful puddings and lots of seconds for the birthday boy.

As predicted, Sunday was much windier than Saturday and ten sensible crews decided not to compete. I was fortunate in that I was standing next to Olly, Graham Knox's crew, watching the hailstones batter the boats and anyone preparing to sail when he announced he was disappointed he could not sail because although he had his really, really wet gear on, Knoxy was not going to sail. Quick as a flash, I offered him a nice comfortable berth in the yellow boat and I saved myself another battering. Hollingworth is Olly's home club; he is much fitter than your author and

better able to cope with the speed freak in the stern of the boat than me.

I went to the club house with about eight other crews to watch the racing and I have to say it was fantastic. There was a great deal of cheering, laughter, begging crews not to put spinnakers up, watching boats being knocked over on a beat, admiring two former world champions giving a synchronized capsize display at the second gybe mark; our new friend, Iain, from Scotland, was actually blown out of the boat and then pushed back into it without his helm even changing course; boats took the wrong course and then caused chaos trying to put matters right. Thankfully, I was forced to sit in the dry warm club house drinking cups of tea.

Some crews simply gave up halfway around the course, others struggled for a long time to right their boats in the strong wind and our friend Iain decided to sail into the shallow water on the far side of the Lake, remove the main because they could not keep the boat the right way up and then try to sail to the club house under the jib alone. Needless to say it was another rescue boat job.

Steve and Olly finish a creditable 11th in the race but were last on the water – the ploy to use a local expert had failed – it made no difference to the result.

The rather damp competitors then joined us in the club house for yet more food. The Race Officer had a real problem on his hands trying to decide whether or not to hold the last race. It was getting even windier as the day went on, and although it was clear that some crews were very keen to carry on, others had decided not to race. Most people agreed that the right decision was to cancel the final race.

The yellow boat finished 18th overall and third in the Bronze fleet – our best result as a crew. More importantly we both had a great weekend and we are now looking forward to the Worlds in 2012 (the entry is in, so watch out you fast guys!).

## Alarm bells

### Ian Dobson

#### Starting – duck or fox?

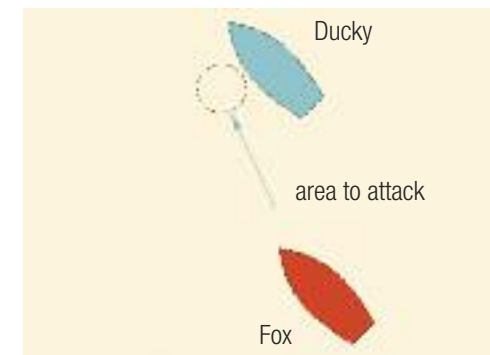
A common problem for anxious mid-fleet sailors is their misguided belief that being bow forward will lead to a good start. Whilst it may be possible to get away with this on the club's Sunday start line, it will lead to a far worse fortune at regional, national or international levels. The reasons for this go far beyond having your mainsail numbers on display. Blue is analogous to a sitting duck – blindly waddling into the open whilst the sly foxes bide their time to pounce.

Blue approaches the line before his colleagues and must slow in order to waste some time. While he is in this slow mode, reduced flow over the foils leads to increased sideways drift. Green, who timed his approach so that she may keep some speed, slips less.

The result is that Blue loses any gap to leeward that she may otherwise have had. Ducky is unable to bear away and accelerate for fear of the jaws of the leeward fox.

The fox cleverly attacks the space adjacent to the Duck's leeward shroud, thus maintaining control of the timing of the acceleration. (Of course the fox isn't really interested in the Duck; he prefers the Chick on the finish boat.) Next time you feel like a waddle, the alarm bells should be ringing...

*This time Iain is sharing an idea which has helped guide him round the race course.*





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### 2010 Results

1<sup>st</sup> GP14 Inland Championships  
 1<sup>st</sup> GP14 Midland Championships  
 1<sup>st</sup> GP14 Master Nationals

### 2011 Results

1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> GP14 Irish Nationals  
 1<sup>st</sup> GP14 Inland Championships  
 1<sup>st</sup> GP14 Northern Championships

### 2011 Results

2<sup>nd</sup> GP14 Scottish Nationals  
 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> GP14 Northern Championships  
 3<sup>rd</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> GP14 National Championships

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# Technical

## Technical advances in the 1960s

At the GP14 Class AGM held at the National Championships at Thorpe Bay Yacht Club on 25 August 1964, a Dr George Bilsbarrow representing the North American Branch suggested that if the Class were to grow in North America, fibre glass and metal spars should be permitted. Mr Jack Austin the President informed the meeting that fibre glass construction was to be referred to the Technical sub-committee for consideration and that Jack Holt the designer had been asked to draw up specifications for a metal mast and boom.

This announcement set in motion a considerable amount of activity among those responsible for introducing the necessary changes to keep the GP14 in the forefront of British dinghy sailing in the so-called swinging 60s.

As the Class Public Relations Officer at the time, I was co-opted to assist Derek Baker and the late Alan Setford to test and try the metal spars on offer. The specification drawn up by Jack Holt with its internal buoyancy of polystyrene did not find favour and the tender was extended to other manufacturers, some of whom soon fell out of contention due to the strict price restrictions imposed, as was usual at that time.

A local company in Southend-on-Sea, International Yacht Equipment (IYE), managed by international yachtsman Ken Pearce with his son Terry on the production side, responded with enthusiasm, and Terry produced a spar to the exact requirements specified by Jack Austin, ie. to replicate the existing wooden mast. This first attempt became known as the Telegraph pole!! Its profile exactly fitted the mast gate dimensions and, if steps had been welded on, it could easily have been climbed without bending or sideways movement. The Holt mast with its internal buoyancy was not much better. After further discussions between our Engineer, Derek Baker and Terry Pearce, IYE came up with a very good solution to the mast gate problem by fitting a collar at deck level.

The survey party relied on all sorts of instruments and gadgets to test bending properties, even

resorting to 2lb bags of sugar from the Butler kitchen to ascertain centres of gravity and balance points. After extensive sea trials of all the competing masts, Derek wrote his report recommending the acceptance of the IYE mast and boom. IYE had the capacity to meet the expected demand from the many builders registered with the Association – at that time there were six recommended builders and a further 25 registered. Simultaneously, an Association-sponsored advertising campaign in the yachting press was stimulating a healthy interest in the boat which showed in the issuing of sail numbers and boat registrations. In 1966, 460 new sail numbers were issued followed by a further 540 in the following year – so you can see that it pays to advertise.

Meanwhile, another group reporting to the Technical sub-committee was exploring the problems of introducing fibreglass construction. Prototypes of the proposed hulls – either all glassfibre or composite (with wooden decks and glassfibre hull) – were built and displayed around the UK. Someone kindly built a double trailer out of a caravan chassis and various enthusiasts towed the rig with two hulls plus metal spars strapped to the side to various venues so that members could actually inspect the products they were being asked to vote for or against as the case might be. As the class PRO, I collected the trailer at South Staffs SC and after a lengthy tour of South East England delivered it safely to Torquay for the National Championships. Not without difficulty, as I nearly impaled a London black cab on the metal masts while rounding Hyde Park Corner in the rush hour!

After all this frantic activity, a postal ballot was duly held which resulted in an overwhelming vote in favour of the adoption of fibreglass construction and metal spars with 1,750 in favour and only 268 votes against. The Association committee granted a licence to S.Bourne & Co Ltd of Nottingham to produce fibreglass hulls from October 1966. In November of that same year

The GP14, in every way possible, had become the people's dinghy

the Association accepted a proposition from International Yacht Equipment Ltd to manufacture metal masts and booms as an optional extra and finally in the January of 1967 a ballot resulted in favour of adopting a Genoa.

So in less than two years from the time of George Bilsbarrow's suggestion on behalf of his North American friends, the class had introduced some radical changes to the GP14 which it hoped would continue the popularity of the dinghy worldwide.

As with all new products there were some teething troubles; in particular the Bourne hulls suffered problems created by the metal struts used to support the deck. These struts caused stress and highpoints in the glass hull while severe flexing of the hull caused leaks in the

buoyancy tanks, so at the end of the two-year licencing period it was decided to open up the market to other designers and suppliers. Thames Marine, a large manufacturer of cruising yachts (Mirage etc.) offered to produce the GP14 using an improved method of supporting the decks and moving the weight and strength of the glass laminates down towards the bottom of the hull to improve stability. This new concept, coupled with the ability to publicise the boat which only a large company could provide, gave further impetus to the popularity of the GP14 which in every way possible had become the People's Dinghy, ie for the members and by the members. Long may it continue.

*Alan Butler, Past Vice President Communications 1975*

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Buying my new boat

The new boat performing well at the 2011 24hr Race



Mike Senior

I decided to buy a new boat after the 2010 UK National Championships. There was nothing wrong with my old boat (*Racey's Rocket*) which is one of the most successful GP14s ever built, but I thought a change was needed to gain a different perspective and to improve my technical understanding of boats and rigs. This was the first time I personally had bought a new boat, so it was great to have full control over everything. I wasn't interested in buying something off the shelf, because I think that to really understand why something works you have to get involved with each individual part. In this article I will explain my decisions regarding hull choice, fit-out, rig, sails, foils and finally settings. I hope it is of use. I am happy to explain anything in this article in more detail and will publish on the GP14 website. Send your questions to michael senior@gmail.com

Hull & fit-out

The choice of which hull to buy is a difficult decision, as the three main production hulls (Duffin, Winder and Boon) compete at the very top. Just take a look at the gear guide on the website from this year's UK Nationals! In the end I choose a Duffin hull because it had won the last National and World Championships and I had sailed one briefly at the 2004 Nationals and was very impressed with its boat speed.

The beauty of purchasing a Duffin hull is that Alastair will accommodate any of your needs. If I came up with a whacky idea of hull shape that was within the rules, Alastair would build it! As an active GP14 sailor, Alastair is also constantly looking at ways to improve his design.

My bespoke requests for the build were:

- Retain long helmsman seats. This is so I could move inboard and as far aft as possible when sitting to leeward, which will help to lift the bow out of the water to retain more control when it is windy.

- Remove wash boards. I don't see the point in them. A GP is so far out of the water that you would have to do something really spectacular to get water to come over the foredeck and into the boat.
- Move the through-deck cleat position as far aft as possible. This makes it easier for the crew to tack, as the sheets are not between your legs.
- Prepare a hole in the centreboard case just under the seat to provide the option of adding continuous control lines.
- No bailers. This was a difficult decision as I was wary about how it would work. The beauty of bailers is that they suck water out of the boat, whereas holes in the centre board casing rely on gravity. However, this proved a good choice as the system actually works really well and removes the question of whether to have bailers up or down.
- Short transom deck. This is so I can get further back downwind when it is breezy. It is very important to get as much boat as possible out of the water when you pick up on the plane.

I painted and varnished the boat myself, with the assistance of Martin Evans (aka South Staffs Engineer of the World!). I was really pleased with the finish, but, in hindsight, I should probably have sent it to Paintcraft or SP Boats, as it took a lot longer than planned!

The fit-out process was what I was really interested in and it ended up being really simple. I used Harken for almost everything. The fundamental principle was to make the boat quicker to sail, therefore every idea was about creating simple systems and trying to reduce the possibilities of things going wrong.

**Proper kite bags** Essential in light winds to keep the kite dry and help to keep it stowed when windy.



**Genoa Cunningham** This allows you to trim how far forward the draft is in the genoa. Basically I pull it on to just remove the horizontal creases, but when it is really windy I pull it on as hard as I can. I fitted a sheave about 12 inches forward of the mast which directs the line below deck onto a cleat beside the mast on the port side.

**Pole adjuster** Used to stop the pole from bouncing. Most of the time it is not adjusted, but cleated on the starboard side of the mast by the gate. Elastic take-up goes up the starboard side of the boat and is knotted at the transom. Height is simply adjusted with a cleat on the mast beside the gooseneck.

**Continuous kicker** Led from the thwart to the side deck and then continuous over the top so it can be adjusted from anywhere in the boat.

**Continuous cunningham** This is made continuous through the centreboard casing. I also added an elastic take-up in the boom so that slack is taken up on release to eliminate friction.



**Through-deck sheeting** My original idea was make this adjustable from the windward side. Recent Boon and Winder boats have produced pretty good systems to control this. I realised though that I never really adjusted it on Racey's *Rocket* so I settled for a simple adjustable system on the leeward side. When the boat was finished and the rig tuned, I noticed that the through-deck adjustment wasn't doing anything. The perfect sheeting angle was to take the genoa sheet through the hole in the side deck and then directly onto the block behind the cleat! I then set the rig for what I believed to be windy settings and the sheeting angle again looked perfect. Therefore my through-deck sheeting system was completely useless so I removed it. Simple, hey!

**Centreboard adjustment** In recent years I sailed a few Fireball events and found it extremely useful to have the ability to adjust the centreboard from anywhere in the boat. Correct centreboard position can make a huge difference, particularly when reaching. I therefore rigged up a simple system to lift the board from any position and an independent rope/cleat to pull it down and set it.



**Rig tension system** Move the cleat to the front of the centre board casing. I have never altered it during a race so why put it in a place where it could get caught?



**De-rakers** (right) Purchased from P&B. These are very useful when you need to adjust the rig on the water. The top pin (base setting) always stays in. You then alter your shroud position by adding a second pin lower down when needed. The system means you shouldn't lose the mast if you accidentally tack during the process. I had to cut these down slightly to fit.

## Rig and sails

Deciding which sail-maker to use requires a lot more than just finding out which sails have been winning or which are more cost effective, because if you are a regular racer the chances are you will be doing repeat business over a number of years, so it is important to use a supplier that produces a quality product for a reasonable price and provides a top service that will help you develop. I decided to stick with Speeds Sails as Jim Hunt and Andy Davis have experience in many classes, are always available and were really keen to push things forward with GPs.

They pointed out to me that there is a limit on how fast a GP can go upwind when it is breezy, as we all sail very close to hull speed and the boat is simply too heavy to plane. Therefore you need to look at how you can gain more height than your competitors, without pinching or to put it another way, go sideways less.

In some classes, when it gets windy, the optimum setting is to reduce rig tension to help flatten the mainsail. The result is that you lose a little height but gain speed. In a GP this is not possible because the genoa is too big. Reducing rig tension would create luff sag and then close the slot between the mainsail and genoa. The result is that you would just go sideways and slower. Therefore in a GP, the aim is to control this luff sag. To test this theory I sailed at the club in about 10-12 knots with standard settings and rigged up a video camera to watch luff sag when a gust hit.



## Have a think about how you sail and what would make your life easier whilst racing

If you could create less luff sag it would mean you could control the slot between the genoa and main more effectively. I have recently been sailing the boat with a relatively light total crew weight, therefore this was crucial as my mainsail would come off the centre line before those of most of the fleet. It is impossible to totally eliminate luff sag, but we did think it was possible to reduce it as GPs sail with relatively low rig tension, compared to yachts or even some dinghies such as Fireballs or 470s. Therefore we were confident the boat could take more tension, but we were concerned whether the Super Spar M7 or Seldon Cumulus section would start compressing with more rig tension. We therefore considered a stiffer mast, which could hold more tension without compressing and thus produce less luff sag. I decided to order a Seldon Alto section through Speeds.

When I mention to most people that I use a stiff mast, their initial reaction is, 'stiff mast, wouldn't that better suit heavy crew weights?' If you were talking about sideways movement of the mast above the shroud hounds, you could argue that a softer mast would flex more to leeward, but a GP mainsail doesn't have a large amount of sail area at the top of the rig and the Alto section tapers off in a similar way to a Cumulus. The real gain is controlling luff sag, which would help the sailor regardless of crew weight.

I had already spoken with Speeds during 2010 about what their thoughts were about developing the sails. Overall we were very happy with the shape of the genoa and spinnaker, but thought the main could be tweaked slightly. At the Inlands in 2010 I sailed with a new genoa and kite with slightly different construction methods designed for greater durability, and trialled a new mainsail where the entry was flattened slightly, but with a little shape added to the top. Conditions throughout the weekend ranged from a force 1 – 5. Our speed was excellent in all races.

### Foils

One of the areas, which I was keen to explore further, was foils. Bill Bradburn (aka BetaFoil) is a local South Staffs member who has been making outstanding OK foils for a while. I managed to win the OK Open at the club in 2009 and first prize was a brand new OK fixed rudder! As I don't normally sail OKs, Bill said he would make me a GP one instead. This started me thinking about rudder shapes. At the Nationals in 2004, Graham Nelson commissioned Linton Jenkins of Full Force boats to make us a custom set of foils. The brief was to make the centreboard as stiff as possible and a rudder which was straight but as close to the minimum dimensions as possible. The theory being that you don't need a large blade in a GP, because if you balance the boat properly the rudder should do very little, therefore why not reduce the area in the water? I decided to ask around why everyone used spoon rudders and I have yet to find a technical reason why they are considered better. If anyone has one, please put it on the GP forum.



The final decision about the boat was what to do with my centreboard. I had some ideas but again I asked quite a few people for their opinion and there were a lot of different views. In the end I thought that if I was going for a stiff rig it made sense to have a stiff centreboard. I therefore asked Bill to make me the stiffest board he could. The board ended up being fairly heavy, which was simply a result of using stiff materials. I also asked Bill to splice in some marks to indicate  $\frac{3}{4}$ ,  $\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $\frac{1}{4}$  etc... very useful when trimming downwind.



### My rig settings

Your rig should be set up depending on your sailmaker. With Speeds I think your base setting for your rig should be as straight as possible, whilst achieving a rake of about 21 feet, 10 inches with 183 kilos (400 pounds) of rig tension. This is set with my mast foot as far back as possible and my spreaders deflection set to remove any pre-bend. I use these settings in light to powered conditions. In powered to windy, I move my shrouds down a half hole and increase rig tension to about 232 kilos (510 pounds). Rake stays at 21, 10. In very windy conditions when I am struggling to keep the mainsail on the back corner of the boat upwind, I move the shrouds down a further half hole and apply the same 232 kilo rig tension. Rake is now about 21 feet, 8.5 inches.



### Summary

Overall I am very happy with the boat. The fit-out is probably not suited to everyone. It was designed around how I sail. If you are considering a new boat or altering an existing one, my advice would be to have a think about how you sail and what would make your life easier whilst racing. My speed is definitely better than last year, mostly due to technique and practice though! The new rig appears to be working as expected. The foils have attracted the attention of many sailors, and, let's face it, the Aerowebs look the business! Apologies for all the blatant plugs, but everyone has helped in this process, so everyone has earned a mention.

## Training report

Well, it's been a busy year so far for the new Association training team. After months of preparation we have already run five excellent training events all over the country. For those who don't know, the team consists of Adam Parry and myself.

I was appointed the Association's training coordinator towards the end of 2010 and I work on arranging and setting up these training events. As well as chasing up the paperwork side of things, I also attend many of the events to provide hands-on support. I have been sailing a GP for ten years and can be seen out and about on the circuit racing GP14 14034 with my partner Hannah.

Adam is our appointed coach for this year. His job is to take all of the pre-event feedback and use it to create a tailor-made training day. His hard work and attention to detail are well known by all who have already benefited from his coaching. He is a very experienced GP sailor and three times youth champion.

The first session of the year was at Derwent Reservoir SC up in the north east, where crews took to the water on a very breezy day, intent on improving their racing technique. The morning began with a classroom session and some shore practice, mostly concentrating on starting techniques and sail control. Enthused with a wealth of new knowledge, everyone was soon ready to hit the water. Extensive video footage was taken of the water-based activities so that it could be used towards the end of the day to analyse technique and to see where improvements could be made. Everyone took everything on board, with very positive results.

Next we headed to Chelmarsh for our second session. Adam put together yet another excellent programme for the day with help from all of the pre-event information collected. Once again it was a breezy day which gave everyone plenty of time to learn about sail settings and how to keep

going well when overpowered. The video footage enabled Adam to point out where people could make changes in order to gain that little extra whilst on the water. The day was capped off with a BBQ arranged by the sailors who took part.

Our second visit to Chelmarsh was somewhat different. We arrived at 8.30 to a glassy mill pond. But, despite this, we were met by 16 enthusiastic sailors buzzing for the day ahead. Getting a good start was once again the main focus for the morning and we headed onto the water in about 10mph winds – perfect weather to practice starting. As the morning went on, the wind increased and so did everyone's sailing skills. Lunch time came, the fleet returned ashore hungry and worn out from a difficult session in the morning. After lunch, longer races were planned to help improve spinnaker techniques and to reinforce what we had learnt in the morning. A freshening breeze made for some good sailing and by the end of the day it had built to a steady 15mph. I would like to thank Chelmarsh for the warm welcome we received over the two training sessions, and I look forward to returning in the future.

For the Nationals, I was asked to arrange a workshop aimed at the bronze fleet sailors to help them get the most out of their week in Abersoch. Adam was more than happy to put an excellent session together, and as he was also sailing in the event he was on hand throughout the week to offer advice and answer questions

The first weekend in September we were at South Staffs, where we were joined by Mike Senior, who provided more advice for those on the water. The plan for the day was to run a session aimed at preparing people for the Open the next day. We looked at how to find space on a crowded start line by boxing in the 11 boats out on the water and creating a short start line. This session worked really well, every start was a mêlée of boats fighting for position and clean air.

We also looked at sail setting, aided by the use of on-the-water filming. For example, we were able to discuss the effects of main sheet tension whilst going upwind in light airs. Everyone took a lot away from the session. There were 39 boats at the open the next day so the practice on busy start lines came in very handy.

With at least two more training sessions still to come, it has been a busy first year for the new training team.

If you are interested in having a session at your club do not hesitate to call me to discuss potential dates.

*Phil Hodgkins, Training Rep*

07800 896 818  
philip\_hodgkins@hotmail.com

## Youth week report

*This training event for youth sailors under the age of 20 takes place annually at the end of October. The participants pay to attend, but costs of the week's training are also subsidised by the GP14 Association, from the fund set up by Howard Davies for this purpose. This year ten youth sailors took part, their ages ranging from 13 to 17, and they have jointly written this account of their experiences.*

This year saw a new look to the Howard Davies Memorial Youth Training Week, the biggest change being the venue, which this year was Crosby water sports centre near Liverpool. With its first class facilities and ample water, it was the perfect choice.

Luke Shaw took on the challenge of being the coach for the week, with the assistance of Jon Close, Emily Cole Evans and the week's organiser, Phil Hodgkins. This year, five boats entered for the week's training.

Monday saw everyone being dragged out of bed for a 7am warm-up run before unpacking the boats and then, finally, the joy of a full English breakfast (to the horror of Luke Shaw).

The first day was very breezy with 18mph gusting 42mph, hard work for even a top sailor. With all this wind, what better than to practice how to de-power the boat, allowing everyone to settle into sailing on a new water? After a capsized or 15 everyone took a lot away from a hard day's sailing.

Day 2 saw the wind drop a little. First thing in the morning, Luke took everyone through the video footage from the day before to point out areas of improvement and, at the same time, we discussed what everyone wanted to get out of the week. On the water, a hard day's spinnaker work with lots of gybes got everyone's adrenalin pumping. To finish off the day some practice races helped us all to perfect our new gybing techniques and to concentrate on flying the kite through the gybes.

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Participants at this year's Howard Davies Training Week, with Phil, Luke and Emily

Day 3 started with a long warm-up run to the beach for a change of scenery with the iron men! Yet again another full cooked breakfast, yet again to the horror of Luke. After breakfast everyone was straight on the water to practice the finer points of boat control. Everyone had great fun tacking as close to the RIB as possible. Soon the challenge became to get so close that Phil could touch the back of the boat after the tacks, which very nearly caused the loss of his phone. Then there were more practice races to help pull all the hints and tips together, along with a new understanding of tactics.

Day 4 saw yet another morning run, the first evidence that coach Phil was not quite as fit as he should be! The plan for the morning was to learn how to self-coach by deciding what areas needed work and what we wanted to achieve. This led on to a demonstration of how not to do it with Luke and Phil, who somehow managed to acquire a boat. The afternoon was full of starting practice, including box starts and hunters and hoverers. This was the first fail for the group, but after many starts great improvement was seen.

The evening was a night of fun, as we were joined by Ian Sinclair for a meal out and bowling.

After some tasty Italian food it was off to the bowling alley. There were three teams: helms, crews and staff. The staff team was victorious, but Sam Clarke got the highest score. His prize... an extra long lie-in.

The last day for some started with a very lazy morning, but a few of the participants woke up at 6am to have some fun with spinnakers. Again everyone tucked into a full greasy fry-up, at which point Luke finally buckled and enjoyed one himself. As we hit the water the new artwork created on the spinnakers was visible in all its glory! The morning training consisted of rudderless sailing and starting practice. Luke, Phil and Emily all hopped in and out of boats to give some hands-on advice... some might say that after watching us sail all week they wanted to play themselves. To make the most of the day, everyone had lunch on the water and in the afternoon a mini 3-race series was run.

Although it was a very intensive week, everyone got a lot out of it. Our thanks go to Luke, Phil, Jon and Emily for running such an excellent training week and a special extra thanks to Phil Hodgkins for making this year's training happen.

Bring on 2012 for another excellent week!

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Adrian Dence, 7 November 2011

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# Area reports

## Northern Bell

The weather had saved the best for last, as the competitors in the final event of the Northern Bell at Bolton SC were greeted by clear, sunny skies and a steady Force 3-4 after a season of fickle winds. However, whatever the weather, the outcome of the Series, again generously sponsored by Omega Sails, had already been determined: Martin Brennan and Alistair Knott of Hollingworth Lake SC had established an unassailable lead at the top of the score board to become the 2011 champions. They are worthy winners, having supported the Open circuit for many seasons and again this year competed in more events than any other competitor. Congratulations!

The final results were:

### Gold

- 1 Martin Brennan & Alistair Knott HLSC
- 2 Bill Kenyon & Ben Ditchburn Budworth SC
- 3 Innes Armstrong & Alex Dunston Burwain SC
- 4 Mandy Mitchell & Jon Close WFSC

### Silver

- 1 Lee Thomas & Stuart Whiteside Southport SC
- 2 Dave Burrows & Kate Billinge WFSC

The number of qualifiers, particularly the absence of Bronze fleet sailors, and low turnouts at events has been very disappointing. It does not reflect the huge effort that clubs put into hosting an Open meeting nor the quality of the racing for those that take part and will no doubt be the subject of much discussion at the next Fleet Captains' meeting. I would really welcome your ideas on how to encourage greater participation, so let your Fleet Captain know your thoughts or contact me directly through the contacts page on the website.

On a brighter note it was good to welcome Silver Fleet winners, Lee Thomas and Stuart Whiteside (Southport SC), to the circuit. They may not have been familiar faces to GP14 sailors but their distinctive (dare I say pink?) boat certainly was – so it was good to find out that their competitive nature is matched by a good sense of humour!



Lee Thomas and Stuart Whiteside, Southport SC, at the Northerns

photo: Mike Shaw, fotoboot

A highlight of the season was undoubtedly the Northern Championship held at Hollingworth Lake SC over the weekend of 21/22 May which attracted a good-sized fleet and included many of the top GP14 sailors who competed in challenging conditions. Mike and Liz Senior (S Staffs SC) took the title ahead of Richard Cornes and James Goodfellow (Milton Keynes SC) with Tom Gillard and Bruce Deppe (Sheffield Viking SC) in third place, and the first northern boat. Look out for details of this keenly contested competition next year.

The other Grand Prix qualifying event in the region was hosted by West Kirby, won by another pair from the Midlands, Peter Jacques and Peter Yate (Chase SC). Bassenthwaite Open will be the qualifying event in 2012 in addition to the Northern Championship at Derwent Reservoir.

I would like to thank all those who have contributed event reports during the past season, and, once again thank the Fleet Captains for their ongoing commitment to the Association. Let's hope that we see more boats on the water in 2012.

*Mandy Mitchell*

## Midland Bell

The 2010 Midland Bell was the closest in years, with Pete Jacques & Pete Tait taking the Travellers Series on the last race of the final open meeting of the year, denying Simon Potts & Drew Nickless victory. This year's series kicked off in North East Birmingham at Shustoke reservoir, with an event shared by the Larks. Both fleets enjoyed variable winds, with close racing for all 18 competing GPs. The event was won by Aeroweb-powered Mike & Lizzie Senior, Richard Instone & Jim Toothill coming in 2nd. Four very calm events followed at Nantwich, Aldridge, Manor Park (their inaugural event) and Shustoke, with three of the four being won by Pete Mitchell, with Andy Hunter at the sharp end of the redesigned Boon Boat driven by North Sails. The fourth was taken by John Salomonson up at Aldridge.

The next venue for the Midland Bell fleet was North Staffs near Stoke-on-Trent. The 2010 champions Jacques & Tait took the first of three back-to-back bullets here, repeating the feat at Tamworth and after an event off, at a hotly contested Bartley Open. Here the start of the GP14 Midlands 'rules fest' was seen, with competing boats ensuring that the RRS were followed. Squeezed in between Jacques' victories, was the win of Sam Blocksidge & Chris Cook at Trimpey in Worcestershire.

The final event before the summer nationals took place on the Trent, the Midland's only river open up at Nottingham. It was here that Sam & Chris cemented their challenge for their first Bell, with a victory denting Jacques' chance of retaining the trophy.

At this stage it was already clear the year was going to be a three-horse race, Pete Jacques having already completed enough to qualify, Pete Mitchell having won all three he'd entered and Sam Blocksidge with his two bullets. It was going to be tight approaching the final mark again it seemed.

After the Nationals in Abersoch, the first time the Midland Bell reconvened was at South Staffs, home to the RYA club of the year. Here a fleet of

39 boats took to the water, which, following the lack of rain throughout the year, was somewhat low. Victors by the end of a challenging day were Mike & Lizzie Senior, with Rich Instone & Jim Toothill taking another 2nd.

If SSSC was low, Midland Sailing Club was empty. With Chasewater currently out of action, the canals were being fed, it seemed, by Midland Reservoir alone! With a decent forecast, boats travelled, only to find the masts were below the reservoir edges. It was tough, yet the cream floated again, as Pete Mitchell, crewed this time by Em Cole-Evans, took his fourth open of the year.

Hollowell in Northants was the next destination for the fleet, on a beautiful stretch of water just off the M6/M1 junction. A force 3-4 greeted the fleet who were set short beats and long reaches for some tight competitive and fun sailing. The event was attended by five of the top seven sailors in the series, and eventually won by Mitchell & Cole-Evans, to all but wrap up the Midland Bell with two events to go.

The penultimate event was the rearranged Area Championships; with Banbury severely lacking in water, Manor Park stood in to host the event, sponsored by Harken. A disappointing turnout, only 15 boats, meant it was a select few who

Jacques and Tait in action at Chelmarsh



photo: Terry Gumbley



Photo: Terry Gumbley

Sam Watson and Andy Hunter (Nantwich & Borders SC) getting good practice in a breeze at Chelmarsh, before going on to win the Youth Championship

were tested by the variable winds and rewarded by some fantastic prizes, the winners being Paul Owen, crewed by Steve Parker using his Elite Sails. Second here were Rob & Andy Smith from Bass, who travelled down the M6 to ensure they got used to the Staffordshire air before the Inlands at Blithfield!

Not part of the Bell circuit, the Inlands were held in our 'catchment' on a cracking weekend for sailing. Some great courses, with long fully powered up reaches, saw Mike Senior and Chris White take the champs for a second consecutive year, just beating Rich Instone & Jim Toothill.

Chelmarsh in Shropshire concluded the Midland Bell series in the middle of October, seven months after we'd begun at Shustoke. Another good forecast saw some fantastic races, and inevitable capsizes in the force 5-6 gusts! The top three in the Bell were here, all of them having a chance of winning the Open going into the last race. Last year's winners of the Bell, Pete Jacques & Tait took the event, but their results were not good enough to prevent Pete Mitchell crewed by Em Cole-Evans winning the Series this year.

So Pete & Em have the Bell, Jacques & Tait with four victories took second, and third went to Matt

Results		
1	Peter Mitchell & Andy Hunter/Emily Cole-Evans	RYA
2	Peter Jacques & Pete Tait	Chase
3	Matt Thursfield & Sarah Froggatt	RYA
4	John Salomonson & Anna Wakeling	Manor Park
5	Sam Blocksidge & Chris Cook	South Staffs
6	Nicky Robinson & John Robinson	Staunton
7	Darrell Sleep & Charles Saunders	Staunton
8	Richard Instone & Jim Toothill	Chase
9	Simon Fletcher & John Cookson	Trimpley
10	Roy Nettleship & Sabine Schamberg	Nottingham
11	Stuart Berry & Andy Jukes	Aldridge

Thursfield & Sarah Froggatt who had four second places throughout the year. Top silver went to John Salomonson crewed by Anna Wakeling. Bronze was taken by Stuart Berry & Andy Jukes.

Another successful year on the road, every event taking place, although every inland sailor must be looking to the skies hoping for rain to fill up our reservoirs. If not we may be relocating to the coast, although not too close!

*Matt Thursfield*

## Southern area

It's been a good summer for the area, especially for the Welsh Harp where the Masters in July stimulated a lot of interest in GP sailing (and also, incidentally, in trying to break your crew's knuckles with a big stick, aka Morris dancing...). The number of entries for the Masters was slightly disappointing, but the sailing was exciting, especially on Saturday, when there were many capsizes. We are grateful to our sponsors Speed Sails, Paintcraft, the Welsh Harp Boat Centre and Fullers, for their generosity, and for all the volunteers who helped with the event.

Welcome to the twenty or so new GP sailors who have learnt to sail at BTYC and Seahorse this summer, ten of whom are now in the throes of an extended Start Racing course. The latest addition to the BTYC training fleet, a Winder boat, is still looking pristine after a season's club use, fingers crossed. Six of the BTYC Instructors have recently returned, fizzing with ideas, from an Advanced Instructor course, subsidised by the Mayor's Legacy Fund, so they should have plenty of new ideas and skills to pass on. Let's hope the weather stays open in the south so that we can sail all winter and be on peak form for the Travellers Series 2012, which opens at Papercourt on 31 March.



photo: Agata Bartoszczak

Some of BTYC's new intake with instructors Roger Walton and Serena Counsell



photo: Agata Bartoszczak

## Southern Travellers

The 2011 Southern Travellers series was completed at Frensham Pond SC in the last couple of weeks. This was the tenth event held over the year at nine very different coastal and inland venues. The racing is always keen, but the very friendly and social atmosphere on and off the water certainly makes these events a very enjoyable way to gain experience and make new friendships within the class. There is a high standard of racing at the front of the fleet, series trophies for newcomers and prizes for 'B' fleet entrants at some events, so if you enjoy class racing and want to develop your skills it is well worth considering joining in next year. Contact davidinnes@campbellreith.com for more details.

Overall results		
1	Mark Wolf & Alex Dotsch	BTYC Sailsports
2	James Ward & Richard Whitehill	Papercourt SC
3	Richard Lord & Lorna Davies	Seahorse SC
4	Ben Kaplan & Roberto Serra	Seahorse SC
5	George Rogers & Jilly Wilkinson	Tollesbury SC

A wet moment at the Masters

The Frensham event was held in a wildly oscillating wind of up to 20kts and keeping the boat going upwind in these gusts proved quite a challenge and the key to success. There were several capsizes (but not as many as in the Enterprise fleet sharing the lake that day!) and early Race 1 leaders Mark Wolf with crew Roger Walton (BTYC Sailsports) and James Ward/Steve Browne (Papercourt/Leigh on Sea) both lost their way (or, at least, so the race officer said). Mark went on to win the next 2 races and the event. James was not so lucky and capsized in race 2 and Bryan Taylor (Frensham ) and Paul Reeves (Papercourt) took second and third. The wind did not relent, so by the end everybody was exhausted and ready for the legendary FPSC tea – more cakes than you have ever seen.

The series started back in April with the first of two visits to the Brent reservoir (Welsh Harp) in Wembley; held in very good weather, it produced, as is usual, the largest fleet of over 30 boats with good attendance from the four home clubs and visitors from South Staffs, Tollesbury, Papercourt and Frensham. The courses were essentially windward/leeward with a short reach across each end of the reservoir. There were gold, silver and bronze fleet prizes. This year, visitors from the Midlands took first and third places, with Rob Janering/Charlotte Cotter from Wembley taking second and Richard Lord/Lorna Davies (Seahorse SC) taking fourth. As always, the hospitality was excellent with lunch and tea eaten on the terrace overlooking the water. A second inland event followed at Papercourt lake in Surrey where Mark Wolf/Alex Dotsch and James Goodfellow/Richard Cornes (Milton Keynes) virtually match-raced through all four races, with James and Richard eventually prevailing with three bullets to one in the four-race meet, Richard Lord taking third.

The next event was our annual visit to the Solent, but, owing to high winds that prevented launch of the rescue boats, the event was cancelled, to the disappointment of a number of keen Southern

sailors suited, booted and raring to go out and enjoy the challenging conditions. Luckily compensation arrived the next Saturday with a wet and wild event at Leigh on Sea in the Thames estuary. Wind and rain brought some back on shore quite quickly, but the races were completed in impressive style and conditions gradually improved. Mark Wolf won from James Ward with Area Rep Steve Browne taking third place just ahead of Colin Walker/Steve Grange and Steve Corbet/Martin Fisher, both from Leigh.

The flagship event in July was the Area championship run in sunshine and a gentle breeze at the Brightlingsea SC. This was a superbly run Grand Prix event over two days. With the tide being an important factor in the Colne estuary, local knowledge was useful, but it was clear from the outset that the visitors from the Midlands were quicker and would dominate the event. After six races on triangular courses, Ross Kearney/Ed Bradburn repeated their success of last year. First southern boat was James and Richard in 5th and Ben Kaplan/Chris Lomax (Seahorse) taking 7th. The 'Old Gaffers' race was taking place the same weekend and some of us were distracted by huge Thames barges and the graceful Essex smacks – in particular David Innes from Frensham who proved that luffing Thames barges is not a good idea. The usual excellent food and bar at BSC along with their facilities and great weather made a brilliant event that was enjoyed by all.

Next venue was the annual weekend at Poole, which is one of the best events on the circuit, with a team race on Saturday, followed by dinner in the yacht club and a round-the-cans Open meeting on Sunday. Light winds prevailed on Saturday, followed by a brisker force 3–4 on Sunday. The Saturday teams are of three boats and the best two results count for the event. With the light breeze, local knowledge was essential to avoid the lee of the islands, where wiser heads realised that there was 'no wind in there'

photo: Kees Smiters



Tollesbury Open

Regrettably, the wind died half way round the second race, which was shortened to finish at the far end of Brownsea Island. Seahorse A finished ahead of Poole A, both well ahead of the other six teams.

For the day of the Open Meeting, courses of laid marks in the top triangle just outside the club and a favourable weather forecast gave perfect conditions which certainly didn't disappoint. Warm and sunny all day, with an ESE averaging force 4 with gusts offering some good planing on the reaches of the well set-up Olympic course. A good entry of boats from Poole, BTYC and Seahorse, plus Roy Nettleship from Nottingham, made up the 22 starters for the first race which got away on time with a clean start. Stung by their defeat in the team racing, the locals ruled supreme with Mike Williams/Mark Taylor and Andy Macgregor/Gary Whitehead taking first and second for Poole with Richard Lord taking third for the visitors.

Next venue was our annual open on the River Thames with Hampton hosting an excellent open with a good breeze resulting in fine racing for the fleet, with Mark Wolf taking first from James Ward/Richard Whitehill in second and leading Hampton crew Kevin and Maddie Anderson

The penultimate event in September was at Tollesbury SC on the Blackwater estuary in Essex. This was also a windy day completed by a torrential downpour during race 3 that blinded most of us (Lesley Kaye complained her contact lenses got washed away!). Good spinnaker control in the strong and shifty conditions proved the decisive factor, and Mark Wolf confirmed the 2011 series win by narrowly beating Richard, the winner here for the last 3 years. This was a tidal venue and the three races had to be sailed in the afternoon back-to-back, before a return to Tollesbury for a hot meal and some beer.

There has been a good sprinkling of southern sailors on the Grand Prix circuit. James Goodfellow and Richard Cornes achieved an excellent second in the Northerns, and Andy Wadsworth and Helen Allen from BTYC travelled widely and proudly won the Grand Prix bronze prize. Mark Wolf, James Goodfellow and Steve Browne had a great fight in the silver fleet at the Nationals with a 14th, 15th and 17th! Helen joined Roger Walton in the Bronze fleet.

All in all, a very good season and we are now in the throes of working out an equally great series for 2012. Look forward to seeing you on the water!

David Innes

## Scottish Area

The 2011 Scottish and Border Travellers Series concluded with a fine event at Arran YC in late September. The sun shone and the wind blew all weekend, providing great conditions for the ten boats that made the ferry trip across the mighty Clyde estuary. Racing was around big Olympic triangles between Lamlash and Holy Isle. Winds were shifty on Saturday, but steadier on Sunday and varied in strength, creating challenging racing.

The leading four boats (all family partnerships) enjoyed extremely close competition, with positions constantly changing. After the tiebreak was resolved, Dave and Jackie Gebhard, who had excelled on the Saturday, came out on top ahead of David and Lynn Lawson. Dave Young/Seonaid Fleming were third and Andrew and Mark Greenhalgh fourth. Unfortunately for three of these partnerships, this was only their second event in the traveller series, leaving them one event short of qualification, allowing Dave and Lynn Lawson a clear victory over the 2011 circuit – very well done to them.

With only four events on the circuit this year, it was disappointing, but not surprising, that the number of qualifiers was half that of 2010. For 2012 we plan to have five events, so for all those (many) teams who were one event short of qualification, you'll have an extra chance next season. The results were as follows:

- 1 Dave & Lynn Lawson
- 2 Colin Midgley & Justin Smith
- 3 Ann Penny & Duncan Greenhalgh
- 4t Angus Campbell & Gary Lewis
- 5 Arthur Logan & Iain Hardy
- 6 Paul O'Neill & Euan Jarvis

I'd like to express my thanks to all four clubs who hosted the events.

The Scottish Championship returned to Annandale, where more than twenty teams enjoyed great hospitality; congratulations to Andy Tunnicliffe and Chris Robinson who successfully defended their title. The second event at Castle Semple was

as well run and friendly as always. The third event at Bassenthwaite was shared with the Northern Bell which meant more boats on the water, great racing and a fantastic event. We plan to return to these three clubs in 2012, as well as to Derwent Reservoir for the Northern Championship.

The fifth event in 2012 should be the Scottish Championship at Largs Sailing Club. The date, May 19/20 is still provisional, but once it is confirmed, I hope lots of you will make a note of this in your diaries. Largs is a phenomenal place to sail with fantastic modern facilities. This will be a great opportunity to practice coastal sailing ahead of the World Championship as well a chance to suss out Largs, the venue of the 2013 National Championship.

The 2011 Scottish Team Racing was held at Derwent Reservoir in early September. Justin Smith and his team organised an excellent weekend. The howling gale that greeted us on Saturday morning eased, leaving ideal conditions for this tactical style of racing. Six teams participated, with a particularly strong contingent making the journey south from Castle Semple. The Annandale team took control of all their races and were the runaway winners. However the battle for second was extremely tense, with Derwent A, Derwent B and Semple A all finishing with the same number of points after the round robin was completed.

David and Lynn Lawson represented the GP14 class at the Scottish Championship of Champions, held at Largs in October. It was an extremely windy weekend and sailing was impossible on Saturday, but Dave and Lynn sailed three consistent races on Sunday to finish a commendable fifth overall.

All in all, 2011 has been a good season with some great events, close competition, a fantastic social scene and lots of new interest. Hopefully we can continue to build on that during 2012, with more qualifiers for the Scottish & Border Travellers and a fantastic Championship at Largs.

*Duncan Greenhalgh*

## Ireland

Every spring, concerns are voiced about how many will come out sailing and while the first regatta had a low turnout, it was a wonderful event for those who showed up. As the year progressed, numbers remained steady, but certainly not spectacular. However, for our main event of the year, our Nationals, we got a wonderful 47 boats, boosted by the local fleet in Skerries and by the magnificent effort of our English cousins, half a dozen of whom turned up. Thank you, and at your request you'll be doing the Irish Nationals in Ballyholme next year. Hope you can make the trip.

It'll be a two-day Nationals on the 21/22 July. Nice training for the Worlds.....

Seven events resulted in five different winners. Shane McCarthy, with a selection of different crews, marched to the front on three occasions most importantly at the Nationals. It's great to have someone of his talent racing regularly in the fleet. Welcome home! Paddy O'Connor has been busy doing other stuff for a while, but reminded us what he is capable of by winning the Autumn Open – welcome back! C'mon Tania, sailin's way more fun than joggin'. Niall Henry and James never miss an event and sure enough they sewed up the O'Tiarnaigh Challenge. Ger Owens launched a brand new Duffin at the Ulsters and with Melanie Morris crewing showed that Alistair builds them fast. Ger's represented Ireland twice in the Olympics in the 470 – to have him join the fleet and race with us is pretty sweet; sailing's pretty cool that way, wonder how often punters get to play Gmac at golf?

The big up of the year though HAS to go to two Derry boys who won their first ever event, at their home club too. Keith and Dessie, stand up and take a bow.

Over the course of the year, Stephen Nelson and his brother Jonny gave most of the Gold fleet a clubbing. Guess which fleet you're in next year boys....



Dan Gill and Yoda, with the afterburners on

The Bronze fleet was topped in emphatic style by Danny and Gareth Gallagher – now who said you can't teach an old dog new tricks? Faster and faster....

Two of our own training days took place during the year, in Mullingar and up in Derry. The Derry boys in Lough Foyle have a gang of young 'uns, who, with a bit of practice, are going to cause some headaches in the future. They had a novice teacher who learned a hell of a lot observing how others go about sailing their boats. Anyone wants to pass on tips on how to run training sessions tell me; sometimes I thought I was herding cats! It must have worked a bit though because Lough Foyle were down in force for the Youths event in Sligo in September. They raced in some of the strongest breeze of the summer and though they only knocked off two races, it was great craic to watch. Lots of swimming. Dan Gill won that with Yoda in the bow.

A massive thank you goes out from the Irish fleet to Steve Goacher and Goacher sails who provided a spinnaker for the youth event – if you donated

your boat for the weekend you were in with a chance of a brand new kite. With the application of judicious technique in the casting of dice, Niall Henry ended up with a very nice new sail and the lady who threw the dice got a fine dinner in the restaurant of her choice... least I heard that was the deal that was cut...

Goachers also donated a mainsail and Genoa – deal was if you did three events you qualified to win 'em. The decision on who got them was again decided by a game of dice. Any of you heard of a game called Perudo? If not, google it. It ensured a highly entertaining night at our final event of the year, the Hot Toddy, where 37 boats turned out... we're not sure when we last had that many boats for our final event, but Mullingar hosts great events, so everyone was well

rewarded. The race officer used as much of the lake as he could. Joe Crilly, I think, was our race officer of the year and has been renamed 'The Punisher' for the work he put us through.

The year started off small, but finished up pretty well. I certainly enjoyed it and of course am already looking forward to next year and the laugh to be had in Looe. A great village to spend time in and a wonderful spot to sail at. I raced a dinghy there once, very badly, a long time ago... I'm hoping it goes a bit better this time. So get sorted, send your entry form in (on website, download) and come to our Nationals for a wee bit of pre-event practice.

Best, from Ireland.

*Richard Street*



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## Book review

### Hugh Brazier

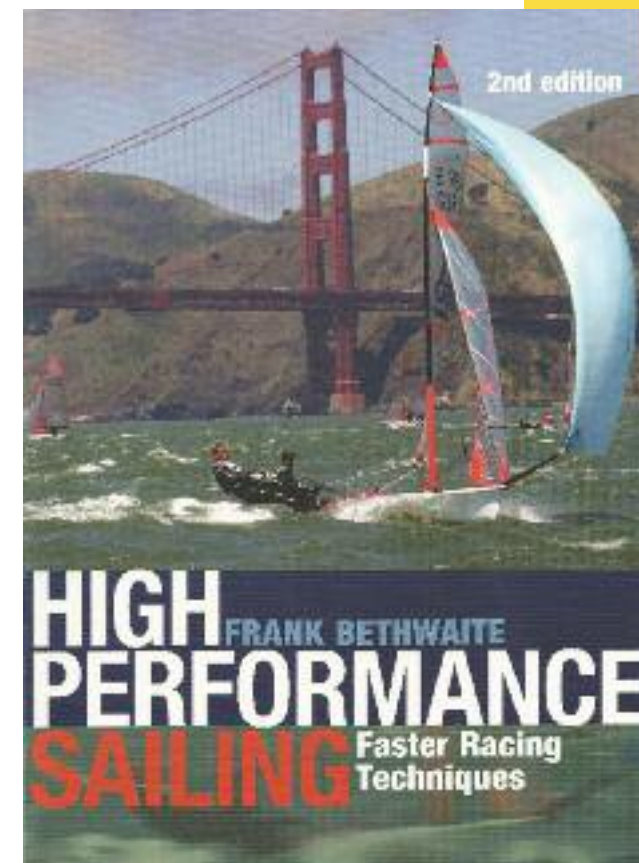
What do you do when the editor of Mainsail sends you the new edition of a highly praised sailing classic to review, and you find the book almost unreadable? Maybe not exactly unreadable, but at any rate difficult, confusing, and perhaps most of all annoying. Is it me? Am I revealing my own inadequacies here? Am I simply too stupid, or too incompetent a sailor, to understand it? Should I just take more time to read it carefully so that I do understand? Or does the book really suffer from serious flaws?

First of all, let's clarify one thing. There is some discussion about this on various internet forums, so I am clearly not the only person to have been confused. This book (High Performance Sailing) was first published in 1993 and was reprinted several times. This 2010 offering is the second edition, which means (or ought to mean) that it is a revision, not just another reprint, of the original. There is also a book by Frank Bethwaite called Higher Performance Sailing, published in 2008. That is a different book.

Frank Bethwaite is Australian, an aeronautical engineer and meteorologist by background, and is closely associated with the development of the 18-foot skiffs that skim around Sydney Harbour. He also designed the Laser 2 and the Tasar, and his son Julian Bethwaite was responsible for the B14 and the 49er.

That pedigree is everywhere evident in this book, variously described (admittedly on the publisher's website) as 'a must for every racing sailor', 'not to be missed' and 'the cheapest bit of go-faster gear you can buy'. And it's true. The book is full of fascinating and valuable information. It is a detailed analysis of how to make a sailing boat go faster, over 400 pages packed with facts, figures, diagrams, anecdotes, new ideas, explanations, physics and psychology. There are two strands running through the book. Partly it's about boat design, describing the author's experiments with hull shapes, rigs and foils, and partly it's about what the racing sailor needs to know and do in

**Frank Bethwaite**  
**High Performance Sailing: Faster Racing Techniques**,  
2nd edition.  
London: Adlard Coles, 2010.  
ISBN 978-1-4081-2491-8.  
c.£30



it is a classic text for a reason –  
It is good

order to get the best out of his or her boat – how the wind works, how to understand wave patterns, how to use that knowledge to gain the upper hand. The average GP14 sailor, restricted by class rules, does not have much scope for tweaking the shape of the hull or the size of the rig, so the second of these two strands is doubtless more directly relevant. But the first is also surprisingly useful (as well as fascinating for its own sake), because understanding the physics of boat design can help you understand the forces at work on your own sixty-year old hull shape, and therefore how to use it to maximum advantage.

There are twenty-five chapters grouped into four parts. Part 1 ('wind') runs to over 140 pages, and frankly says more about wind than you ever wanted to know. Part 2 ('water') is brief, describing the actions of waves, currents and tides. Part 3 ('the boat') covers sails, rigs, foils and hulls, and a lot of it is concerned with the results of the author's own experiments with all of these over several decades. Part 4 ('handling') puts it all together, discussing how knowledge of wind, water and boat can be used to improve racing performance. This is all good stuff, and some of it is very good stuff.

Now, about that sense of annoyance –

There is a great deal in this book that I would like to know more about. I am indeed convinced that knowing how to recognise a ribboning or a channelling wind pattern, or understanding more about laminar flow, would help me sail faster – but in many cases I felt that this wasn't the book I was going to learn it from. As a list of topics it is fine; as a coherent explanation of those topics it too often falls short.

I found a lot of fascinating bits and pieces in this book, but as a whole it is frustratingly disjointed.

It is a series of essays rather than a coherent whole. It seems to have been written piecemeal and then just thrown together. It would have benefited greatly from some editing, to draw all the material together in a logical sequence and provide some navigation aids for the reader. It is nice to see a preface by a third party urging us to 'read Frank's book', but it is disconcerting that this pops up unexpectedly at the beginning of part 3, rather than at the start of the book.

Further annoyance arises from the fact that this is described as the second edition, and has a publication date of 2010, but nowhere is it explained what has been changed for the new edition. There is a postscript dated 1996, followed by an appendix that must have been written recently (it contains references to events in 2009) – but what about the rest of the book? Is the bulk of the text unchanged since 1993, or have some bits been rewritten for the new edition? I simply have no idea. When the author uses words like 'today' or 'recently', or phrases such as 'over the past twenty years', what does he mean? I have not been able to compare this new edition with the original, but I strongly suspect it is unchanged apart from a few additional pages at the end. Certainly nobody has taken the opportunity to correct the many spelling mistakes that litter the text, and another clue is that the topics covered by the appendix are not included in the index. Is this really a second edition, or just a repackaging of the same old classic text?

And you know, it is a classic text for a reason. It is good. It must be just me, after all. I really need to spend more time with this wonderful book, and then more time on the water putting it into practice.

*Hugh Brazier*

# Cruising corner

First, a very warm welcome to Ed Washington, who has joined the Committee to boost the Cruising representation; the plan is that he will succeed me when I retire from office next August.

In order to spread the load, Gareth Morris is now getting involved with running Vintage Boats events, and Steve White is endeavouring to set up some cruising events in the Southern Area.

All three are most welcome, not only because it is great to have a team sharing the load, but also because it is good to see some substantially younger people as members of the team after many years where successive Cruising Reps have been of the retired generation. Not, I hasten to add, that there is anything whatsoever wrong with being of retirement age, but it is good to demonstrate that Cruising is something that appeals to all age groups and not only to those of us who are fortunate enough now to have more leisure to pursue it.

## Cruising Log Trophy

My usual reminder for this competition, and invitation to enter. This year we are expecting an entry from Stewart Elder in respect of his exceptional 'Summer of Sailing', nine more or less continuous weeks, celebrating his new-found retired status, and encompassing all the major Class Association cruising events plus two (I think) Scottish events, plus his own cruise the full length (in each direction in turn) of the Caledonian Canal.

However please don't let that put off anyone else from entering; it would be good to have enough worthy entries for us to have to actively decide between them.

The cruising itself does not have to be on the same scale as Stewart's epic summer; as long as the boat is a GP14, any log that enables readers to share their enjoyment of the cruise/s is in with a reasonable chance of the trophy.

Entries either by email or via the office, by the end of January, please.

## 2011 cruising events

### Sail the Caledonia Canal and Ivan's Bala weekend

I have already referred to Stewart Elder's cruise, accompanied by Mark Burgham, who even in semi-gale conditions happily slept at anchor aboard his particularly well sorted GP14. See page 47 for Stewart's account of this cruise. Page 51 has an account of the Bala weekend written by a youth cruiser, Josh Bennett.

### Ullswater weekend



On the shore at Ullswater

This was a new event on the calendar this year, and was most enjoyable despite the disappointingly small number of boats that were able to attend. In fairness, two participants who had every intention of joining us then unavoidably had to drop out, one because of an enforced job change which left him working that weekend, and the other – actually on the morning of their intended arrival – because his son sustained an injury while fell-walking and they needed to get him home.

So we had a total of four boats sailing, Henry Henderson and family, Stewart Elder (single-handed), and myself (also single-handed), joined on the Sunday by Andrew Finfer and family. Winds were generally light and variable, just occasionally brisk, and we enjoyed glorious summer weather and superb scenery, and a most hospitable host club.



Steve Watson with his children Zya and Zak (hiding behind his dad)

photo: Ed Washington

I find it difficult to decide what was the more memorable, the stunning scenery, or the 120° wind shifts-shifts which sometimes increased to 180° within a few hundred yards as you moved along! And what a difference to be sailing on flat water, with no waves to speak of, even when the wind later got up a bit; that feature will no doubt be familiar to many lake sailors, but I had forgotten what it is like, indeed I had forgotten even that such conditions exist! Now, for the first time, I understand why lake sailors are sometimes a little nervous of venturing onto the sea because they are concerned about coping with waves; the two environments are almost different worlds!

Overall I am convinced that a cruising weekend, or – even better – a long, long weekend, in the Lake District is something that is well worth putting into the programme on an annual basis. The only real question is whether to keep it at Ullswater, where I am sure we would be most welcome, or to ring the changes so as to include Windermere and possibly also Coniston and Derwentwater and Bassenthwaite in rotation. Those interested, please let me know your preferences.

#### UK national cruising week

A thoroughly enjoyable and convivial week was enjoyed by eight boats, despite somewhat mixed weather. This was a return visit to Neyland YC, who had been so hospitable to us four years ago, and they amply lived up to that standard again on this occasion.

The first sailing day was the Sunday, and since the club do a magnificent carvery Sunday Lunch the programme was planned to take full advantage of this. So in the morning we headed off upriver in good sunshine but very gusty and

unpredictable winds; not infrequently we had spells of flat calm abruptly interrupted by a force 5 gust from a random direction, then another flat calm, followed by another force 5 gust from an entirely different direction! Within just this first shakedown sail we had our first candidate for the Capsize Memorial Trophy.

After lunch, the intention was to sail down the estuary as far as the mouth of the Pembroke River, and then sail up the latter. In deference to a coming squall cloud several of us chose to reef, and in due course we got the squall just about when we were off the Pembroke River; enough wind to fully justify the earlier reefing decision, together with a veritable deluge of almost icy rain. Not nice!! Not at all!!

The rest of the week continued with mixed conditions, often characterised by the gustiness of the wind, which later in the week led to the second capsizing. Highlights of the week included an upriver sail towards Llangwm, which we curtailed when the leading boats got to the end of Castle Reach to find a fair slammer of wind and quite substantial waves as soon as we rounded the corner and were exposed to the much longer fetch; no less than three downriver sails to Angle (and a pub lunch there), and then on to Dale; meeting Dai Morgan and family, who had been with us last year at Poole, on the water in their Rustler 31; and the very convivial annual Cruiser Dinner. One day was lost to sailing because it was blowing a full gale, so the party split up into small groups to do a variety of things ashore.

The convivial nature of the week was helped in no small measure by the fact that most of us had booked onto the same camp site, and it was also good that we had a full age range represented – from children through to people in their seventies.

My former crew Richard Moore, and I started our involvement in the cruising weeks by sailing together, until Richard eventually became so taken with them that he eventually went and bought his own boat. Similarly after several years

of Ivan and Ed Washington sailing together in Ivan's boat they brought two boats this year – Ed bringing his Series 2 Duffin, together with teenage crew Josh, the youngest member of the group apart from the two children.

#### Sail4Cancer: passage to the Isle of Man and back

Unfortunately this event had to be cancelled. As the date got nearer, we had three skippers keen to participate, and a small fleet of escort vessels, but then two of the three skippers had to withdraw unexpectedly. One is a Royal Navy serviceman, who was suddenly deployed to Libya, and the other found himself unable to find a suitably experienced crew, although he is very keen to participate next year if we do one then.

#### Aberdovey cruising and vintage weekend

An enthusiastic but numerically small group of us congregated at Aberdovey with three Vintage boats plus Ed Washington and Josh with Ed's modern boat. Turnout was a little lower than last year, and much smaller than we had hoped for, which was a disappointment, but again part of the reason was force of individual circumstance; Gareth was temporarily without a car, and both he and Kev Foote were having to work at least part of the weekend.

Our host for the weekend was Rupert Tildersley, whose family own *Pimpernell*, no. 2, the earliest GP14 known to be still surviving. However the boat herself was not present; they have problems with her which sound to me like glue failure, and tend now to get her wet only for very special occasions, and even then only in fair conditions.

It was good to see Stewart Elder's *Aeolian*, no. 28, again, which I gather he had only newly acquired when he brought her down last year; this time she was clearly showing the benefit of the TLC that she has received over the intervening twelve months.

A surprise addition to the fleet – surprising only because I have known her owner for some years

but had not realised that he now owned this boat – was *Gilpin*, (ex-*Cumulus*) no. 16, owned by Peter James, who had kept very quiet about this acquisition! She was also looking in very nice condition, and showing the benefit of a lot of TLC; indeed Peter and Ivan were still fitting her out after they arrived, as this was her first 'wet' since Peter bought her.

Peter writes, 'I bought her a couple of years back from a guy in Northampton. The boat had been stored upright for many years in a garden in Abersoch, with the result that the transom had rotted. He had found a woodworker to replace the transom and the decking, and subsequently stored her dry but unfinished in his garage for some years.

'In preparation for the Aberdovey weekend, I decided to get her back onto the water and off my drive where she had overwintered. I found a load of original fittings and some period handles and washboards, a wooden mast (yet to be restored) and boom and rudder. Did the old boats have toe straps? I frankly had not found time to fit them, so arrived at Aberdovey and gave Ivan Washington (who was crewing) the option. 'If they are not fitted, you can't use them' was his response, so we kept everyone else waiting to launch until they were on.

'I have copies of the paperwork for several owners: The first is from when she was sold to a D.S. Everall (Shropshire S.C.) on 1/10/56 and recorded as built by Bell Woodworking in 1950. Subsequently, she went to a J.C. Bruce (Christchurch S.C.) on 16/5/58 and then a P.H. Duncombe on 18/7/61 (Rugby S.C.) who resigned from the Association and the previous owner reapplied for membership in 1991. She was known as *Cumulus* until I registered her in her new name of *Gilpin*.'

My own vintage boat, *Snowgoose*, no. 64, was sadly looking somewhat, er, maculate. She had sat out over last winter, and I had not been too bothered about the inevitable cosmetic deterioration

because I was planning on some major work during this summer. Unfortunately, I then completely ran out of time, so the work never got done.

We again made the best of the weather; Saturday morning saw us sail up a tributary river, the Afon Leri, and then back across the banks (making a circular route) to the club for lunch just before the rain started – and it set in with a vengeance for the rest of the day. On the Sunday – in weak sunshine and settled dry conditions which tempted me to use the prized cotton sails on *Snowgoose*, we sailed up the main river until we started to run out of water, and then beat back downriver against the still flooding tide to the small boatyard at Fron Goch where we stopped for a picnic lunch. Then after lunch we enjoyed a pleasant sail back to the club, once again arriving just in time before the rain started – and it then too settled in for the rest of the day.

#### Liverpool SC 'Run The Bridge' cruise

The day cruising events of my home club which are Open Invitation events have become quite popular with some of the Class Association cruising fraternity, and the final one this season was a sail upriver on the tide to the far side of the Widnes-Runcorn Bridge, then back on the ebb. At least, that was the plan; in the event the wind was kind to us, and we made such good progress that we were about an hour early arriving at the top end. So we had a bit of a play round above the bridge, before turning round as the flood slackened off, without waiting for the start of the ebb.

None of 'the usual suspects' were actually free to join us on that occasion, but it was good to have a visit from Kath Hall and Ann Rushton, who had last sailed with us in the National Cruising Week at Abersoch in 2008. Weather conditions were perfect; the heatwave at the end of this year's Indian Summer, the sunniest and hottest October day since 1858 (or something like that), and enough wind to move the boats briskly, but without it ever becoming physically tiring to sail them.

Kath writes, 'We just want to say again thank you for a spectacular day – we marveled at the sun/water effects and wave patterns constantly changing along the route, the birds running over the water for the high ground as the tide dropped, but above all the warmth, assistance and advice that you and your club members and safety crew welcomed us with. The day could not have been better.'

#### Plans for future years

##### UK national cruising week

For 2012 we are looking at the South West; the original idea had been to join the racers at Looe, but there was some feeling at this year's Cruising Week that there are not many places to cruise to from Looe, so Ed Washington and Richard Moore (who lives in West Cornwall) were jointly tasked with researching other alternatives in the area. Falmouth and the Helford were both mentioned as worthy of investigation.

For 2013 we understand that (provisionally) the racers will be going to Largs, and I have expressed interest in the possibility of the cruisers joining them there. If we do so, Stewart Elder has offered to run the week, as he knows the area well.

##### North Devon cruise

I personally will almost certainly spend several weeks of the summer sailing in the South West; I lived in North Devon for many years, and in Exeter for 18 months before that, and these are some of my favourite sailing waters. And in any case, if I am travelling that distance I want to stay for long enough to justify the travelling.

The only question is which boat, one of the GP14s (plus camping ashore) or the yacht. But if I choose to use a GP14 then one of my shore bases will be North Devon, and sailing will be in the Taw/Torridge estuary and/or off the coast, depending on weather. Anyone who might like to join me is more than welcome to get in touch.

*Oliver Shaw*

## A summer of sailing

### Stewart Elder

Bass Rock



photo: Stuart Elder

The main purpose of this article is not to provide a blow by blow account of my summer of sailing. However, these expeditions took a long time in planning and I may as well share these experiences with you to hopefully bring like-minded people together to be inspired, encouraged and to think about ways to make the best use of our time on planet Earth.

I know this may come as a surprise to those that have sailed with me and especially to those who race with me at Hollowell SC on Sundays, but my offer to lead the British Sailing Team at the London Olympics next year has been rudely ignored. As this has coincided with 2011 being my retirement year, I decided instead to follow the advice of Mark Twain:

'Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.'

Now there are two old things in my life – one is Mrs Elder, the other is my 50-year-old GP14, *Kyle Lea*. One gets all my care and attention, the other will be standing on the pier head waving a frilly hanky as I disappear over the horizon. So it was that I threw off the bowline and had myself a summer of sailing.

It started off with an afternoon sail around the Bass Rock in June. This is a very famous lump of basalt sitting off the coast of North Berwick near Edinburgh. David Attenborough describes it as 'The most important bird sanctuary in Western Europe'. I launched off the beach at North Berwick – a fee of £8.50 is charged for this privilege! This sail is not to be taken lightly and is not a family jaunt. The island is about 4 miles from North Berwick, I left two hours before high tide and the journey took three hours. I did have a crew and there were regular pleasure cruisers around the island which gave us some reassurance. There was a feeling of adventure and exhilaration as we sailed round the leeward side of the island – sideways on, in what were pretty big waves. What really made it for me was watching the 100,000 gannets watching me! They dive for fish, hitting the water at 60 mph and some were very close. There were also puffins which you only saw coming out of the water and always with a mouthful of sand eels.

From there I had a day sail out of Port Edgar just outside Edinburgh. This is a large marina and sailing school situated directly under the Forth Road Bridge. It's a good place to sail a GP and you can cruise under both the Road Bridge and Railway Bridge – I just had enough head room! There are changing rooms and hot showers as



well as cafés. I think I paid a fee of about £8, which included rescue cover.

From Edinburgh I made my way to Fort William for the main expedition of the summer. The first few days I sailed down Loch Linnhe to within two miles of the Corran Narrows – sorry, just had not got the courage to go through them! On Saturday I met up with Barney Creaser, my crew for the next two weeks – as well as another GP14 sailed by Mark Burgham. Also with us was David Mason who had brought his 22 foot trailer sailor. All three boats were heading down the Caledonian Canal and out into the Moray Firth to Chanonry Point on the Black Isle. In the end we sailed on past there and did an overnight stop amongst the very large cruise ships and oil rigs at Cromarty (Nigg Bay).

nearby, often with a picnic table. Our kit was carried by Dave in his 22 footer which was a great resource as it meant we could have two adults in the GP in better comfort and, in the event of a capsize, at least our tents and sleeping kit would be dry. Mark, in the other GP cooked and slept on board. And no, he was not a midget nor did his legs unscrew from his body!

The longest part of the sail was a 12 hour stretch from the end of Loch Ness out into the Moray Firth and on to Cromarty. We arrived at 9 pm at night and set sail back to Fortrose the next day catching the incoming tide at 6 am. The forecast for the day was 'winds 0 to 1 mph gusting to 1, sea state wavelets'. A forecast I have never heard of before and never want to experience again! The sea state though did enable us to sail with the dolphins at Chanonry Point.

If anyone is thinking of doing this journey in a GP14 then there are a number of considerations:

- 1 Do not do it alone.
- 2 The logistics of getting cars and trailers from the start to the finish is a nightmare.
- 3 Do not under-estimate the sailing conditions that can exist on Loch Ness (it has its own RNLI lifeboat station).
- 4 There is a rule that no sailing is allowed on the canal sections.
- 5 Consider a small craft 'mother ship' with an engine as it does get you through the locks quicker.

And 6, remember that wild camping is permissible in Scotland (within certain criteria). The most memorable night of the trip was when we just pulled over to the side of the Loch, built a small fire and set up camp for the night.

From Fortrose and after collecting cars and trailers, we said goodbye to Mark as he started the long journey home to Kent. The remaining three sailors were now based at Findhorn (near



Coming into harbour at the Portsoy Boat Festival

photo: Stewart Elder



Camping at Foyers on Loch Ness

The Caledonian Canal for us was a major expedition. Other boaters see it as a bit of relief from sailing and purely as a short-cut from one sea to the other. *But* – these boats have *engines* – our two GPs just had oars. The canal itself consists of 22 miles of actual canal and 38 miles of open water (Lochs). The longest of these is Loch Ness which is 22 miles (this took us two days). The facilities provided by British Waterways were very good and at most locks (not to be confused with lochs) there were toilets and often showers. A camping site was also freely available

photo: Stewart Elder

Nairn) for the Royal Findhorn SC regatta week. By the way, this was at the time of the Scottish Golf Open – yes, the one that was hit by tornadoes and thunder storms that swept away hillsides – about ten miles away from us. So, as you can guess, the annual Royal Findhorn Regatta week did not have winds '0 to 1 mph gusting to 1'. My 1956 GP14, *Kyle Lea*, stood no chance of winning anything, but the experience gained over the previous weeks' journey stood us in good stead as we were one of the few boats not to capsize. I cannot recommend this regatta highly enough – there are three races each day lasting for about 4 hours. It enables a family to have a sailing holiday without being totally committed to sailing all day. On the Sunday before racing started, we sailed at the Portsoy Boat Festival. I attended this Festival with my other vintage boat two years ago and had a great time. 20,000 visitors a day come here to watch old men playing with hand-built and traditional boats. The setting is a 17th century harbour which provides a great backdrop. On the day, there was a huge

swell – this was so bad the top of my mast was lost in the troughs to spectators on shore.

What next? Well, at the end of regatta week it was goodbye to Barney and Dave and I moved on to the Kyles of Bute or more specifically Tighnabruich (try saying that when you've had a few whiskies!). Most people will recognise its location better when I say it's on the Firth of Clyde. The visit here coincided with the Tall Ships Race leaving Greenock on Monday 11 July. This was quite a sight, and I have never seen so many small boats in one place. We rented a chalet at Carry Farm just outside the village of Kames. This place has its own sailing school so it was an ideal location to set off on day sails. The weather was bright and sunny and the sailing was just *great*. This is a good sailing area and comes with the most amazing scenery. Highlight was a sail up to Loch Riddon, catching mackerel and eating them within the hour. It was my intention to circumnavigate the Kyles, but I found enough sailing in the area without heading out for what would have been a two day sail.



Looking down to  
Loch Riddon

There was a gap now for three weeks (time for a holiday, I think) before I sneaked back into Wales – this time to Aberdovey. This was with the GP14 Vintage Section – not to be confused with the GP14 Cruising Section. I attended this event last year on the 60th anniversary of the first launch of the GP14 at Aberdovey. It was a pleasure to be back especially with my 1950 GP14 no. 28 *Aeolian*. We could only manage two short sails in the weekend, as the good old Welsh weather struck with some vengeance. There is a great tidal race just off-shore which provides an interesting sail, especially with a leaky, vintage boat. I had a near miss with a whale . . . at least I think I did, or it might have be me dreaming about where to sail next year.

GP14s make excellent cruising boats and if you can take one on holiday then I hope I have inspired you into doing something other than racing.

*Stewart Elder*  
GP14s nos. 28, 2910 and 13554



Meeting a whale at Aberdovey

photo: Stewart Elder

From Tighnabruaich, 'me and *Kyle Lea*' headed down the M6 to have a wee sail with the GP14 Cruising Section on Ullswater. For those looking for a weekend or a week's holiday with the family, this is a good place to sail. We stayed in a caravan at the Ullswater Caravan site which was about a mile up a steep hill, but had a brilliant harbour and launching area separate from the caravan site which made it just perfect! Winds were very changeable for the weekend and on the Sunday I experienced the 'winds gusting to 1' situation again, this time fortunately without the influence of the tide. This is a very good cruising area that I would like to come back to, as we never actually made it from end to end.

Saturday 6 August, it's into Welsh Wales (well they are a strange race, someone has to visit them – no sense of humour, you see boyo) again with the GP14 Cruising Section. This time it's a week's cruising around Milford Haven and Pembroke. The report from Oliver Shaw covers this week better. It was a good sailing week with some pretty strong winds. The sailing area was excellent, as was the company. We were using Neyland Yacht Club as a base and this arrangement could not have been better. I was very impressed with the area and hope to revisit soon. I will tell you more about it once I have painted over a few road signs, tamed a few locals and got them to speak proper English.

photo: Stewart Elder

## The Bala cruising weekend

For a wind-down after my GCSEs, I took up the opportunity to head up to Bala Lake in Wales for my first GP cruising event. Having only really raced before, I found cruising a completely different ball game, giving me to chance to answer some of those important questions every sailor has asked themselves, like can I swim as fast as a boat? No. Or does this drybag float? Also No.

After setting off Saturday morning at an hour that I didn't know existed, we arrived and rigged up the boats and headed off from the campsite to the other end of the lake. Despite a desperate lack of wind, the sailing wasn't too bad, made even better by some of the best weather this year. Tying up the tiller, pointing the boat in the roughly the right direction and lying back along the thwart was also a new experience, made better by the promise of ice cream at the other end.

While enjoying my sleep, Lewis decided it was time to abandon the boat and swim alongside, failed to keep up and ended up being dragged by holding onto the end of the mainsheet. One of the 'old guard' of cruisers came along by at this point, looked as us two 'kids' and simply laughed before heading off elsewhere, presumably in search of some slippers and a pipe?

After a while of trying to sleep, Lewis eventually persuaded me that I should get up and turn the boat around to pick him up, and due to the extra drag I decided it was probably worthwhile if I were to get an ice cream. Needless to say, despite our 'larking about' we still beat Gareth and Ed to the beach.

After a filling of raspberry ripple, we started the return journey, which was never destined to be.



Josh Bennett

photo: Ed Washington

After half an hour and virtually no progress, we gave up and took a tow back to the campsite. As lunch began to settle, Ed and Gareth in the boat being towed behind began to get the munchies. Hence commenced the great apple-pie float back – of course after a quick check of the density, volume and probable displacement of an exceedingly good pie.

The evening was finished with a BBQ, annual Bala cricket championship and the new-founded tradition of rounders. The following day we launched into a great breeze, and 'almost planed' all the way down to the ice cream shop for round 2 and a new flavour! The beat back up was more eventful, with a couple of near dunkings and some serious hiking all the way.

Bala was a great warm-up to the Cruising Week in Neyland, and, all in all, I think I'm hooked on 'this cruising lark' – bring on next summer...

*Josh Bennett*



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