



Articles

Chairmans Report

Worlds 2016

- Winning ways*
- Gallery*

Plus

Club Focus

Youth Column

Technical - Sayce/Rees Pole

Dinghy Show 2017

Training @ HISC

Euros 2017

EPIC
SA

Contents

Chairmans Report

Worlds 2016 - Winning Ways

Dinghy Show 2017

Worlds 2016 - Gallery

Youth - The future of the class

Club Focus - Staunton Harold

Technical - Sayce/Rees Pole

Training - HISC

Euros 2017

AOB



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Chairmans Report

Chairman's Report - January 2017 Fireball e-news

Well, those were certainly testing conditions in the earlier part of the recent World Championship, weren't they?! At Hayling we all agreed that when waves look big in photographs then they really are very big! Congratulations, then, are doubly in order to Tom Gillard and Richard Anderton for not just retaining their title but for doing so in wide-ranging conditions and collecting nine bullets on the way. Only the ninth race eluded them and even that wasn't too shabby with a 2nd! You will find a report on the championship, written by Richard, in this edition of e-news.

Staying with the worlds a little longer, I was struck by just how much effort our South African friends put into the organisation of the championship including daily live video reporting. It is a shame their hard work wasn't rewarded by a larger entry but there are a multitude of reasons why people find it difficult or unattractive to travel to overseas events these days which really places the onus on the local fleet to underpin the entry. In that regard, sadly, South African numbers are currently a little thin. At least we should be spared that particular problem with the European Championship to be hosted by Lyme Regis SC later this year.

It's been a busy few months behind the scenes for the UKFA committee recently. Frustratingly, the new website has taken far longer to go live than we anticipated. Not only have there been technical issues to solve but additional urgency was injected into the project when the old web site was hacked and left us with a decision to either repair it - with attendant cost - or simply keep it ticking over while concentrating time and resources on the new site. We chose the latter option and, hopefully, by the time you read this the new site will have been available for a few days. To start with the content will be very familiar to you but we aim to work our way through and amend or refresh as quickly as possible. More positively, we now have a direct debiting facility available to us which will permit faster and more efficient collection of membership subscriptions and payment of entry fees.

Many of you are keen to know the position on the proposed rule changes particularly the one concerning the introduction of twin spinnaker poles. I have to report that progress has been slow and reaction from other NCAs has been cautious

and often negative. Whilst we in the UK are quite used to seeing twin poles on competitor classes it appears many, perhaps most, of the other NCAs have not seen them used in action and require to be convinced of the argument. Amongst a number of reactions, cost has routinely been cited as a concern but, as we all know, there are many variations on twin poles in other classes and use of an expensive Ezi-launcher is not mandatory. On the positive side, Fireball International do intend to have a vote on the proposal and World Sailing appear to be on-side. However, a good deal more information has been requested from UKFA: videos, line drawings and still photographs all of which can be supplied but may prove difficult to assemble in a short time frame given we are currently in the throes of winter. The bottom line here is I think it will be unlikely the vote will be held any time soon and, without wishing to appear pessimistic, a positive outcome is not assured although, having said that, I have literally just seen encouraging support from a major NCA so perhaps sentiment is beginning to swing in favour. In the meantime, members may wish to consider the Sayce-Rees pole - Jono and I have used one on 'Dazed and Confused' for a season and a half and are very happy with it. An article on the pole, written by Nick Rees, appears in this edition of e-news.

I mentioned the 2017 Europeans/Nationals earlier. Entries will start to be taken shortly and the 'early bird' price will be worth taking up. Don't delay!

Finally, the UKFA stand at the Dinghy Show (4/5 March) will be in a different location this year - C31 - so don't go into automatic mode when you arrive at Ally Pally. I hope to see you at some point over the weekend!

Chris Turner

Fireballs 6 & 15111, Hayling Island SC





Worlds 2016

Winning Ways - by Richard Anderton

A long trip but well worth it for those that made it... Mossel Bay was BIG

When South Africa was announced

as the venue for the 2016 worlds, it was already at the top of the list of all time destinations.

Following the chill of North Wales, we were really excited about the promised warmth of South Africa, and as 2016 progressed, we booked flights, entered, and checked the boat over thoroughly - not only was it going to be warm, it was going to be windy with waves - gear failure was a very real danger.

Before we knew it, we were loading the container and saying good-bye to the boats for a month. With an innovative frame design from Tom Egli from Canada - well known at the UK Nationals and other worldwide events - we managed to squeeze 10 fireballs into the container though it took some 3 hours of loading.

With the event being held in the second week of December, work commitments meant that I could not make the pre-worlds - though the trade-off was that I could remain in South Africa for 2 weeks after the worlds, meaning one of the longest holidays I have ever managed in my working life.

Eventually time came to board the plane, and after a 22 hour journey, Lucy and I arrived in Mossel Bay. I was met by Tom who was changed, had the boat rigged (main sail up and everything), and waiting at the top of the slip way. 5 minutes later, we were on the water - the trip already forgotten - I can recommend this as a great way to arrive after a long journey. Lu quickly found other sailors in the bar, where I found her an hour or so later! We had to sail on the Saturday evening for 2 reasons - if anything was wrong with the boat, or our kit we had to know before hand, and most importantly was to check Tom's rigging - all crews know that letting a helm rig is a leap of faith...

During the pre-worlds, it had become apparent that the old adage 'It's never normally like this' certainly applied to the weather at the event. The forecast of 20knots and 2m waves seemed to be off the mark - it was either flat calm, or blowing dogs off chains. Speaking to the locals on Saturday night, and they seemed hopeful of a return to more normal conditions for the Worlds.

Sunday dawned, and it quickly became apparent that the thermal breeze was going to be present in force in the afternoon. We left the beach, and before we knew it conditions were at the top end of the racing range and we had a nasty chop on top of a large swell - conditions were tough. Around half of the fleet retired from the race either with damage, or simply from self-preservation. The second race was postponed which offered relief to all.

Monday brought a change in wind direction. The water flattened out, but the wind had increased to around 25kts. When the fleet were released from the beach many were wary about the prospect of the days sailing - though the wind was blowing off shore, the sea was covered in white horses - an alarming view for even the hardy. After a 10 minute postponement to allow those brave enough to venture to the start to assemble on the water, we had another brutal race. We were sent ashore after the race, which was a blessing for Tom and I as we shredded the main sheet on the final reach. Most packed up for the day, and were then surprised to see another race signalled some 3 hours later after the wind had abated slightly.

Tuesday brought a slight respite, though by now the official notice board was running out of space in accommodating the numerous requests to replace failed equipment. With almost perfect conditions the fleet headed out for 3 incredible races. The evening saw another great social - this time at the fish restaurant next to the hotel. While waiting for dinner, the Kenyans entertained the fleet with a couple of bottles of Jagermeister, and after dinner the owners of the restaurant decided they'd made enough money for the night, and started giving out free drinks to those who remained.

On Wednesday we had the morning to ourselves, to try and shore up the boats, then we were off on a Safari for an evening drive - followed by a Boma dinner finishing up sitting around an open fire listening to a fine example of African Drumming.

It was looking like Thursday and Friday may herald a return to the conditions seen in the pre-worlds with light, shifty winds prevailing. Luckily, this was not quite the case, though the wind did ease up enough for everyone to really start to enjoy the racing. The first race on Thursday saw us challenged for the lead on the second beat. Claude and Ruedi tacked under us at the leeward mark, and then proceeded to sail straight past us and tack in front of us. Thanks guys. Unfortunately (for them) they crossed us and were then hung out to dry on the wrong side of the course by a shift. A couple of tweaks to our setup and we were back on

the pace. The thermal started to kick in again, and we were back in full power mode. We seemed to have settings for 12+ kts of breeze that gives us just a little more speed than the rest of the fleet.

Friday was the lightest day of all, and it seemed to remain constant all day. Up the first beat we had an opportunity to tack under Ben Schultz which we declined, preferring instead to push on past. With a shift in the wind, Ben just made it up to the mark to round first, and from that point we were unable to get past - the race track was one sided, favouring the right up the beat where there seemed to be more pressure and a persistent shift. The second race saw Derian and Andy round first - though only by a boat length or so. With a slightly quicker hoist, and taking full advantage of the 'O' flag we rolled over the top of them on the first reach. The remainder of the race saw us having to choose who to defend against - Derian and Andy on one side of the beat, or Claude and Ruedi on the other. We opted to hover right of centre, with the knowledge that right was paying, and ended up with a nervous couple of moments as Claude had gone almost to the beach on the right, and appeared to be in twice the amount of breeze we had. We managed to get over to him, and then simply remained between him and the mark till the finish.

We're usually asked a myriad of questions during an event, and this one was no exception, though this time, there was one question which kept cropping up time and again: what sun cream do you use?

South Africa was an amazing event. If you didn't go, you missed the best event in a long time.

I'd like to thank our sponsors for providing world class equipment - Allen for bullet proof faultless fittings; Gul for state of the art clothing - keeping cool in South Africa was suddenly a new challenge - but one that Gul had all the answers for; and of course North Sails - we have the confidence that we have the fastest setup on the water in all conditions.



Dinghy Show 2017

04-05 March

Date - 05/05 March 2017

Venue - Alexander Palace, London N22 7AY

Times - 10am - 6pm Sat, 10am - 5pm Sun

Tickets - £10 RYA members in advance, Standard £12.50 in advance, £16.00 on the day

Fireball Stand - C31

Event Host - Helena Lucas & Mark Covell



Fireball. 50+ years in the making

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& International Championships
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Regis, this is all the boat you'll
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When are you getting one?**

**To find out more come and visit us at the dinghy show in March or
for news, events and classifieds visit www.fireballsailing.org.uk**



www.facebook.com/UKFireballClass



www.youtube.com/user/SailFireball

www.fireballsailing.org.uk

Gallery

A picture speaks a thousand words

The 2016 Worlds Mossel Bay, SA delivered some epic conditions and the pictures prove it!

All Credits - Stuart Parker













Youth

The future of Fireball

With older boats available for just a few hundred pounds, discounted entry to major events and the association, plus more youth sailors than ever at last years Nationals, the future of the class looks rosy. This is the 1st of a regular Youth Column for the Fireball e-news. Now let's get down with the kids..

By Georgia Booth

I started sailing the Fireball when my crew in the 470 decided to stop sailing and I was unable to find another female crew my age with the same commitment to compete for GBR. So to help me continue sailing through the summer I borrowed the family Fireball and started sailing with a lady from my home club. Our first event was the Lord Birkett Trophy at Ullswater, we then decided to venture out into more competitive waters and took part in the Fireball 2014 Nationals. The warm welcome we received as new class sailors was so genuine I returned the following year and intend to compete again this year too.

My first experience in a boat was at the age of eight at my local sailing club. When I started to sail on my own, my mother began to worry as I had no clue what I was doing. Our friends advised me to try for a place in the Optimist North Zone Squad to gain some experience. I managed to secure a place and from then on worked my way up to the National Squad in the Optimist before transferring into the Laser. In the Laser class I was part of the 4.7 National squad and the Radial Youth National squad. Unfortunately I did not grow enough to be competitive in the Laser Radial so I had to look at double handed boats, I tried a few and decided to go into the 470, in which I am still competing.

The fireball fleet is an enjoyable fleet to be a part of, the level of competition is extremely high due to the participation of world renowned sailors. Onshore the upbeat atmosphere continues with fun and games in the evenings to keep us entertained, this also helps us become acquainted with the other sailors.



Club Focus



With an awesome clubhouse, friendly people and a great stretch of water, it's no surprise that Staunton Harold won the coveted RYA Club of the Year award back in 2014, or that it's home to an active fleet of Fireballs. The 1st Golden Dolphin event of the year will be there in March and it can get pretty windy! (see below) Club member and Fleet Captain Simon Foscett had this to say about the new year..

With Christmas celebrations complete, the Staunton Fireball fleet took to the water Boxing Day to burn off the "Always over-sized Turkey"; Pigs wrapped in extra warm Blankets and not to mention the so called "Christmas Brandy and anything else in the cupboard".

The breezy 20+knot day saw fuzzy heads turn to concentrating and then cold heads within the first lap. However it was a fantastic day and much enjoyed.

January this year is quiet on the Reservoir. It's time for us all to repair our boats and make those last minute tweaks before the 2017 sailing season commences. February SHSC is hosting the newly devised Staunton Blaster, open to everyone, even if you don't have a Fireball ;). Then March hits and we are proudly kicking off the Golden Dolphin Fireball Series at SHSC. Weather permitting we shall bring back the Sprint races and hopefully the numbers!





Happy New Year to you all and see you on the Water. Si.
(Pics credit Paul Williamson Sailing)

Technical

The Sayce/Rees Pole by Nick Rees



The Sayce-Rees Spinnaker Pole

For many years Fireballers have had to make the decision whether to have a “double ended” spinnaker pole with a sliding central up-haul down-haul or a fixed “single ended” pole with the up-haul and downhaul fixed to the outer end. The double ended pole’s main advantage is that it is easier to gybe. However, it does have some problems because:

- The pole needs to be extremely stiff (which can make it expensive) or it will bend around the centre,
- The pole isn’t held rigidly by the uphaul - there is always some slack in the loop, so it can bounce up and down and
- The uphaul/downhaul sometimes slides right over the ramp, missing the locating notch.

The single ended pole doesn’t have these problems, but it is difficult to gybe. This can be simplified with a fly-away system, but that can still go wrong. Hence, there has always been a lot of discussions about poles - I know in the 1980’s

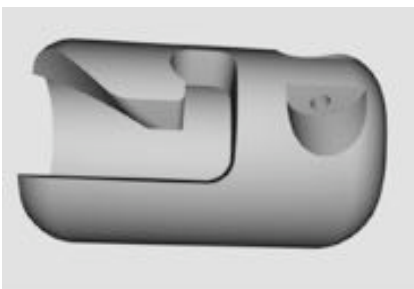
many of the top UK crews used single ended poles, but today that seems to have gone out of favour and double ended poles are the norm, but they are difficult for smaller crews to handle. Our new poles, which people have dubbed the “Sayce-Rees pole” is an attempt to develop a pole which has the best of both systems.

History

When David Sayce and I returned to Fireballs in 2014 after last sailing together in 1990, David thought he could do better than the existing pole systems. He had come up with a similar concept in the early 1990s while sailing the Laser Two and he spent some time developing the system and used it successfully for a number of years and used it when he came second in the Nationals in 1995.

By 1995 the system had evolved into something very similar to what we started with on the Fireball in 2014 i.e. the uphauls were attached by sliding rope loops and there was a single downhaul in the centre. Early on David was convinced that it would be possible to find an engineering solution that replaced the loops, and even took it to Mark Rushall who was at Proctors (as Selden then was) with a few suggestions but there wasn’t much interest in developing it. Soon after that David started sailing asymmetrics and dropped the idea until getting back into the Fireball in 2014.

In 2014 David and I started with a rope loop system, but the possibility of an engineering system bugged us. The current design came to me when hanging our sailing gear out on David’s rotary hoist - it has a twist-lock system and I thought we could use that to locate some collars. The design went through a few iterations - the first prototype was a piece of drainpipe, the second machined out of solid nylon (which we used at the 2014 Nationals) and in 2015 I decided to experiment with 3-D printing and settled on the current design for the collar shown in the diagram, and illustrated in the pictures.

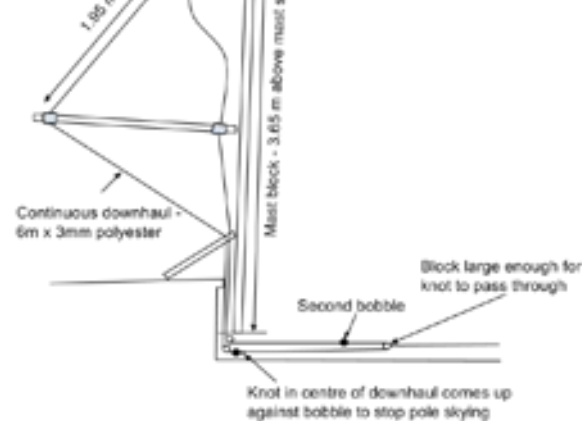




Setup

The pole system has a simple split uphaul - a bit like the bridle on keelboat poles. We use 2mm dyneema for it, and the split is about 1.95 m above the pole. However, the biggest problem is the downhaul, because both downhauls have to retract independently.

Our current downhaul is continuous, about 6m long in 3mm polyester. There is a knot in the middle and two bobbles. There is one travelling block running along the bottom of the boat attached to a shock cord retriever. The bobbles come up against the turning blocks by the forward bulkhead to stop the pole skying. (See drawing)



The downhaul is the part of the system you have to work on to get right. It will twist up during a race, because the pole rotates in the same direction every gybe since we always go around the course the same way. Generally, there is half a twist per lap - unless you do a gybe-set at the top of the run, in which case the twist goes away.

The big problem with this system is that the block with the shock cord rotates and the two ends of the downhaul twist up in the boat. For 2017, we are going to try two separate downhauls (one on each side of the boat), joined together with a single piece of shockcord that

goes all around the cockpit.

We usually start by over twisting half a turn before the start and that is normally sufficient - in a three-lap race there is one twist the other way at the end - which is not enough for it to snag. You have to untwist the pole between races and every now and again check that the rope itself doesn't get any twists in it - if it does, the rope twists up along the bottom of the boat.

In Use

We have found the pole very easy to use. It is important to have the parrot beak's on the pole facing upwards because otherwise the new spinnaker sheet won't float out of the end after the gybe and, even then, if they are upwards, you have to give the trigger line a good yank to ensure it happens. However, the best way to get the idea is by watching a video, and Claude Mermoud and Ruedi Moser made some of their system (note that their parrot beaks face down):

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ay0z4nETGs>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uQjb9EJHVLU&feature=youtu.be>

More information

I have made a number of these poles and have also given the 3-D CAD drawing to a couple of people from other countries who wanted to try it themselves. If you want more information, please don't hesitate to contact me - nick@rees-schotte.net.

Training

@ HISC by David Sayce

Over the last three seasons the Hayling Fireball fleet has benefited from training days provided by Tom Gillard, Richard Anderton and Tim Rush. These have been highly valued and we hope and expect to be able to arrange for similar events to take place in the future. However, the fleet has now grown to the extent that we are considering supplementing professional training by drawing on home-grown experience and expertise.

We think it likely that in most club fleets the specific requirements of each individual team are likely to vary widely according to experience of competition in general and Fireball-racing in particular. One advantage of extended club-based training over single-day training is that there is more scope for focusing on these specific individual needs. With this in mind we have proposed a training framework that is intended to address the training needs of the fleet as a whole as well as the individuals within it.

In mainstream education and training it is a well-established principle that effective training nearly always begins with an assessment of the needs and current abilities of each individual participant; only in the light of this 'initial assessment', it is argued, can an effective programme be provided. While most clubs may find it impractical to carry out a rigorous initial assessment, a good alternative is to encourage individuals to assess their needs for themselves.

We began our programme with an exploratory shore-based session, led by me, in which we attempted to identify the key features that

contribute to racing success. As part of a short PowerPoint presentation participants were provided with a table (see below) containing entries under three headings: Boat Speed, Boat-handling and Strategy/Tactics. Teamwork was also recognised as an over-arching concept of fundamental importance. Participants were invited to add to the suggested entries and then give serious consideration to those areas in which they felt they were most needy. Potential trainees were made aware of the likely disadvantages of working in areas that they liked or enjoyed and were encouraged to recognise that the greatest, and often easiest achieved, gains are to be made in the areas that they like least. It was pointed out that as a result of the Law of Diminishing Returns, marginal benefits tail-off as we put more and more effort into a particular aspect of performance, but focusing on something that has to date received relatively little attention is likely to result in large initial gains.

During the session there was a good deal of discussion of the role of practice and a recognition that many of us have a tendency to race too much and practise too little, further evidence perhaps that we tend to do what we enjoy at the expense of what we need to do to improve. There was also a warning that in general it is not practice but **good practice** that makes perfect; the dangers of practising poor techniques are sometimes overlooked. For this reason it was felt that some form of practice that was guided by a coach or mentor would have a significant role to play in any training we devised.

GENERAL FACTORS AFFECTING PERFORMANCE

Boat speed	Boat-handling	Strategy and Tactics
Correct gear	General technique	Wind
General set-up	Tacking	Tide
Ability to change gear	Gybing	Starting
.	Spinnaker hoists and drops	Points of sailing
.	Mark rounding	Defence and attack

Team Work - Roles, responsibilities, communication - afloat and ashore

Having considered all of the relevant factors, each member of the fleet was asked to complete a short questionnaire identifying their training interests. Simon Benson played a key role in constructing the questionnaire and collating the information. A separate section of the questionnaire invited more experienced helms and crews in the fleet to identify topics for which they would be willing to provide coaching/mentoring.

When the results have been analysed we will attempt to pair-up groups of individuals who have a specific training requirement with a suitable coach/mentor. The suggestion is that coaches and their assigned groups then meet to decide between themselves on a format for addressing the topic in question. There are numerous possibilities for doing this and great flexibility in terms of time, place and method. For the purposes of illustration only, I have included two hypothetical examples.

Rig set-up.

Let's assume that an experienced helm, Ben, has agreed to share his extensive knowledge of 'changing gear' with two teams, A and B, who are less familiar with the subtleties of the Fireball rig. Ben might decide to rig one of their boats in the dinghy park and demonstrate the changes that would be made to principal settings for different wind strengths and conditions. Next time they race, Ben might suggest teams A and B go down to the beach early and set up their boats alongside each other. After suggestions from each team, and possibly some comments from Ben, they could agree on appropriate settings for the prevailing conditions. Ben might also observe both teams on the water for a few minutes before the start. On coming ashore, they might meet as a group and discuss what had happened and what changes had been made during the race. Ben would probably want to provide feedback and suggestions.

(This general approach could continue for as long as was thought appropriate.)

Boat-handling

Here we'll assume that a top crew, Saskia, is going to assist teams C and D with tacking. She may decide to begin in the training room by showing a GoPro video (or something similar) that she had specially shot to show good tacking technique. Alternatively, she may go out on the water with one team at a time to demonstrate, observe and make suggestions. If resources allow, videoing from a rib might also be helpful as it would allow teams to go back the classroom later to analyse the results and formulate targets for the next phase of practice.

Apart from putting together a programme that addresses individual needs, we think that there are opportunities for whole-fleet training ashore on days when club racing is abandoned. We are fortunate at Hayling to have a significant number of experienced sailors who could prepare short sessions that could be rolled-out at very short notice. We hope that this can also be tried next season, addressing such topics as local knowledge, tactics, strategy, team-work etc.

At the time of writing the proposed programme remains at the planning stage but we hope to put it into practice next year, focusing initially on the needs of teams that are relatively new to Fireball racing. As co-ordinator, I am keen that two key principles inform all that we do:

1. That coach/mentors don't rely solely on demonstrating and explaining what teams need to aim for, but also make provision for trainees to put into practice what they have learned and then receive constructive feedback that can be acted upon.
2. That over the long run all teams are encouraged to analyse every aspect of their performance and, when appropriate, seek help from other members of the fleet.

EUROS 2017



2017 Gul Fireball Europeans & Nationals - Lyme Regis Sailing Club - 18th-25th August

It is with great pleasure that the UKFA in association with Lyme Regis sailing club can announce that the entries for the 2017 Gul Fireball Europeans & Nationals is now open. The event website is hosted on the Lyme Regis webpage: <http://www.lymeregissailingclub.co.uk/championships/>

A facebook event page is here: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1125264430919461/>

The first round of early entry closes on the 19th March.

We are expecting competitors from all over Europe, and interest is already registered from competitors from Australia, Kenya, Canada, and South Africa.

Lyme is one of the best sailing waters in the country. It is situated on the South Coast of England and caters for the whole family. Launching from the harbour, adjacent to a large sandy beach, the race area is in full view of the shore. With a prevailing wind from the South West, it is likely that sailing conditions will be near perfect. There is a full schedule of 10 races planned over 5 days.

A full social programme is in place, and with a family friendly atmosphere, this is an event not to be missed. Families can explore the Jurassic coast and with Lyme Regis being a major tourist attraction there is something for everyone. Exeter is just 30 miles away.

Lyme Regis is part of the Heritage Coast, and easily accessible from all the main sea ports.

If you need any help with accommodation, please contact a member of the team.

Sponsored by:

Gul, CoastWaterSports, HISC, North Sails, Hyde Sails, Allen, OTTER Brewery

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- The new website is now live! <http://www.fireballsailing.org.uk> You may need to re-register. Please bear with us as we iron out any bugs!
- The early bird entry for the European & National championships is now open! visit <http://www.lymeregissailingclub.co.uk/championships/> to register and view more event details including the NOR. If you haven't booked your accommodation you need to get moving as the town is filling up fast.

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

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