

Fireball



e-News #11

September 2021

Useful UK Fireball information

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Cover - Mark rounding action at the 2021 Blackwater SC Open Photo : Zoe Nelson

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Editorial

Welcome to Fireball e-News 11 which, I'm afraid, is a little on the thin side as there isn't a great deal to report but, at the same time, we were keen to get Keith Walker's tips on sailing in Hayling Bay to you before the Nationals.

While we all edge to normality, or a 'new normal', organised sailing has gradually picked up as 2021 has unfolded. In the Fireball class, open meeting attendances have been lower than we expected but, on the other side of the coin, club racing appears to have strengthened a little. I do wonder whether a re-set button has been pressed and the class may, to a degree, be starting a return to its traditional roots of strong club fleets underpinning a robust open meeting circuit. Only time will tell but, recognising the current position where many people have re-discovered the joy of club racing, the committee is working on a new 'Clubman Championship' that will embrace existing club racing across the country. Further details later in this bulletin!

Otherwise, plenty of behind-the-scenes work has been going on both here and internationally to construct new sailing programmes. In the UK, we have several scheduled events during the next few months including the National Championship at Hayling Island SC at the end of September. HISC is busily hosting championships and open meetings and I can report from first hand experience that the club is staging great events while at the same time taking all necessary Covid-related precautions. Fingers crossed for good late-summer winds!

Chris Turner



Dave Hall and Paul Constable at the Blackwater Open. Not much wind but what a great backdrop!

Photo : Zoe Nelson

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Derian's Chairmanagram

Welcome to this latest edition of Fireball e-News, produced by Chris Turner, who has managed to conjure content despite this having been a quiet year for us so far. Thanks Chris!

It is with huge relief that we've finally opened up registration for the 2021 National Championship at HISC. Simon Benson has spent hours over the last 2 years arranging and rearranging this event – doing budgets, co-ordinating with clubs, researching and booking social events, then unwinding all the work he'd done. I can't thank Simon enough for not losing faith and putting at least as much effort into this event as the first attempt in 2020. Now what we need is a show of support from as many Fireball sailors as we can attract to take part in what's going to be a great event. Hayling Island SC has a superb track record in laying on well-run events and to placate anyone's fears about the infamous Hayling bar (not the one that leads to raucous laughter and a sore head), just read the article written by Keith Walker. Once armed with the knowledge and experience he's built up over more years than he'll care to own up to, we'll be sailing in and out of the bay with ease!

One thing that's been wonderful in these difficult times for many businesses is the willingness and enthusiasm to support our fleet. For this year's Nationals, **Gul** is again our main sponsor, providing the overall prizes for the week. However, we've secured further prizes from **UKGlobal** (who offer discounted insurance rates to UKFA members), **Hyde Sails**, **Ropelocker** (who offer UKFA members a 10% discount on all purchases) and **North Sails**. As ever, if you get a chance to support these companies, please do.

We're all aware that the number of Fireballs travelling to Opens has been down this year. Part of the reason for this is that we have a few clubs who are successfully growing a local fleet and people are getting their fix from racing at their home club – Hayling Island, Draycote Water and Blackwater are the 3 biggest UK fleets. Chris Turner has written an article giving us tips on how we can start the ball rolling then build on that, to get fleets going at more clubs. I believe that we need this foundation to our sport and from that numbers at open meetings will start to increase again, especially when we observe the improvements those who travel make after just few weekends competing against boats from other clubs.

We've got an excellent "Round the Cans" article in this edition of e-News - this time it's Peter Kyne who has revealed all! Chris has given me a sneaky preview of the article and I think we need to teach Peter & Tom what ex-Chairman Rachel Keeling and I always called the "Adam Hoist" (after Adam Bowers who taught it to us) – a winner for those occasions when the kite is in the windward bag.

There are so many people who have a soft spot for Fireballs as anyone who has done a stint on the Dinghy Show stand will know. Only a few weeks ago I was up in Kirkwall Marina, Orkney (we've been big boat sailing with Fireball friends!) and I got chatting to a guy on the pontoon. As soon as I mentioned that I sailed a Fireball he smiled and started reminiscing about having sailed one many years ago! Long may this love of the Fireball continue.

Latest 2021 Fireball programme

All subject to government restrictions, club guidance and procedures.

European Championship

Piombino, Italy

11 - 17 September

Staunton Harold SC Open

26 - 27 September

Gull UK National Championship

hosted by Hayling Island SC

30 September - 3 October

Paignton SC Open

9 - 10 October

Gul Inland Championship

hosted by Chew Valley Lake SC

6 - 7 November

Draycote Water SC Open

13 - 14 November



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With this year's national championship being hosted, for the sixth time, by Hayling Island SC we asked HISC Fireball stalwart, Keith Walker (left), for a guide to sailing in Hayling Bay and a tip on how to negotiate Chichester Bar!

Photo : Chris Turner

Racing in Hayling Bay

Hayling Bay has been a venue for countless dinghy championships, Admirals Cup Inshores and many other 'big' boat events.

Leaving the club and reaching the race area can be problematic but the Nationals coincide with neap tides so current rates should not be an obstacle unless conditions are very light. In the recent Feva nationals crews walked their boats to the harbour entrance against the flood tide! The position of the race area will be displayed outside the main entrance and outside the changing rooms. Allow plenty of time to reach the race area as it may be necessary to leave West Pole Beacon to starboard before turning west into the bay.

Once clear of the harbour entrance the flood flows in a north westerly direction and ebb flows to the south east. Current rates in the bay during neaps will be no greater than 0.5 knots. Obviously, if the course is set close to the harbour entrance flows will be influenced by the ebb or flood into, or out of, the harbour.

Our prevailing wind is south westerly; this can be affected by the high land on the IOW so shifts should be expected. With winds from the west, roughly parallel to the shore, the divergent angles of the land wind and sea wind will result in lighter winds near the shore. The opposite would be true in the case of an easterly wind where land and sea air streams converge resulting in a band of stronger wind inshore. A north westerly is off the land and is in any case inherently shift and patchy. A southerly wind is not affected by the land but is unlikely to be shift free!

During these neap tides currents will not be strong but can still affect the wind and sea state. Wind against current will increase the sailing wind and may create the Hayling Bay chop. Wind with current will have the opposite effect. Expect an easterly wind to result in a bigger sea as it has a longer fetch.

Hayling Bay is quite shallow but the race area may include the deeper water offshore. The ebb and flood rates will be greater in the deeper water. If you were beating in a south westerly it would normally pay to lee bow the stronger current as the wind would be lifted more than inshore.

Sea Breeze

Our nationals are late in the season but records show that a sea breeze can develop even in late September though it may not reach the 15 to 18 knots we might see in high summer. The telltale requirement is fine weather and a light north or north westerly gradient wind. Convection cloud over the land is a classic indicator of the sea breeze to come. The breeze comes in from the south but it may flick around 150 - 170 degrees as it strengthens. Typically, it will gradually move to 240 - 250 degrees before fading.

Crossing the Bar

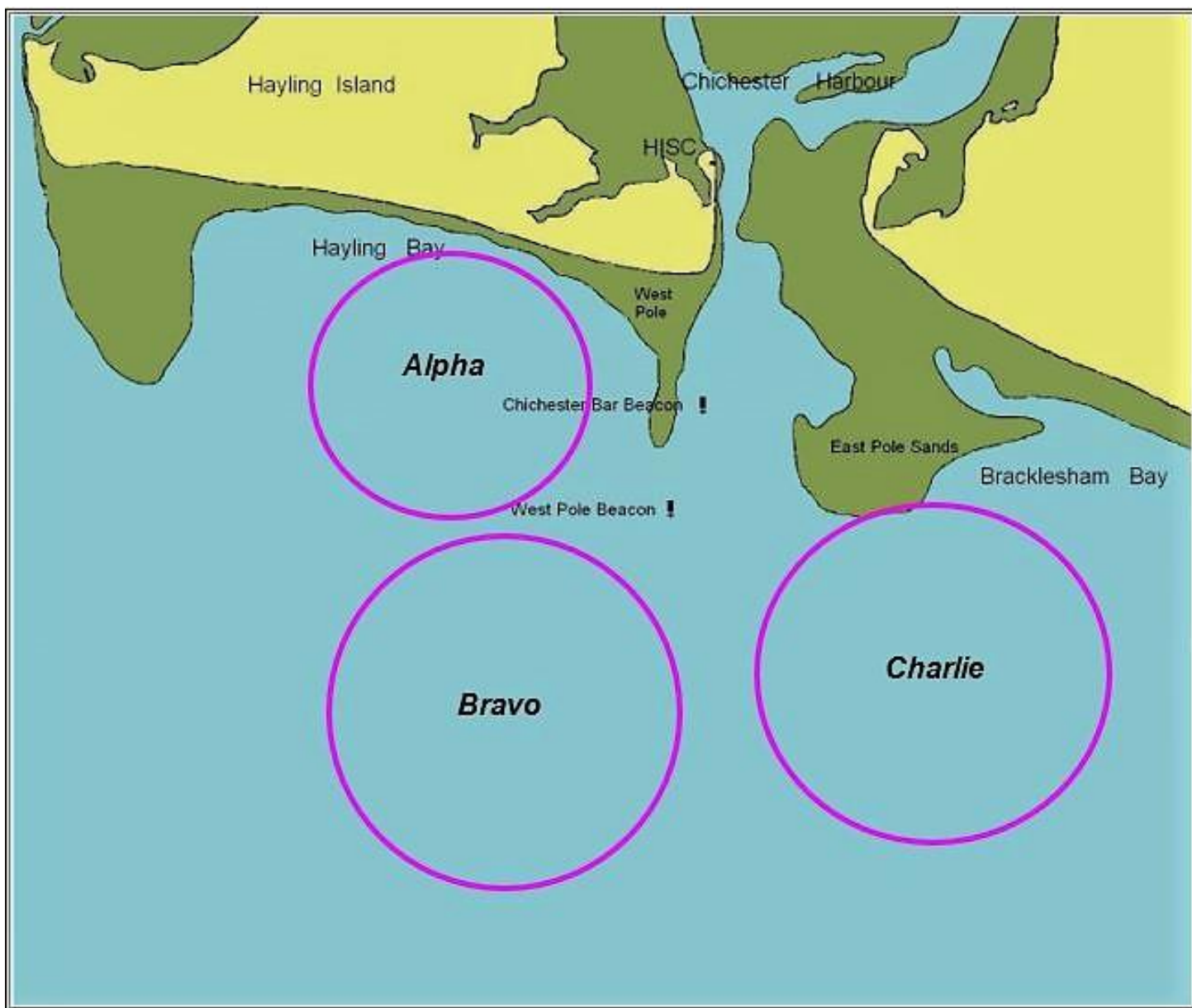
Chichester Harbour Conservancy provides notes for navigating into Chichester Harbour including the following: *With a falling tide and strong winds from a southerly sector a dangerous sea may be encountered. In these conditions it is advisable to exercise caution and cross the bar between three hours before and one hour after HW springs. In very strong winds entry should not be attempted.*

This warning is for all craft. Apart from the potentially dangerous sea there is the issue of depth hence the timings. A keelboat ignoring the guidance could ground on the bar with disastrous results. On one day in the 1979 Fireball nationals over twenty masts were broken when boats capsized in the standing waves.

In a south or south westerly the safest route in is to sail well to the east of the beacons shown on the chart (below). Two reasons for this: the seas will be less difficult away from the main channel and your course in will be a reach (rather than a run) where you can control your speed. The bar is far less of an issue when the wind is from other directions but do keep your wits about you and remember the water is relatively shallow. A chart of the area will be posted on the Official Notice board at the Championship as will a chart of tidal streams.

Post Script

Back in the '70s and '80s championship courses in Hayling Bay were larger than those set today. There was one race a day which might take 2 to 3 hours! On one occasion the windward mark was closer to Bembridge on the Isle of Wight than Hayling Island! It could be argued that notes like those above had greater relevance then whereas now the legs are shorter and are less susceptible to tidal and wind changes. One mantra used by a world famous big boat skipper with whom I sailed was "sail with what you've got". In other words don't build a strategy on what might happen, just use what you have. Entirely valid today!



This chart was incorporated within the sailing instructions for the 2016 National Championship and is reproduced here for guidance purposes only.

With club Fireball racing going well at Hayling Island SC and boat numbers increasing during Lockdown 2, Derian asked Chris Turner, with his HISC Fleet Captain's hat on, to scribble a few thoughts on club fleet sailing and suggest why some fleets seem to be surviving the general malaise afflicting many classes in the UK.

Club fleets (Fireball sailing is not all about championships and open meetings!)

In the heyday of club sailing it seemed almost every club boasted a Fireball fleet which collectively underpinned a thriving open meeting circuit. Those days are long gone and, sadly, we're now down to a handful of fleets with the largest being at Blackwater, Draycote and Hayling Island. The reasons for this decline are well known and I won't go into them again now but, instead, I've reflected on why certain fleets have bucked the trend and set out a few identifiable reasons in this article. As part of this thought process it did occur to me that the stronger fleets all seem to benefit from sailing on large expanses of water. This may be a red herring but I offer it for what it is worth.

At the outset, though, let's acknowledge that many Fireballers thoroughly enjoy their club sailing and have little, or no, desire to race more widely. Further, I think it is fair to say that the club sailors' value in the 'pyramid of success' has not been truly recognised by the class - at least in recent times. Club fleets form the base of the pyramid from which some sailors graduate to open meetings and, in turn, some of those to international competition. In other words, club sailors are vital to the strength and future of the class.

We have a great design: Fireball is a fantastic boat to sail and can provide exhilarating performance in comparison to rival classes. Recently, I was amused to overhear a conversation between a talented teenage 29er sailor and a newcomer to the class that included the observation 'unless it's blowing then it's a Fireball day'. The class may be nigh on 60 years old but Fireball is still relevant to today's sailing scene and continues to make its mark.

Fireball sells itself on the water especially when it's breezy and many sailors in other classes stay ashore. The simple fact is that Fireballs at high speed, throwing off spray, getting round courses when other classes don't (or can't) simply attract attention. Just being out on the water is like posting an advertisement in a shop window. It follows that turning out regularly will enthuse others and prompt growing admiration.



Chris Turner and Colin Parke enjoying a breezy reach 'in the shop window' at Chichester Harbour Race Week which saw 12 HISC Fireball entries. Photo : Rob O'Neill

There is a human factor to fleet success but all it takes is a small group of people, or even a single person, to generate class profile at a club, both on and off the water, and either sow the seeds of a fleet or perpetuate and further its standing. Of course, that's easier said than done but expanding fleets act like magnets to those looking for change (which principle applies to all classes of course!). In parallel, we are fortunate as a class in having a long history and there are countless numbers of sailors from the past who will happily reminisce about Fireball and sing its praises. These advocates, with their fond memories and experiences, can be usefully harnessed to elevate the class's standing in a club and, in some cases, prompt a return to the class of the individual concerned. Perhaps it goes without saying but opportunities to gain new members to the fleet need to be worked on. If somebody enquires then that enquiry should be followed up. An enquirer may have already decided to get a Fireball but need assistance in finding the right boat (or avoiding the wrong boat!), they may value an opportunity for a trial sail or perhaps they're simply looking to crew for someone and introductions are required.

Needless to say, it's not just about getting people into Fireballs. It's also a case of keeping them and that does require a level of enthusiasm and commitment from one or two members of the fleet. Clearly personal interaction is important and key fleet members such as the Class Captain need to be seen around the club, be available for fleet members and perform a liaison function between the club and the fleet. Not everything needs to fall to the Class Captain; for instance a Social Secretary can be a great help in spreading the load.

Periodic fleet social events are valued by members whether, for example, they take the form of meals at local restaurants, taking tables at club dinners and Xmas celebrations or trips to the theatre. On the water, training sessions are often welcomed and sometimes it's worth considering taking a day or two out of the club's scheduled race programme to do something different such as boat on boat tuning. Organising a fleet championship or a Clubman series will maintain interest.

Social media is not to everyone's taste but there's no doubt it is a powerful and effective tool. Both Draycote and Hayling fleets make full use of Facebook to promote impending racing and to report the outcome of the day's races. Mike Deane, the Draycote Fleet Captain, has his famed meteorological bushes to forecast upcoming weather and his race reports are very amusing (I'm jealous of his literary skills). Posts also include general fleet banter, photographs and other notes intended to keep group members engaged. 'Welcome to the fleet' announcements are a great way of getting good news out and introducing new Fireballers to the rest of the fleet. A 'crews wanted/available' sticky helps match people up and get more boats on the water. Posting a message doesn't take long and reaches its audience immediately. For those not on Facebook, a post can also be copied to an e-mail group very quickly. WhatsApp groups are a useful addition to the communications package particularly if the message is best kept strictly to fleet members. There are many other platforms of course but I find those mentioned to be effective. Incidentally, Mike and I encourage others to contribute and share the weekend's race reporting. Not only does it spread the workload but it helps make people feel they're 'part' of the fleet.

Building up a library of photographs is a worthwhile exercise. Photos attract attention (something about a picture painting a thousand words) and, used judiciously, excite comment - not just from fleet members but also those who simply wish to follow the group - and contribute to activity levels. I find the simple addition of an action shot to a routine message gains 'likes' from both fleet members and the group's many followers. The Hayling Island Fireballs group currently has 234 members of whom perhaps 30-40 or so actually sail, or have sailed, with the fleet.



Zoe and Adrian King at Chichester Harbour Race Week. Photo : Peter Hickson

Before the advent of social media and digital publishing, most of us were avid readers of the Yachts & Yachting race reports pages. The impact of hard copy printed reports has diminished considerably - I rarely buy Y&Y these days - but the digital alternative has taken over and it remains worthwhile arranging for open meeting reports and fleet news to be published on a national forum. Nothing has changed in that respect apart from it being easier and faster to get the job done now!

The key message to take away is, I think, that the key to success is activity. Activity levels are important: a high level - in whatever form - will generate further activity and an upward spiral of success will develop. The converse is just as true. Both the Draycote and Hayling fleets have gained members during the pandemic. In Hayling's case a fourth boat in the last nine months was gained during the time this article was under compilation (and I'm hopeful of a fifth in the not too distant future)!

First things first, though: get a Fireball, or Fireballs, on the water - in that shop window - and impress the audience!

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Round the Cans

With **Peter Kyne**

Peter is a long-term member of Brightlingsea SC and, with his son, Tom, is well known on the open meeting circuit.



Name: Peter Kyne

Age: 61

Profession: : For 34 years I was in the gas distribution and emergency business in East Anglia and London. After that and mainly for fun, I became my own boss and did building and decorating work and refurbished and sold more boats than I can remember - mainly lasers.

I now have a Traditional 1952 Brightlingsea One Design which I am renovating, from basically bare planks without ribs, decks, centre case or rig, with Malcolm Goodwin who many of you will know. I look at the green Fireball he built, still sitting in his workshop, thinking it should have another outing sometime. I understand it was pretty rapid, like every boat Malcolm was involved in.

Home town: Tiptree in Essex (where the jam comes from)

Club: Brightlingsea SC

How long have you been sailing and what type of boat did you first sail in? Since I was 13, so 48 years, when a family friend took me out in his GP14 on a Brightlingsea S.C. cadet evening. Then I joined the sailing club and did some crewing in GP14s, Larks and Mirrors with some success which got me hooked. I lived at Brightlingsea until my late 20's so the sea was a big part of lives down there (as was playing rugby until my sailing took over). I really wanted to helm and my parents gave me the option of paying for the school skiing trip or buying me a Mirror dinghy. I had a Mirror.

When did you first sail a Fireball and what were the circumstances ? My youngest son Tom was getting interested in sailing and at the time we had a Laser 4000, that we dragged out of the Queen Mary dinghy park covered in slime, which actually turned out to be a nice one. We learnt a lot but it was not the boat for Brightlingsea really - just handicap racing while low tides brought restricted width for an asymmetric and then there was also a heavy haul up the ramp. In 2013, a good friend Dave Pannell from the club, who many of you will know, decided to order a new Fireball and offered 14860 to us at a price I could not refuse. It was right there on the doorstep in Brightlingsea dinghy park too. That was the start of my Fireball sailing and strangely I had never sailed one before. That probably stemmed from the old Fireball/Hornet rivalry days which, looking back, was a nonsense.

What other boats have you sailed ? Probably too many but I read once that to improve you need to get racing in as many classes as you can. I may have taken that advice too literally –

Crewing – Gp14, Lark, Micro tonner and Mirror.

Helm and owning - Mirror, Hornet, Windsurfer Regatta, Laser, 470, GP14, Moth, 505s, Contender, RS600s, RS700, more Lasers, Laser II, Laser 4000, Fireballs, Solo. Apart from Lasers which I still have, I have spent the longest time racing and owning a Fireball because it is such a great boat.

Between Tom and I we currently have a Fireball, Musto Skiff, Solo, Brightlingsea one design, RS800 and two Lasers. I have just sold the 505. So yes, still too many.



What is your current Fireball and what is your Fireball history ?

Well, in terms of many of the fleet members I am a relative newcomer and have only owned two boats. The boat I have already mentioned, 14860 which was a Winder with all the bimbles, sporting a set of P&Bs on a Cumulus mast. It was fast but it was evident that there was a next gear for some who were using M7+ masts with Norths, so I decided to get a brand new winder in 2015 with all the extras and that rig set up - number 15124. There was probably no difference in all round speed between the main sailmakers and boatbuilders, and even less now, but when you have the same set up as the top crews at the time, at least that concern about gear is out of your head. 15124 was one of the first boats to be built under the revised weight rules and I am sure Dave Winder continued tweaking the shape too. It was noticeably quicker and more responsive from the off and remains that way so I am very pleased I took the leap into forking out for a new boat.

Do you helm or crew and who do you sail with ?

Since I had my own Mirror at 15, I have pretty much helmed, and probably mostly in single handed boats. I feel comfy sailing on my own and somehow it focusses the mind knowing its all down to me. Equally I love sailing two man boats with two heads better than one; its just sometimes I have to remember to let crews know what I'm about to do! My youngest son Tom has sailed with me for a few years now since getting a laser II. For quite a few years we have been at the wrong ends of the boat with me being bigger but now the dynamics have changed and we are at the right place (provided I keep deceiving myself that I've lost weight) I know we are getting there weight wise as we have stuck it down the mine a couple of times recently when he's gone forward to put the kite up.

What do you enjoy most about sailing Fireballs and what the least ?

The Fireball is a great all round boat and as soon as I jumped into 14860 I knew that we were going to love it. Despite doing lots of sailing in other boats, there was a lot to learn and far beyond what can be put down in a tuning guide - that's just the start. The boat has many quirks which could be about hull shape or sail plan but anyone that can just newly jump into one and make it fly is at the top of their game.

In terms of depth, because the class is so established, it attracts top sailors and great event venues to match. Alongside that it is a very sociable and friendly fleet and intensively competitive on the water - top to bottom. The committees and organisers of events do a sterling job and their dedication and unpaid time devoted to the class cements the whole thing together. Thank you.

What do I like the least – well not much. I wish I could sail them more but Tom has broken his hand on the foredeck throwing the kite out - OUCH! Like many with family, work or other commitments, I wish I could be 'beamed' to and from events without all the packing up and travelling faff. Otherwise what is there to moan about ? Just get out there.

What would you change about the Fireball and why ?

Personally very little because it is so well sorted and balanced and still affordable and there aren't many classes where you can sail in the full wind range that we do. Let's face it, they are pretty bullet proof now which means running costs are low. I suppose carbon tillers and extensions will come next and even carbon booms as production costs come down but that won't really enhance the boat, just modernise it. New booms could even lead to loose foot mains so again that is an on-cost for consideration. Twin Carbon poles may be attractive to lighter crews at little cost really. You only have to look at 505s and Merlins to see the best systems. They will work with bags, Its been done successfully in 505s back in the day.

To be controversial, carbon masts if costs come down and they have very similar characteristics to our current masts. The lasers have introduced them mainly to stop top section breakages but they have matched the bend on the alloy ones and I haven't seen any speed advantage from those that have them. They would have to be one design though or constant development costs and replacing them regularly to keep up with trends is a costly business. I see that happening on Merlins as the mast diameters get impossibly smaller.

I did say controversial a further move once twin poles are established may be to get the kite higher and bigger and adopt more upwind /downwind courses balancing out the crew weight disadvantages. Some of the best tactical racing we have had is with that type of course in a breeze, wiring the whole way. Certainly the 505s seem to have adopted that boat and course configuration. On a conventional triangle course there is not a lot of place changing on the reaches (although they are great fun) and in a breeze the leaders slip away, able to hold their line whilst the huddle of boats behind head up or go low doing the great circle route to get clean air and before you know it the fleet is very stretched out. Many top half crews have a new spinnaker every year anyway, so the cost of a bigger kite and twin poles may be worth considering and possibly attract a wider weight range of crews to the class. It is as always a gamble between turning off existing sailors and making the Fireball look a little more attractive to those outside the fleet. Just thinking out aloud really.

Typically, what sort of Fireball sailing do you participate in ?

As we have got used to the Fireball I think we are doing less club sailing and more opens and Championships really. Its a bit like riding a bike, If you keep reasonably fit and sail other boats I think you can jump straight back into it and after a few races you are back on the pace. It's a fine balance between de-tuning yourself round the cans regularly or just being flat out against top sailors at big events. Certainly many of the leading boats just tend to do the latter. I'm probably wrong on that one and I think it's a personal preference. I sail a Solo more regularly at Brightlingsea for the moment, more so since Tom turned into captain hook with his broken hand and also he has just bought a Musto Skiff, clearly attracted to the pain of broken limbs. The Solo is a great trainer boat for the Fireball in many ways like hiking position, controls, foils etc. much more so than the Laser although I still enjoy them too. My favourite remains the Fireball however.

What is the funniest memory you have of sailing a fireball ?



As mentioned, I am a relative newcomer to the fleet compared to some and certainly haven't experienced as many events or the exotic destinations for Championships as some crews. Anyway I think the Fireball socials are top notch particularly when hosted by Andy. It takes me back to the old Rugby and Hornet sailing days. Long may our great socials continue.

Lets face it, most funny moments are definitely not that at the time, its only when you have cooled down and look back, you can laugh. Here goes: Laying third at Lyme Regis in the second race, last beat and the halyard lock failed. We already had a second and would have been leading the championship, that will never be repeated.....

Gybing before the first start at Hayling and the brand new super-duper fibreglass fat pole smashed between the boom and shroud - Noooo! (I hope that doesn't happen with the carbon ones ?).....Tacking for the Windward mark in second place at the Torbay Nationals with my single hander head on, forgot to tell Tom, straight in and down in the teens..... Putting the kite up at Brightlingsea in a Force 6 with steep swell, then realising Tom had grown into a big boy and immediately pitch poled it when he went forward..... On the night before the lay day, riding my hired bike back to the hotel at Carnac after a particularly lively evening ending up in a dubious night club and falling off into a post and spraining my thumb – not wanting to appear a wimp I never told Tom, so now he knows.....There are more in other boats, mostly injuries but the worst was jumping over the swimming pool wall at midnight during Pyefleet week at Brightlingsea. Just one problem – the other side was two feet lower and I broke both heels in half. I had to win the next day's race in a 470 to take the week. On tiptoe and in excruciating pain I did do it, but I cannot begin to describe how painful that race and the next few weeks were.

What is your particularly memorable Fireball moment ?

Not so much a moment but an event and that was the Worlds at Pwllheli in 2015. We had the new boat and got it sorted out before the Championship but nothing could really have prepared us for two weeks solid of a huge fleet, big wind, mountainous waves, cold and rain. The race management was second to none and doing many breezy races in an upwind/downwind format allowed us to stay in touch despite being too light. In hindsight, yes a few things I would have done differently. I would have had Tom 6 years earlier so he was the size he is nowI wouldn't have hired a motor home which rocked in the wind and sounded like we were in a jet car wash all night in the driving rain.....I would only have done a few outings in the pre-worlds so I wasn't knackered before the actual Worlds even started.....I would have taken a drysuit.....I would have eaten and drunk less at Wetherspoons.

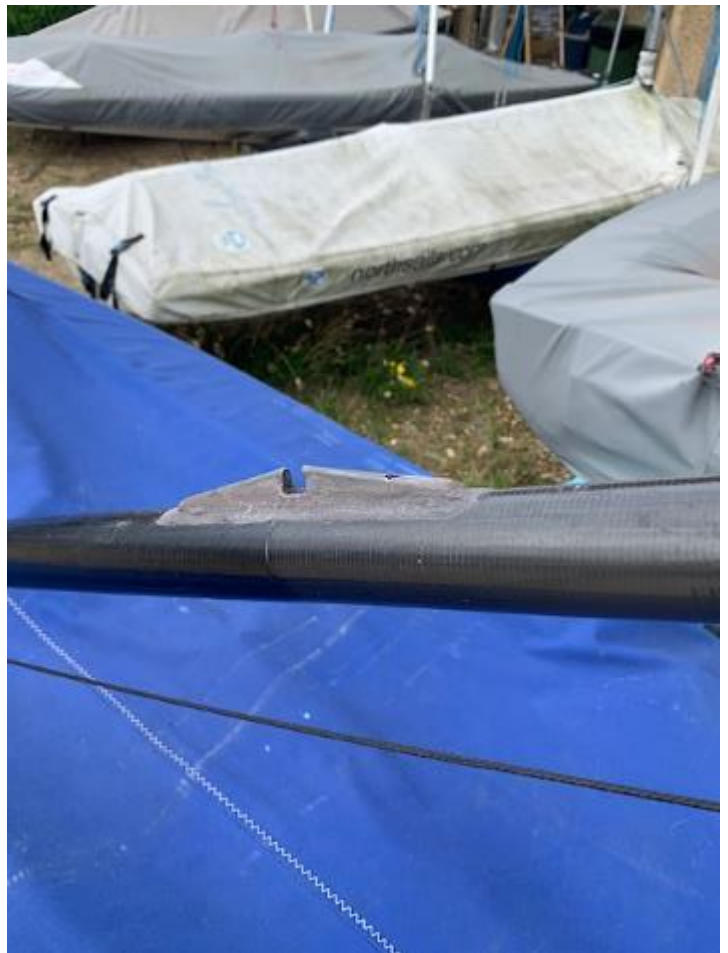
I will never forget the sight of all those boats in the club hangar doing repairs, rigging new masts, fixing holes and mainly putting mainsail flatteners on the booms which seemed to be the 'must have' trend of the week. An EPIC event and incredibly memorable for many reasons.

Gear, gadgets and other things to empty your wallet

Carbon spinnaker poles

I was beginning to think the dispensation to permit carbon poles was looking like a damp squib until Dave Hall rocked up at Chichester Harbour Race Week having just collected six, very smart, examples from Superspars! It turned out that all but one had been sold to Blackwater members and that, as hoped, they were finding favour with lighter crews. This is great news as it evidences that even a modest amendment to class rules can bring about a positive change benefitting Fireball's future.

If you're interested, Weathermark Sailboats can supply Superspars poles for £295 a pop; contact Dave Hall on 07802 611599. Another producer is Neal Gibson of Gibson Sails (07801 815861) who got in touch with me to say that poles can also be supplied for £295 each (or £270 each if a block order of 10 is received).



Pictorial reflections on Chichester Harbour Race Week - the best attended event of the season before the Nationals



Photo credits: Rob O'Neill exc top left Neil Shawcross and bottom right Peter Hickson



Photo credits: All Peter Hickson other than
Fiona Sayce's shot of 2020 470 Olympic
gold medallist Eilidh McIntyre with Dave
Hall

Clubman Championship

There appears to be a modest revival in club sailing presently - not necessarily linked to lower open meeting attendances - which has prompted the committee to look at ways in which the class could recognise this and, perhaps, add a little weight to it. We'd like to say 'add a lot of weight to it' but the reality is that local impetus comes from local people. However, with thanks to Russell Thorne for the idea, the concept of a Clubman Championship has been developed.

In essence the idea is that participating clubs will nominate a batch of races from which individuals' results will be extracted and the top performing club sailors identified. Essentially, it's a season-long race series.

In outline, 50 qualifying club races are nominated of which a competitor may count 26 towards their season-end score. Scoring works on the basis that a competitor's race place is divided by the number of starters to produce a score of 1.0 (for last) or lower. For example, 2nd place in a fleet of 6 boats scores 2 divided by 6 i.e. 0.33. DNF, DSQ and NSC score 1.1 while DNC scores 1.2. A race that is cancelled is simply struck from the list of 50 eligible starts and not replaced. As can be seen, the greater the number of starters in a race the lower the scores so a race win in a 7-strong fleet scores better than it would in a fleet of 4 starters.

The initiative is being trialled by the Hayling fleet this season and, if judged successful, will be opened up to other fleets for the 2022 season



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If you have any suggestions or can help in any way then please feel free to contact chairman@FireballSailing.org.uk Don't forget, you can follow us on Facebook '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 continue to enlarge the 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 and 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. ©Fireballsailing.org.uk

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