

FIREBALL

UK Fireball Association
e-News #10
January 2021



Useful UK Fireball information

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Fireball Grapevine, Gallery & Gossip

Fireball U26

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Blackwater SC - Charlie Stewart

Brightlingsea SC - Barrie Winship

Draycote Water SC - Colin Snowdon

Hayling Island SC - Chris Turner

Parkstone YC - Mike Barton

Members offers: Discounts are available to UKFA members from Pinnell & Bax, Ropelocker and UK Global Insurance - see the website for details



2015 Worlds : photo Lee Whitehead

Cover photo - Simon Kings and Jono Loe enjoying breezy conditions at Hayling Island Photo : Chris Turner

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Welcome to Fireball e-News #10!

My thanks to Andy Robinson who edited the first nine editions of Fireball e-News and who has now moved to warmer climes and handed over the baton to me. Andy hasn't severed his links with the Fireball class and I'm sure we will see him around and about at some point.

Last season was rather strange. We all know why, of course, but on the positive side sailing has been possible as most clubs found ways to get their members on the water. Open events have proved to be far trickier to organise and the majority were cancelled. In our case, cancellations included the National Championship ending an unbroken run that started in 1963. Indeed the only Fireball event of the year was the Paignton Open held in mid-September.

Club handicap racing - no substitute for class racing in my eyes - provided an outlet and some large turn-outs resulted. In my case I managed just two outings in my Fireballs: one race in Sunday Girl and a spin in Six of the Best! with my wife to visit the seals in Chichester Harbour. Otherwise, it was time to make use of my D-Zero and that switch to singlehanded sailing proved to be a running theme during the summer as many traditional double-handed sailors ventured into single-handers — often with great success.

None of us know how 2021 will unfold but we can only plan ahead, keep our fingers crossed and do our best to ensure that, when the opportunity arises, the Fireball class gets back on the water in numbers and with enthusiasm!

Chris Turner, Editor



Handicap sailing was pretty much the order of the day in 2020. Pictured are Dave Hall and Paul Constable approaching lift-off during Blackwater Club Week (the Solo wisely went behind them). Photo : Peter Gould

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Derian's Chairmanagram

A funny old year

Throw your minds back to March 2020. The UKFA organised its usual stand at the RYA Dinghy Show. We were mindful of COVID and I remember that hand sanitiser was dotted around Ally Pally. We were all aware that things were teetering on the point of change but I don't think any of us anticipated the impact this pandemic would have on our lives. Shortly after the show, the UK went into lockdown and many of us feel like a part of us has been missing through lack of seeing our Fireball family and limitations in being able to sail. I'm one of the lucky ones – the foresight I had in converting my rock-climbing boyfriend (and now husband) into a Fireball crew has paid dividends as sailing with my husband means we haven't suffered from the mixed household dilemma. However, I appreciate that many of you have not been able to sail as much as you'd like.

In case we've forgotten, here's a brief summary of what happened in the UK in 2020:

We went into our first lockdown in March and the early season events were all cancelled. In the UK we are lucky to have the RYA who lobbied the Government on behalf of all sailors to allow a return to sailing and who published guidance to clubs on how to run safe sailing. In mid-May we were allowed back on the water but only people from the same household were allowed to sail together. This meant the majority of Fireball sailors couldn't go out. Around the country, there were a handful of Fireballs sailing (not racing) at their local clubs but, generally, access to club facilities was restricted and changing in the boat park became the new norm. Many clubs limited the number of people and boats on the water and imposed upper wind strength limits because the usual rescue cover wasn't possible. Dry robes have been in great demand!

At the end of May, we had to cancel our Nationals in Weymouth, which were scheduled for the end of July, along with many of the open events. Racing was gradually introduced at club level in July but it wasn't until the end of July that mixed households were allowed to sail together. We managed to line up a rescheduled Nationals for the start of October but, unfortunately, had to cancel this too as organising the shore-side logistics while complying with the Covid regulations was proving too challenging. A few clubs, including Blackwater and HISC, were able to run member-only club weeks over the summer and the local Fireball fleets were well represented.

Finally, in September, we held an Open event at Paignton Sailing Club on the south coast. The forecast wasn't good and the turn-out was therefore affected but those that went along had a great time despite the requirement to change in the boat park still being in place! We then organised a Winter Championships for mid-November – early online entry was looking good ... then lockdown #2 was announced. The Winter Championships have therefore been postponed until 13th March 2021.

Virtual Life

Many (most!) of you will have been taking advantage of the various video conferencing tools that have become so well-known this year! The Fireball Committee has followed the trend and moved from teleconferencing to videoconferencing which has partially made up for our lack of seeing each other this year. I've attended a few sailing related talks which I'd never have got to go to had they been physical events.

The most recent event I “attended” was Chew Valley Lake SC’s prizegiving night. We had Mark Rushall as our guest speaker and, rather than his normal approach of telling us little gems to help us get to the top mark faster or how to position ourselves to get the inside rounding, he decided to tell us stories about events he’d been to over many years and why they stuck in his mind. It was brilliant that he started by raising his wine glass to the screen, pointing out that it was a prize he’d won at the Chew Fireball Open in 1983. There were many stories but no class was mentioned as often as the Fireball and he waxed lyrical about how the Fireball is hard to beat for thrills and rewards when the breeze is up. There was even a story about winning a race at a Fireball event in Switzerland where it was gusting 45 knots – he and his lightweight crew won by developing a technique to right their boat faster than all the others and, bit by bit, they overtook everyone!

We were unable to hold our AGM in 2020 – a combination of our Nationals being cancelled and the wording of our constitution which reads as needing a physical meeting. We are updating the constitution to include the provision for virtual events.

Looking forward

The 2021 RYA Dinghy Show is also going virtual. The UK Fireball Association is going to have a virtual booth which will be open to people from all round the world. It’s a fantastic opportunity to promote ourselves through videos and photos and provide international access to price lists and specifications for new boats along with photos of the latest fit-outs. We’ll have articles available to download about the class and the sailors and information about upcoming UK and International events. It will also will give us the opportunity to give a little something back to the RYA which has done so much for sailing in 2020.

Dave Hall has been busy organising a full programme of events for 2021. With more clubs requesting a minimum entry, we are trying out sharing a few of these events with other symmetric classes. As well as helping the host club’s finances, it will provide an opportunity to meet and socialise with a wider group of people. No-one knows whether we will face more disruption this year but rest assured that we are in regular contact with the clubs who are hosting our events. This includes SCYC where our Nationals are being held from 31 July to 6 August. I’m looking forward to sailing again at Abersoch; it is a great venue.

Many clubs have had a boost to their membership as a result of the pandemic. This is a great opportunity to show off the Fireball to new or returning sailors and see if we can tempt them into joining us. We can all use the RYA Dinghy as a way of promoting our class too ... the more the merrier!

Membership

In May 2020 the UKFA committee discussed the effect the pandemic was having on our members’ ability to sail and took the call to suspend all current memberships for 2020. As a reminder:

- Any Membership paid, or direct debit processed, prior to 31/05/2020 will run until 31/12/2021.
- Any Membership renewals due on or after 01/06/2020 were not collected and your new membership is due from 01/01/2021.

Members whose renewal fees are now due will have been contacted by our Membership Secretary to set up a new GoCardless payment. New members are now able to join and take advantage of the member benefits (details on the UK Fireball website).

I *REALLY* hope to see you on the water in 2021 – the virtual world just isn’t the same!

Derian (UKFA Chairman)

Provisional 2021 programme

All subject to government restrictions, club guidance and procedures.

Winter Championship –	13 March
King George SC	
Staunton Harold Open	27/28 March (with Scorpions)
Hayling Island Open	1/2 May
Brightlingsea Open	22/23 May (with Merlins)
Grafham - GB Challenge	29/30 May (open event)
Poole Open	29/30 May
WPNSA Open	5/6 June (with Flying 15s)
Blackwater Open	12/13 June
Weymouth Dinghy Regatta	3/4 July
Mumbles Open	17/18 July (with Merlins)
Abersoch Week	25-30 July
Nationals - Abersoch	31 July - 6 August
Chichester Harbour Week	9-13 August
Europeans - Italy	11-17 September
Paignton Open	9/10 October (with Ospreys & Merlins)
Draycote Open	16/17 October
Inland Championship –	
Chew Valley	7/8 November

Dave Hall has done a superb job in putting together this schedule of events. It is correct at the date of publication but may well change as the effects of the pandemic continue to unfold.

One or two clubs have yet to draft their 2021 programme so more events may be added.

60th Anniversary celebrations

The Fireball class will celebrate its 60th anniversary in 2022 and your committee has started outline planning.

Many members will recall the very successful 25th anniversary regatta (it seems like only yesterday!) hosted by Hayling Island SC in 1987. Initial thoughts for 2022 are to involve Chichester Harbour again as that it is where the Fireball prototypes were worked up from Peter Milne's home club of Dell Quay SC.

It's early days and we'll keep you informed!

Left : FB0 (the pre-production prototype now in the National Maritime Museum) sailing at the 25th Anniversary celebration.

Photo : Fiona Sayce



Fireball International appoints Dave Hall as Technical Committee Chairman

We are pleased to announce that our own well-known Fireball competitor, UKFA committee member and owner of Weathermark Sailboats, Dave Hall, has accepted the position of chairman of the International Fireball Class Technical Committee. Dave will be supported by Tom Egli (Canada), who has covered the technical role for many years, and Mitja Nemec (Slovenia) who is an active well known European Fireball sailor and class measurer.

Dave says, "Christina (FI Commodore) contacted me regarding possibly taking on the role which Tom has done on his own for longer than most can remember. With pressure on his time, Tom asked to take a step back but still wanted to be very much involved".

"Having spoken to the UKFA committee and to Dave Winder (and of course my wife!), and after some thought, I decided to take on the role. This is an opportunity to progress development of the class. The first matter in hand is to cement the Class agreement to allow a carbon spinnaker pole. This change was proposed, discussed and voted for at the Worlds in 2019 but, with World Sailing staff having been furloughed for much of the year and now a change of personnel, it has not yet been ratified. We plan to get the rule change submitted in the New Year. However, as with all these things it is not just a matter of simply inserting a line in a rule - as I am finding out!"

"Once there is news, FI and the UK committee will update you."

The AGM that wasn't

Following the cancellation of our Nationals, I let the Association members know that the committee had discussed, but decided against, holding an online AGM. This was for a number of reasons:

Firstly, because we suspended membership renewals, this meant that there will have been members whose renewal was due after the suspension date, and they will have been unable to vote. Secondly, we didn't think that there were any specific issues that needed discussing. Thirdly, when we referenced the UKFA Constitution we agreed it was open to interpretation on whether holding an online AGM would be valid.

I'm pleased to say that all of the current committee has agreed to stay on and there have been no objections from the membership.

Our treasurer Ian Castle, usually comes along to the AGM to present the finances for the preceding year (in this case 2019). Ian encourages questions from the floor, then we vote on accepting the finances as presented. Because this hasn't happened this year, we have published a statement covering the 2019 finances (income, expenditure and bank balance) on the UK Fireball website. At the 2021 AGM, Ian will present the combined 2019 & 2020 finances which will be voted on together.

We intend to update the constitution over the winter to bring it up to date, including facilitating the use of virtual meetings for association members.

Derian Scott

Dinghy Show 27/28 February 2021

This year's show will be somewhat different insofar as it will be held virtually. UKFA will have a 'booth' and, whilst details are still being thrashed out as this edition of Fireball e-News goes to press, the current understanding is that it will be manned by on-line volunteers for the whole weekend. Needless to say, it will be great if members stopped by for a chat!

Further details may be found at:

<https://www.rya.org.uk/newsevents/news/Pages/RYA-Dinghy-Show-goes-virtual-for-2021.aspx>

Memories of an Ancient Mariner

Christopher Driscoll reminisces about sailing Fireballs in the 1960s



Chris (above) was heavily involved in spinnaker viability testing as reported in Fireball News Bulletin #12 in September 1967

Since Bulletin Number 1, the Committee have been discussing the full scale testing programme which will be taking place this year with a view to giving the AGM a very full report on the results. It has been decided to form a Development Sub-Committee to look after this and other aspects of class development consisting Chris. Driscoll, Hayling Island SC - Ray Boden, Hayling Island SC and Vic Watkins, Rushmead SC.

We have now taken delivery of our prototype spinnaker from Musto & Hyde built to dimensions worked out by Keith Musto and Peter Milne. The spinnaker is a 'spherical' of something in the region of 125 sq.ft. roughly 15/20 sq.ft. less than the one France is using. Most of the testing will be carried out at Hayling Island SC where they have several other Fireballs fitted with the necessary gear and several other spinnakers for comparison purposes. Our own spinnaker has already been used by Bob Fisher and Ron Cohen during the 'Two of a Kind' meeting at Sheppey.

My first glimpse of a Fireball was during the autumn of 1964 when a fledgling fleet arrived at Hayling Island Sailing Club (HISC) for their National Championships. Chichester Harbour has a way of helping any boat look majestic as she rides the crest of the waves amongst such spectacular scenery but there was something special about seeing the Fireball in action. I was beyond impressed and knew my days of Hornet and Canoe sailing were to be behind me. The next day I made an appointment to visit Chippendale boats at Fareham to order what was to become my first of three Fireballs from them. 'Gemini' (Sail number 773) hit the waves early in 1965 and with Colin King on the wire we set about finding our way within the growing fleet.

For the 1966 season I was joined by David Nutton who, at nearly 2m tall, was the ideal crew for someone like me who in those days weighed in at a mere 9 ½ stone; together we made a formidable team. The Nationals that year were in Plymouth. I've always remembered that every race of that regatta was won by a Hayling boat with five different helms in total taking line honours. We won the last race but, having to carry forward a DSQ, we dipped out of the top spots.

At the end of the 1966 season I joined the class committee and as the youngest member of the team was given the task of researching options for adding a spinnaker to Peter Milne's craft. I started 1967 with 'Red Gauntlet' (sail number 2007) and with the help of local sail makers Lucas, Michael Mountifield and Bruce Banks we rigged a variety of sails to my Proctor mast and spent many happy days on the water with life-long friend Nigel Roper sizing up alternatives for the class to consider. The concept of a spinnaker chute was still a new invention, so we set up a spinnaker bag adjacent to the forward bulkhead and by the 1968 season our recommendations had been adopted by the class association. The Fireball from then on was a three-sail racing machine.

Sadly, a medical issue prevented me competing in the 1968 Brixham Nationals but never one to miss an opportunity to party I made my way down to the championships to take part in the revelry. This was the 1960s af-

ter all and we were a merry band of bachelors in our twenties! The passing years mean I forget many of our escapades but I do remember a formidable telling off from the Commodore of the Royal Torbay for removing a shackle in the dead of night to unlock the member's car park to recover my Austin. I'm sure that was the least of our shenanigans. The flaming red hull of 'Red Gauntlet' was sold on, and for the summer of 1969 'Lady Be Good' (sail number 3663) named much to my father's consternation joined the family. She was



another Chippendale hull constructed with their new balsa sandwich technique. I was never fully convinced that she performed as well as her predecessors but that didn't stop us charging around the country with her hitched to the back of my Lotus hightailing from one sailing club to the next and back to my beloved HISC every weekend.

Around this time there was a great deal of committee discussion as to whether or not the RYA should be

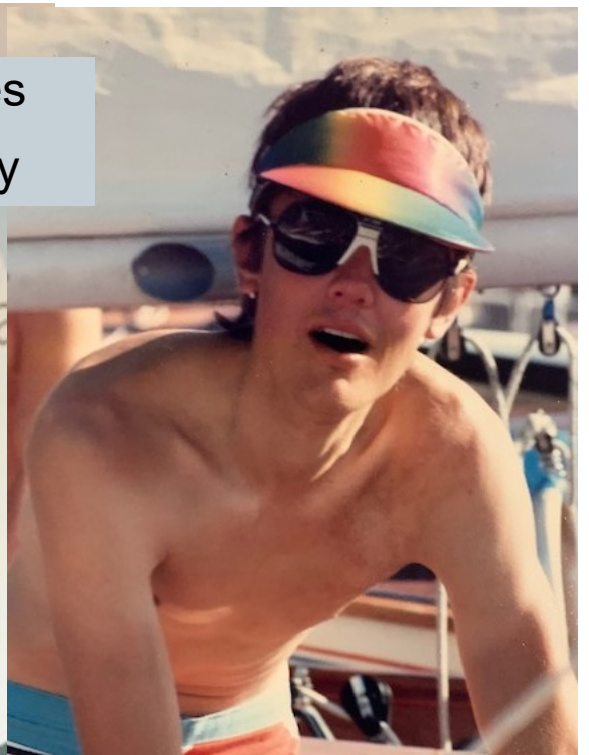
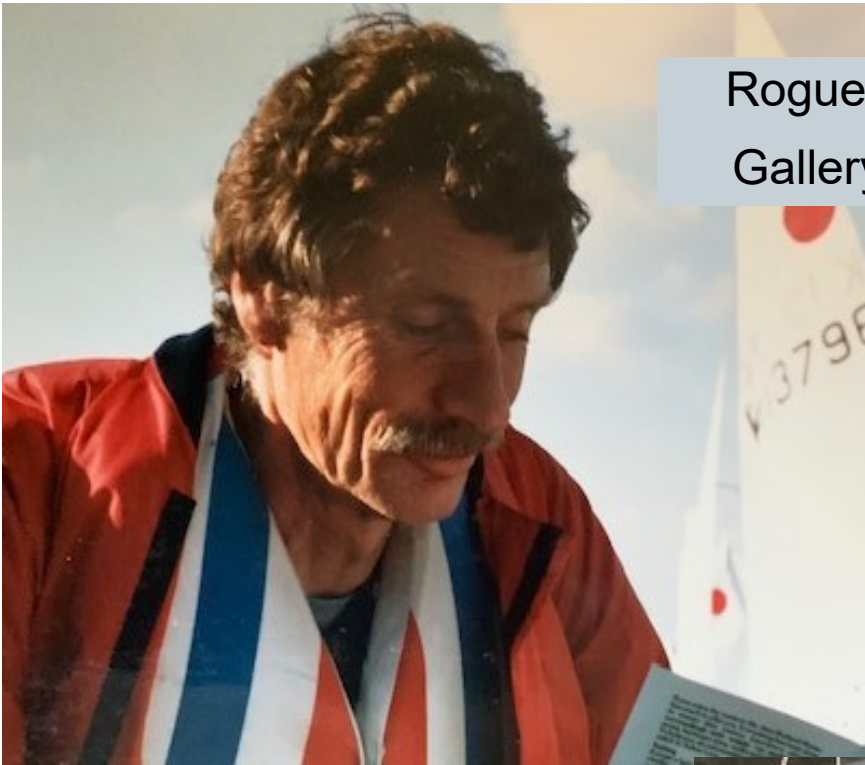
approached to develop the Fireball as an Olympic Class. The overriding opinion was that this route could lead to increased construction costs which would have a negative effect on the ever-growing class numbers, so this idea was not pursued further.

With the arrival of the 1970's and my impending 30's I made some big changes in my life. Firstly, I moved to my parents' weekend home on Hayling Island meaning I could sail more frequently. This was marvellous and a decision I will never regret; I've remained a Hayling resident and sailor ever since. However I also decided to leave my employment and start my own business. In order to raise the capital for this my beloved boat and car were sold. My brother's Fireball 'The Pheonix' (sail number 2334) stayed at Hayling for a few years and I enjoyed sailing with friends in the harbour. My last sail in a Fireball would have been in the mid 1970's, but I never lost my interest in the class.

With the arrival of my children I found myself once again towing boats around the countryside and enjoying watching history repeat itself as new generations developed their sailing and formed those ever-lasting friendships that sailing enables. Beyond my many happy memories, all that remains of those wonderful years is one of the two trailers my father had made for me. As I approach my 80th birthday it gives me great pleasure to see our 1968 trailer still in use only now bedecked with an Optimist, an RS Tera and the paddle boards my children and grandchildren now enjoy.



Rogues
Gallery



Rogues Gallery (see previous page)

Those of you who are members of The Fireball Grapevine, Gallery & Gossip Facebook group will recall a popular post of photos of Fireballers from a few (actually, quite a few!) years ago.

Here are a few more shots all taken in the mid-1980s by Fiona Sayce.

All you have to do is work out who they are! A clue: most of you should get at least two - one of whom still sails a Fireball!

Answers at the end of this edition of e-News.

UKFA Archive

Continuing the theme of things past, the UKFA archive has grown steadily from its inception around 10 years ago. Copies of most of the UK Fireball Association's newsletters and magazines since the very early 1960s are held as well as many related papers such as event entry programmes, press clippings, builders' records and personal photographs.

However, there are still gaps and sometimes with surprisingly recent material. For instance we don't have a copy of the full results for the 2001 Nationals! Can anyone help? More generally, though, if you have old copies of Fireball News, results sheets, clippings or anything else you feel should be kept rather than discarded please consider donating them to the archive (contact details per the UKFA website).

Finally, some of the long-lost early Nationals results surfaced last year when a package of papers belonging to one of the early class stalwarts was gifted to the association. I had almost given up hope of ever finding them! Once the new website is up and running those results will be uploaded and available to members for the first time in almost 60 years!

Chris Turner - UKFA Archivist



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Round the Cans

With **Mike Deane**

Mike is a stalwart of the Draycote Water fleet and guardian of famed meteorological bushes that render all other forms of weather forecasting redundant!



Name: Mike Deane

Age: 57

Profession: Not sure I've got one of those. Software, electronics and technology perhaps.

Home town: Rugby

Club: Draycote Water since 1975

How long have you been sailing and what type of boat did you first sail in?

45 years! How the hell did that happen?

I was press-ganged into crewing for my mother in a Mirror dinghy at the tender age of 12, and hated every minute of it. It wasn't until I started helming and Andy Blee turned up to crew that it became interesting. Later we started winning, but I was already hooked.

When did you first sail a Fireball and what were the circumstances?

I really didn't want a Fireball. My Dad had built and sailed them at Brighton when I was very young, so by implication, I didn't want to. But aged 30, after 10 years of windsurfing, the big fleet choices at the club were Enterprise, Flying Fifteen or Fireball. Well it wasn't going to be either of the first two, so I bought FB 12400 and got stuck in. I was entirely hopeless for years.

What other boats/classes have you sailed?

Cherub, Topper, 420, Laser, RS300, 49er and 18ft skiff. None of them very seriously.

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

I progressed from 12400 to 13741 to 14226 ('Rockers Revenge') to 14778 ('Cruel and Unusual'). I've owned the latter for at least 15 years. It's a white Winder with extra kevlar and war wounds. The mast is an Alto which Peter Wood kindly donated after he bent it. I straightened it and reckon it's faster than my last one (a Cumulus, which I bent). Sails are whatever I can get second-hand for sensible money, P&B at present, but the previous North mainsail and Edge jib seemed just as good. I am not a big spender when it comes to sails. Or spars. Or, in fact, anything to do with boat maintenance. I have a reputation to uphold...

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

I helm, but am a passably good crew apart from being a bit too light, slow, unfit and opinionated. I have been fortunate to have Paul Disney crewing for me for about 20 years. Paul came out for a trial go in the Fireball straight after doing an RYA Level 2 course, we swam 6 times in the first race, and he kept coming back for more. He insists that he still doesn't know how to sail, but I can tell you he's definitely got the crewing thing down to a fine art. He is known locally as 'Poorly' Paul due to his tendency to come out of any incident/collision/capsize with some form of injury. He is like a racehorse – very fit but a bit delicate. Of course, if he was a racehorse, we'd have shot him by now.



Mike Deane and Paul Disney bowling along very nicely at Draycote Water SC Photo Malcolm Lewin Photography

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

How easy it is (admittedly after 27 years of getting the hang of it). This is important because I am deeply unfit. But it's all good, planing upwind, hurtling off on a 3-sail reach, carving the gybes, and there is so little effort involved, frankly it should be illegal. It is easy to set the boat up just the way you like it, with multiple options for de-powering the rig when the wind picks up. There's also the tactical element of sailing it on a typical club course, you can gain or lose big time on a reach just by getting your kite up (or down) at the right moment. There are no downsides, apart possibly from close reaches in big wind.

What would you change about Fireball and why?

I'd introduce a rule allowing boats with young/small/female crews to carry twin spinnaker poles. I'm not convinced that everyone should have these, but there's a strong argument for them where the crew lacks upper body strength and finds it hard to set the pole on a reach in a blow. I think we lose out as a class by not having that extra degree of inclusivity. I'd also make the battens longer to increase mainsail life. In fact, that one's a no-brainer, do that first! *(Ed: the recent trials involving a longer lower batten were inconclusive - further investigation needed)*

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

I'm a club sailor at heart. I am somewhat intimidated by big fleets of serious sailors and rarely do well at open meetings. I do relish the challenge, but having to pack the boat up, travel, reassemble it etc seems like a lot of work when I have 700 acres of water and a big fleet on my doorstep at Draycote. I do the Nationals & Worlds occasionally though, just to show willing.

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

Possibly the time Paul jumped out of the boat anticipating a head-on collision with Pete Badham, later found floating around impersonating a buoy. Or the time we started a race utterly becalmed at the star-board end of the line while the boats at the port end were capsizing in a healthy (if rather sudden) force 3. Or the time I crossed the boat too fast while tacking en-route to the shore after racing, and fell out of the boat backwards. One foot remained tangled in the toestraps, leaving me mostly in the water and being dragged along by the leg. I was disinclined to say anything due to the water splashing over my face, so I concentrated on steering and playing the main to keep the boat upright and flat – too much heel threatened to break my leg. I kept this up for some time. Looking keenly forward, Paul didn't notice any of this, but he was interested by the small crowd on the shore all pointing and laughing. He turned back to me and said, "What are they all looking at?", and then, "what are you *doing*..?"

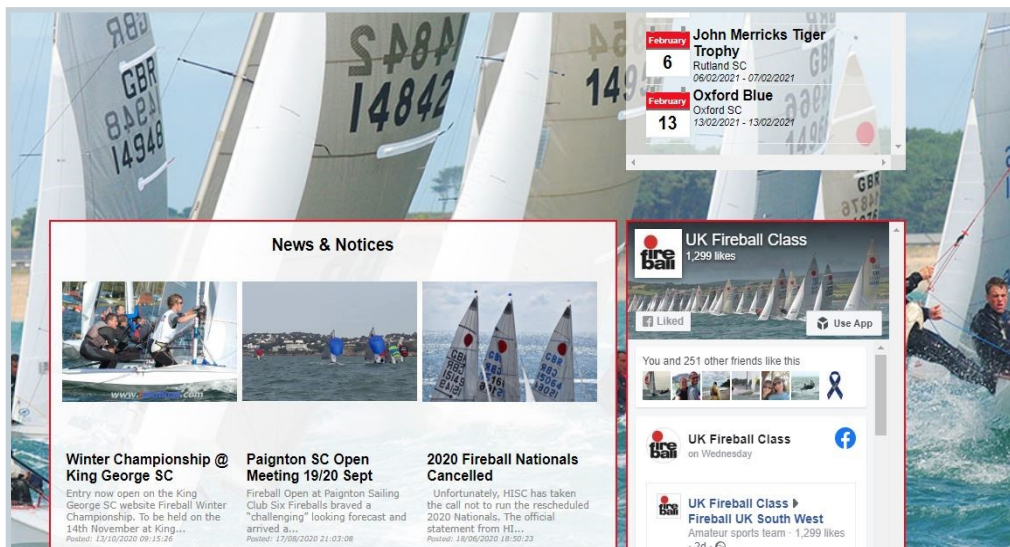
What is your particularly memorable Fireball moment?

That would be the last race of the 2005 world championships at Teignmouth. 176 boats, and a massive course. We came around the top mark in the mid 30s, which was pretty good by my standards, and set off for the next mark which was the flyaway, about half a mile off. Everyone else bore off and put their kites up, but I spotted a patch of dark water to windward and decided to 2-sail up to it before going for the kite. When we got there, it was properly windy and also now too close for the kite, so we just kept on as we were, only faster. The windy/headery stuff quickly enveloped everyone else, who then had to Ozzy-drop or flog their sails while we hooned past the lot of them. At the flyaway we were in the top 10, which I now know is a really nice place to be. We spent the rest of the race being gradually overtaken by the great and the good, and ended up 17th, which I was very pleased with.



Draycote Fireballs obligingly queuing up for the camera

Change on the way for the UKFA website!



Social media platforms are central to the lives of many (but not all!) people and it is easy to forget that the UKFA website is the association's principal point of reference.

Although the present website is only five years old it is dated and requires a re-fresh. Steve Goacher kick-started a project to produce a completely new site which Simon Benson has now taken over. We're aiming to launch it sometime in the first quarter of 2021



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For more information or to obtain a quote, please contact Jerry Dungate:

Tel: 01883 333512

Email: jerry.dungate@ukglobalgroup.co.uk

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Gul UK Fireball National Championship 31 July - 6 August 2021 - *PROVISIONAL*



Whilst currently yet to be formally confirmed, the 2021 Nationals will be held at Abersoch and hosted by South Caernarvonshire YC over the week 31 July - 6 August.

Until there is greater visibility regarding the future state of the pandemic and attendant restrictions the championship dates have to be viewed as provisional. We are in regular contact with SCYC and monthly assessments are being made. As things stand, we do not envisage opening for entries until Easter at the earliest.

In the meantime, lists of available accommodation, campsites etc may be found on the UKFA website.

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Aluminium launching trolleys



After a coincidence of three broken trolleys - all axles - in just one weekend, the HISC Fireball fleet explored the possibility of obtaining replacements made from aluminium. After measuring up, some two months later a batch of five nice, shiny aluminium trolleys arrived at the club courtesy of Sovereign Trailers.

Owners' reaction has been unanimously favourable not just because the trolleys are expected to survive a good deal longer than conventional galvanised steel ones but, also, the all up weight of boat and trolley is markedly reduced and makes launching and recovery over sand and shingle considerably easier. Wheeling a fully packed combi around is that

much less arduous, too!

At the time of writing, the retail price is £520 inc VAT with a discount on offer for bulk orders (minimum 3 units). Contact Rob O'Neill at Sovereign Trailers/Welsh Harp Boat Centre on 0208 202 8629.

Super Spars spreaders

A chance dinghy park conversation led to the realisation that several Fireballers using Super Spars M7+ masts had found it impossible to achieve pre-bend (or the correct amount of pre-bend) without altering the standard spreaders. Mostly, owners had moved the adjusters further towards the spreader tips to allow the spreaders to swing further back than otherwise. On one occasion an owner had ground back the stainless steel 'screw' but, either way, corrective work was tricky and mistakes easy to make. Super Spars were unaware of the issue (although it seems the Scorpion class have had the same problem) but produced a customised spreader for a trial. As well as drilling a second set of holes to accommodate the adjusters moving along the spreader the spreader base was re-profiled. The new set of spreaders were fitted and provided sufficient pre-bend although, with hindsight, the new adjuster holes could have been drilled closer to the spreader base. Super Spars are aware!



Carbon spinnaker poles

Subject to World Sailing's sign off, carbon spinnaker poles will soon be class legal. More to follow in due course!

Winder Boats centreboard case moulding



Winder Boats have recently refined an element of Fireball construction.



Following on from development work on the Winder Solo, a mould has been created for the inside of the cockpit including the case sides. The hull is resin-infused with the internal mould in place so that a perfect moulded finish emerges on the inside including all the control pads.

Seen here is Simon Kings' GBR15166

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SHOP SAILS

2021 Fireball European Championship

An introduction to the event from Andrea Minoni, Secretary of Fireball Italia



The Fireball European Championships 2021 will take place from 11-17 September in Piombino, Tuscany. It's one of Italy's most diverting and appealing regions to sail and stay for holidays at the centre of the Tyrrhenian Sea.

It's the place where the Italian Fireball Class have held national regattas for many years now and in 2019 the Italian Championships took place here. The races were held in front of the tourist port Marina di Salivoli, a recently built infrastructure which offers anything needed in one place, such as boatpark, club, beach, apartments for the participants, as well as restaurants and places to sojourn in campervans, parking for cars, trailers and containers.

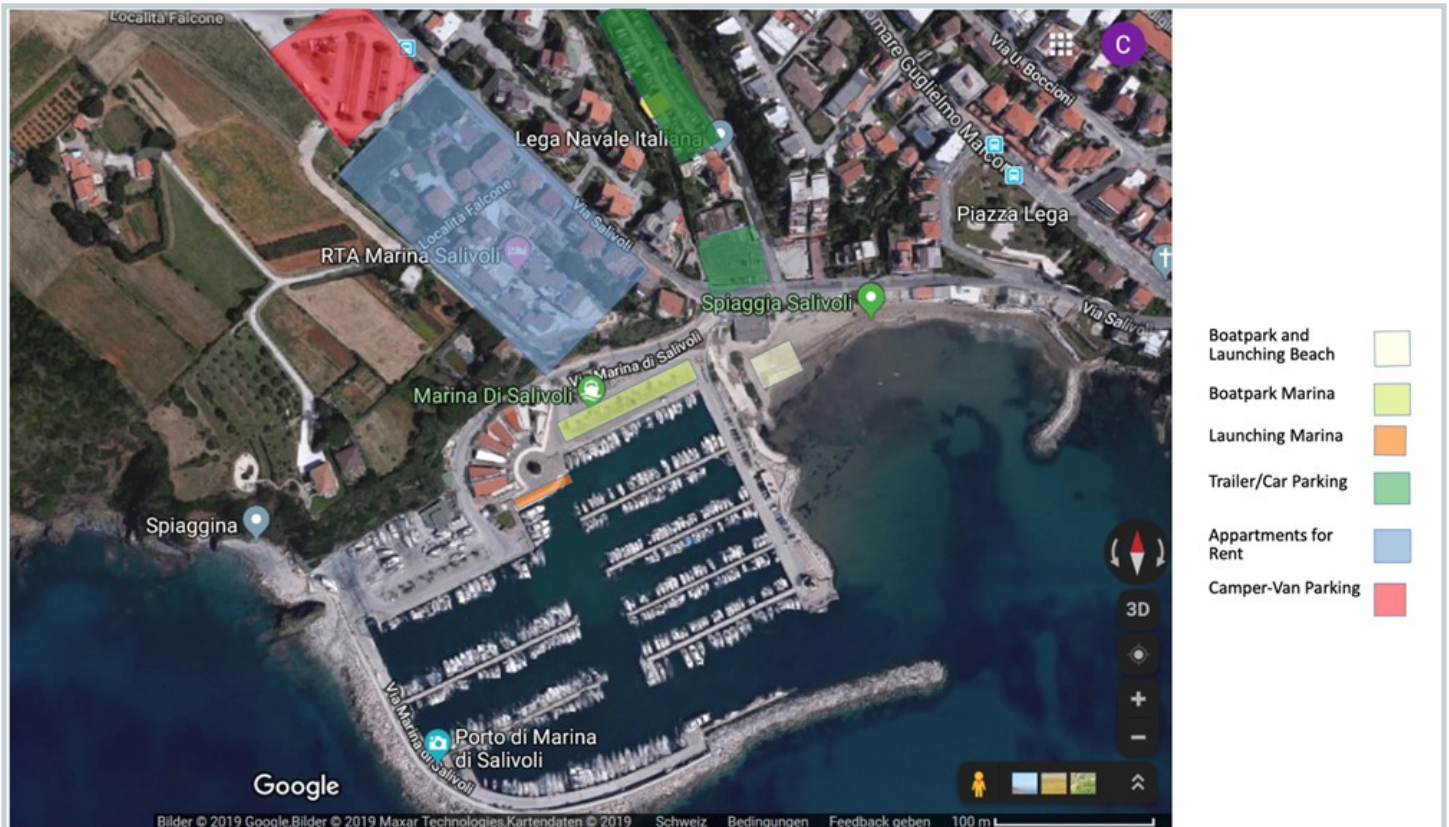
It is planned to hold the races off the Porto di Salivoli and within sight of the Piazza di Piombino. This is a part of the sea characterised by regular breezes channelling in between the Italian coast and the Island of Elba, which is only a few miles in front of the coast. Thus there may be some current enhancing the excitement of racing tactics.

The wind conditions will be sufficiently complex for the most experienced crews. However, they mainly stay within the limits not to exceed the challenges for the average Fireballers and those less experienced in sailing.



The championships will be organized as usual: one and a half days for registration and measurement checks (Sat/Sun), three days of racing (Sun/Mon/Tue), followed by a layday (Wed) and two more days racing (Thu/Fri). The final prize-giving on Friday evening will allow for a convenient return home over the weekend for those coming from farther away.

As usual we expect to accommodate our Fireball friends coming from the UK and Ireland, from France and Switzerland as well as from Germany, the Czech Republic, Slovenia and, hopefully a few others. They will join our numerous Italian Fireballers coming from Val d'Aosta, Piemonte, Lombardia, Liguria and Lazio.



The above picture gives an overview of the areas at the disposal of the participants and their companions.

At the rear of the port a broad space for trailers of any size including possible containers will be reserved, while the boats will be placed on the waterfront of the marina or on the adjacent beach.

The Club is situated in the round building of the port and directly in front of it a broad slipway to allow for easy launching of boats.

From the port the apartments of RTA Salivoli (<https://www.marinasalivoli.it>) are accessible conveniently by an elevator. 220 persons may be accommodated there. (It is possible to book directly by email reception@marinasalivoli.it or by calling +39 056545288)

At the rear of the apartments it will be possible to place campervans and motorhomes. In close vicinity of course there are further possibilities of accommodation such as hostels, B&Bs, private houses

Thus, the whole logistic is ready to reduce organisational effort enabling participants to focus all their energy on the sea, the wind and the races.



For the layday, however, there are many highly recommended attractions within reach of this splendid part of the Tuscan coast.

Those preferring to stay close by may choose to go on a trip to the adjacent bay, the golfo di Baratti, (<https://www.golfobaratti.com>). They will immerse themselves in a comforting mix of intriguing history and relaxation. The gulf, surmounted by the pre-Roman town of Populonia, was the place where the historic population of Tuscany gained access to the sea and where they processed minerals from mines on the Island of Elba.

Keeping on the topic of mining, it is possible to visit the mine of Temperino in the Parco Archeominerario della Val Cornia (<http://www.parchivaldicornia.it/it/cosa-vedere-parco-archeominerario-san-silvestro.html#miniera>). It is possible to enjoy a comfortable trip in the little train along the trail used originally to transport the minerals out of the mine.

The day may be completed with an aperitif in the little bay called Buca delle Fate, north of Salivoli, It will allow time to admire the spectacular sunset and at the same time prepare for another nice Italian dinner which may take place there or at the historic center of Piombino. It is worth trying the local specialties (tasty dishes of land and sea accompanied by one of the delicious wines) and finally enjoy a walk to the Piazza Bovio - a huge terrace 30 metres above the sea.

For those preferring nature, it may be worth visiting Oasi WWF Padule Orti-Bottagone, a coastal plain, where the rich biodiversity of the original marsh formed by the river Cornia has been saved from being drained thus preserving adequate habitats for many animal and plant species, specifically more than 200 bird species.

(https://www.wwf.it/oasi/toscana/padule_orti_bottagone/visita_l_oasi/)

However, Tuscany is obviously more than sea and nature! Only a few kilometres away it is possible to get to Pisa and immerse oneself in the extraordinary beauty of its famous Piazza dei Miracoli with the leaning tower, the baptistery and its perfect acoustic effects, the majestic Duomo and the solemn Campo Santo.

Slightly farther away is Florence a destination that attracts countless visitors from around the world. It is rich in history, architecture, and gastronomy such that it might be worth extending holidays for at least a week before or after the championships.

Tuscany is famous all over the world for its superb quality of food and wine. It could also be a good idea to use the layday for a visit of wine cellars and estates where it is possible to sample the specialties and indulge in a deserved rest from the strains of the regatta.

To supplement this superficial summary it may be beneficial to consult the usual tourist services, (e.g. Tripadvisor). In the next months you will find more detailed proposals for tourist opportunities for the competitors and their companions on our championship site (www.fireballeuropeans2021.eu)

Buon vento!

Andrea Minoni - Segretario Fireball Italia

Rogues Gallery quiz answers

Left to right. Top: John Caig, Nick Rees; Middle: Daniel Cripps, Jonathan Clark; Bottom: Alan Robinson, Tim Rush, Graham Thomas

For a little background on their successes, check out the results section of the UKFA website from 1970 on!



A taste of what we're all missing! More 2015 Worlds action. Photo : Lee Whitehead

If you have any suggestions or can help in any way then please feel free to contact Publicity@FireballSailing.org.uk Don't forget, you can follow us on 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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