



E-news

Fireball

Edition 4 Nov 2017

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Chairmans Report

As we start the 2017/18 winter season, welcome to Fireball e-News #4!

In this edition, you will find a range of articles and reports reflecting the continuing strength of Fireball sailing in the UK: championship success, club activity and gear development.

The combined Europeans/Nationals held at Lyme Regis in August are now receding into the past. Firstly, though, congratulations to Matt Burge and Dan Schieber of Poole YC for taking both titles! The event was memorable for a number of reasons: the large number of Lyme Regis SC members who volunteered to assist, an impressively strong overseas entry, many past Fireballers dropping in to say 'hello' and David Sayce & Nick Rees of Hayling Island winning two races some 50 years after David first sailed a Fireball! A big 'thank you' to Russell Thorne, Richard Anderton and Tom Egli for all their work in putting the event together.

Most of you will be aware that your committee recently took the difficult decision to relocate the 2018 Nationals from Looe SC to Penzance SC. The conditions Looe SC required UKFA to sign up to were simply not acceptable on several fronts including exposing the association to a high risk of significant loss. We are grateful to Penzance SC for stepping in and, in no time at all, presenting us with a viable alternative. In fact, other clubs also reacted quickly so we weren't short of options! Looking a little further ahead, we are in discussions with clubs in respect of the 2019 and 2020 Nationals and are comfortable with outline terms. I must highlight the work of Simon Benson here who has thrown himself into his new role of Nationals Coordinator with gusto and experienced a real baptism of fire over the Looe situation. Many thanks, Simon!

We continue to re-build the foundations of the association: the new website is gradually being tamed and populated with more material, we have reviewed our list of

measurers and have appointed a new full measurer - Andy Willcocks - for the south-west and have launched a search to recover missing trophies (one turned up within days after being AWOL for almost 40 years but it wasn't one we knew was missing - a sort of known unknown!). Going forward, we are working with Fireball International to produce a Fireball video that is intended to be used for both marketing and training. We are also looking at the possibility of providing a training event purely for the youth section of the fleet. In short there is plenty going on!

This is a good moment to mention that Derian Scott joined the committee recently to replace Richard Anderton who had stepped down after many years of service. Derian had the choice of a role with Fireball International or one with UKFA (or neither I suppose!) but opted for UKFA for which we are very grateful as she has made an immediate positive contribution. We are still looking for someone to concentrate on marketing the class so if the role appeals or you know of someone who may fit the bill please do get in touch.

Finally, this e-newsletter relies on a handful of people supplying copy. It would be good to receive material from the wider membership so feel free to submit items to the editor, Andy Robinson, or, if you'd prefer not to break into print yourself but would like to see articles on particular subjects let Andy know and he'll see what can be done.

The next edition of Fireball e-News is scheduled for mid-late February. In the meantime I hope you have great winter sailing!

Chris Turner



Gul Nats & Euros 2017

Lovely Lyme - by Andy Robinson



A truly international flavour in
quintessential seaside Dorset

Take 85 boats from 9 countries add 1 Dorset seaside town with some serious history and multiply with a sailing club right on the beach and you have a formula for a fantastic event. The 2017 Gul UK National and European Championships were always going to be the highlight of the European Fireballing calendar and as expected, it didn't disappoint.

Fish and chips are a winner! It's official, even the French agree. Although at times they were described as Chips and Fish (or Chish and Fips after a few local ales) it didn't really matter, what mattered was the fact that everyone enjoyed them.

This year's combined National & European Fireball Championships had a truly international feel to it with contestants from as far away as Kenya, Australia and Canada all gathered in a little seaside town on Dorset's "Jurassic Coast". If you've never been, you should. Lyme Regis, or Lyme as it's called locally, is one of the most quintessentially English Sea Side resorts imaginable, truly the gem of Dorset. It's a delightful step back in time, this place hasn't changed all that much since Jane Austen walked the promenade. A stunning setting and made all the more attractive by sunny weather and the promise of great sailing with, occasionally, huge waves to go with it.

The Fireball really is the boat for anyone and the entry list was typical of a major Fireball event. Lightweight youth teams, Father & Daughter crews, Husband & Wife pairings, young, old, very old, fit, fat, experienced hands and 1st time major competitors, all of them mixing it with the top teams from the UK plus the cream of Europe. Brand new boats with shiny crisp sails alongside wooden boats 30 odd years old with baggy sails not much newer.

We had the French team who had trailered their wooden classic boat all the way from Corsica and lived the week without a launching trolley. We had brand new boats from Winder and Weathermark with some new (and retro) traveller systems fitted. We even had a boat showcasing the proposed twin spinnaker pole system.

The club installed a large marquee on the harbour side next to the beach and the boats were parked up right next to it, with the foreign visitors being very nicely given the most handy spots.

The boats launched through the ancient harbour and a short sail got them out to the race course in the bay with the Jurassic cliffs providing a dramatic backdrop.

The racing was close with some great results over the week, including a very popular race win for David Sayce and Nick Rees of Hayling Island in Race 1, proof that age is just a number! However, it was new pairing and current World Champion Tom Gillard, sailing with Geoff Edwards who were the early leaders after a string of solid results despite not actually winning any races. It was to be a position that they would hold onto until the Thursday. Unfortunately, a cautious decision on the Tuesday where, on the advice of the Harbour Master, the PRO decided to bring the layday forward a day, had a significant impact on the overall results.

It meant that the teams missed out on what turned out to be the best days Fireball weather. It also meant that, when the wind didn't materialise on the Wednesday, that the Race team had 6 races to get into 2 days. Suffice to say, it didn't happen and with only 8 races sailed and no second discard it was Matt Burge and Dan Schieber who were crowned worthy National and European Champions.

The fleet celebrates all levels and while the racing is tight at the top with some significant quality across the top 20 boats, there is always a race to be had, wherever you are in the fleet. The UKFA introduced fleet leaders jerseys for this championships, with Gold, Silver and Bronze fleet leaders wearing their respective jerseys on water, so it was always apparent who you had to chase down.

The Fireball is getting a great reputation for the off water antics too and the infamous Dork of the Day award, sponsored at this Championships by the local Otter Brewery, got a daily outing, along with a nightly prize giving that included some amazing prizes from the incredibly generous sponsors. Title sponsor Gul provided a stack of vouchers that were handed out, not only to the race winners but also as spot prizes throughout the fleet. Hyde created a real buzz with a sail number lottery for numerous 50% sail vouchers and a brand new spinnaker! There were other great prizes from Allen, 2 brand new centreboards from Ian Castle, a daily "Halo" award from

Hayling Island SC awarded for outstanding sportsmanship or general good cheer. Everyone agreed that they couldn't remember a championship that delivered so many prizes across the fleet as this one. The sponsors deserve a great big pat on the back.

The social scene was buoyed by the close proximity of accommodation in Lyme, the great facilities that the marquee provided and the solid performance from the social committee who organised numerous meals, a band, a presentation on next years worlds in Carnac, a Fireball international open Forum and the now famous International "Mr Fireball" game-show containing entrants from the UK, France, Belgium, Kenya and Canada. It was a close run contest and the crowd got right behind them all, but the French Entrant Gael came out on top to be crowned Mr Fireball 2017. All the contestants were hilarious and made the evening fun for everyone in attendance.

The Fireball is continuing to go from strength to strength and at 55 years old, it's showing no signs of slowing down. There were loads of youth sailors at the event and the feeling was generally very optimistic.

The next big international Event is the World Championships in Carnac next August and on this showing, it should be a well attended and competitive event. Bring it on. Or as they say in France.. l'amener sur (apparently)

Gallery

Race Pics by Pauline Rook Shore pics by Fiona Sayce









Dinghy Show 2018

RYA Dinghy Show Alexandra Palace 3&4 March 2018

The UKFA will be at this unique show exhibiting boats from both the UK builders – Winder and Weathermark. We have a good corner spot this time which will give more exposure to the boats.

The theme and effort will be to promote the class to younger sailors and to that end there will be a team of current young sailors organised by Sophie Benson speaking to show goers both on and off the stand.

The RYA are having a class association hub and work shop which the UKFA will both take part in and attend.

We will need help to set the stand up and dismantle. Plus, some of the ‘older’ members to be along side the younger ones to speak to the punters.

Please contact Dave Hall if you can spare a few hours – you get a free pass and with any luck a shirt!





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Inland Champs 2017

Draycote Delivers by Dave Hall

It was a fitting end to a successful season for the Fireball class. Just under 40 boats arrived to a sunny and windy Draycote - the quite unseasonable weather making the sailing and racing very pleasant for October.

The team at Draycote ran two days of back to back racing with a fast turnaround, the brisk breeze meant that each race was between 4 and 5 laps with many fast spinnaker hoists and drops.

As well as the event being the Inland championship it was the final round of the Golden Dolphin - the class traveller series so there was a lot to play for.

In the gusty and shifty conditions Tom Gillard & Geoff Edwards showed their intentions by winning the first race in convincing style. Behind them there was plenty of action and much place changing amongst the usual suspects. In the end it was the team of Sam Mettam recently back from Canada & Tim Saunders who claimed second spot.

The same conditions prevailed for the following 2 races with Tom & Geoff taking both guns, this time with not such a margin. The team of Dave Hall & Paul Constable following in on their transom in both races.

The forecast for Sunday was for an increasing wind through the day, one could be forgiven for doubting it as the fleet left the shore in drizzle and light airs. The first race of the day got away with Peter & Tom Kyne taking the lead. A close battle took place though the duration of the race with Tom and Geoff finally overhauling Peter & Tom to take the gun.

The promised wind kicked in along with the sunshine for the second race of the day, Kevin Hope & Russell Thorne took an early lead but were reeled in by Tom & Geoff who went on to win. Paul Cullen & Adam Whitehouse found some useful shifts and also overhauled Kevin & Russell.

Going into the last race Tom & Geoff were now unbeatable but the battle for second was on with four boats in the mix. It was Dave & Paul who pulled a 3rd out of the bag behind Tom & Geoff and Isaac Marsh & Richard Byrne (also known as the Draycote shift masters) to take runner up spot.

A terrific weekend to kick start next years program where the class expects big entries at the Nationals in Penzance and the Worlds in Carnac - France

Overall

Gold fleet

1st Tom Gillard & Geoff Edwards

2nd Dave Hall & Paul Constable

3rd Peter & Tom Kyne

Silver fleet

1st Isaac Marsh & Richard Byrne

2nd Peter Wood & Paul Roe

3rd Simon and Tom Maskell

Bronze fleet

1st Kath & Thomas Broatch

2nd Eleanor Craig & Richard Botting

3rd Daniel Johnson & Ben Latham

1st Lady Helm Derian Scott

1st Lady crew Karen Hiles

1st Junior helm Eleanor Craig

1st Junior Crew Charlie Turnbull

1st Classic boat Daniel Johnson & Ben Latham



Youth

The future of Fireball

The Fireball class continues to thrive and attracts sailors of all ages. Despite strong competition from 'youth' classes, the proportion of the Fireball fleet represented by younger people is increasing. The class is working hard to build on this welcome trend and in 2016 created a new UK Fireball Association Committee role, Youth Co-ordinator, to promote the class to youngsters.

Building on the initial work of the first appointee, Sophie Holden, the current Youth Co-ordinator is Sophia Benson who is one of the dozen or so youngsters who are members of the flourishing Hayling Island Fireball fleet. One of her first tasks was to promote a competition for the best 'youth' report of the recently completed combined [European and UK National Championships hosted by Lyme Regis Sailing Club](#).

The winners of the competition, that was backed by UK Global and [Pinnell & Bax](#), were Toby Hamer and Torie Morley who earned a £250 [Pinnell & Bax](#) voucher for their effort. Congratulations Toby and Torie!

The Fireball Europeans: The diary and thoughts of a youth boat competing in Lyme Regis 2017

In the midst of reading about other favourite classes struggling at this year's nationals, we turned up to Lyme Regis in the blazing sun to a fleet of over 80 boats representing countries from around the world, not just Europe!

Now looking back to our event preparation, well we can be honest there was very little. Having not sailed since Easter and only done two open meetings this year, we were entering with open minds. The atmosphere of entering a boat park full of avid sailors tinkering with their beloved boats is electric and quick to transmit; soon we were tinkering away, seeking the perfect set up.

I find sailing friends fantastic, you can go for months without seeing them or even talking to them, but when you rock up in the boat park, friends from all around the country and world come to chat to you, tell stories and jokes. Just because you don't see them the rest of the time, doesn't make them not friends, it just makes it more special when you do see them and is one of the reasons why we all travel across the country to be together.

We have a small group of committed youth sailors in the class, which is always surprising to some who look at the huge youth classes and wonder where they all go. From my experience even though I loved sailing, after all the squad racing, I was almost sailed out and took a season off. Then the itch came to get back into racing. Getting into adult classes is hard though, by then you are usually at university and fending for yourself. To buy a £4000 boat, pay boat park fees and £300 entry fees as well as travel and accommodation, it is so hard to warrant.

This year we have not bought new sails, we have just about put a few new bits of string on the boat and paid the entry. But we love the sailing so we are willing to work and scrimp to get us out on the water. For this even it meant living in a van in the public car park, £3 a day parking, what's not to like? Its hard to dry kit but if you have two sets then they can get mildly dry. Other ways to save is cooking for yourself, we still go to all the socials but hold off on the event food.

Talking of socials, this was one of the best parts of this event, with a fantastic Mr fireball game show to an interesting class debate. On the water the racing was tricky during this event, sometimes not to my taste and our strengths.

The weather meant for some frustration in the boatpark, two days of no wind and a painful decision from the race committee: to not sail on the day we had the best wind, due to fears of breaking waves making boat recovery dangerous. Those who stayed at the club watched the day pass, looking at prime fireball conditions and no breaking waves! For us this enforced lay day did not involve much laying around, the busy life of youth sailors meant we used the day to continue moving house. I drove to Ludlow in Shropshire to finish off moving our possessions while Torie spent the day unpacking.

There were times in this week where everyone found themselves in a poor position and didn't you know it! The light winds meant if you were anywhere past mid fleet the boat could never power up and clean air did not exist. At these points we really asked ourselves why we were there spending so much time and money when it just was not fun. Then wham, you smash the next gate start, get a whiff of clean air and open water ahead of you. The boat lifts off and its easy, yes you are fighting for positions but not dogging it out over standing the laylines by 200m because there is no wind and chop everywhere beneath this.

A mixed bag of results, the good ones makes you realise you really can sail and strive to do the same again. We pulled through to regain Tories title of 1st female crew, a fair achievement in a challenging physical job role. Her message to those twin pole heralds is: Practice more, be quicker, just do it. When we see our kite pop and fill faster than those around us, the argument females struggle with a conventional pole is questioned. Sailing relies on the weather, it can really make or break an event. Some events like the Pwllheli worlds have the perfect weather window meaning memories and stories for years to some. In this Europeans we held frustrations on the water and with the race committee, however the friends, location and few good races mean we will go home looking forward to next years worlds in Carnac.

With the Frenchies promise of sun, big waves and breeze, how could we stay away?

Toby Hamer and Torie Morley GBR 14804



First female crew, Torie Morley, 'Practice more, be quicker, just do it' - photo © Andy Wilcox

Club Focus

Parkstone



What's to say about Parkstone Fireballs? Well I guess we have a long history in Poole Harbour with this class, some of our fleet have been sailing them longer than I've been around and I'm definitely in the middle aged bracket! My first experience with the fleet came in the 80's when Parkstone boasted a fleet worthy of a big open meeting nowadays on a Saturday afternoon, but like many clubs, numbers have declined almost to the point of no return a few years ago. It seems at every turn a member is saying "I used to sail one of those" and "nice to see the fleet still here".

We currently have 8 boats on the books including our fleet rental boat, although in recent years we've struggled to get more than 5 of us on the water at the same time with varying commitments outside of sailing from across the fleet (how dare we have other lives!). We can always squeeze in a few more boats if you fancy joining for a more long term commitment, we have some of the best clubhouse facilities around and they are only going to get better - we have all ages of boat from vintage to more recent wide bows and skill levels to suit everyone.

We have some of the best sailing on the south coast, the harbour is stunning and provides a mix of deep water open blasting and shallow "river style" channel racing against some strong currents, both primarily on a course set around some of our many race marks hidden around the harbour and out in the bay. Some of them are parked as far away as Swanage or Bournemouth which in 20 knots makes for a good blast where the need to tack can be determined by how tired the crews front foot is getting or if the helm needs an arm change - we only do those a couple of times a year though and mainly it's loosely based on the traditional Olympic shapes returning to our starting platform once a lap. We are also still lucky enough to enjoy fleet

racing through a shared start line with just the one handicap race held at the club each year (apart from Bart's Bash).

We've not sent anyone to the nationals recently (despite two being local!) which is a shame, but that's not say we don't like a good fight on the water. One of our helms is regularly at the front end of the Ospreys and there's always someone to chase (unless you're in front, then it's all about how badly you can bury the Merlins without getting caught!)

We are hoping to get an Open back on the circuit in the next couple of years, we've put it on hold recently due to low turnout and our clubhouse needing a little renovation (OK, we're knocking it down soon and moving into a new one, picture below!). If you fancy a taster in the meantime we have an open at Easter over 3 days (more than 6 entries from a class for a dedicated start) and Poole Week in late August/Early September for (you guessed it, a week!).

Our winter series is also open, running Sunday mornings from October to December with "trail sail" and storage entry available and you can also pay by the race if you just fancy dropping by to challenge the locals.

I was asked to provide some photos, which you'd think as a photographer in my spare time you'd think I'd oblige - but I was too busy sailing to get any pictures of Fireballs, they are always of the other fleets!

Thanks for reading - see you on the water, if you'd like more info on the club you can find us on Facebook at [https://www.facebook.com/groups/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/155245521188991/)



[155245521188991/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/155245521188991/) or drop me an email (mikebarton99@gmail.com).

Technical - Poles Apart

BY Nick Hurst

“A tale of two poles”

Well, it's more than two, really, once all the options and choices are factored in, but the rules say we can't have two on the boat, so what to choose?

Please bear in mind when reading this stream of consciousness that it is written by someone from the wrong end of the boat, albeit one who cut his teeth, back when dinosaurs sailed Wayfarers, at the front of symmetric spinnaker boats.

Starting with the 'default' choice, the traditional double-ended pole has its principle advantage in its simplicity, and the fact that many sailors, who have not necessarily sailed Fireballs before, can get to grips with it relatively easily. It can be set and gybed quickly - provided that the inboard end can be latched onto the mast before the kite starts flogging. Once this happens the pole is dancing about and it gets tricky. This is why the smaller, lighter crews find can it difficult. In big seas a larger crew, standing right at the front of the boat can upset the trim and nose-diving can result, especially where there is a large weight difference between helm and crew. We use ours in 'ends-up' mode, as run-to-run gybing works better this way - the guy can escape the jaws when released and the kite doesn't collapse (if we get it right). Also, in the event that the outboard end *is* dropped on the foredeck there's a chance it won't go through, whereas with 'ends down' it is certain to 😞. I don't profess to understand the forces involved, but the reason we have Kevlar-wrapped alloy, or Twaron poles is because when the uphaul is in the middle there's a tendency for them to bend.

Moving on to the single ended pole, firstly - here's a disclaimer. I have never used one! The benefits are reported to be an easier set because the uphaul line has more travel so the inboard end can be latched onto the mast more easily. Also, it can be set up with an auto launcher so it can be pulled out with string. This approach can be set up with blocks on the 'D' ring or using the more expensive 'Spiro' mast fitting. Where an auto-launch system is used, the elastic pole return can put a hazard - literally - in the face of the helm as the pole flies back. This setup needs to be gybed with the pole stowed. i.e. pole off, gybe the boat, reset the pole. The auto-launch does also mean that there's no-one faffing around for



weeks at the front of the boat trying to get the **** pole on the mast, to gentle encouragement from the back of the bus! A single-ended pole can be of lighter construction than the double-ended because the bending forces are not present with the uphaul connected to the pole end. The uphaul does, however need to be joined to the mast higher up



Now, the deluxe option, popular in the Hayling fleet and gaining popularity further afield. The double ended 'Sayce / Rees' design combines the advantages of both double- and single-ended poles, and none of the downsides. With the uphaul high on the mast, it's easier to hook on, and connected to the pole ends, so the bending forces are reduced. It's an engineered solution, and relatively easy to retro-fit. Again, I've not sailed a boat with this setup yet but those who have tried it love it to bits. There is more string and shock-cord involved than with the normal double-ended system, but not significantly so. What is required is some dexterity from the crew to manage the locking mechanism on the pole during sets, gybes and drops. Again this is a short learning experience. The pole can be left on the mast thru the gybe and reset once the boat has gybed.



For both the single ended and the Sayce/Rees poles, there are choices with the pole height control. The uphaul(s) can be move so the entry point is higher (~200mm below the jib halyard box?), requiring a sheave fitted here. Alternatively, the uphaul can be fixed to this point and a ring attached to a line entering the mast at the existing sheave point. The uphaul line(s) are passed thru the ring so pulling on the control line puts a kink in the uphaul, effectively shortening it.

None of the above does anything to address the question of whether twin poles should be allowed. If a twin pole system were to be fitted, it would build on the single-ended system described above, and it can be made as simple or as complex as an individual chooses. Five-0's, with their monster kites use lots and lots of string and fittings. Merlins typically seem to use less - no Spiro, for example. I think the big gain would be in having the guys permanently attached to the pole ends, and with the long uphaul lines attachment to the mast will be easier. I also think that the argument that the quick guys will just get quicker with a twin pole system is flawed. They are already quick with the pole system they're using. They might gain a few %. The rest of us, who sometimes struggle with a pole set, could gain a shed load of time. And do not forget that an out of control kite and a crew (that's both people in the boat - not just the one at the front) struggling to tame it is a capsize waiting to happen. And while flat is fast everyone knows that is not referring to the rig being flat in the water! - Nick



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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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