



# Fireball

E-news

Edition #5 Feb 2018



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# Chairmans Report

## Chairman's Report

Perhaps it's just me but the calendar pages appear to be turning over quickly now as we head towards the start of the new season. The Dinghy Show at Alexandra Palace provides me with an annual prompt that it's only a matter of a week or two before I squeeze into my wetsuit - which always seems to have shrunk since it was last used in December - and take to the water for a shake-down sail.

Not that things have been quiet for the UKFA committee since the end of the 2017 season. Far from it! Nationals and Dinghy Show organisation take up a lot of time during the 'quiet' months of the year - 'twas ever thus - but we have also spent a good deal of time trying to find ways to promote the class and to offer Fireballers reasons to be UKFA members.

The most visible evidence of our efforts is Fireball e-News where this edition - the fifth - is larger than normal and will be available for distribution to interested sailors at the Dinghy Show. Speaking of which, our stand will return to its normal size this year and will be enhanced by a short UK Fireball video that should engage passers-by. My thanks to Lucy Cornes for producing the video by assembling clips from many sources in a short space of time! A strong Fireball 'youth' presence is planned with our younger members not only manning the main stand but also undertaking stunts looking after the RYA 'try trapezing' apparatus seeking to direct prospective trapeze artists towards the Fireballs on show. Further, Andy Robinson will be on the RYA Class Association stand at 2.30 pm on Saturday presenting on all-things Fireball for 15 minutes. Knowing Andy, we can be confident he'll be the star of the afternoon!

As many of you will be aware, we recently announced that Gul have kindly agreed to be headline sponsors for both the Nationals and the Golden Dolphin series for not just 2018 but also 2019! This is fabulous news as it provides both the association and Gul with certainty and also means that Gul are in a position to donate some seriously impressive prizes. Watch out for

significant awards for the silver and Bronze fleets and for random spot prizes at the Nationals!

We are also very pleased to let you know that Pinnell & Bax have offered to provide UKFA members a 5% discount on chandlery and sailing wear. To take advantage of this offer members will need to quote their membership number (which P&B will be able to check) that may be found on your membership card. If you haven't got a card there's a strong chance you're not an association member so you know what to do! Given the UK Global and P&B discounts it makes financial sense to be a member. Why wouldn't you want to be?!

Turning to international matters, this year's worlds will be held at Carnac which is very popular with UK sailors of all classes so a good contingent of UK Fireballers is expected to cross the channel in August. Further down the line and keen to be on the front foot, UKFA has submitted a presentation to Fireball International offering to host the 2023 world championship under the burgee of Hayling Island SC. We wait to see and will update you with news in due course.

To conclude on a sad note, we mourn the passing of Toby Hamer who died at a tragically young age shortly before Christmas. Toby was an ever-cheerful and enthusiastic Fireballer who'll be greatly missed. He will not, however, be forgotten as, working with Dynamic Sails where Toby learnt the art of sailmaking, we intend to institute a Toby Hamer Memorial Trophy for presentation at the UK Nationals to a young Fireballer, or young Fireball team, who sailed the event in that spirit of joie de vivre displayed by Toby and his partner, Torie Morley. No one who attended the Nationals at Tenby a few years ago will ever forget 'Skunk'!

Chris Turner



# Nationals 2018

## Penzance

### **Penzance : a snapshot - and no pirates in sight!**

By now you will all know we're going to Penzance in late July for the Nationals but those of you haven't been there before may be wondering what to expect.

Well, Penzance SC has a strong association with the Fireball class having hosted the Nationals on several occasions most recently in 2012 when the club welcomed 58 entrants. What's more, though, it just has to be one of the most welcoming, enthusiastic and friendly clubs out there!

Sailing in Mounts Bay is, of course, fantastic! If you've sailed there you know; if you haven't then talk to anybody from any class and you will receive a very favourable report. The course area is close to the club, the race team is top-notch and officials are always keen to liaise with the fleet to ensure it gets what it wants.

The clubhouse is on the edge of the harbour and has a large public car park adjacent to it so cars

are only seconds away if tool boxes or changes of sailing gear are required. Road bases stay at the club meaning arrival and departure days are that much easier. Parking is not free but a weekly ticket can be purchased to make the cost quite reasonable and, in comparison to other clubs, it is definitely an advantage to have cars close by. Launching and recovery via a concrete slipway at most states of the tide is very easy and made easier still by many youngsters rostered to lend a hand. If the tide is out there's a bit of a walk with the boat to deeper water but it's sheltered and not an issue at all. A floating jetty runs alongside so boats returning from the course can, if they wish, queue rather than sail straight into the slipway. It's all very orderly!

There is plenty of accommodation in the vicinity: flats, houses, B&B very many of which are within walking distance of the club. Further afield there is plenty of choice including camping and caravan sites.

So, there it is – attending and participating in a Nationals doesn't come much easier than Penzance. What's more we can be certain of a hugely enjoyable week: the club will really look after us and the bar is legendary! See you there!

**Photo (Left) by Chris Turner: Penzance SC 2012 Nationals.**

**The original mainsail from FB8 hoisted to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first-ever Fireball race.**





The waves in Mounts bay are legendary

# Round the Cans

## All about you

A new regular series where we get under the skin of Fireball Sailors in an interview fashion. In this first edition it's new Committee Member and returning Fireballer Steve Goacher in the hot seat.. So if you don't know Steve, read on...



**Name:** Steve Goacher

**Age:** I'm 55 years old... so born in 1962 which was the year the Fireball was designed by Peter Milne and first sailed in Chichester Harbour.

**Profession:** I'm lucky enough to work with my wife Sonia and we run our own software business now, but I was a boat builder and a sailmaker before I realised I should go and get a proper job.

**Home Town:** Lymington

**Club:** I'm a member of Hayling Island Sailing Club because they have such a fabulous Fireball fleet there, and Lymington Town Sailing Club where I manage to get some good handicap racing especially in the Frostbite Series where we raced last Sunday.

**Boat number and name:** GBR15145 called "It's not normally like this here". The boat name is a reference to the one statement that I have heard at most of the championships I've ever been to around the world at some time during the week some says "it's not normally like this here".

**Fireball buying history:** I've built four Fireballs, owned a further 5 or possibly 8 or maybe 12...

**Current nationals Fleet gold/silver/bronze:** Unsure, I didn't really look at the results last year.

**Gear - which sails do you use:** P&B sails, because they are fast, reliable and they do a standard flat cut mainsail which is perfect for lightweight crews.

In 2017 I had my first new boat for a long time - this time from Dave Hall at Weathermark Sailboats – it's very, very good.

**Which Kite/Pole system:** The Sayce / Reece designed pole system which works magic for lighter crews.

**How long sailed FBs:** Since I was 16, crewing 'till 1990 then helming

**At what level club/national/international:** Yes all of those. I've done over 60 Fireball championships and at the worlds I've finished overall placings in every place in the top 20 except 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Year of 1st nationals:** 1980 in Penzance - as it happens we are back there this year. Fabulous venue and I'm really looking forward to it.

**Last major championship:** 2017 Fireball Europeans at Lyme Regis – great place, great people, shame about the weather.

**Best ever major championship:** In terms of fun... the Fireball Worlds in San Francisco in 1984 where I was crewing for long term helm and life-long friend David Sayce.

**Why:** San Francisco bay is an amazing place to sail, with the backdrop of the city and the steady building wind every day. It was very windy all week. We were 10<sup>th</sup> overall and for a couple of lightweights we were, on reflection, very pleased with that result.

**Most memorable result:** As a crew... David and I won a couple of races at Fireball World Championships, in boats that I built. It's very difficult to describe that feeling as you cross the line ahead of everyone else at a world championship race. Not everyone gets to do that - I'm very proud of it.

**Most memorable result:** As a helm... I won the French Nationals again, this time with Tim Edlund crewing. That was sailing in Quiberon bay and as we are going to be racing there this year I've a good feeling about that.

**What other boats have you sailed:** I've sailed most things, but Fireball is the only boat I've ever really felt at home in. I hate sitting out. When you compare how easy a Fireball is with, say, a Laser, or Merlin, or a Moth. The 505 is too scary for me (have you seen how big that spinnaker is?). The RS boats are in my view just terrible with the possible exception of the 800 but you need to be young and fit for those and I am neither young nor fit. Perhaps the newer lighter RS single handers are a lot better, but I am just so happy with my Fireball.

**Why do you sail a FB:** The Fireball is magic to sail and it's incredibly forgiving. You can be reasonably competitive however old you are, and whatever weight you are. It's a great combination of almost one-design, with enough flexibility to be inventive. Most of the stuff we fiddle with doesn't make much difference at all (although having an extra bit of string always make me feel better). I've made friends all over the world through Fireball. Last weekend I was rigging the fireball in the club car park to go racing in the winter series at Lymington and a bloke who I've never met wondered over and said "wow I've not seen one of these for 40 years... used to sail one in the 70's and loved every minute of it". In 40 years' time there won't be many RS sailors saying that with such a strong feeling of sheer delight about the boat.

**What do you like best about it:** I love sailing upwind when it's REALLY windy, rake back, kicker on, the main rattling and really just the jib driving the boat forward (even saying this brings a smile to my face). It's a long time since I was properly competitive in those conditions, but in the fireball it's possible to be racing in those conditions and I just love it. I'm in complete awe of people like Tom Gillard, Viv Townend and Richard Wagstaff who have just won so many Worlds races over the years I've lost count and I'm sure they have too. I doubt they enjoy racing more than I do though.

**Who is your crew:** Last year I teamed up with Tom Goacher who is 17 and just doing his A Levels this year. It's really great sailing with my lad. There is very little that I can teach him about schoolwork as he is much brighter than I am, but sailing Fireballs is something that I can teach him, and we get along really well in the boat. I'm enjoying it immensely and I really hope he is too.

**What does he/she do well:** Tom is very quick about the boat (providing it's after midday – he is 17) and he is much better at remembering numbers than I am, so he does the compass numbers and I just point the boat and pull stuff.

**What could he/she do better:** Getting him out of bed is the main challenge.

**How do you prepare for a campaign (boat/fitness):** Hmm, I'm much happier working on the boat than I am on me. I'm lucky to retain a reasonable level of fitness so I run occasionally and have maintained 10k in less than an hour for the last 6 years.

**What event are you most excited about this year:** With the nationals in Penzance and the Worlds in Carnac I'm looking forward to great year. Southern Brittany is wonderful, warm and good sea breezes in August - a great place to race, with potentially a mixture of big waves and also possibly much lighter winds at times through the week. Dave and I won the French National Championships there in nineteen eighty something and so I'm looking forward to going back. French food and the people are just wonderful and welcoming.

**What would you like to see in the class:** MARKETING. I have been sad and frustrated that Fireball International has fiddled with the FI Constitution and fiddled with the Fireball rules thinking that will help sustain the class, but has failed to grasp the fundamental issues regarding the absolute requirement to do some proper marketing for the class. The boat is fine... and needs no substantial rule changes. What the class as a whole needs right now is Marketing. The Fireball has so much to offer club sailors in the UK and worldwide, with a good strong second hand market and club racing across the UK and much of Europe. We must do some marketing of the class. There is so much opportunity to develop the class – so money where the mouth is time - I've joined the UKFA committee and I'm looking forward to making a difference by just doing some basic advertising and marketing the class on its strengths. I want to double the UKFA membership in two years and double it again in four years.

**Sausage sandwich/bacon butty/avocado on toast:** Bacon every time. Avocado... what is that?

**Whats your best one liner:** Not a quick thinker, so don't tend to do one liners. I do like the boat name though... "it's not normally like this here".



Britain's Steve Goacher and his crew, Tim Edlund, get to grips with the heavy swell during the Fireball world champs off Durban this week.



# Sailjuice 2017/18

## Fireballs Shine



Photos by Tim Olin

Words by Dave Hall

## The Fireballs

have been out in force in the Sailjuice winter series. Taking place at lakes across the UK, this winter series has become the 'must do' winter sailing.

Here is the story so far.

The first event kicked off at Draycote, known as the Draycote Dash it has recently attracted large numbers. The Fireball class was the largest fleet, but the light winds did us no favours now the PN number has been radically reduced last year following a windy series. Ian Dobson & Richard Wagstaff flew the flag near the front finishing a credible 15<sup>th</sup>. Isaac Marsh & Oli Davenport and James Cuxon & James Arnott managed good mid fleet places in the very large entry.

The Datchet Flyer was next and yet another light wind event favouring the slow boats or those with very big sails. Only one day was sailed following the snow storm on the Saturday night. The Fireballs were represented by Georgie Booth & Ioana Dixon and Zoe Bazen & Charlie Sanson who in the light conditions faired mid fleet.

The series then went up North for the Brass Monkey at Yorkshire Dales SC.

It was down to the Northern teams to represent the class, Ian Dobson & Richard Wagstaff plus Dave Winder & Ben Rayner put in a good effort but once again the light winds and the short course legs gave the advantage to the slower and single-handed boats.

Grafham Grand Prix.

Finally, the wind came – maybe a bit too much. Dave Hall & Paul Constable managed to finish all three races to end up second. There was a high retirement rate, Kevin Hope & Simon Hibbet had a good first part of the first race but decided the shore was a better option. Russ & Penny Clark missed the first race, managed an OCS in the second and finally completed the last race in style. Mark Maskell & Nigel Sheppard decide to reduce the size of their mainsail and the young team of Dan Johnson & Ben Latham completed all races to end up 17<sup>th</sup>.

King George Gallop

This event replaced the huge pursuit on Queen Mary SC which currently has no water. The reduced entry on the smaller lake did not reduce the quality of the fleet but it was back to business as usual with a light wind that favoured the single handers and early starters. Penny & Russ Clarke led the charge for the Fireballs but were never going to catch the first boats on the tight course. Also flying the flag were Georgia Booth & Oliver Davenport, Zoe Bazen & Charlie Samson and Jack & Elliott Berry

Tiger Trophy at Rutland.

Tradition has it that this event is always cold and usually very windy. A huge turn out of 14 boats took part and were greeted with 2 different days. Saturday's racing ended up being cancelled through lack of wind so it was decided to hold the 3 races usually sailed on Saturday on Sunday. The first race was a tame affair but race 2 and 3 the wind came up and the temperature went down. It was payback time for the Fireballs after so many light wind events, Ian Dobson & Richard Wagstaff won the event in style. Matt Burge & Dan Schieber were 6<sup>th</sup> and Dave Hall & Paul Constable were 7<sup>th</sup> – also winning the 'oldies' prize. Kevin Hope and Russell Thorne completed the domination in the top 10 finishing 9<sup>th</sup>.

At the time of writing there is still the Oxford Blue to come – the Fireballs are hopeful of some wind. It's always cold and windy at Rutland!



# Dinghy Show 2018



**3-4 MARCH 2018**  
ALEXANDRA PALACE, LONDON



It is an exciting year for the Fireball class in the UK. A Nationals to look forward to in Penzance and a trip to France for the Worlds. We will have two boats on the stand at the show, Paul Cullen's new Winder and Bryan Sargent's brand-new boat from Weathermark. We have also arranged to have a video running which has been put together by Lucy Cornes plus Andy Robinson will be doing a presentation on the RYA class stand. In addition, the RYA are running a Trapeze simulator for show goers to learn how to hang off the wire – we have got some of our young members on the stand to help out and guide them to the best class!



We still need class members to help on the stand. Please contact Dave Hall. You will get a free ticket and if you are lucky – a shirt!

All we are looking for is for you to spend a couple of hours on either Saturday or Sunday telling the Dinghy Worlds how great the Fireball class is.



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# South West Focus

## West Country Resurgence

South West Fireballs News By Chris Thorne

The Southwest has historically been a hotbed for Fireball sailors and still is, however; with many Fireballers spread across a large area it is a challenge drawing this quality group together regularly.

This year though, could be different! Through the off season the area co-ordinator, Chris Thorne has been busy pulling together new initiatives for the area and needs your help to make this a success.

There is now a dedicated area facebook group, 'Fireball UK South West', where all the area information is posted so if you're short of a crew or looking for an event this is the place to start.

The 2018 season in the South West is kicking off with a training event with renowned coach Adam Bowers on the 17/18<sup>th</sup> March at Chew Valley Lake Sailing Club. The Event is open to any Fireballers but places are limited and over 50% have already sold. Boats can be left at CVLSC ready for the open the following weekend. Do not miss this opportunity. More details and registration forms available on the UKFA website.

Finally; The South West has a new regional circuit. A lot of negotiation has gone on throughout the winter to put this together and it can only work with the support of the local fleets and other travellers. The series will use major dinghy regattas in the area and has the support of a number of local clubs to fill in the gaps in the season. SO...Pop these dates in your diary and prepare yourself to enjoy a fun and competitive season of Fireball sailing in the South West this year.



**SW Series**

**6 EVENTS**  
(5 to count)

- 24/25 March Chew Valley Fireball Open
- TBC April Parkstone Yacht Club
- 26/27 May Paignton Open for Double Handers
- 23/24 June Portishead Annual Pill Race
- 07/08 July Weymouth Dinghy Regatta
- 04/05 August Lyme Regis Dinghy Regatta

**fireball**

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Visit [www.Fireballsailing.org.uk](http://www.Fireballsailing.org.uk) for more information



**SW Training**

**17/18 MARCH 2018**  
**CHEW VALLEY SC**

Additional Land Based Seminar on Saturday evening included

**£30.00 DEPOSIT TO SECURE A PLACE**  
£15/seat in 2 part payment - £15/seat - Deadline for receipt of deposits 13:59 30th January 2018

Places allocated on a 'first come first serve' basis.  
Book Soon to avoid disappointment

**ADAM BOWERS**

Former 470 Olympic Race Coach  
Former RYA National Cadet Coach  
Two Time J/24 National Champion  
Fireball World Champion  
Four Time Flying Dutchman National Champion  
Six Time Osprey National Champion  
Winner RTI Race

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Visit [www.Fireballsailing.org.uk](http://www.Fireballsailing.org.uk) for more information & registration forms

# Youth

## The future of Fireball

The youth Fireball fleet is consistently growing as the fleet expands as a whole. We are currently preparing for the Dinghy Show on the 3rd/4th of March with 2 Fireballs on the main stand, as well as a trapezing stand which is being manned entirely by youth! A high turnout is expected with youths taking slots on both stands left right and centre. We wish to expand the youth side of the fleet further by encouraging young sailors up to and including people aged 25 to try out the boat and truly see how fun and fast it can be. We are currently finalising designs and costs for the youth hoodie which was designed by a small groups of youths including myself in the south of the UK. This will soon go into production and youths all around the UK can purchase these hoodies to wear to events to spread the word and be part of the team.

In the near future, we have also organised training events such as Chew Valley training on the 17th/18th of March for Fireball sailors of all ages, to improve the skills of each and every member and create a highly skilled fleet as well as bring everyone together as a close-knit community. Furthermore, we also wish to put forward the idea of a youth training event to create a more specialised and personal training session which will allow the younger end of the fleet to receive help from more experienced sailors with years of racing under their belts. To add to that, the specialised training session would bring youths from all around the UK together improving the fleet's friendships, creating lifelong sailing friends.

By Sophia Benson



# Membership

## Good news

### Membership subscriptions

Not the sort of article you normally wish to read, I know, but please persist. There's good news here!

The direct debit scheme we introduced a year ago has proved very popular – far exceeding our expectations – such that the vast majority of members have elected to use it to pay their annual subs.

A consequence of the scheme is that those members who paid their subscription by direct debit in 2017 will have their renewal subscription claimed automatically on the anniversary of their first payment. Most members paid after (sometimes well after!) the historic 'official' renewal date of January 1 so there is now no sense in persisting with that date.

Henceforth, each member's renewal date will be the anniversary of their first payment and that principle will extend to those few members who are still paying by cheque or standing order (although obviously we'd like everybody to pay by direct debit as it cuts down on administration and cost!).

In due course an amendment to the Association's constitution will be made to reflect the new rolling renewal process.



### Exclusive craft insurance for Members of the UK Fireball Association 2017-18

The UK Fireball Association Member craft insurance scheme is provided by Craft Cover, the specialist sailing craft insurance solution from UKGlobal.

This exclusive scheme is designed to provide Members of the UK Fireball Association with the most appropriate cover and highly competitive premiums, negotiated on your behalf.

As a Member of the UK Fireball Association you qualify for a £20 discount\* on the annual cost of your insurance. Plus, you'll receive a further 10% discount\*\* off your first year's Fireball insurance.

Specially negotiated rates

New-for-old cover on sails, covers, masts, spars and rigging

£20 off for Members\*

10% discount for new customers\*\*

Premiums start at just £75 a year\*\*\*

For more information, or a no-obligation quotation, please call us on 01883 333 500

\* A £20 Administration Fee is removed for Members of the UK Fireball Association. \*\* 10% new policyholder discount subject to having sailed a Fireball in the last 12 months without making an insurance claim. \*\*\* For Member of the UK Fireball Association with Fireball craft value under £1,000, £250 excess and 3 years No Claims Discount. Excludes Insurance Premium Tax. Standard Policy Terms and Conditions apply.

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# Golden Dolphin & Nationals With Gul

## **Gul Performance Apparel sponsorship of the Golden Dolphin Series and the Nationals**

We are delighted that Gul Performance Apparel have agreed a 2-year sponsorship of both the Golden Dolphin series and the National championships.

There will be fantastic prizes available and, as Gul are keen to ensure their support is for the whole fleet, competitors will have the chance to win clothing or vouchers wherever they finish!

In 2018, for each of the Golden Dolphin series events, Gul vouchers will be presented to the first three helms and crews in the Gold, Silver and Bronze fleets (£40 for 1st place, £30 for 2nd and £20 for 3<sup>rd</sup>) while additional £20 vouchers will be awarded for merit performances in the Silver and Bronze fleets.

Further, the helm and crew of the Silver and Bronze fleet overall series winning boats will win a Gul wetsuit each while second and third helms and crews will receive other Gul products such as spray tops or buoyancy aids.

If that isn't enough, a prize draw will take place with the lucky winner receiving an award of a weekend for two at the Watergate Hotel at Watergate Bay in Cornwall comprising two nights B&B, a surf lesson and a dinner at the Beach Hut in Watergate Bay!

Turning to the Nationals, Gul have kindly agreed to the same prize structure as the Golden Dolphin series with the exception of the hotel prize. Instead of a weekend in Watergate Bay, there will be four major draw prizes for high value items such as drysuits and wetsuits. Goody bags will also be made available to all entrants.

As you will see, Gul have been very generous in their sponsorship of the Fireball class. Let's make 2018 a year to remember on the circuit and at Penzance in July!



 **GUL**  
PERFORMANCE APPAREL



DELIGHTED TO SUPPORT THE FIREBALL CLASS

[GUL.COM](http://GUL.COM)

# Club Focus

## Hayling Island - By Nick Hurst

### Why sail a Fireball – Nick Hurst

People often ask why the Fireball, a 1962-designed two-person, single trapeze and symmetric spinnaker design, remains so popular in an age of off-the-peg, mainly asymmetric or single-handed designs. What attracts so many of the country's leading sailors to the class? Why is the class sailed all over the world? Why, when so many new classes burst onto the scene but often quickly disappear, does Fireball's appeal endure? Because the Fireball appeals to all ages and can be sailed by both genders – at either end of the boat. Fireballs are relatively cheap to buy and examples may be found to suit any pocket. FRP boats will last a long time in top condition - the 2016 European championship was won by the same boat that won the same event in 2002! The Fireball is peerless in 'bang-for-buck' terms.

Despite the 'speed-machine' look, the Fireball is actually very forgiving. The Fireball is 'easy to sail but hard to sail well' which is why sailors of varying experience all find it such a joy. There are those who will point to the symmetric spinnaker as a negative but that is actually part of the appeal. Yes, there's a skill set to master, but it is far more rewarding than an asymmetric kite.

Many will have noticed that not all Fireballs are modern, white FRP-built hulls – outwardly similar although sporting varying rigs to accommodate different crew weights. Some are built in that rather old-fashioned, but aesthetically pleasing material called 'wood'! Fireball sailing offers a broad church and older, wooden boats have their supporters. Some of our members prefer to cruise their lovely vintage boats and may often be seen sailing single-handed around the harbour. One such boat, Fireball 2, harks back to the class's earliest days and to HISC's place in Fireball history. Not only did HISC host the first-ever Fireball race, a year later the club hosted the inaugural UK National Championship and, in 1966, the first World Championship. Fireball is in the club's DNA.

That's the boat. You will have gleaned by now that I love it. So, if you're going to sail a Fireball...

### Why Hayling?

HISC's active and growing Fireball fleet is looking forward to an exciting and active 2018 season, following successful growth throughout 2017.

The Hayling fleet is a prime example of the diversity the boat promotes. Within the existing fleet at Hayling we have a growing number of teenagers mixing with adults who often have decades of sailing experience. Several active fleet members first sailed Fireballs in the 1960s. Novices sail with those who have great international experience and who will happily dispense advice. What bonds them together? A boat that is fun and exciting to sail! More than that, as the wind increases the sailing experience becomes simply exhilarating. There is nothing quite like a stunning, fast, three-sail reach across the relatively flat waters of the harbour or surfing the waves in Hayling Bay!

At Hayling we have a thriving club, with fantastic facilities. The fleet is valued and actively promoted, meaning no waiting list and priority berth allocations. Racing is held over a mix of courses, either in the harbour using permanent harbour marks or laid inflatables, or in the bay for bigger courses and waves. The club offers training in all sorts of sailing-related skills, from mark-laying and race officer, to VHF, Safety, First Aid, RYA Powerboat certification and more. There are social events held throughout the year, too, with informal music and comedy nights and formal black-tie events. On the social & catering front, all tastes are catered for with a 'wet bar' for hot and cold meals, snacks and drinks; a dining room for lunch or dinner; plus the HUGE bar area.

It's not all about being on the water though. The fleet has developed a training programme offering assistance to sailors reflecting their experience and addressing areas for improvement. Neither is it all about sailing. The Fireball fleet regularly gathers for social events usually held at local restaurants.



Fireballs for all ages – total age here somewhere north of 300 years I think – Photo Peter Hickson



Hayling gybe mark rounding – Photo Peter Hickson



Tom Payne & Alice Powell - Photo Chris Turner



Bryan Thompson & Hugo Knight



These two? Less than 50 years between them – Photo Peter Hickson



David Sayce & Nick Rees - Photo Peter Hickson



Reflecting the fleet's position as one of the UK's leading fleets, HISC Fireballers' put a lot back into the class. Steve Chesney is a past Commodore of Fireball International, Chris Turner is Chairman of the UK Fireball Association and Simon Benson, John Piatt, Sophia Benson and Nick Hurst are all UKFA committee members. Consequently, the fleet is always at the forefront of Fireball matters and is in a great position to influence debate.

The present day HISC fleet has enjoyed a resurgence recently and continues to grow strongly with more boats joining all the time. Fleet members tend to prioritise Sunday racing where we have our own class start, the monthly Pennant series and one-off events such as pursuit races.

HISC has hosted major Fireball championships several times in the past – most recently the 2016 National Championship where 16 boats from the home fleet competed.

If you are interested in learning more about or joining the fleet as a boat owner, helm or crew looking to 'hook up' please get in touch. The fleet has its own Facebook Page 'Hayling Island Fireballs' or contact Nick Hurst (Fireball 14821 - Sijambo), email: [fireballcaptain@hisc.co.uk](mailto:fireballcaptain@hisc.co.uk)

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**For a limited time, the Joining Fee is waived for new members actively sailing or crewing a Fireball saving you up to £350.**

For more information, please visit our website [www.hisc.co.uk](http://www.hisc.co.uk) where you can download an application form

# Technical - Bridle

By Chris Powles

Bridle Mainsheet System on FB 15087 by Chris Powles

Following several capsizes that resulted from getting the standard aft mainsheet caught on the transom / rudder / tiller extension, and unhappy with the high mainsheet load in strong winds, I came to the conclusion that a re-think on mainsheet systems was needed.

I had experience of the Merlin system and was aware of the Fireball hoop being developed by David Winder and Team Birrel/Townend but after careful thought and discussion with other Fireball sailors at HISC I concluded that a bridle system was a cheaper and more practical alternative. (Both David Sayce and Keith Walker have been in the Class long enough to have sailed with centre bridles, and encouraged me to experiment)

The image below shows the current state of development.



Having spoken to Dave Winder I discovered that there is a piece of 16mm ply in the top half of the side tank going about 250mm from the front of the thwart. So it was easy to screw on a four-hole anchor plate with 4 number 10swg screws, plus an open harken micro cam cleat on the side deck. The boom has two 40mm harken carbo blocks plus a single swivel block which also acts as a becket. (See next image)

The bridle is D12 with a swift core outer and has two stoppers that allow the bridle to be set on the centerline via the D12 adjustable tail. Once set, I have found there is no need to adjust it for various rakes. The principal operation is predominately in light winds; if you decide you need the boom to windward with little kicker and an open leach, you just pull the bridle to windward. When tacking you simply pull the bridle tail out of the cleat on the new leeward side and then pull the bridle to windward before you pull in the mainsheet.

Boom set up



**Bridle pulled to Windward (left)**

The main advantages of the system are:-

- No mainsheet catching on transom
- No mainsheet dropping from boom when tacking
- No mainsheet getting caught in tiller extension when sitting to leeward
- No mainsheet getting caught on life jacket / neck when running
- Easier to gybe by holding all four sheaves of the mainsheet
- No need for crew to gybe boom thus counter steering is in your control
- In winds above 12kts it seems that you can still get boom just below centre line by pulling in hard and not pulling bridle to windward
- In winds above 15kts with rake at say 22' 4" the boom is never required on the centre line so not blocked out
- Easy to adjust mainsheet at 4:1 especially in strong winds
- Have not found bridle to be in the way when sitting forward
- If you wanted you could pump the main by taking mainsheet from front block (not yet tried as you would need a longer mainsheet like we have on Solos)
- On a tight two sail reach easy to adjust
- Easy to take the rudder off when coming ashore

Some slight disadvantages

- On a broad two sail reach you have a lot more sheet to play
- More spare sheet in the boat when beating (no issue so far)
- The bridle on a run can lie on the C/B case impeding controls adjustment
- The bridle when beating can be slightly in the way when adjusting some control lines on the C/B case

Overall I think the advantages outweigh the disadvantages and I intend to continue with the use of the bridle.

I understand that David Sayce is considering a modification of this system, in which the anchor plates for the bridle are at the bottom of the side tank where it meets the cockpit floor. This should facilitate the helmsman moving forward in light winds at the expense of a slightly reduced mechanical advantage when the bridle is centralised.



**Close up on tank set up (left)**



**Bridle view from front of FB (right)**



**Boom block set up from front of FB (left)**



**Close up of side tank block (right)**





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If you have any suggestions or can help in any way then please feel free to contact [Publicity@FireballSailing.org.uk](mailto:Publicity@FireballSailing.org.uk)

Don't forget, you can follow us on Twitter @ukfireball on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/UKFireballClass/> and visit our website <http://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

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