



E-news *ireball*

Edition #7 December 2018

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Chairman's Report

A lot has happened since the last edition of Fireball e-News!

Congratulations to Matt Burge and Dan Schieber who are the new Fireball World Champions after putting together a very solid series of results to hold off Penny & Russ Clark. Racing was tight and the destination of the title went down to the wire with four crews all in the hunt. The United Kingdom was very well represented with over one-third of the 101 entries and British teams took seven of the top ten places including all of the first six.

Draycote Water SC hosted the Inland Championship and 28 boats defied the weather predictions to turn up for what was a memorably windy first day! Well done to Ian Dobson & Richard Wagstaff on winning the title with a very impressive scorecard.

Staunton Harold SC suffered from a water deficiency meaning the Gul Golden Dolphin Series was curtailed after four rounds leaving Kevin Hope & Russell Thorne as this year's champions. Special congratulations to them as they were one of only a handful of teams who competed at all four events in what was a well-attended series. Gul's

sponsorship was very generous and greatly appreciated by competitors!

Now the summer season is over, attention turns to the multitude of winter events and we can be sure many Fireball teams will be making their mark during the course of the next few months. Fingers crossed for decent breezes!



Turning to off-water matters, your committee continues to work hard on your behalf but is now looking light on numbers. If you feel you can contribute a little time to assist with running the association please get in touch with me or one of my fellow committee members. Our number one priority is to find someone who would like to take on the marketing/press role and we also need an events co-ordinator. Many hands make light work as they say!

Chris Turner

FB 15149 - December 2018



Photo credit
Urs Kueblis

Gul Golden Dolphin 2018

The series that rewards those who are prepared to travel with their balls, dolphins optional (no animals were harmed in the running of this series)

The 2018 Gul Golden Dolphin series took the fleet from Chew Valley SC in the west country in March across to Blackwater SC on the East Coast in April and then back again to Brightlingsea SC in June before arriving a week later on the south coast for a long-to-be-remembered weekend at Hayling Island. Sadly, the fifth and final round that should have been a foray to the midlands and Staunton Harold SC was at first postponed due to lack of water and then eventually cancelled as water levels continued to fall.

Some fifty teams took part in at least one round and by all accounts had a good time. Gul's generous sponsorship assured us of plentiful prizes and one or two teams accumulated a fair quantity of vouchers to replenish their sailing kitbags!

The overall and very worthy series winners were Kevin Hope & Russell Thorne who were one of the few teams to complete all four rounds. Congratulations to them!

The Golden Dolphin Trophy v2 (the original remains missing) will be presented to Kevin and Russell at the 2019 Dinghy Show where a draw will also be made for Gul's headline series prize of a weekend away for two at the Watergate Bay Hotel, Newquay. In addition to two nights B&B the lucky pair will have a surf lesson and enjoy a dinner at the Beach Hut!

In common with UKFA, Gul are very keen to encourage mid and back-of-the-fleet sailors so the overall first three teams in the Silver and bronze fleets were handsomely rewarded for their efforts receiving wetsuits, buoyancy aids and spay tops.

We hope the successful 2018 series will provide the springboard for an even

better one next year!

2018 Gul Golden Dolphin series results:

Gold fleet (and overall)

- 1 15133 Kevin Hope & Russell - Thorne Notts County SC
- 2 15127 Tom Gillard & Geoff - Edwards Sheffield Viking SC
- 3 15144 DJ Edwards & Vyv Townend - Tata Steel SC

Silver fleet

- 1 15070 Isaac Marsh & Oliver Davenport - Northampton SC
- 2 15145 Steve Goacher & Tom Goacher - Hayling Island SC
- 3 = 15148 Bryan Sargeant & Will Sargeant - Blackwater SC
- 3 = 14821 Nick Hurst & Jake Elsbury - Hayling Island SC

Bronze fleet

- 1 14889 Barry Smith & Ricky Spring - Thornbury SC
 - 2 14982 Maia Walsh & Peter Bentley - Blackwater SC
 - 3 15149 Chris Turner & John Piatt / Jono Loe - Hayling Island SC
- (photo credit Rob O'Neill)





 **GUL**

THE EVOLUTION CONTINUES . . .

GUL.COM

SouthWest Fireballs

2018 Southwest Fireball round-up by Chris Thorne

At the end of 2017 we knew we had a small core of travelling Fireballs that regularly appeared at the nationals/worlds and did rather well but, with very few south west events and such a large geographic area to cover, nobody really sailed together. We set about bringing the region together which has sort of gone to plan but hopefully we can build on the success and take the region forward into 2019.

We started with communication which inevitably involved social media interaction and a Facebook page which has been widely used and group messengers to start a conversation. A trend which has been adopted following the Carnac Worlds by some UK Fireballers is a *whatsapp* group for which I highly recommend you speak to Paul Cullen if you're not involved as it's a very useful point of information.

Secondly, an events calendar seemed a logical place to start for the Southwest but, with relatively small numbers, we chose to use locally-arranged events to get everyone together and hopefully get Fireball class starts which, for the most part, has worked well.

First things first as we all dusted off the kit after winter storage: a training weekend at Chew Valley Sailing Club, hotly anticipated and run by the effervescent Adam Bowers. Unfortunately for 2018, March became the apocalyptic scene of two snow storms! However, not even these could dampen the South-West's enthusiasm to learn and Adam, aided by long term successful Fireballers Dave Hall and Richard Anderton, gave a very active day of classroom tuition followed by a fantastic meal at Salt & Malt across the lake and then an open evening talk back at the club. We had hoped to be able to set a second date for further training but the year became rather busy with weekend and championship sailing coming thick and fast. The feedback has been extremely positive and it is something that we hope to be able to reproduce in 2019 albeit with the all-important 'on the water' practice. Underlining the success of the training, we even saw Hannah Showell emerge from retirement with new crew Gordon Finlay sailing out of Starcross.



The fleet then went onto several weekend events where we promoted Fireballs and although the weather in the early part of the season was light they were well attended with six SW Fireballs at Chew Valley Fireball Open, three at Poole Yacht Club (racing was unfortunately cancelled due to fog although three boats went for a very good training session in 13 - 17 knots on the Sunday), six at Paignton Open for Double Handers, three at Portishead Pill Weekend, eight at Weymouth Dinghy Regatta and two at Lyme Regis Regatta.

These events served as a great platform to compete, practice and develop against the best of the local Fireballs with the ultimate goal of seeing the South West Fireball sailors performing well on the National and international stages.

This leads nicely onto the South West report on the UKFA 2018 Gul Nationals hosted by Penzance SC in what can only be described as the best summer conditions we've had since well...I can remember. With temperatures regularly reaching 30°, the only thing that dampened the spirits was that it did not seem conducive to wind...AT ALL. However, the race management did a great job of getting nine out of ten races in.

In the Willcocks twins, arguably we have the lightest pairing in the UK Fireball fleet and they took full advantage of this in posting their first Nationals race win in race 7 and finishing a very credible 4th overall. During the middle of the week they even managed to head home for their graduation ceremony somehow

having arranged for that day's racing to be abandoned for lack of wind! Following them, stalwarts of the South West Derian and Andy Scott finished seventh overall picking up a second along the way. Finishing 10th overall were Russell & Chris Thorne (one of three father and son teams at the event) remarkably taking a second place on the water and first British boat to the line in race nine thereby finishing second overall in the Silver Fleet. Elaine and Graham Slater closely followed in 13th and Tim Morgan, helmed by resident MC Andy Robinson, in 14th. Rounding out the South West results in 22nd were Barry Smith and new crew Ricky Spring whom, had the wind been a few knots higher, would have relished the opportunity to move forward. Barry also picked up a great spot prize from Gul in the form of a new drysuit which just goes to show its not just the big boys at the front who win all the toys. It really was a great event for the South West region!

I believe eight boats from the region made the trip to sunny Carnac in northwest France for the world championships and with 101 entries the competition was fierce. A range of weather conditions really gave every crew a great shot at a good result with Black Flag DSQ's always bumping a few boats up the order.

Best of the bunch were the ever consistent Derian & Andy Scott in 15th picking up impressive fourth and sixth individual race positions, followed by Russell Thorne helmed by Kev Hope in 22nd who were decidedly miserable (note the politically correct mood description) when beaten by son, Chris Thorne, in race five. Ultimately Thorne senior had the last laugh with junior finishing in 49th. The Willcocks twins were at it again posting consistent results with an 8th and a 10th being the pick of the bunch and ending up 27th overall. Allan & Chrissie Tyler, making what we hope is a resurgent comeback to competitive Fireballing, finished an active year with a very credible 36th. Barry Smith, sailing this time with his son Chris, toiled his way to 67th while father and daughter pairing of Christine and Graham Slater, discarding two maximums, ended their week in 69th closely followed by another regular father and daughter team of Geoff and Sophie Holden in 72nd.

Finally we got some wind and headed to Draycote for the Inlands where the wind really turned up with gusts up to 35 knots on Saturday battering the fleet into submission before and during the event. Only two travelling boats travelled from the region with Anthony and James Willcocks again showing great consistency - and an ability to survive when weighing next to nothing - emerging third overall and somehow first in the Silver Fleet (blame Spanner, chaps) while Chris Thorne, crewed by John Piatt, finished 11th overall and took third in the Silver Fleet.

Overall, a successful season for the region and with next years nationals at Torbay there will be another chance for the local boats to test themselves against the best of the rest. Look out on the Facebook page for South West events and if you're in the region but aren't aware of us please do get in touch. Lots to look forward to...Oh and those two Gills from Portishead need to get their boat out of the garage and come and play in 2019.

Finally - Just a quick note to wish Andy Willcocks, long time Fireball sailor and father to James and Anthony, well following some pretty major surgery. Hopefully he is on his way to a speedy recovery and we'll all see Andrea and him back in a boat soon. See you in over the winter or in 2019. *These sentiments are echoed by all Fireballers in the UK - get well soon, Andy! -Ed*

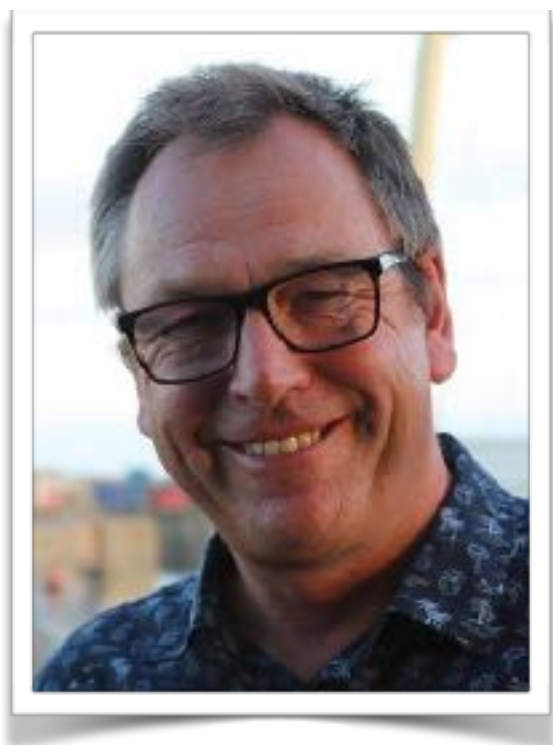


Photo credit
Chris Turner

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 edition serial Fireball buyer and ever present fleet competitor Barry Smith. So if you'd like to get to know one of the fleets kindest contributors read on...



Name: Barry Smith

Age: 58

Profession: Aircraft fitter

Home Town: Bristol

Club: I started sailing in a Mirror at Thornbury SC on the Severn Estuary when I was 8 - and am still a member now - but got into Fireballs when I was 13 as Dad had winter membership at Chew Valley Lake which had a big Fireball Fleet. Thornbury is a great club - family oriented, good socials (good for camping so people can stay over) and great sailing on a huge expanse of water.

Fireball Buying history:

I got my first Fireball in 1973 (or 1974) - number 58. We bought the wooden hull and re-vamped it: we fitted a spinnaker chute, got hold of a Needlespar mast, and Dad (who worked for Rolls Royce at the time) made the fittings for it.

Boat numbers and names: After No. K58 I got K9914 "N-n-n-n-nineteen", a stitch & glue home built boat. That was followed by K14114, "White Knight" - a Northampton hull. The next one was GBR14430, a wide bow Winder which I re-named "Jango Fett" - after a Star Wars character regarded as the best mercenary in the galaxy who was chosen to serve as the genetic template for the Clone Army. Fireballs look a bit like cloned Storm Troopers, don't they! 😊. I still own Jango Fett but also bought GBR14889. This was the Holt Allen sponsored boat sold to raise money for the Fireball Worlds at Teignmouth. I was sailing with Hannah

Showell at the time (when she wasn't sailing her Solo) so I named it "Millennium Falcon", whose captain was Han Solo!

Current Nationals Fleet: I was in Bronze this year as I've been sailing with a newly trained up crew. It's good that the fleet recognises that it's a team in the Fireball - to do really well both helm and crew need to be good. Perhaps I'll be in Silver next year having won the Bronze fleet in The Golden Dolphin and coming 4th in Bronze at the Nationals. What a year - we won £200 of Gul vouchers as well as a wetsuit each. Thank you Gul!!!!

Gear: I use a mixture of North & P&B sails but have recently been trying out Hydes. I tend to look for a good deal as I'm happy to learn how to set them up. I've got a Cumulus and Alto mast - what I use depends how heavy the crew is. Both my boats are Winder hulls and both have the traditional spinny pole set up.

How long sailed FBs: Since I was 16. I crewed until 1990 then helmed them. I still crew off and on.

At what level club/national/international: Yes! I did my first Nationals in 1975, next in 2008, then every one since. I try to do 2 big events a year

Year of 1st Nationals: Penzance 1975

Last major championship: 2018 Fireball Worlds at Carnac

Best ever major championship: Barbados. We went to the Prime Minister's residence (he was there), lots of free stuff, rum and champagne sailing every day.

Most memorable result: As a crew, Sligo 2011 sailing with Hannah. We got a 6th in the 1st race and came 33rd overall. As a helm, this year at Carnac. We had a really bad result just before the Lay Day, but got 23rd out of 101 in the next race!

What other boats have you sailed: Mirrors, Solos, Lasers, 505s, Miracles, Windsurfers, ISOs, Boss, Cruisers (I took over sailing Dad's Westerly Centaur).

Why do you sail a FB: I was sailing a Miracle with my son Chris. He wanted something faster - White Knight was in the club, lying around neglected, so that's how it began.

What do you like best about it: It's a great boat to sail in all conditions. I like the International side of things, racing people from all over the world in different locations. I've sailed with helms and crews of different weights and can just set it up to suit.

Who is your crew: Rick Spring - he only started sailing last year!

What does he/she do well: He's very fit and athletic. He used to be an endurance cyclist (e.g. riding 700 miles like over the alps) and a downhill mountain biker. He's really sociable and keen.

What could he/she do better: Be lighter on his feet which is necessary in light winds. Guys like Tim Saunders and Russell are a great example that it can be done!

How do you prepare for a campaign (boat/fitness): Fitness - I just keep sailing, go cycling and motor-biking, which is more physical than you'd think! Your arms and torso get a good workout on a long (4-5 hour) ride. For boat prep I polish the hull before and when I get to the event, check over ropes, fittings, wires on the mast and slot gasket then replace as necessary. I also check the foils have no chips on the trailing edge.

What event are you most excited about next year: Torbay Nationals - I wend down on my motorbike a few weeks ago. There's a good café culture, it looks like an easy place to launch and well set up for hosting us. I'm pricing up for Canada (I've got a spreadsheet going!) as I'd really like to do that.

What would you like to see in the class: More effort put into selling the class. It's such a fantastic well-built boat, the sails are reasonably priced and you can sail it with all weights and sizes. We are a very competitive class with a massive amount of potential in skills I wonder if that might put some people off joining us. Saying that, having the Bronze & Silver fleets is really good, this year especially with the great sponsorship from Gul - can we shout out more about that? It'd be good to get more "Sail a Fireball" days (like at HISC and Blackwater SC). I think we should encourage the fleet to go to more multi-fleet events like regattas, club weeks, which enables more people see the boat. It seemed like there were a lot of female sailors at this year's championships - let's publicise that to inspire more.

Sausage sandwich/bacon butty/avocado on toast: Got to be bacon butty (staple diet!). I recall a very posh bacon & avocado was on offer at Parkstone YC!

What's your best one liner:

Just enjoy your sailing! The Fireball is such a great boat. It's not just about doing well. At Carnac there were some brilliant angles on the reaches and it was AMAZING!



World Champs

Past & Present by David Sayce

Reflections on Carnac and earlier World Championships by David Sayce

I have only attended two Fireball world championships in recent years but I certainly don't regret making the trip to Carnac. This was a successful and enjoyable event with over 100 boats in a very attractive venue. Sound organisation, an experienced race team and good weather contributed to its appeal. So too did the availability of a wide and varied range of accommodation for competitors within cycling or even walking distance of the Club. Nor were the attractions confined to sailors. Opportunities for swimming, paddle-boarding, cycling, visiting local towns and markets as well as gustatory delights all helped to make this championship what it was.

First impressions are important. I arrived a few days before the French Nationals when the Club was still immersed in preparation for the forthcoming events. In spite of this we were warmly welcomed and assisted in finding a berthing slot. Measurement when it began was efficient without being officious and struck a suitable balance between rigour and pragmatism. Teams whose black bands had seen better days, for example, were not despatched to the back of the queue, as I have seen in the past, but allowed to make speedy amends. And the fact that sailors who took part in both the French Nationals and the Worlds did not need to de-rig for measurement between events was also welcomed.

If the dinghy park was crowded, and a busy local sailing school added to congestion on the slipway, these were only minor inconveniences. Prizes too were not so comprehensive as some competitors are accustomed to.

Having returned to competitive Fireball sailing relatively recently it occurred to me when reflecting on this event how things have changed since I attended my first Worlds in Wrightsville Beach in September 1972. (Wrightsville Beach was recently in the news as a result of the devastation it suffered at the hand of Hurricane Florence. It still puzzles me why Fireball International thought it was a good idea to hold a championship in the middle of the hurricane season. When we were there the town hadn't fully recovered from damage done in 1954.)



David and his sister Carol sailing early Fireballs over 50 years ago. Photo credit - Unknown

Perhaps the most significant difference between now and then is that UK competitors are no longer required to qualify to represent their country. In the early Seventies it was not simply a case of having to finishing sufficiently high-up in a qualification series; rather teams were required to compete in 'indicator trials' and impress a panel of selectors who made the final decision about who went to the worlds. This sometimes resulted in dubious outcomes. I recall that on one occasion my Hayling Island club mates Keith Walker and Mike Dawe, having performed strongly in the trials, were deemed an 'unknown quantity' and denied the place at the Worlds that they felt entitled to. Even when selection by a panel was later dropped in favour of a strict qualifying series, there was still the difficulty of not being able to plan time off work until the series was over. This was sometimes only a few months before the relevant championship. It was an advantage, though, that the winner of the series was awarded a travel grant from the RYA.

As a consequence of national quotas, Fireball world championships were inevitably smaller than the UK Nationals. In some years UK National entries were so large that it became necessary to impose limits. On the occasion of his eightieth birthday I recently visited John Caig, double world and UK champion. In the course of our conversation he made it clear that in his experience the UK championship was usually more difficult to win than the Worlds. Perhaps Matt Burge, Tom Gillard, and all the other helms and crews who have taken both titles in the modern era have their own views on this.

Another difference in 1972 was race reporting. I do not know whether the presence of not just one, but two of Britain's leading yachting journalists was in any way related to a less restrained FI budget in those days or possibly just more sponsorship, but I can't help feeling that the quality of reporting at Carnac in no way suffered, and in many ways gained, from the insightful daily reports provided by 'volunteers' who had been actively involved in the racing.

Carnac is of course renowned for its frequent and well-run sailing events and a world championship is nothing out of the ordinary for the Club. By contrast, having the Fireballs in Carolina in 1972 seems to have been something of a novelty which attracted much local attention. The UK team had hardly stepped off the plane at Wilmington before we were whisked into a local commercial television station to explain the subtleties of Fireball racing to a daytime audience. TV ratings were not so well publicised in those days but I doubt that our presence, or that of the troop of bell-ringers who accompanied us, did much to assist soap sales that day. Sponsorship also extended to a series of lavish dinners, sometimes in a grand local hotel but always followed by interminable speeches from local dignitaries who constantly reminded us that "Carolina Has It All". (Not hurricanes on that occasion thankfully)

As in Ireland in 1970, money was made available to film the 1972 Worlds. I saw the completed version only once, and that was when I returned to Wrightsville Beach for another World Championship in 1992. While this film was never going to be nominated for an Oscar, it contains interesting footage not least of twenty-one year old Jorg Diesch achieving a significant milestone in a career that led to an Olympic gold medal in the FD class in 1976. Winning the Fireball worlds is a huge achievement in itself but it was all the more remarkable that prior to that regatta, Diesch and his crew, Sven Warfvinge, had never sailed together, and had only English as a common language. Does anyone know what happened to this film? I'm sure it would be of great interest to Fireball historians.

Returning to the modern day, I think we can all feel grateful that the Fireball Class has continued to evolve in a way that allows venues like Carnac to provide well organised open competition that attracts a large and genuinely international cohort of top-level participants in a friendly (and hurricane-free) environment. Many of us will be looking forward to equally enjoyable events in Canada, Ireland and Australia.

David Sayce



David and his crew Nick Rees competing at this years worlds in Carnac.

Photo credit Urs Kueblis



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2019 - What lies ahead

Next season's championship and open meeting schedule remains work-in-progress as we look to firm up on events for the second half of the year. In particular, discussions are under way with a number of clubs to host open meetings.

The good news is that we enter the second year of Gul's - very well received - two-year sponsorship of the Gul Dolphin series but the bad news is that we have a major 'fixture clash'. It has been very well publicised that the UK Nationals clashes directly with the European Championship being held in the Czech Republic.

As an association, we have to work a long time ahead when trying to find venues for the Nationals simply because there is a lot of competition: many classes are chasing a handful of popular host clubs often over the same time periods. Additionally, some classes are favoured by certain clubs: as I write, we suspect we are going to lose out to another class on a potential 2021 host club after a year of discussions. On the other side of the coin, we have a firm marker put down with a different club - firm supporters of the class - for 2023. There are lots of moving parts when trying to pin down venues and dates

The dates for the 2019 Nationals were published at the same time as those for the 2020 event and, with some surprise, we heard a little while later that Fireball International had recognised a potential clash with the 2019 Europeans. Nevertheless, FI carried on with their negotiations and firmed up their dates. Clearly better communication is required for the future but we are where we are with 2019. If there is a saving grace it is that fewer British teams are contemplating travelling to the Czech Republic than attended this year's Carnac Worlds so neither events' entry should be too badly affected.

Later in the year, the World Championship will be held in Montreal and the event seems to be catching the attention of British teams as, thanks to the efforts of the Canadian Fireball Association, it appears likely that heavily-subsidised transportation costs may be available. Details are being thrashed out. It also appears that the Canadian hosts may be able to assist with accommodation, too! Watch out for announcements!

The current 2019 schedule may be found on the UKFA website (Events tab) but please keep visiting as we anticipate additions being made.



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Club Development

Swap and Go — by Chris Payne

Chris Payne is well known to many UK Fireballers most of whom also know that he and Heather MacFarlane are also top Tasar sailors and that Chris is the class's Chief Measurer.

Clearly the Tasar and Fireball are very different dinghies but one initiative Chris launched in the Tasar class seems very transferable and would benefit our club fleets. No doubt variations on a theme have already been tried but here's how the Tasars have successfully upskilled crews and closed the gap between the back and front of their fleet.

As ever, simple things can be effective! The attention grabber was **“Ever wondered what the top sailors are doing differently and wanted to get some on-board training as you go round the track?”**

The advertisement went on: “Well we've organised to make this happen for all our budding up and coming sailors. The helms and crews from some of the top boats have committed to a “Swap and Go” race day at Hampton Sailing Club this Sunday. They'll be there ready to swap helm/crews for the normal Sunday racing i.e. two races. All you have to do is turn up with your boat/helm/crew by 11am so we get all the swaps sorted out and the sailors have time to agree on what they want to work on whilst out on the water.

Chris Payne and Heather MacFarlane at Carnac.
Photo credit Urs Kueblis



Membership Update

UKFA membership – changes to membership categories and fees

UKFA membership classifications have remained unaltered for decades and need to be amended not just to move with the times but also to reflect the current sailing climate. Prompted by a proposal prepared by the committee a good discussion was held on the subject at the 2018 AGM held at Penzance SC during the Nationals.

Unfortunately, association membership is seen by many Fireballers as something to be ignored. Their view is, in part, driven by the annual subscription figure but also by lack of knowledge of the benefits of membership. A common response to the question 'why are you not a member of the association?' is 'because I get nothing for my money'. That isn't the case, of course, but the misconception is there.

The association is a broad church: it is as keen to encourage club sailors and others interested in supporting the Fireball class as it is to support those who live to compete in major championships. To encourage those sailors who do not presently feel they wish to support UKFA we have decided to largely extinguish the argument over 'cost'.

Therefore, as agreed at the 2018 AGM, with effect from 1 January 2019, membership classifications, entitlements and subscription rates will change.

Going forward our approach will be to offer a very affordable membership that will bring an individual full entitlement to everything the association offers **except** participation in the Nationals or international championships and receipt of a Fireball International boat sticker. This will be known as 'Local' membership and will be available for just £8 p.a.

For those individuals wishing to compete at the Nationals or international championships the current 'Full' membership will be available bringing with it a Fireball International boat sticker. There will be no change to the current arrangements and the membership fee will remain at £30 p.a.

Similarly, 'Junior' members (aged 21 or under) will benefit from the same package as a 'Full' member but will only pay £20 p.a. Again, there is no change to current arrangements.

What does every member (i.e. all membership categories) of UKFA get for their subscription?

Well, the right to:

- Participate in UKFA-organised/subsidised events such as training sessions
- Participate in Golden Dolphin open meetings and the Inland Championship and benefit from generous sponsors' prizes at these events
- Download copies of Fireball e-News (either to your PC or to your mobile)
- Benefit from discount schemes the association offers (e.g. from UK Global insurance and from Pinnell & Bax).
- Access to the 'members only' section (currently under development) of the UKFA website

From a purely financial perspective, the cost of 'Local' membership is more than recovered simply by insuring your Fireball through UK Global. It's a 'win/win' situation!

To reiterate, though, only Full and Junior members will receive a Fireball International boat sticker and have the right to compete in the UK National and in international championships.

We do hope the revised membership structure will encourage club Fireballers and those who are not interested in competing at major events to support the association. The scheme discounts alone will more than cover the annual fee!

Technical MAINSAIL MUSINGS

By Dave Hall

During the open forum at the Worlds in Carnac the subject of sails was brought up in the context of ways of making them last longer. Chris Payne from Australia spoke (a little tongue in cheek I think) about fully battened sails but it was taken seriously with the merits and downsides discussed acknowledging the fact that fully battened sails do last longer but have a definite effect on boat handling.

However, he then asked why the lower batten on the mainsail is shorter than the 2 mid battens. He commented and others agreed that, because the batten is short, the sail can hinge at the inner end and, as the sail gets old, this area is the first to distort and thus may lose performance. Interestingly enough, when speaking later to other sail designers many wished that all the battens on the Fireball mainsail could be longer.

Tom Eglin then suggested - and it was agreed by FI - that a sail should be altered or made with a longer batten and trialled. This sail would be used at open meetings but not a Worlds or in International competition.

I agreed to alter one of my sails and make it so both the short and long batten can be used. This sail will be tested through 2019 with reports going to Tom at FI. The class can then decide if it would like to adopt it and make a rule change. Tom also suggested if the class should look at all the batten lengths.

My modified sail was used by Ian Dobson and Richard Wagstaff at the Inlands with positive results but it was hard to determine any performance changes or long-term effects bearing in mind the high winds experienced that weekend at Draycote.

Watch this space for updates!



A low-angle, close-up shot of a sailboat's mast and sails. The main sail is a vibrant blue, while the jib and other sails are white. The boat is heeling to the left, cutting through the water, which is visible at the bottom of the frame. A crew member in a black wetsuit is visible on the deck, reaching up towards the rigging. The sky is a clear, pale blue. The text "MAKING SAILS THE WAY YOU WANT" is overlaid in large, white, sans-serif capital letters on the left side of the image.

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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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