



E-news

Edition 1 Nov 2016

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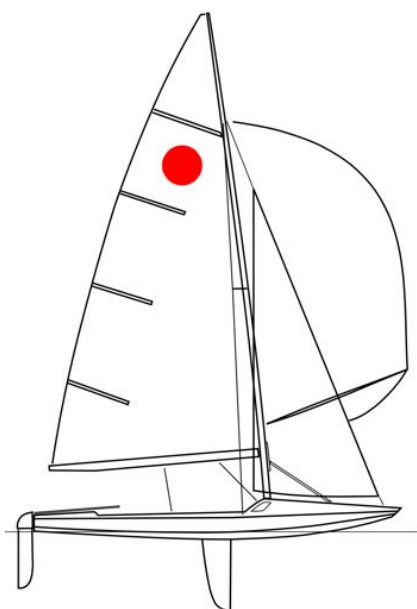
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Chairmans Report

Welcome to the first edition of Fireball News to be delivered electronically – only 50 years after it was produced on foolscap! I hope you enjoy reading it.

I had the honour of being elected Chairman of the UK Fireball Association recently but most of you will know little of me although you may well have come across my numerous and more illustrious namesakes! I first came across Fireballs while watching an annual regatta week at Shaldon, Devon when I was probably 6 or 7 years old; the design was new, people were talking about it and something must have struck a chord with me. Roll the clock on a few years and, by then a fifth former (year 11), I acquired a third-hand boat, FB5176, and sailed at Dell Quay SC where there was a 50-strong fleet and a fellow member was one Peter Milne - designer of Fireball. Since then I have owned many boats and currently have Fireballs 6 and 15111 both of which are based at Hayling Island SC.

Which takes me nicely on to the 2016 Nationals that were held in mid-August at my home club. The sun shone, all 10 scheduled races took place and great – but varied – sailing was had by all. Congratulations to Tom Gillard and Richard Anderton for retaining their title! To start with it looked like they were finding it all a little too comfortable having posted five straight bullets but Sophie Weguelin and Eilidh McIntyre, taking a break from their 470 training while the Olympics were on, put paid to that by winning races 6 and 7. They were part of a small, but very talented, contingent of RYA squad sailors who made a great impact on the championship.

To a degree the Nationals entry – a very respectable 49 boats - was depressed by the European Championship that finished just a few days earlier. Viewed from afar that event seemed to be held in trying conditions with the UK contingent struggling for consistency. Top GBR team were Allan and Christina Tyler of Lyme Regis SC who finished an impressive 5th overall and who counted a race win - one of only two by British boats in the entire series. With just three British boats in the top 10 the finishing order had an unusual look to it but that can't be a bad thing for the class. Claude Mermoud and Reudi Moser were worthy champions posting a set of low scores that were remarkable given the vagaries of the week and, what's more, doing so in the same boat, SUI14799, in which they took the 2002 European title!

Returning to the UK, the association's AGM was held at Hayling following which your new committee is now largely in place and looking to make a significant difference to the association and to the class in general during the next 12 months. This e-bulletin is the first tangible evidence of change and you will soon have a

new website. For some while it has been recognised that UKFA members need to get more for their subscription than simply supporting the class and this has no doubt discouraged membership renewals. Part of the problem is that a wealth of Fireball information and advice is free to all via the current website so the latest one will have a members-only section and only fully-paid up members will receive Fireball News. However, more needs to be done and, amongst a number of initiatives, it is the intention to work up a list of 'members offers/discounts' with appropriate suppliers – one or two already exist – such that a member will be able to recoup the annual subscription in savings. With any luck, these will be in place by the new year.

Talking of early January, that is when annual subscriptions are due and to make it easier for people to remember when to pay (a few days before the Nationals really isn't the ideal!) we will encourage members to sign up to direct debiting. As well as smoothing out the association's cashflow it will also save on administration costs and time.

I am very much a club Fireballer and, on my occasional forays to championships, you will find me at the back of the fleet; like the majority of club Fireballers up and down the country I have no aspirations to win the Worlds and simply want to enjoy sailing my Fireball. As an association we have much to do to re-engage with weekend club sailors: we will be looking to rejuvenate dormant club fleets and to create new ones where there is a nucleus of boats or even one keen individual with drive. In that regard the Committee is looking for someone with enthusiasm and ideas to co-ordinate a drive to re-build club fleets. If you are interested in knowing a little more about the role do please get in touch!

Whilst I am writing this note in blazing sunshine I am all too aware we are now rolling towards the latter part of the season. However, there is still plenty going on: we have open meetings coming up at Brightlingsea and King George, various winter series will start in late October/early November and, of course, there is the small matter of the World Championship. Travelling to South Africa may not be for all us but please try to support any local Fireball activity you can!

Chris Turner

Chairman

Fireballs 6 & 15111, Hayling Island SC



Hayling Island

Nationals 2016

A Fleet Perspective

Father and Son Stephen and Peter Jones from Blackburn epitomise what it is to be Fireball Sailors. Veterans of the class, they prove that it doesn't matter where you are in the fleet, the racing is fun and competitive. And age? Well that's just a number..

Day one was champagne sailing with a great breeze and some challenging waves and wind shifts which saw some carnage on the gybe half way round the triangle. Taking some avoiding action from an upturned boat in front of us, we capsized. When we finally righted the boat, we were towards the back of the fleet which is where we stayed.

On days two and three the wind was much lighter with far fewer incidents on the race course, but with three races each day it was still a good challenge and hard work at the back and the front of the fleet.

On the final day we had a great challenge to get to the committee boat but the wind eventually filled in enough to get two great races in, which gave us our best start up the right hand side of the race course.

Off the water there was some great social events, including two great live bands and Dork of the Day, won on one day by our race officer Paul Carpenter for knocking the course board overboard before a race. What a great sport! Paul hung the Dork of the Day jersey off the committee boat for the following day. Thanks to Andy Robinson for the fantastic organisation of the Dork of the Day.

What a fantastic event we have had both on and off the water. We would like to thank Hayling Island Sailing Club and everyone involved in making the event happen. The race team did an amazing job in setting courses and it was brilliant that they managed to get the full quota of 10 races in over the four day event.

It is great to see some new faces in the Fireball fleet along with some British team sailors taking part and also some of the more seasoned fireballers.

Finally I would like to congratulate the National Championship winners 2016 Tom Gillard (helm) and Richard Anderton (crew). Amazing work guys and very well done.

Pete and Steve Jones

spinlock

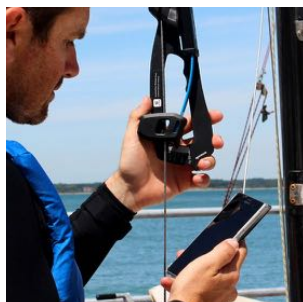
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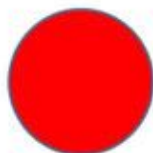


Rig-Sense App is available free for iOS and Android phones and tablets.



www.spinlock.co.uk

Winter offer



Fireball sails



20% discount on championship sails.

Offer ends 30th November.

Contact Dave Hall

davehall@hydesails.co.uk

+44 (0)7525 271500



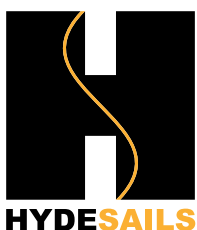
50 YEARS OF RACING SAILS FROM HYDE

Hyde Sails celebrated 50 years of making fast, quality sails last year by going back to our roots in One Design racing

With a new team dedicated to development and results we achieved some spectacular successes in a range of classes both dinghy and keelboat. Most satisfying perhaps was James Peters and Fynn Sterrit's performance at the Fireball Worlds, where at their first attempt they very nearly won a top quality international event, with boat speed that confounded their 108 rivals.

We will continue with our ambitious plans in 2017 in the Fireball and across a number of classes. Why not see if we can help you to lead your fleet not follow the competition?

Call Dave Hall 07525 271500. Or find him on stand C44 at the RYA Dinghy Show.



MAKING SAILS THE WAY YOU WANT



Club Focus

Anyone who's been to Blackwater knows the score. It's one of the best clubs in the country. Fact. A family friendly club with a super club house and one of the most active Fireball fleets going...

By Bryan Sergeant
Blackwater

boasts a membership in excess of 1000 members and is proud to host a strong Fireball fleet. The club facilities were upgraded 10 years ago to make them amongst the best in the country with the club winning the Yachts & Yachting best sailing club in 2014. There is a selection of boats including a Fireball, for members to use.

The Fireball Fleet

Over the last 3 seasons the Fireball fleet has seen a strong resurgence of numbers, with many of the existing fleet upgrading their boats trying to retain or improve their winning potential as well as new members joining the fleet! Weekly emails reporting on available crews, race reports and friendly banter on tactics both good and bad have helped to create and sustain interest in the fleet.

The fleet actively encourages younger members, both helms and crews, to join the fleet racing and several members make it a policy to constantly change crews just to shake the order up in the fleet. This keeps the interest up as well as introducing lots of new people into the class. The class is also trialling a simple personal handicap system whereby newcomers and less experienced crews and helms are given a time allowance against the more experienced sailors to hopefully tighten up the results and encourage those at the back of the fleet to keep improving.

As well as encouraging the younger members we try to retain the older stalwarts of the class

and recently at the age of 78, having officially retired 6 months earlier and sold his boat, George had to buy a new boat as he was missing the fleet camaraderie too much! The club currently has fifteen fireball members each enjoying owning their own boats, with up to ten racing regularly.



The Fireball fleet arranges annual training to take place at the club as well as an annual open meeting. The family /club week is held in August which is always highlight of the sailing season and attracted a fleet of 12 boats, it would have been 14 if two of them hadn't been at the Nationals!

These events are open events and visitors can be assured of a very warm welcome with plenty of after sailing activities for all the family. .

Many of the fireball fleet race on the open circuit and travel to the Europeans and World Championships.

The club has a great [website](#) for any one wishing to review its full potential. We would like to invite you all to our Fireball open meeting next year and our club week full details of both events can be found on the fireball website.

Club fireball contacts are:-
Fireball Fleet Captain - Rorie Ash
07796608794
rorieash@gmail.com

Technique



With top sailors coming into the fleet from other classes we get to learn of a fresh approach and maybe some things we hadn't thought of. Who says you can't teach an old dog new tricks?...

Many people have asked about the technique that Olympic Squad 49'er Sailors James Peters and Fynn Sterritt used so successfully and with great effect at last years Fireball World Championship in Wales. That is, having the crew take the mainsheet straight from the boom up wind and on two sail reaches. I spoke to James and Fynn to pick their brains and find out their thoughts and more importantly how they did it. So over to you James and Fynn;-

"We found the 'crew on the mainsheet' technique to be effective in strong wind conditions where the mainsheet needed to be played constantly and fluidly in such a way that it's sole purpose was to keep the boat at an angle of heel that the fireball hull responds positively to - which we think is close to flat but not quite. In conditions

where the mainsheet is sometimes 'block to block' or pulled all the way in, we didn't find the technique to be as effective. This might be because we struggled to get enough leech tension (only pulling the mainsheet from the boom rather than coming down to the jammer), or it may have simply been because in these conditions the helm is just as capable of achieving the required mainsheet movement as the crew (In these conditions the mainsheet is played less and may often be very critically linked to rudder movements ie when a gust hits, to what extent do we feather the boat or ease the mainsheet?). When the mainsheet is always block to block, there is no gain to the 'crew on the mainsheet' technique whatsoever. It's probably also worth mentioning other reasons we think this technique worked particularly well. Having the crew on the mainsheet upwind allows the helm to focus far easier on:

1. The steering of the boat (which in large waves is particularly important)
2. Any tactical decisions that need to be made (not having the mainsheet allows freedom of body rotation to look around)
3. Hiking! The fireball is a very narrow boat. Therefore any given increase in displacement of body mass outwards from the centreline has a large % increase in movement compared to most other dinghies. A free forward arm (that would otherwise be used to hold the mainsheet) allows the helm to put this arm over the crews legs and effectively put weight through the crews trapeze wire rather than through the toe straps. You can actually flat hike the entire beat if you fancy it.....



The following descriptions are referring to conditions in which we think you will see gains from employing this technique (roughly 16 knots +).

• **Handing over the sheet off the start**

Often straight after the start, there tends to be more of an emphasis on needing to 'hold high' rather than sail fast forwards in order to hold a lane. Of course what only some of the fleet realise is that by building speed and getting the fireball freely planing, the foils really start to work and we see a huge reduction in leeway resulting in being able to track higher. Therefore the first boat that is able to reach this mode is not only going to go forward on everyone else, but will end up higher too. The 'crew on the main sheet' technique excelled in this faster mode where the boat responded positively to constant and fluid mainsheet movement. The problem is that you initially give away a boat length or so to leeward transitioning to this mode from the 'higher' slower mode. If we started with a decent gap to leeward, we knew we could sail the fast mode even from the trigger and therefore we swapped Fynn onto the mainsheet straight away (as we got more confident sometimes even on the start gun). If we couldn't sail the fast mode, James played the mainsheet for a while until either we had climbed off the boat to leeward, or they were a good quality

boat and they themselves decided to bear away and kick the boat up onto the fast mode. In terms of the mechanics of the swap itself, James just took the mainsheet from the boom block and pulled it back through the jammer until the knot was against the cleat and then passed the mainsheet from the boom block out to Fynn.

• **Tacking**

This was easy, helm takes the mainsheet back from the crew and tacks with the mainsheet from the boom (see youtube for 29er tacking), crew tacks the jib as usual.

• **Bear away**

We wanted to get the helm back on the mainsheet from the jammer by the windward mark so as to be able to sail the fireball conventionally downwind. To begin with we kept dunking Fynn in the water as he basically dropped the mainsheet and James tried to pull the mainsheet through the jammer quickly! Clearly not the way forward. We ended up with James passing the tail of the mainsheet from the jammer out to Fynn, then James taking the mainsheet from the boom block whilst Fynn pulls the tail of the mainsheet all the way through the jammer until it was tight again down from the boom block to the jammer, then James takes the mainsheet back off Fynn from the jammer. Not the most slick system.....

• **Rounding up hand over**

much the same as after the start..... So now the winter is upon us let's all go and try it! Fynn and James think that the technique can still be refined and also helped by looking at alternative mainsheet systems.

James and Fynn were interviewed by Dave Hall of Hyde Sails and Weathermark Sailboats



Nationals 2016

A Class Act

470 Olympic Squad team Helm Jess Lavery and her Crew Flora Steward joined fellow squad members Sophie Weguelin and Eilidh McIntyre on the start line for this years Nationals.. How does the 470 compare? Read on to find out..

By Jess Lavery

We had heard that the Fireball was a competitive, friendly fleet so with less events in the 470 over the summer it was a perfect chance to try out a Fireball! The class were helpful in finding a boat for the event and while we were setting up in the boat park plenty of people came over to say hello. Everyone was very open and happy to help with the set up, give us some tips on how to sail the boat quickly and how it might be a little different to the 470. We also had a number of people come over saying that we had a quick boat - so no pressure then!

The racing didn't disappoint either. After a slight baptism of fire in the windy weather we were glad to see we weren't the only boat to go swimming. It took a bit of time to get used to racing in a bigger fleet as we rarely race in a fleet of more than 40 which meant we had to keep our head out the boat a bit

more while also trying to not slap every wave! The racing was close no matter where you were in the fleet, whether it was near the front or more in the pack. We felt like we improved through the week and started to work out how to sail the boat fast. Downwind still remained a bit of a mystery and a slightly stressful experience deciding whether to sail it like a 470 straight downwind or start to sail angles. We tended to go with what the majority of the fleet were doing with mild panic setting in when we then saw someone else doing something different!

Overall it was a great event and I loved sailing the Fireball. It was great fun learning to sail a new boat and working out how to make it go quickly and the fleet was friendly helpful. Hopefully I will be back for some more!

Nationals 2016

The Gallery

The 2016 Nationals at Hayling Island Sailing Club were without doubt the highlight of the season. Here are a few of those memorable moments.. Thanks to Peter Hickson of HISC for the action shots..









Whats Next?

2017 is gonna be a cracker

With a UK European & National Championships, a revamped Golden Dolphin series, a new Chairman and refreshed Committee, a new Website, regular e-magazines, plus active and competitive boat builders and sail makers, the future of Fireball is looking rosy. What we do need is to keep promoting the class and the incredible boat that we all love sailing.

If you have any suggestions or can help in any way then please feel free to contact Publicity@FireballSailing.org.uk

Don't forget, you can follow us on Twitter @ukfireball on Facebook [https://](https://www.facebook.com/UKFireballClass/)

www.facebook.com/UKFireballClass/ and visit our website [http://](http://www.fireballsailing.org.uk)

www.fireballsailing.org.uk - There's loads of useful information on the site, from clubs where Fireballs are sailed, to technical, rigging and tuning guides, information about future open meetings, National, European and World Championships, reports and results from past events large and small. The discussion forum where (almost) anything goes, the classifieds for buying and selling all things Fireball. We're in the process of building an archive of older material so if you have anything which might be of use or ideas and suggestions, please get in touch.

Don't forget the gallery where you can find photos of Fireballs old and new, fast & faster, at home and away.

If your club has an event this winter which is even remotely connected to Fireballs we want to know so we can tell the wider community.

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Edited by Andy Robinson

Nationals Pictures Credited to Peter Hickson

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