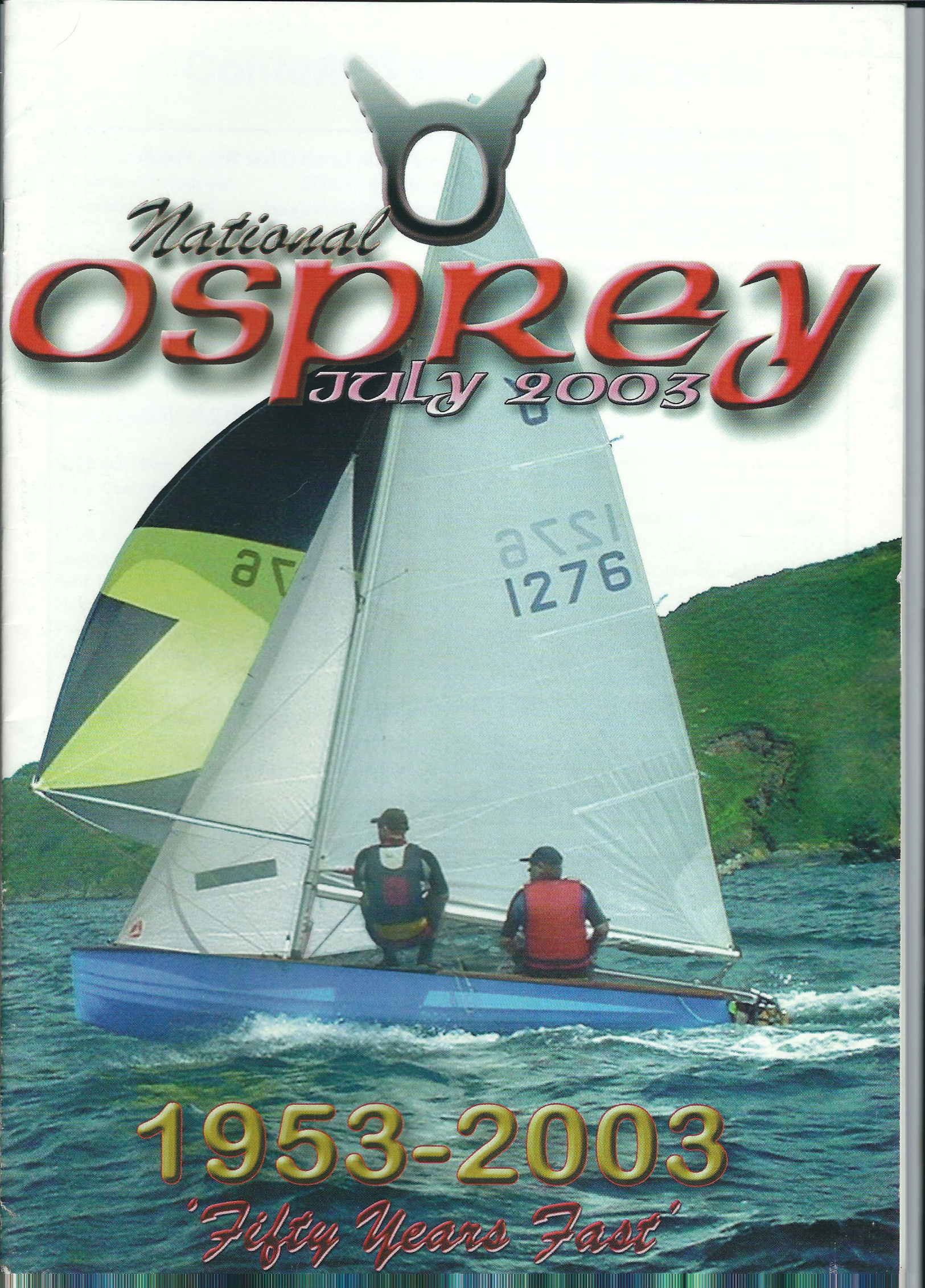

National
OSPREY
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1953-2003
'Fifty Years Fast'

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Editorial

WELCOME TO THE new look Osprey Magazine, the first that it has been my privilege, and at times, chagrin to edit. I imagine practically every editor before me, and there have been many, will have felt the same. The amount of work that goes into it is incredible - even if you're completely at ease with the software, which I'm not. Still, the fact that you're reading these words means that I've finally finished it and it's been printed and posted.

Inevitably there are some people whom I must thank for invaluable help with it. The main one is Jane Mooney, daughter of Mike, who got it printed in full colour at a price I can still barely believe, and who did the typesetting; Chris Mant for his efforts with the advertisers; Graham Mant for many useful hints and tips; all the contributors who were pestered, cajoled and blackmailed into writing articles for me; and last, but certainly not least, my wife Chris, who put up with so much after my long hours at the computer when often I could not sleep.

Like so many other projects it seemed to come together at the last minute. At the beginning of May I did not have sufficient material to put a magazine together, and then a lot of things came in a rush. That's OK, but it is better to receive the stuff in good time. Please remember that if you've got anything for the Christmas edition.

There are only two Open Meeting reports in this edition, so if it feels a bit light on the racing side and heavy on the filler, that's because it is. There are only four Opens before this issue comes out. The first one, at Rock, effectively had only two participants, so it wasn't thought appropriate to write a report, and the second, my own at Hornsea, was abandoned halfway through the second race because of the tragic death of my very good friend Steve Clay.

Thank you to all the visitors to Hornsea Open for their help and understanding in what was a difficult and distressing situation.

Alec Mamwell asked me to include a mention about last year's Kielder Open. Richard Hewitt protested the race committee after the second race (the Dam to Dam long distance race). He lost the protest, but took the matter to the RYA who upheld the complaint and awarded him redress. The results were not affected at the front end of the fleet, but there are slight changes lower down. I have no details yet, but will publish them in the next edition.

Well, that's it from me, I'm just off to paint the Forth Bridge. Oops, did I say paint the Forth Bridge? I meant to say start working on the next magazine.

See you at the Nationals.

Dave Metcalfe

Chairman's Message

Dear Members,

I AM SORRY to report the death of two long-standing Osprey sailors, Steve Clay of Hornsea SC and James Curnow of Mounts Bay SC. Both were untimely and both will be greatly missed by families and friends including the Osprey class as a whole.

2003 is the 50th anniversary of the launching of Osprey number one, and you can read more further into this anniversary edition of the newsletter. In this special year we have already seen an excellent new class stand presented at Sailboat 2003, and look forward to further enhancements as resources permit next year. I would like to offer my thanks to all the people who donated time and resources to make it happen, and of course to Mike Mooney for trailing his new boat down for the exhibition.

You can read more about open and national event calendars in the Secretary's article below. I know that Nick Jones has worked extremely hard to secure acceptable arrangements for the 2004 nationals at Penzance, and we can look forward to an exciting week on The Cornish Riviera. Future years' arrangements depend to a great extent on entry numbers, so keep up the encouragement of everyone at your club to join the fleet for these events.

I hope you are enjoying your Osprey sailing this year wherever you are. For myself, I have been a bit limited to local handicap (yuk!) sailing although we did have an Easter Egg series with Mick Taylor and Jon Willey also contending on the Blackwater. You will be delighted to hear that the Ospreys demonstrated to the Fireballs etc how to blast around the estuary and took the egg away. I am still aiming for Poole, Penzance, Blithfield, Nationals, Netley and Rutland.

Thank you to everyone who responded to the class questionnaire. The findings are still being processed by Graham Mant who managed it all, and we will make the results known as soon as possible. Every effort will be made to reflect members' wishes in our activity going forward.

Last but not least, do please get to Poole this year for the National Championships on 26th to 29th July. A great deal of time and effort is going into making this a memorable four-day event, definitely one not to be missed.

Will Odling, Chairman

May 2003

Secretary's Report

IT IS WITH a sad heart that I write this article, as it is only recently that one of our fellow Osprey Sailors, Steve Clay, passed away. I did not know Steve well but enjoyed competing against him at many of the Opens and Inland Championships. Also in the past 6 months we have lost James Curnow from Mount's Bay. Anyway lets move on to things sailing.

This year there is going to be a Symmetric Trapeze Grand Prix at Datchet Sailing Club on the 4th and 5th of October, which will be handicap racing against seven other symmetrical spinnaker boat classes. This event is open to all, but I would like to make a special plea to our own top ten: this is a clear opportunity to compete against the best and show that the Osprey is undoubtedly the best of all. So get the grease out and get those trailers moving to Datchet.

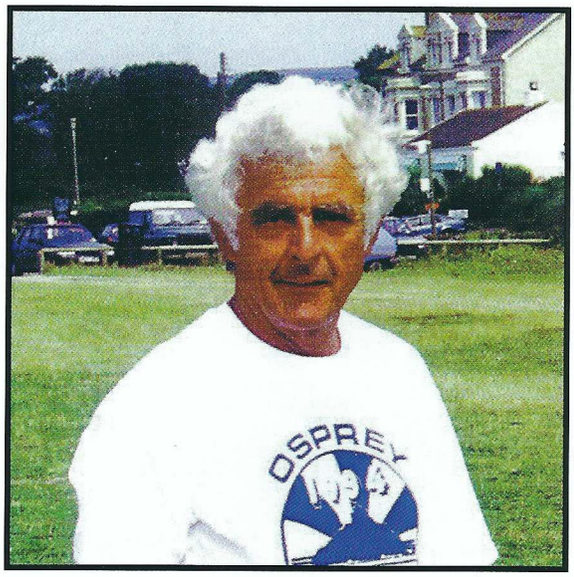
Another item for thought: over the past six months I have been making arrangements with Penzance for our Nationals next year and there have been lengthy discussions about the format of our racing. We are not bound by our rules, but custom and practice has led us to the current format. I would like to open this up for discussion at this year's Nationals. With it becoming ever more difficult to find venues willing to give us our own exclusive Championships, we are faced with sharing, and many classes may not want the typical Olympic format of our racing. I feel that the AGM should give the committee freedom to arrange racing formats so that we can consider sharing with other classes. I will therefore be putting this item forward under *Any Other Business* for discussion. If you are not attending the Nationals this year but have some views that need to be voiced on this issue please e-mail me and I will ensure your views are expressed at the AGM.

In the coming year we will need to negotiate with other venues and I feel the person responsible needs a mandate of operation.

Looking forward to meeting you all at Poole for the Nationals. I'm certain it will be a great event.

Nick Jones Hon Sec.

May 2003



Tribute To James Curnow

I KNOW THAT MANY of you will be sad to hear of the sudden and untimely death of James Curnow, stalwart of Mount's Bay Sailing Club. James died in early February this year, just a week before an intended trip to New Zealand with some of his old sailing colleagues. The intention was for him to visit his brother there, and for the party to watch the final stages of the America's Cup.

James was a lifetime member of Mount's Bay Sailing Club, and for many years an avid Osprey sailor. He encouraged the development of the Osprey Class at the Club, and was instrumental in many National Championships being held there.

James's achievements in sailing the Osprey were tremendous. His boats were all distinguished by identical numbers 333, 666, 888 (*Pieces Of Eight*) and finally 1111 (*For One And All*, the motto of Cornwall). He sailed in over thirty Nationals from 1958 onwards all over the country: Scotland, Wales and England, but although he was never champion, he came runner-up once and was always in the first ten and often in the first five, and those were in the days of a hundred and more boats in the Nationals fleet. James made friends all over the UK and whenever people talk of Mount's Bay Sailing Club, everyone remembers him; many people say he was MBSC He was certainly the greatest ambassador for the Osprey Class.

James sailed regularly in club racing until a couple of years ago and at one time or another won every cup in the club, particularly the Carmody Bowl which was for the overall best sailor, which he won for an astounding nine years in succession. His wife Marion was his mainstay, looking after the farm and doing the milking in order that James could do his beloved sailing, and without her that would not have been possible.

James was a big man with a big heart. He will be sadly missed by all who knew him, and our thoughts go out to Marion and his daughter Jane.

This tribute is a combination of two received from **Don Flannery**, *Osprey 1164, and* **Ian Roxburgh**, *Rear Commodore, MBSC*

Tribute To Steve Clay



ON THE 10TH MAY, during the second race of the Hornsea Open Meeting, Steve Clay, in Osprey 1209, collapsed and died. Steve, the secretary of Hornsea Sailing Club, had been sailing Ospreys for eight years. He regularly attended most of the northern Open Meetings, the Inlands and occasionally the Nationals.

If I could sum up Steve in one word, the word would be enthusiast. He was enthusiastic about everything he did, and he did a lot of different things. As well as sailing, he enjoyed fast road cycling, with Brian Ruston, Steve Sharp and myself, played squash regularly, circuit-trained every week, and had recently taken up golf, having a lesson every Sunday morning. All this in addition to a very demanding job as Transport Manager for the East Riding of Yorkshire.

He had a zest for life that I have rarely seen in anyone else. Nothing ever seemed to be too much trouble for him, and he was unfailingly good-humoured about any demands made on him, both as secretary of the club, and as a friend.

On the water he has been my main rival for the last few years, becoming a regular race winner, and walking off with many of the club's trophies at the end of the season. We never fell out on the water, not even last season, when I T-boned him, taking off most of his gunwale, in a port-starboard incident in which I was in the wrong. He simply came up to me at the end of the race, and said, with a grin on his face, "You plonker, what did you think you were doing?" He brought his boat back to the club the following Sunday with a perfect repair.

Steve leaves a wife, Agnes, and a daughter, Joanne, to whom our condolences go. All of us at Hornsea sailing Club will miss him greatly, as secretary, as tireless promoter of the Osprey class, but most of all as a very good and true friend.

Dave Metcalfe

Time To Make A Date In Your Diary

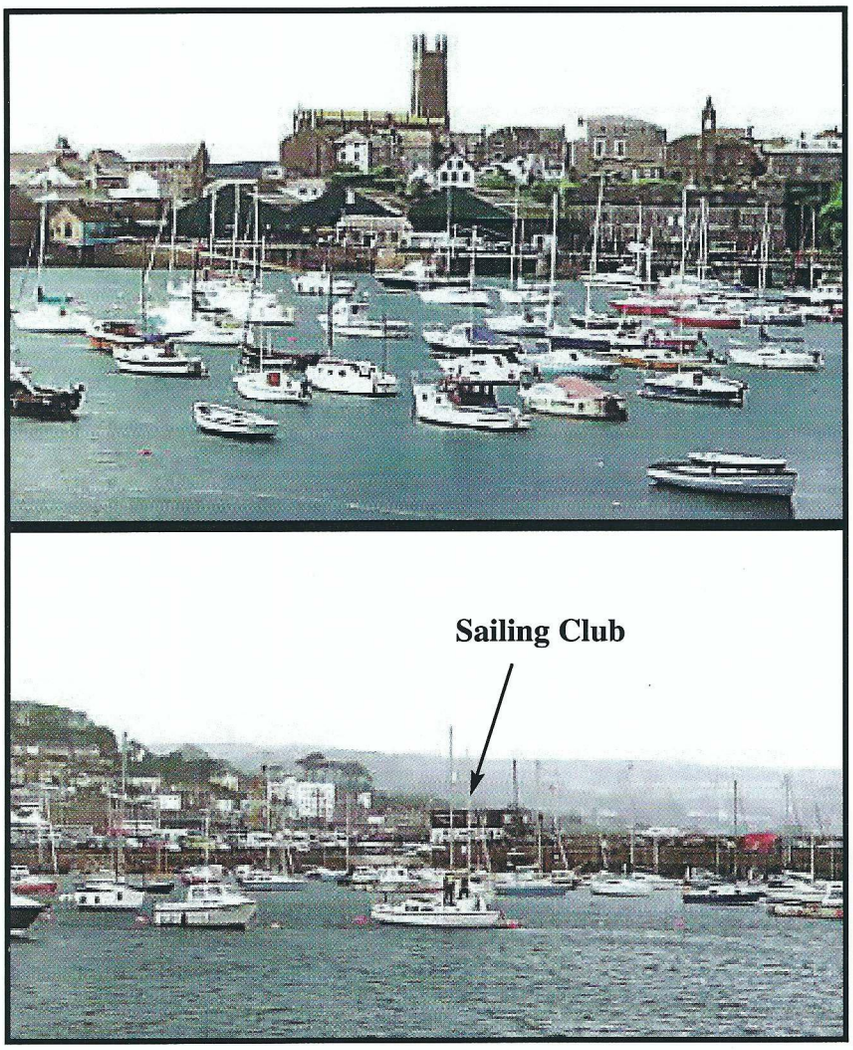
Next year's National Championships have already been booked at Penzance. **Nick Jones** *tells us a little bit about what we can expect on the Cornish Riviera, and also a little bit about his trip into King Arthur country with his intrepid companion Karl Gorner.*

WITH STILL A few weeks to go to Poole I find myself writing about next year's Nationals at Penzance. The reason I want you to make an entry in your diary is that we have agreed to guarantee an attendance of forty boats. The days of not making guarantees appear to have passed, and it is becoming increasingly difficult to find venues that meet our standards without giving the host club a guaranteed revenue.

Karl Gorner and I travelled down to Penzance in March to get the basic organisation agreed, identifying what was NOCA's responsibility and what falls to Penzance Sailing Club. (Thanks Karl and especially Lisa for the lobster dinner on our return to Swindon, bought fresh from the quay in Penzance.)

We have agreed with Penzance Sailing Club that the Nationals will run from Sunday 8th to Friday 13th of August. This is the latest that we have held a Championship, but the tides are an important factor at this venue and they will be at their best for the week we have chosen. This also should avoid a clash with Cowes Week, which I know some of you like to do - so now, if you have the stamina, you can do both.

We shall be sharing with the Tasars. They are expecting to bring twenty boats, and will be having two races a day. Currently we are remaining with our usual format of one points race per day, but this could be changed at the AGM this year. If you have any views on this, but are not able to come this year, please write to me so your ideas can be made known to the Fleet.



Two views of lovely Penzance

The 2004 Nationals is going to be great value for money, sailing in some of the best water around our coasts. The club is well set-up for the event and there will be social activity on every night apart from that of the AGM. When I have full details I will let you know either through the newsletter or on our website. We will be having our Prize Giving at the Queens Hotel, in the town and Des Menear is in charge of organising this event.

If you have never been to a Nationals and are unable to come to Poole, this venue is an ideal one to start at. There are many attractions in the town - excellent restaurants within walking distance and all the typical attractions of a holiday venue - some lovely places to go and see. Oh and don't forget the lobster!

To find out more about the club here is their website:
http://www.pzsc.freeserve.co.uk/index.htm

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Bitten By The Osprey

What made you start sailing an Osprey? Did you simply like the look of them, did they just happen to be sailed locally, or was there some other reason? **Viola Scott**, *who sails* Lady In Red *with her husband Michael at Kielder Water, tells us of her family's blossoming love affair with our favourite boat.*

IN MY YOUTH I did a lot of sailing in Chichester Harbour but although we had inherited a Fairey Duckling, a 1956 Finn, a fibreglass Bobbin and a Mark 2 Firefly, they had been dry for some 15 years. It was Michael who got us down to Kielder in the spring of 1996, when our boys were 9 and 8, to do some pootling about in our various craft. Racing was not on his agenda and I had to work very hard at trying not to tune the boat, trim the sails, etc, but just relax. Not easy.

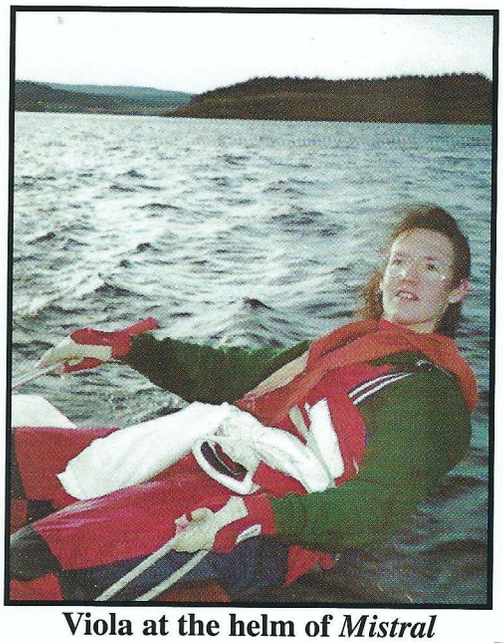
Then chance stepped in - our Firefly was invited to the 50th Anniversary Open at Itchenor SC, Chichester Harbour. Leaving the boys with my parents we set off, and arrived to a tremendous welcome. I was rather rusty on the rules but remembered the water well enough to know which sides to take, and we ended up in the prize money - Michael was hooked. He could see that racing was FUN and was eager to improve his skills and confidence.

Back at Kielder the Firefly proved capricious. There was not enough room for Michael to manoeuvre comfortably under the boom, and the PY of 1168 meant we were always last back for lunch. Worst of all, if he got in the boat without me, it promptly capsized. He cast wistful looks at the Osprey's trapeze.

September saw our twelfth wedding anniversary - that evening Michael arrived home towing Osprey 748 *Mistral*. Celebrations at Kielder about the expanding fleet were followed by lots of encouragement and advice from Roger, Davey, Vic and Alec as *Mistral* was not set up for racing. For the rest of the season we got in to lunch much earlier. However, we saw little other than the sterns of the rest of the Ospreys. That winter saw a lot of work in the garage - stripping and revarnishing the decks, re-arranging and upgrading the fittings. The next season we learnt to sail together and occasionally did not come last, went to an educational Open Meeting and even won our first race. Michael enjoyed the trapeze so much he could not resist getting a Contender. (The children got a Topper - how many boats is that now?) That second winter newer sails were acquired and a Mark 2A conversion took place.

Meanwhile at Kielder, some beautiful new boats were appearing on the scene - Vic had built *Excalibur*, Alec first got *Lady in Red*, then *Jennifer*, and later Roger and Davey produced *All Torque*. We stoutly defended *Mistral* and went to our first Nationals in her at Pwllheli, where we tailed the fleet. However, I did enjoy the advantage of being a female sailing an Osprey - lots of space in the changing room and very little competition for the showers. That week we gained a lot more confidence and came back determined to upgrade our mast. We got placed in a Kielder Series and started to feel we could be regarded as a threat. A slight one, but nevertheless a threat. Exhilarating! That winter Michael was very gloomy about being able to improve *Mistral* much further. Alec was pushing *Lady in Red* as ideal for us (having three Ospreys was too much for him) but I was sceptical. I tried holding out for selling *Mistral* first, but as that happened almost at once, *Lady in Red* became ours. The moment we got into her I could feel a difference: the power, the control, the stability of the hull. Michael was right, we could go much faster now. At Sunderland Nationals we finished closer to the middle of the fleet, just ahead of Alec. Intoxicating!

Every season we have done a little better against the growing home fleet as we continue to learn and improve our skills. We enjoy the wonderful range of sailing our lake has to offer, and the varied racing challenges from the Round the Lake races to the new Windward Leeward series. We sail with fantastic people and love to see other newcomers also gaining in confidence and skills - it's the best thing to a racer to see other people blossom and challenge us and then chat about it all over cake and custard, the Kielder lunch special. The only threat is from Francis, our eldest son, who not only requires taxiing to 420 events but wants to sail Ospreys too, and is itching to replace either Michael or me. Anyone need an Osprey crew?



Viola at the helm of *Mistral*



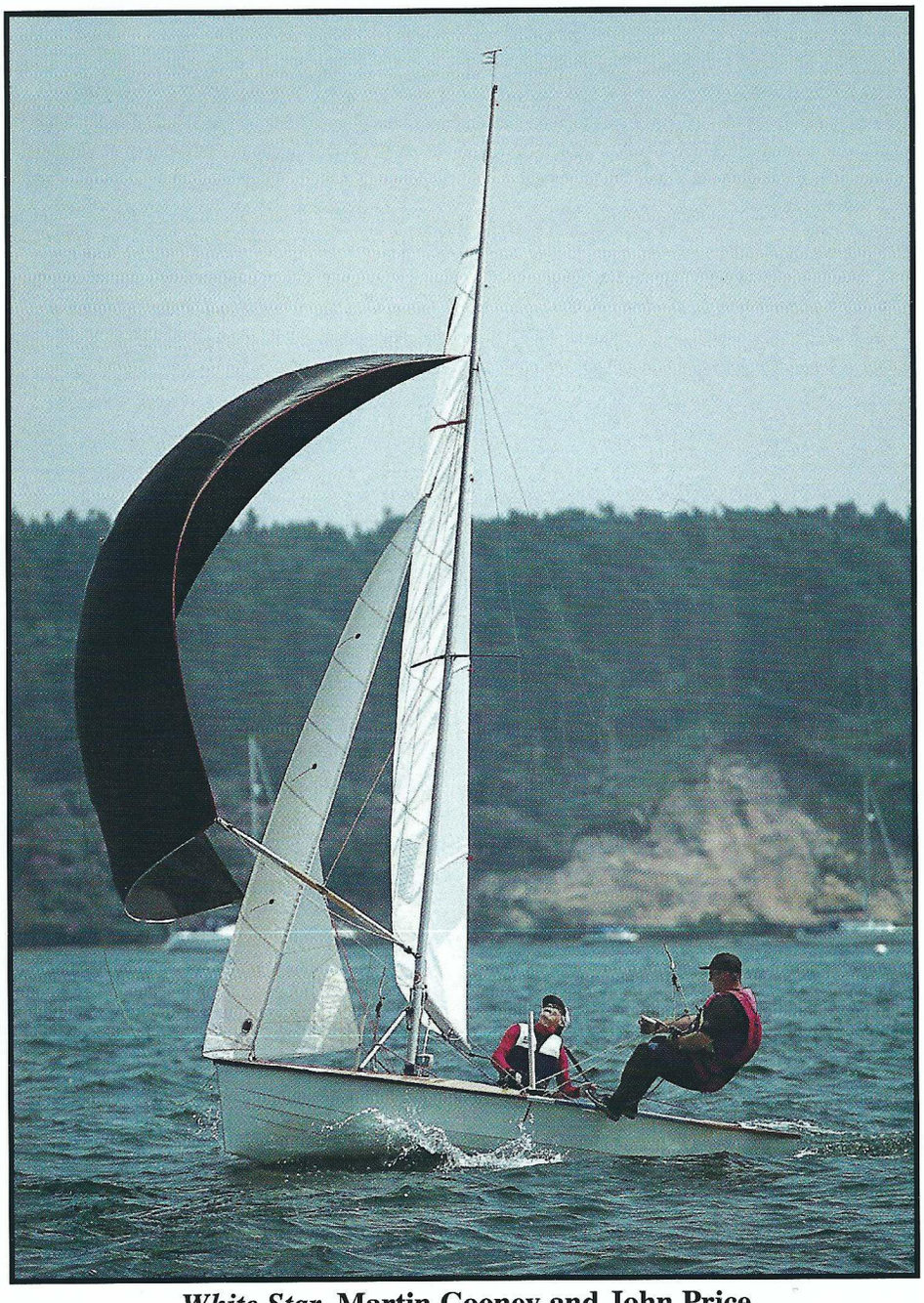
Sunny weather and light winds greeted nearly thirty boats at Poole Open. The racing was close, but local boats dominated. Report by **John Withers**, *photographs by* **David Harding**.

AS A WARM UP for the forthcoming Osprey Nationals, which are being hosted by Poole Yacht Club between 26th and 29th July, the club held an open event and crews travelled from far and wide to test the Poole waters before 'the big one'. Mostly sailed in the light winds and sunshine that the weekend brought, competitors were hardly pressed.

Saturday gave a force 3, the strongest breeze of the weekend, and it was the home pair of past National Champions Andy Barker and Phil Angrave who made the best of the breeze, gaining two aces from the two races sailed with another Poole duo, Martin Cooney and John Price, taking both seconds.

A collision in the second race saw local duo Richard Marshall and Nick Willis take a swim but they managed a finish. In the resulting protest the 'court' ruled in their favour and the pair had their 5th position reinstated.

On Sunday racing started in light rain but the sunshine soon shone through. The winds were light easterly and variable with a lot of wind shifts making life very difficult for race officer Andy Macgregor and his team but eventually they got away. This time the tables were turned and it was Cooney and Price who took the honours with another past champion Martin Lewis, with his crew Peter Verver hot on their heels, Barker and Angrave having to settle for third.



***White Star*, Martin Cooney and John Price**

This turnaround left the overall prize wide open with everything dependent on the fourth and final race. But the lighter breezes were favoured by the Cooney/Price partnership and they took the gun again with Barker and Angrave in their wake. Local sailmaker Rob Kemp with Phil Coxhill gained the final third spot.

So it was a Poole podium trio of Martin Cooney and John Price, Andy Barker with Phil Angrave and Nigel Scudder and crew Pete Frith who took 1st, 2nd and 3rd respectively.



Andy Barker and Phil Angrave leading the fleet

Reminder

Don't forget that your menu selection and meal order for the Nationals prize-giving must be returned to Poole Yacht Club by 14th July.

The most successful sails ever built - now made by

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Osprey Class at Sailboat 2003



Steve Sharp *gives us his personal view of Sailboat 2003, both as an Osprey sailor and as a general visitor to the show.*

I'VE ATTENDED THE 'dinghy show' ever since the 1950s when the boats were carried (and I do mean carried) upstairs at the Royal Horticultural Hall in Westminster. As dinghy sailing developed so did the show, but for many years it remained the home of the committed amateur enthusiast.

Moving from one venue to another it never lost its distinctly amateur feel until its last days at Crystal Palace. There, a seemingly endless parade of small sports halls began to be dominated by the big manufacturers, and inevitably the show stagnated. The enthusiasts were still there but you had to seek them out as attendance began to decline. Moving to Alexandra Palace has been its saving.

Sailboat is all about measuring ourselves against other classes, and using the unique style and presence of our boat to reaffirm our annual commitment to the Osprey Class.

The manufacturers' stands are still there at Sailboat, but now the stands of the rest of the dinghy sailing world have room to breathe. And breathe they do.

The Osprey Class Association has exhibited at the show for as long as I can remember. This year the Class featured Mike Mooney's split-foredeck boat, and graphic design walls from four final year students from North Oxford College. Although the overall impression of the stand was sparse, my visits found it crowded with Association members and general punters alike.

Elsewhere in the show it was interesting to note that the Javelin, a strikingly similar boat to the Osprey, attracted plenty of new interest. Marketed as the fun end of top competitive sailing and with a stylish GRP bare hull retailing for £4000 the Javelin seems to have a strong product in direct competition with our own.

Over the years new classes have come and gone - only the best survive. *Sailboat* is all about measuring ourselves against other classes, and using the unique style and presence of our boat to reaffirm our annual commitment to the Osprey class. Although *Sailboat* may not provide a cost effective return in new Class Association members, it does allow current members to renew their membership and meet together in a celebration of all that is Osprey.



Mike Mooney answers questions about his boat.

A big thank you should be expressed to everyone who helped out on the stand - Graham Mant, Karl Gorner, Jon Willey and Mike Taylor, Willy Crichton, Nick Jones, Jon Osgood and Mike Mooney, his wife and daughter. In the spirit of the very earliest shows the Osprey still has its committed enthusiasts, and is deservedly still going strong after fifty great years.

That Damned Stand



Think the Sailboat stand just appears on the day? So you think there's not much to do? In his own inimitable style, **Graham Mant** *gives us the low-down on this year's production.*

Photograph right: courtesy of Yachts and Yachting.

Photographs far right: courtesy of Paul Ellwood.

IT ALL STARTED with Smart Alec Mant having a bright idea and your committee agreeing. Was it a good idea? You judge.

When the Osprey attained its 50th I thought *(thinking ahead to when I reach that momentous age - oops, hides growing nose!)* that it was time for a re-birth, a change of outlook, a fresh approach. So I nagged the committee for some funds to create a new stand, to sell a new Osprey image to the unsuspecting Sailboat public. Was I in for a tough time? Did I have to push them? Would they agree? Curses! No I wasn't, no I didn't and yes they did. See what I mean by Smart Alec? *(Again! Mo)*

So there I was, in January, budget in hand, committee members retired to the woods or wherever it is they lurk when not consuming Bloxham tea and no bloody idea whatsoever what I wanted, how to start and more importantly, who to palm the whole barmy idea off on. As for the latter, NO TAKERS. So I put on my thinking cap, having found it under a pile of old socks in the washbasket. That was a waste of time so I tossed it back and headed for school. That's where 'Thinkers' are found, right? Well, in this case, YES! Hurrah! Someone -two, WOW, three with brains AND imagination. Two of them very pretty too. *(Smack! Behave! Mo)* So there I was, in the classroom: Illustration and Design; after nnnntytwo years, propounding the merits of sailing; Ospreys; Ospreys; sailing and... erm... Ospreys! They cottoned on quickly and sent me away with a promise of good things. I think they just wanted me to stop rabbiting but the promise sounded good, so I left.

Next day, phone call. "Y&Y here. Where's the copy for your ad? Last day tomorrow." Call Barny *(next door neighbour, art student)*. "Can you re-design the Osprey logo and invent an ad by tomorrow?" "Phnagh! Grrrn. Wha?" He did. Worked all night. *(Well done. It was great.)* Y&Y printed it: not quite correctly, so they gave us another go. Did you notice the changes? Did you approve of them?

By now it's February. Still, plenty of time, eh? The exhibition isn't until March.

OhMiGravenIdol! It's 1st and 2nd of March and Feb doesn't have as many days as the rest, does it! **PANIC!!** Who? Me? NEVER. Well, maybe. Just a bit.

Designs were offered and changed, modified, changed again, all with the theme of Sea, Sky, Spinnakers and Words. The words were yours *(from the questionnaire, remember?)*; the rest were ours - well theirs really.

Having decided what was required, then came the problem of how to achieve it in 3D. Easy peasey, just tap up your best mate with the engineering works and hey presto! Hmmm! Engineering works often have **stuff** in them, so space is hard to find. They often **do** things too, so time is hard to arrange. And what was that about setting it all up to paint it? Well, it's only 5.5 x 5.5 x 2.5 metres. No problem, it'll fit in the corner won't it?

So I arranged with Mike Taylor to deliver all the bits of metal and plywood *(thanks Mike, the budget wouldn't have stretched without your help)*. I then feigned a devastating illness for two days whilst Graham Taylor *(best mate, engineering, no relation)* set about nailing it together. *(Thanks Graham, without your skill and patience nothing would have happened. I just drew the sketches.)*

And so it was, half way through Febuary, we had a stand taking up large lumps of Graham's works and three young artists keen to splosh the paint. Wait a minute, it's freezing and the works ain't heated. I sold them the idea that if they wanted to be famous they had to live and paint in a freezing garret, like van Gogh, and this was the nearest I could offer. They bought it, heh heh. So there they were, muffled to the eyebrows, paint brushes in shaking hands, busying away at **OUR** stand whilst I sat in the nice warm office, managing. I **LIKE** that term. And when their hands had unfrozen they made beautiful spinnakers from bits of wire and tissue paper. (Th, th, th, th thanks guys, you were brilliant!)



Spinnakers and graphics on the stand

Feb 27th dawned and I had a complete stand, some new graphics and some artists who were nearly warm. Then there's the problem of transporting it to Ally Pally. Hmmn. No problem, it's only 5.5 x 5.5metres. Hire an artic. No can do. Budget spent. Think again. Put it all in my trailer and drive down. Well, as luck would have it my trailer (it's actually a 6ft gap bed lathe, but that's another story) is 8'2" x 4'2" and the stand panels are 8'x4'. Neat huh? Graham T built the trailer for me two years ago - perhaps he knew something.

On the morning of the 28th we tossed the bits in. **NO WE DIDN'T**; we loaded them like pieces of Chippendale and wrapped them up in blankets to keep them warm. Then tried to waterproof the lot as rain was forecast for the journey down. Three weeks of bone dry, you'd think it could wait a day wouldn't you? Could I wrap it up securely? You guess!

And so it was that I set off from Hook Norton to Bloxham to collect bits and bobs and drive to London for 4pm, as arranged with the set-up gang. **NOT!** My trusty old, utterly reliable CX refused to start. Just point blank refused! It's now 2pm with a two hour drive ahead of me and no power. **PANIC**. Yes, this time I did. Call Mo at work. "Help! Come and push." She's only ten miles away. Bugger. Won't work. Use the other car. She has it. Well of course she does, it's hers.

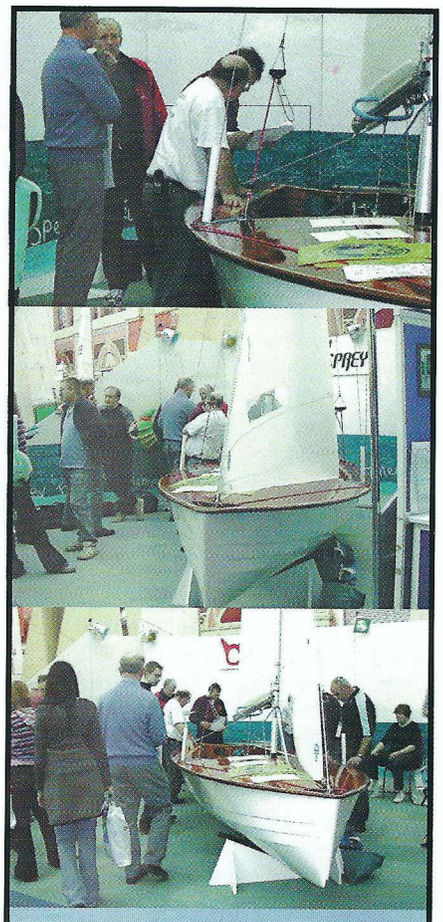
"Darling, sweetheart, honey bun, would you be a lover and lend me your...?"

"Darling, I thought you'd never ask. I'll just drive ten miles home and..."

So she did. I hitched the trailer to the BX *(half the size and half the power pulling half as much again as it should)* and set off, taking Mo back to work, TEN MILES IN THE WRONG DIRECTION, first. I hit the motorway at speed - well, forty. By now it's 4pm. Now where was I supposed to be...? I'll just call Nick Jones and let him know I'm on the way. Yes, yes, I know it's bad practice but this is an emergency. Bloody mobile's on the blink. Intermittent fault. Nothing for it but to roar on *(by now we're doing forty-two!)*. They don't shut the hall until 10pm. Eighty miles on, 7pm and I hit the North Circular. Ever tried it on Friday at 7pm? **DON'T!** Mayhem is better.

It's 7.45, the phone rings. Can't be mine, it's broken. Yes it is mine, it's come back to life. It gives me half a minute to tell a very worried Nick I'm at Golders Green and will be there in... Silence. Ah! Well, I guess he heard the message.

8.15pm arrive at Ally Pally with a trailer load of sodden blankets, *(I forgot to mention, it rained Datsun Cogs all the way down)* to the amusement of the security staff who told me they'd chuck us out at 10pm.


Lots of interest on the Osprey Class stand

Frantic action from Mike Taylor, Nick Jones, Jon Osgood, Mike Mooney, his daughter and wife and - and - who have I forgotten? who are all set to to erect the new stand in record time without any prior knowledge. Oh! The lighting suppliers arrived at about 9.30 with all the wrong gear and then set about littering the incomplete stand with cables, lamps, control gear and stuff, just for fun. And **YES**, they did chuck us out at 10pm so the stand was finished early Saturday morning and was complete with flashing lights and sounds of the sea by opening time. Just. Who needs sleep?

Was it worth the effort? Those of you who were able to visit the show will know and I would appreciate your comments. We now have a stand that can be used anywhere, so if you want it for your own exhibition let me know.

To everyone involved: Felicia, Christine and Tjark (design, painting & spinnaker making); Barny (graphics); Mike Taylor (the bits); Graham Taylor (construction); Nick Jones *(keeping me sane, or so he thought)*; Hilary and Naomi (printing the paper when my printer failed at the last minute *(that's another story!)*; Trevor Brown (music); Mike Mooney (the boat) *(when you're fed up with it Mike...!)* and The Erection Team. *(Tch! Tch! They took it down too!)* **THANKS A MILLION!**

Phew! Gimme a beer!



Sailing in the South-East

Three clubs in northern Kent are currently sailing Ospreys. **John Shenton**, *from Wilsonian SC, tells us a little about them all.*

WHAT A WONDERFUL opportunity - a phone call from Dave Metcalfe giving me the chance to put my words into print and update all of you on sailing activity 'down South' in sunny Kent (well it was as I wrote this!) The daffs and tulips are blooming, the shrubs need trimming and the lawn requires a haircut - but who cares as there are other, more meaningful things to think about, namely SAILING.

There are three clubs along the north Kent coastline where Osprey sailing is enjoyed - Minnis Bay, Sheppey and Wilsonian (although it might be stretching the imagination just a little bit to use the word 'coastline' with reference to Wilsonian as we are based ever so slightly up the River Medway, but still in the estuary, near Rochester). However, sailing in a river does seem to hone the tacking skills!

There are three Ospreys based at Wilsonian - 555 (Tim Kift), 1167 (yours truly - John Shenton) and 1182 (Jonathan Osgood). Sailing is available for most of the year, with the main season running from March to October followed by a winter series in November/December. This year saw the introduction of a pre-season series for those brave enough to enjoy the bracing weather from January to March (or, according to my wife, suffering from a serious sailing addiction). Wilsonian Sailing Club hosts the Medway Regatta which is held over two days each summer as well as The Creeks Open, and assists with organising the Hoo Freezer every February. For those of you with deft fingers, information on Wilsonian SC can be found on www.wilsoniansc.org.uk .

There are also three Ospreys based at Isle of Sheppey Sailing Centre (697, 824 and 1183) which, I understand, also enjoys a very full racing programme as well as organising one of the largest annual sailing events in the South East - The Round the Island Race. For those of you who don't know, this is the circumnavigation of the Isle of Sheppey (a mere 40 nautical miles!) during which you can sail the open sea (Thames Estuary!), across sand banks (be careful if you have a fixed rudder), up river and under a bridge (you have to get out and turn the boat on its side) - and is an absolutely wonderful experience. Details on IOS SC can be found on their website www.iossc.org.uk

Last, but not least, is Minnis Bay Sailing Club which operates a very competitive fleet of dinghies and catamarans (in classes too numerous to mention) with both racing and cruising on offer from Easter to November each year. Janet thinks that they even have a Boxing Day race for sailing die-hards (addicts!). Minnis Bay must have one of the best beaches along the north Kent coast - its gentle slope down to the water is a dream to launch from. To check out the facilities at Minnis simply log on to www.minnisbaysc.com

Well, I hope this has whetted your appetite if you ever get the chance to come sailing in the Garden of England (I really should do something about that lawn!). See you at Poole.

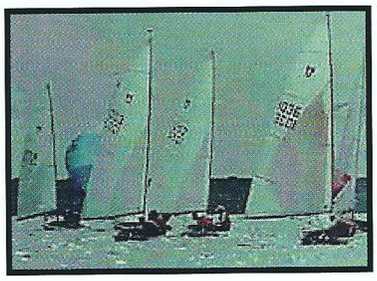
Blithfield Bounces Back!



In these days of shrinking fleets in many traditional classes it's good to hear **Ian McDonald's** *story of an apparently successful club with a growing Osprey fleet*

A BRAVE STATEMENT, and we have a long way to go, but I want to tell you about a revival at Blithfield.

From the early days of Blithfield, Ospreys have been a major fleet and a major force in the club (especially at the Bar!). When I joined the club in the late 80s, numbers had dropped slightly, but most weekends would see four or five boats out racing. And then asymmetrics and "manufacturers" classes happened. The lure of "out of box" boats at what looked like good prices hit Blithfield, as I am sure they hit most other clubs. Even the large Fireball fleet was affected as what had always been strong class racing became handicap racing in a large variety of boats. Not good for the racing, it also had an effect on the social side as there was less to talk about afterwards.



However, all was not lost. The appeal of many of the new classes quickly faded as much of the fun of setting up a boat and personalizing fittings was lost. At the same time people realized that racing boats, rather than the clock, was the way forward. Our Merlin fleet took the arrival of RS400s in its stride has advanced and expanded to be one of our strongest racing classes with new boats arriving regularly. At the same time the Laser and Phantom fleets were taken on by two keen fleet captains. They have cajoled and persuaded, so that ten to fifteen Lasers and over fifteen Phantoms race regularly on Sundays. We still have handicap racing, but a much higher proportion of our racing is now back to "boat for boat".

And what happened to the Ospreys whilst all this was going on? At one point - with Albert taking care of the bar - Keith and Jon Gibbons in 1205 were the only representatives, and it was their persistence that kept the whole thing rolling. A few of us had been interested in the class and had dipped in and out without commitment. First to see the light were Richard and Mark Hartley (who now are running two boats - one for club and one for "Best"). Richard's middle name is Enthusiasm and with Mark getting closer to optimum Osprey crew size every week they have given the racing a boost. Next up were Nick Broomhall and Jon Batt. They were stalwarts of the Fireball fleet in the past and a few meat pies down the road decided that the "Proper" boat was for them. They bought Mike Taylor's 1284 and have spent this year getting on the pace and learning the different forces involved in sailing an Osprey as opposed to a Fireball.

I was the next to jump. Nick Dailey Hunt (didn't he used to be good in Ospreys?) had let me sail *Blue Moon* a few times and as usual I had blown hot and cold on the concept whilst wasting time in Solos and Canoes. He was finally successful in convincing me to stop messing about and the ex-Adrian Summers 1285 joined the Blithfield fleet this winter. Martin Bower, who used to sail my Fireball, showed how

bad his memory was by agreeing to direct from the front. I have to say that our first reach in a force five convinced me I had made a very good move.

So we have had three or four boats out racing, with more in the dinghy park and the potential to have bigger numbers this summer (Chris Guy still has his boat and we are working on him to get it wet).

Where do we go from here? We had several visits from existing Osprey sailors - who have been impressed both by our nice piece of water and also the updated clubhouse. At the same time several competitive sailors from other fleets have shown interest, having seen us flying about, and have been looking at second-hand boat lists. However, I think the best thing that has happened has been Glen Cooke and his crew. They have bought *Orca* - Albert's old boat - and are going really well. I don't think Glen's crew has done a huge amount of sailing and they have followed the standard Osprey learning route - go out in five gusting six and learn whilst they are out there. This attitude is great and I am hoping we can encourage some others like them.

We have a long way to go but we are confident that Ospreys are most definitely back at Blithfield. We look forward to welcoming you to our Open this year to show you why. I can assure you that our place at the bar has been reserved and that any crews struggling to reach sailing weight need not fear after a weekend fed by the "Osprey Ladies". See you in July.



Hornsea - Down But Not Out

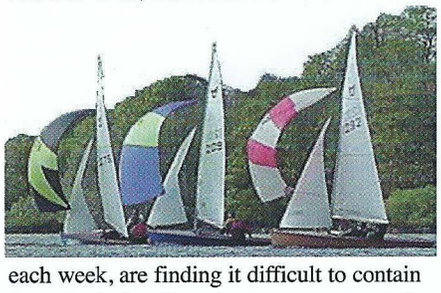
Right now it seems like hard times up there in Yorkshire, but Osprey Class Captain **Dave Metcalfe** *is confident there'll be better times ahead.*

OSPREYS HAVE BEEN a regular feature at Hornsea sailing Club, on the Yorkshire coast, for nearly forty years. They were introduced to the club in the late sixties by Matt Anderson, who had a policy of buying a boat, sailing it at the club for a few months, then selling it on within the club and buying-in another. By this means a substantial fleet soon built up.

Recently our fleet has been somewhat depleted, even more so by the tragic and shocking death of Steve Clay during our Open some weeks ago. But our main problem for some time has been that very few of the regular Osprey sailors can find regular crews.

I believe that one major aspect of the situation is that for some years now we have had practically no teenage sailors in the club. Young men and women of this age were always ready to try their hand on the wire for a couple of years before they went off to university, and for some time there were always others coming along. Now that is no longer the case, and most of the fleet is struggling to sail on a regular basis.

However, there is at least one bright star on the horizon, in the shape of the Smith brothers, Peter and Matthew. At twenty-one and eighteen respectively they represent the future of the class at Hornsea. Last year Peter bought Mike Mooney's boat, *White Knuckles*, 1281, and they are now winning lots of races, in both heavy and light airs. The rest of us, often with a different crew



each week, are finding it difficult to contain them. Let's face it: we're not managing it. I hope they go from strength to strength, and stay with both the class and the club.

Mike Mooney has not sailed so far this year after a painful operation at the start of the season, but should be out soon. Steve Sharp has also not sailed his Osprey more than a couple of times because his crew, Olvido, has been ill. Les Green and Alan Mills have raced several times in 1238, but John Rayner hasn't yet sailed his own boat. (He has sailed 1238).

Our other newcomers, Dave and Phil Beck haven't yet got their boat ready, so we've only seen them crewing for other people. Pip Warner's boat, *Two Bob Bit*, 1245 will not be seen at the Mere until next season at the earliest, but he has crewed occasionally.

So, who does that leave? Oh yes, me. Well, I've been down there since the beginning of April and have sailed in most of the races. I haven't got a full-time regular crew, but I've got a half-time one, Richard Blowman. Richard's in the Merchant Navy, working month on, month off. Now you see him, now you don't. With a bit of luck, and considerate bosses, you should see him at the Birkett and the Nationals.

So, as I said in the title, at the moment we're somewhat down, but we're not yet out, and if I have anything to do with it, we never will be.

Poole - *The* Place To Sail Your Osprey



It's been well-known for years that if you want to do really well in the Osprey fleet at national level, there's only one club to sail at. **Mike Richardson**, *Class Captain at Poole, gives us a brief overview of the club.*

POOLE YACHT CLUB has the biggest Osprey fleet in the country with about 26 boats. We race three times per week, on Monday and Thursday evenings and Sunday mornings. The main race evening is Thursday, when about twelve boats turn out. Mondays and Sundays are less well supported. Racing usually takes place in Poole Harbour, though on some Sundays we venture out into the open sea of Poole Bay.

If you can win at Poole then you can win anywhere in the country. The highly competitive front end of the fleet reads like a 'Who's Who' of contemporary Osprey sailing. Andy Barker and Phil Angrave (*Barking Mad* 1298) are the 2002 National Champions, Martin Cooney and John Price (*White Star* 1296, a Barker built boat) are the 2002 Inland Champions and Martin Lewis (*Schiaffino* 1207) is a former National Champion. Other fast boats include Gavin Rose and Steve Birch (*Lettice* 1194), Bob Iles and Colin Rainback (*Yabba Dabba Doo* 1272) and Peter Frith (*Swiftwun* 1290). However, in spite of the almost mythic status of some of these sailors, the cups were evenly distributed throughout the fleet last year.

We run a well-attended Osprey Open Meeting every year, and also organize a Dinghy Regatta which is open to visiting Ospreys if they wish to come and take part.

On the social side we have a Dinner Dance every year at the club and a Christmas Meal.

This year we are hosting the National Championships over four days from Saturday July 26th to Tuesday July 29th. We are hoping to have at least twenty home boats competing in this 50th Anniversary year, and would like to see as many visitors as possible take part, to give the event a large turnout after the disappointing one of last year at Plymouth.

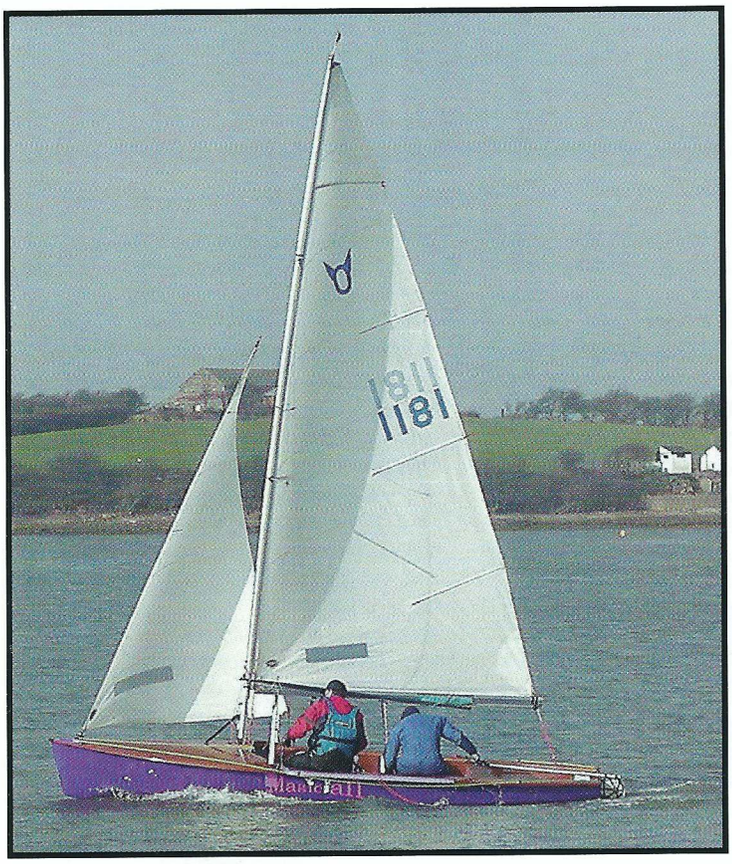
So please come. You will assured of a warm welcome, good social events, and most of all, great sailing.

Ribble Scribbles



Ribble Sailing Club have had problems for some time. As **Bill Crichton** *tells it, they may soon be coming to an end.*

WE ARE STILL awaiting the building of our new jetty. We have had so much red tape to get through you won't believe me when I tell you it's taken over four years to get it this far. The Fylde Borough Council has spent money for the new timbers to build and erect it. We have all the sections built by them, and a few Ribble members have worked their socks off to get it off the ground, namely Don, Dick, Dave Miller and our Honourable Secretary, and our past and present commodores. And I am not sure how many more worked behind the scenes in getting it to the stage we are at now. We can't erect it until after the 1st of May 2003, because of the Ribble Estuary's breeding crustaceans, according to DEFRA and the RSPB. Hopefully we shall be sailing from our new jetty in June this year if all goes to plan. I'll keep you informed of when and if we can next hold an open meeting.



Bill Crichton and *Magician*

I did get to the Dinghy Show and it was good to talk to Mike Mooney about the layout of his newish boat. I did hear it had a few teething troubles, but one wise guy said that it was Mike! Oh oh, sounds like fighting talk where I come from.

A titbit from the web gossip: Stuart wants an oldies race at the Nationals. If he shows up he can take part in all the geriatric races if he's up for it. Hmm.

So, to the sailing bit. As we have had no jetty to use the last two seasons four Ribble Ospreys have joined Glasson Sailing Club (near Lancaster), and I will take this opportunity to thank them for their very kind offer. We have had some great sailing there. If you've never been you should try and take part in one of their open regattas - what a tidal delight, it runs about four knots. The water is fairly flat with good access down a short slipway. We shall be sailing there until we can return to the Ribble.

That's about it for now as I don't want Alec, of you know where, to have a go at me for wasting magazine space.

P.S. Stop press - jetty not ready until 26th June. Will keep you informed.

Happy Sailing

24th - 26th May Coniston

Nine boats turned up for the Coniston Open from all over the country - not bad for a venue in the frozen north with no home fleet. **Bill Crichton** *sent us this report.*

IT WAS A bad weather forecast for the weekend, but it did not put off the warm reception given to the nine Ospreys who had travelled from as far away as Ramsgate, Medway, London, Kielder, Ribble and Glasson, plus all the other fleets who converged for the racing over the bank holiday. The weekend was sponsored by Goacher Sails, Maiden Marine, Phil Evans Rigging, Coniston Boat Centre and others. It was a seven race series with two discards.

Race 1 started in a north westerly but with all the confusion that Coniston can fling at you. You know the scene - you are beating on port while thirty metres away another boat is reaching on starboard with the big coloured sail up, and so on. Mr Wally Gardiner who was our race officer for the weekend (of Osprey legendary fame) set the best course he could, given the wind direction, which must have suited the boys from Wilsonian SC because 555 Tim Kift and Matt finished first, with Alec Mamwell and Ian Little, 1276, Kielder SC second and with a very good third was 1182 Jon Osgood and Paul, Wilsonian SC. Of course there were changing places within the rest of the fleet.

Race 2 was the same course: triangle and sausage x3, same weather, mixed and variable. From the start there was a new face at the front who was chased fast and



The wing mark

hard to the finish but never caught. First place went to Kielder boat 1261, Viola and Michael Scott, followed by 1276 Alec and Ian and third 555, Tim and Matt. A close fourth was Dick Hoad and Sarah Bennett in 1150. Sarah is one of the Ribble juniors and at only 13 years of age is a very good sailor. Well done Sarah for your spinny flying in very shifty and difficult conditions.

Saturday night consisted of a meal and beer at the Ship Inn, ceilidh dancing and music in Coniston Hall, then back to the yacht club for more beer, beer, beer and talking into the wee small hours.

Sunday morning started with the birds singing and no bloody wind, but it always starts that way so no worries. Soon it filled-in in the same direction as the previous day: north-westerly and variable 0 to 4. The course was again a triangle and sausage x3.

Race 3 started with 1182 taking the lead for almost the whole race, only being overtaken on the beat to the finish by Alec and Ian who took first. 1182 was second, with third place going to 555. Viola in 1261 was forced to retire with halyard problems.

Race 4 was won by 1276, second 1261, third 555 fourth 1182.

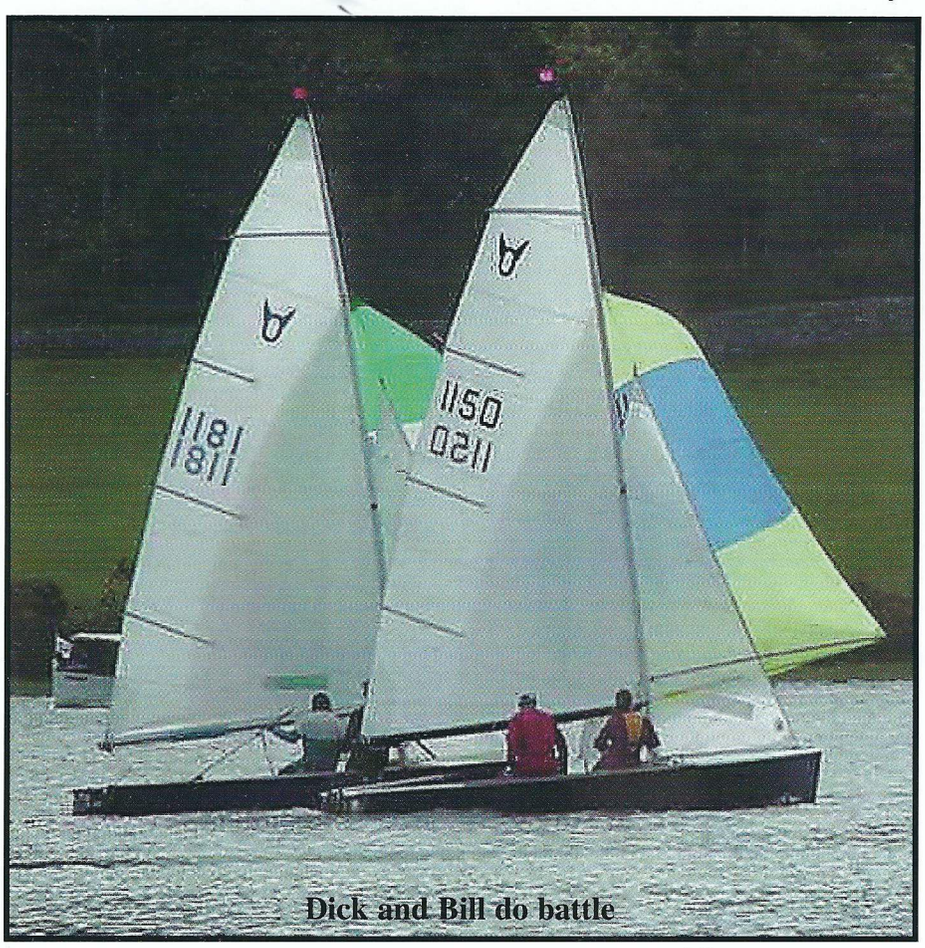
Race 5 started with me, (Bill Crichton) and Francis Scott in 1181 shooting to the front to build up a lead of two legs only to be becalmed. When the wind changed direction, filling in from behind, it was a sight to behold the fleet planing towards us. It reminded me of the Charge of the Light Brigade. They soon caught and passed us. Our lead was destroyed but not our spirit (not the alcoholic stuff).

It was now a force 3 and Alec, who had been sixth, took line honours, followed by Viola. Third was Tim, fourth Bill, fifth Don Flannery and Roger Woodhead, 1163.

So ended the racing for the day, with no clear leader after five races, unlike in the past when Robert Shaw and LARDY Watson had it sewn up by this time. Sunday night activities were the Ship Inn for food and beer, beer, more beer. The sailing's great and so is the socialising. The sunset was beautiful as the sun had come out during the fifth race.

On Monday morning there was no wind (you should now be getting a clear picture of what happens next). Yup, sure enough the wind came but this time a south-westerly the full length of the lake. Wally Gardiner our race officer was well pleased as it allowed him to set a longer beat and proper reaches; he knows how to please Osprey sailors. The wind had strengthened to about a four or five. Alec had to sail, or Viola could win the event if she and Michael took the next two races. The penultimate race was closely fought but 1276 crossed in first place, with 1261 second and 555 third.

In Race 7, 1163 got away in clear air and led until the last beat when he was overtaken by 1261. So first was 1261, second 1163, third 1276, fourth 555, fifth 1182.



Dick and Bill do battle

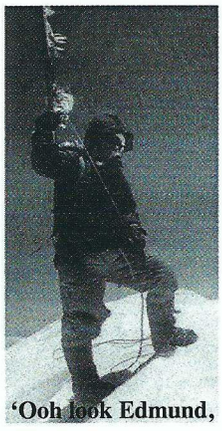
1	Alec and Ian	1276	Kielder
2	Viola, Michael	1261	Kielder
3	Tim and Matt	555	Wilsonian
4	Jon and Paul	1182	Wilsonian
5	Don and Roger	1163	Ribble
6	Bill and Francis	1181	Ribble
7	Dick and Sarah	1150	Ribble
8	Andy, Ryan, Robert	1233	Ribble
9	N. Webber	736	Ramsgate



So what else happened the year our boat first took to the water? **Dave Metcalfe** *has been doing some digging around in the history books and found that it was quite an eventful year.*

1953

AT THE BEGINNING of the year Britain suffered the worst natural disaster ever recorded when over three hundred lives were lost and twenty-four thousand homes destroyed in the East Coast floods on January 31st. They were caused by a combination of freak weather conditions, the natural topography of the North Sea, and inadequate sea defences. In spite of all this destruction, Britain fared much better than Holland, where eighteen-hundred people died.



'Ooh look Edmund, you can see our house from here'

On May 29th Edmund Hillary and Sherpa Tenzing Norgay of Nepal successfully reached the summit of Mount Everest. The mountain had defeated nine previous attempts, including the ill-fated Mallory-Irving expedition of 1924. Sir John Hunt's 1953 expedition used the latest technology, including portable radio and closed-circuit oxygen systems. Hillary and Tenzing left the Union Jack, the Nepalese flag, and the flag of the United Nations on the summit, and dedicated the climb to Princess Elizabeth who was crowned Queen four days later.

The Coronation on June 2nd was the most opulent state occasion in living memory, and was the first one to be televised. People crowded into each other's houses, depending on who had the television in the street. (I watched it on my friend Michael Parkin's grandmother's twelve inch set, the only one in our terrace in Dewsbury, West Yorkshire. I thought the conquest of Everest was much more exciting.)

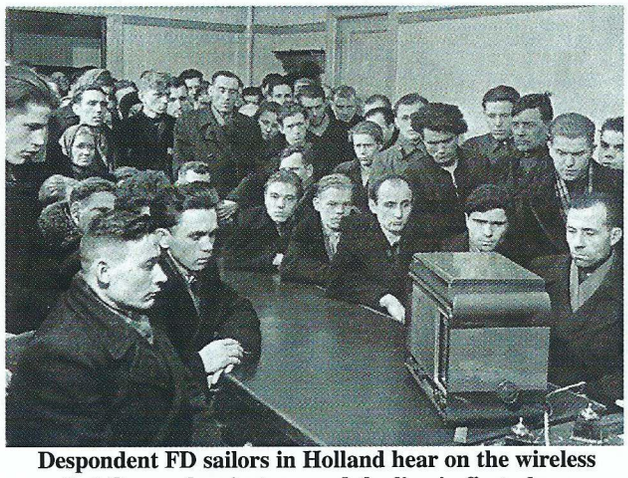
Overseas the Korean war came to an end but a new one, in Viet Nam, was just beginning. On March 5th Joseph Stalin, the great dictator of Soviet Russia, died. The queue to see his corpse stretched for over six miles, the people being afraid not to come in case it was noticed.

The same month in America, the Salk vaccine proved itself successful against polio. Over the next few years the disease was virtually wiped-out, saving many millions of lives.



Everybody wanted to play round at Elizabeth's house, because the contents of her 'dressing-up' trunk had to be seen to be believed.

Anti-communist witch hunts were at their height in America in 1953, with chief prosecutor Senator Joe McCarthy even accusing ex-president Harry Truman, a Republican, of being a fellow-traveller. In September Senator John Fitzgerald Kennedy married Jacqueline Lee Bouvier, a beautiful society photographer.



Despondent FD sailors in Holland hear on the wireless that Osprey has just crossed the line in first place. No, really - jubilant factory workers in Moscow hear of Stalin's death.

And on June 6th, Osprey won the Round The Island Coronation Cup race by one second.

James Watson and Francis Crick's paper on the structure of DNA heralded the end of history, at least in biology. It has been acclaimed as the most important discovery of all time.

The Nobel Prize for Literature was won by Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill "for his mastery of historical and biographical description, as well as for his brilliant oratory in defence of exalted human values".

The film From Here To Eternity, based on the 1951 novel by James Jones, received thirteen Oscar nominations, the most for any film since Gone With The Wind in 1939. Burt Lancaster, Deborah Kerr and Frank Sinatra starred. It actually won eight Oscars.

In 1953 a portion of fish and chips would set you back one shilling (5p). 3d. for the chips and 9d. for the fish. In old money pence were abbreviated to d. not p, from the Latin denarii.

A Firefly dinghy direct from Fairey Marine was £120. A set of Firefly sails from Ratsey just £22.

Signing On

Antony Charles Lynton Blair (Tony Blair), was born in Edinburgh on May 6th 1953. His father was a lecturer of law, who in 1963 suffered a stroke whilst campaigning as a Conservative parliamentary candidate, an event which made the 10 year old Tony determined to become a politician. But that's just an Ugly Rumour.

Signing Off

Legendary Belgian jazz guitarist Django Reinhardt died on May 16th. Regarded by many as the greatest jazz guitarist ever, he was remarkable for having the middle and third fingers of his left hand paralyzed in a fire.

A Labour of Love?



Ever thought about building your own Osprey? Many people have, and a lot of home-built Ospreys have been very successful. In the first part of a series of articles, **Mike Mooney** *recalls why he took the plunge, back in 1983, when he built his first boat, Hokey Cokey.*

IT STARTED BACK in 1982. That was the year I decided to home-build an Osprey. It can be done and it's not that hard, but if you fancy having a go, watch out; I finished up building four!

I had been sailing Ospreys for ten years. Dinghy sailing was booming and the competition was hot. Osprey opens and championships were very well attended and good fun. A Sunday morning hangover was very hard to avoid.

I watched from mid-fleet as the technically minded Tony Blachford, expertly crewed by Brent Strickland, coolly dominated the hundred-boat Nationals fleets of the late 1970s. The guy certainly knew how to make an Osprey tick, but he wasn't telling how. You had to work it out the hard way. By contrast, I saw Andy Barker blast his way to second place at Shoreham in 1979 and first place at Mounts Bay the following year. His display of power sailing and aggression was a real eye-opener. There sure was a lot to learn. It became obvious that to mix it with the superstars required dedication, aggression and teamwork, plus an edge in boat speed that would make tactics stick. Don't get me wrong, I was doing okay already, but watching Andy perform made me want to do better.

The hull was going to be stiff, so I wanted a mast that would help the boat power on in the gusts. The Superspar M2 seemed to be the one.

I had club-sailed with various crews at Hornsea Mere, Bridlington and Filey, even winning the odd open meeting. A big breakthrough came in 1981 when Malcolm Clack and I teamed up. Having a skilled regular crew to sail with is a wonderful thing. We moved up the pecking order to around tenth in the national fleet but could get no higher. It was time to improve the equipment.

We were sailing 1178 *(Psycho)* at that time. Well built in wood, she was fast then and still is, but she did not have the edge in speed that I was looking for. Racing her, we spent too much time defending our position. What to do? was the question. Refit Psycho with a new rig and centreboard? Maybe. Commission a new boat? Too expensive. Have a go at building a new one? Hmmm.

I started to plan my perfect Osprey. Ian Proctor designed the boat to be home-built, which was a good start, but I am sure that he did not envisage the amount of rig tension and stress that his design would be subjected to. A little re-engineering would be called for.

I would start by making or buying a centreboard. The centreboard case could then be built around the board and the boat around the case. The building frames could be altered to allow the centreboard case to be set into them, thus ensuring that the case was plum upright. I could add strength by taking the mast-step part of the case through the front bulkhead instead of just butting up to it. I was on a roll; I was hooked.



Mike sailing *Hokey Cokey*

The foredeck carlins, normally just tapered-off and glued on top of the side decks, could be continued at full size out to the shroud-plate pads. A small bulkhead could be set into the side tanks at that point and lined up with full width centreboard-case knees, thus forming a ring frame where it is needed most. A bonus would be the opportunity to rid the boat of those water traps that exist at the forward end of the side-tank tops. A strong laminated transom would be needed instead of the solid mahogany specified.

The weak and inaccessible forestay fitting built into Ospreys at that time would have to go. If I laminated a strong cross-beam from plywood to carry a suitable forestay plate, a mini-bulkhead could be glued to the back of it. That bulkhead could extend down to the underneath of the second stringer. A hole could be cut into the bulkhead to accept a spinnaker tube and a small plywood floor glued on top of the second stringer in front of it. Thus a spinnaker chute would be formed and the strong forestay attachment point would be accessible.

The hull was going to be stiff, so I wanted a mast that would help the boat power on in the gusts. The Superspar M2 seemed to be the one. It had enough flex available in the top third to open the mainsail leach without the helmsman having to dump an armful of sheet.

The plan was carried forward and worked a treat. With much use of epoxy resin and associated fillers to make up for my wood butchery, Osprey 1209 was born. She was light, stiff, fast and handled beautifully. Clackers and I were right on the pace at last; I can tell you it was a great feeling and well worth the effort.

Our first open meeting with the new boat was a rough seas, high winds affair held at Gorleston. I wondered if my creation would hold together. It did and we placed third.

Next came the first National Championship to be held at Tenby. I couldn't believe it when we finished fourth. We would have done even better had I not been suffering from shock.

In the next part of this article I'll tell you about the actual building of the boats. Have I whetted your appetite to have a go? If I have, be afraid - be very afraid - it may take over your life.

Blasts From The Past

As this year is the Osprey Class's fiftieth anniversary I thought it might be fitting to make up a page devoted to short pieces and snippets from past magazines. Here then is a small selection going back to 1975.

April 1975

A POINT OF VIEW

The first of an occasional series in which well-known North Devon helm Geoff Dean will put his point of view on some of the finer points of Osprey sailing.

It will be interesting to see which masts are at the head of the fleet in 1975. As noted in the last newsletter the top ten boats in the Nationals used a variety of makes and selections. I shall be using the small-sectioned Heeldespar again this season as I was impressed with the even bend it produced over its full length. I also hope to try a Proctor 'D' which has a thin wall section and is very light in weight. The 505 class has used this mast with much success and although a few of our top helms consider it too light a section for Ospreys, Ken Robertson will be able to prove them wrong as he has stepped one on his new boat *Pound Seats*.

Seahorse Sails are re-designing their Osprey genoa hoping to provide a fuller sail with a finer entry. I hope to test the prototype early in the season and will report on its features in a later newsletter.

I have moved the shrouds inboard 1¾" on *The Magic Dragon*. Still maintaining the forward tack position for the genoa this should provide quite a fine sheeting angle, which I hope may be of advantage to windward in light airs and smooth water.

No doubt friendly rivalry will exist between owners of Mk 2s and Mk 3s as to the merits of each particular design. I welcome the advent of the Mk 3 as it is more suitable for mass-production than the old design and, let's face it, a mass-produced boat is all we will be able to afford if inflation continues the way it is. As for this season I bet that the Mk 2s will be up amongst the winners on more than a few occasions, lets hope so.

On the question of optional forestays, I personally would not consider removing mine unless I had a roller jib. Without the roller jib there is no way of removing all sails in the event of an accident or capsize, which could cause extreme difficulty to rescue boats, apart from letting the jib flog itself to death in the process.

From 1981

Another Fragrant Leaf from the Oggy Book of Nursery Rhymes and Cautionary Tales

I had a little Osprey, its sails were white as snow,
I tweaked it and I tuned it, but the bugger wouldn't go.
I got new sails from Mustos but they really weren't much cop,
And I stuck on 'Go Fast Goodies' all over t'bloody shop,
Muscle boxes, cleats and levers, and to get a bit of heft,
I wrote off for a Mighty Screw - that's when the Missus left.
I'd ten to one on Cunningham and ten times that on kicker,
By God but I could whack it down - but we didn't go no quicker.
So I bought a brand new burgee, and I thought, 'By heck, that's got 'em',
But I sweated up its halyard and the mast went through the bottom.
So...
I bunged each crack and knot hole up with paint and polyfilla,
I got a crew like Oscar's - a nice lad called Godzilla.
Alas 'twas all to no avail, the laughter just got shriller,
Till they told me where the trouble lay,
- 't were the nut that held the tiller.

Also from 1981

The Wunderful Thing about Tiger,
Is Tiger's a Wunderful Thing,
His top is made out of rubber,
His glasses are held on with string.
He pumps and pumps and pumps and pumps,
He pumps the whole race through,
The Wunderful Thing about Tiger is...
That Tiger's a Wunderful Crew.



'Infidel' photographed some 10 minutes after launching on 29th March. Tony was aware of the sail twist and the matter was corrected in time for the Royal Lymington Easter Regatta.
Credit Brian Manby

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STREET CRIES OF YESTERYEAR

"STAR BO-AR D yer b *st*rd, or I'll cut you in two!" was the cry that distinguished Clayton (Darcy 414) Roberts at the height of his not inconsiderable powers, when Plycraft ruled and mast rams meant something altogether different.

Clayton who won many an open meeting when thirty or forty boats was the norm, lived on Rennies, beer and his nerves. His frantic approach to sailing was reflected in his demands upon his crews. Clayton's forte was continuous tuning, the best possible gear and meticulous attention to every single detail. After that during a race, he just sat there and thought through the tactics whilst his crew did everything else.

It was Clayton who at the 1965 Nationals at Plymouth Civic Reception sat in the Lord Mayor's 'throne' as it was the only seat free. He vacated it only after a long and loud altercation with the 'guards'. Quite unabashed by this *faux pas*, he then proceeded to demonstrate new heights in the art of lounge lizardry by removing in one swoop eight medium-dry sherries from a silver tray intended for said Lord Mayor and his distinguished party. The liveried waiter, his nose disdainfully hoisted, sailed majestically by bearing the silver tray. Clayton's hands, with a striking speed that would have sent hooded cobras hurrying to the opticians, returned with a full copita *(a tulip-shaped sherry glass - Ed.)* in between each finger and thumb.

The flunkey, unaware that anything was amiss, duly presented the empty tray to Plymouth's most important citizen.

Of his two top crews, one suffered jet lag after every sail and elected to sail in a slower and less demanding Osprey, 130 *Swingalong* - mine at the time, whilst the other emigrated to Australia only to return when Clayton gave up dinghy sailing in favour of radio 'hamming'. Dion now sails a Laser from behind a beard and dark glasses - always.

Clayton, now crewless, sold *Darcy* and acquired a Toy singlehander. In his first eleven club races he failed to reach the first weather mark once. In one race he capsized eleven times up the first leg and was dragged out dazed and in need of a professional rub down and small kit check.

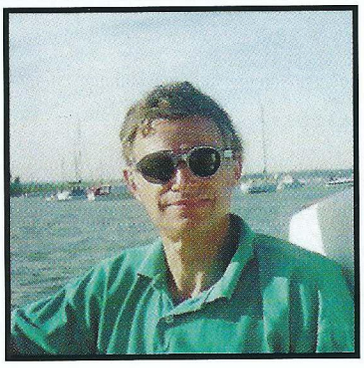
This experience prompted him to search out a fast but more stable 'oncer' culminating in the purchase of an 'A' class Unicorn cat. This weapon possessed unbelievable acceleration combined with minimal directional control. During one memorable club outing he was seen doing about fifteen knots with a Mirror dinghy trapped between his cat's twin hulls. The Mirror's terrified crew, shouting "Rape! Rape!" finally climbed onto the trampoline and set about him to such effect that all three went overboard. The cat, relieved of the weight, careered on, finally capsizing in a welter of froth ... you know what cats are when they are roused.

The Unicorn was campaigned quite successfully and it was a real pleasure to his pals when Clayton, confidence restored, was heard once again bawling his battle cry for the unwary (albeit modified).

"STARBO-ARD yer b*st*rd ... or I'll cut you in THREE!

Osprey Submariner

Practically every sailor has a store of personal disaster stories to tell - stories that sometimes do the rounds for years. This one is from **Mike Richardson**, *class-captain at Poole. What's yours? Let me know for the Christmas edition.*



ABOUT EIGHT YEARS ago Alaistair Watkins and I went out on a pleasant but rather windy Thursday evening in September to race in Poole Harbour. Before the race started we hoisted the spinnaker but soon capsized in a gust. I didn't realise at first that I hadn't put on the bow-tank hatch-cover, but as we righted the boat it was immediately obvious that a large volume of water had entered the bow-tank, causing it to float much lower in the bow than the stern.

The water was quite choppy that evening and we soon went over again, the boat being very unstable. This time it turned turtle and defied all our efforts to right it. With the tide on the ebb we gradually drifted towards the harbour entrance, the mast constantly knocking against the seabed (Poole Harbour is quite shallow in places). Eventually a small motorboat came to our help and threw us a line, but our boat submarined completely when being towed, so they cut the line, telling us that they would report our predicament to the race officers. A short time later a rescue RIB came out from the club in our direction but did not see the upturned hull in the water and returned to the club.

The situation was looking increasingly desperate as we continued drifting towards the harbour mouth.

About half a mile further on, nearing some moored cruisers, I managed to tie a line around one of the mooring buoys, even though the force of the water on the hull was tremendous, and we climbed gratefully aboard a cruiser. Luckily someone on another cruiser nearby realised that we were in trouble and radioed the club for help. Two RIBs came out, one of them taking Alaistair back to the club as he was becoming cold. (He was only wearing shorts, a top and a buoyancy aid.) We managed to right my Osprey at last, and the remaining RIB towed me back to the club. By this time we had been in the water for well over two hours.

The race had long-since finished by the time we got back, and everyone had been enjoying a post-race social in the clubhouse, but almost all of the fleet came out to the slipway to welcome me in (quite a humbling experience which speaks volumes for the camaraderie of the Osprey fleet). Somebody had a camera and took a photo, and a pint of beer was thrust into my numb hands. Then I was rushed off to a hot shower to warm up while my boat was sorted out for me. The mast had broken, but the boat was otherwise not badly damaged. (I managed to get a new mast and to have the boat ready for the Nationals two weeks later.)

Simon Bridges, the incumbent Class Captain at the time (he has since gone to live in the south of France), decided to honour the escapade by inaugurating a new cup, the Gribblestick Trophy, of which I would be the first recipient. This trophy is now awarded annually to the helm who has the most cock-ups in the year.

I am the current class-captain (not for sailing merit), and one of my privileges is to decide who wins the Gribblestick Trophy. Naturally I have not won it since!

And Alaistair? Well, he still sails in an Osprey, but not with me. And one consequence of that memorable evening is that the club has introduced a system of signing-on before, and signing-off after racing, to ensure everyone is accounted for.

Fifty Years Fast

In the spirit of the Fifty years fast - fifty years young slogan of the Osprey this year, I began pondering members attitudes to age. Helping out with the Questionnaire, I had noticed how many members had given too old as a reason for not doing something or other - and most were younger than me! Scary!
So I thought let s see what people over 50 can do and I ll start the ball rolling by looking at our family. My father learnt to drive at 55 and Graham s mother passed a City and Guilds exam at 82! Graham started to make pots and has had an exhibition. I ve just finished a 2-year course in architecture and hope to turn it into my first degree over the next five years.
So don t be shy, let s hear what you and your over-50 loved ones are doing to show all those (like Tony Blair) who are fearful of 50 that, like the Osprey, they can be 50 years fast - 50 years young .

Mo Mant

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Flying The Flag



How often do you take your Osprey to handicap events on small inland waters? Seldom or never? **Alec Mamwell** *did just that last winter, with unexpected results. In a thought- provoking article he tells us why we should all consider doing this.*

I'VE ALWAYS BELIEVED that we should support each other, and throughout our time in Ospreys Ian and I have tried to attend Open Meetings around the country. We have tried especially hard to attend Opens at clubs whose members have supported Kielder. Our efforts, and those of Roger Edwardson before us, have not always been reciprocated because, let's face it, Kielder is somewhere near the end of the road to nowhere. However, every now and again all the nagging, cajoling, begging and telephone calls coincide with people's availability, and we get, as we did in 2002, a great turnout.

This was brilliant for Kielder, and I would wish to encourage a similar or better turnout for 2003 because I believe that good Open Meeting turnouts are a positive help to the class. After the poor attendance at last year's Nationals I think that we all need to work very hard to ensure that we do support each other, because if we fail in this matter, no one else will help us. The future is in our own hands, and I am encouraged that the Committee has made a start on addressing these issues, and probably does not need me to remind them of the size or scope of this task. It would be impertinent of me therefore to say more than I have already on the subject, but a couple of incidents that happened to me last winter have got me thinking about Open Meeting attendance, and a slightly different way to support the Osprey Class at the present time.

Funnily enough, the first incident was related to a bit of practical mutual support that Ian and I had embarked on at my old club, Elton SC, in Lancashire. Elton Scorpions have been present at the Kielder Open for the last three years and it seemed important to me that someone from Kielder should support one of their Opens to encourage continued attendance. Thus, in mid-November, we found ourselves waiting to start a pursuit race fifty minutes after the first boats had got away. After doing our impression of nautical hamsters on the treadmill for a couple of hours we finished, and Ian re-christened Elton Reservoir 'The Pond of a Thousand Gybes'

I was just happy that I managed to navigate *Jennifer* around such a small bit of water without any problems, and quite happy to have fulfilled our real, or imaginary, obligations.

As first visitor, in third place, I was able to make the point as well as attempt to drum up even more trade for our Open in 2003. What struck me, however, was how many people, who were obviously regular sailors, did not know what type of boat *Jennifer* was or, when told, had not heard of Ospreys. One chap even came and thanked me for bringing my 'whatsit', because he had been delighted to see such a beautiful craft at his home club.

My incredulity was reinforced between Christmas and New Year when I turned up at another small Lancashire pond to watch Delph Sailing Club's Plum Duff Open. My attempts to bring a boat or cadge a ride with McDaniels, the well known Scottish *Magician*, had been thwarted but I had managed to lure the wife out with the promise of a brisk moorland walk on the surrounding hills. Both of us were keen to escape a surfeit of family, but torrential rain and low cloud persuaded us otherwise. As I struggled to put on waterproofs a keen sailing type bounded over and, perhaps sniffing a potential new member, invited us into the club for a coffee. His patrol boat duties took him away, but later on we got talking. I found out that he sailed a Miracle, that he had been sailing for nine years, and that RS400s and 200s were a great new addition to the boats sailed at Delph. When I told him that I sailed an Osprey he looked at me blankly. I might as well have him told that I sailed an Octopus for all the difference that it would have made.

Now it might just be me and the odd folk that I sometimes seem to attract, but I think these two incidents indicate that we have a substantially bigger publicity problem than we perhaps thought. It might also be down to the fact that fewer people travel these days and therefore the sailing population in general has become more parochial. Maybe the sailing media have flogged the new boats so hard that other classes have been driven from your average club sailor's mind. I honestly cannot imagine why I have come across this unexpected level of ignorance in situations where grassroots sailing takes place, but I am sure that if people do not know about something they cannot be expected to try it or buy it.

Thinking aloud for a minute, could it be that our efforts at the dinghy show, reports in *Yachts and Yachting*, and attendance at showcase events such as the 'Birkett' or the 'Bloody Mary' are actually focusing on situations where most people who attend or read about it are already committed deeply, not just to sailing, but to their own favoured class? I would not suggest in any way that we should give up on these events because it does the opposition no harm to know that you are alive and kicking. However, it might just be worth seeing this ignorance that I have come across as a potential opportunity to be exploited as we seek to increase the exposure of the class in an increasingly competitive market-place. Of course, this always presupposes that such lack of knowledge is widespread, but if I look at my own club I would guess that at least half, and possibly more, of the membership would not know an Osprey from an onion if we did not sail them at Kielder.

I suspect that a great deal of dinghy sailing in England is done on inland waters. Apart from Blithfield, all the clubs that sail Ospreys, including the inland ones, are round the edge of the map. That means there is a whole country to go at in terms of increasing the class's exposure. In practical terms, my suggestion is that all the Ospreys that travel should pick at least one Open a year that is not a traditional Osprey meet, and 'fly the flag'. You might have a good time, make new friends and even, given the attention that *Jennifer* got at Elton, the odd convert. A bit of preparation does not go amiss either. Elton SC noticeboard now has an Osprey poster, and so do all the juniors who were sailing that day. You never know, in five or ten years time they might just remember!

A Little Bit of History

It's well known in the dingy fraternity that wooden Ospreys stay competetive for forty years or more. **Will Odling** *recounts the origins and history of* Bluebird, *his first Osprey, built in 1964.*

IN OUR FIFTIETH year it does no harm to reflect on the heritage of the Osprey Class. Having owned and raced an early Osprey that still flies, I would like to share its history with you.

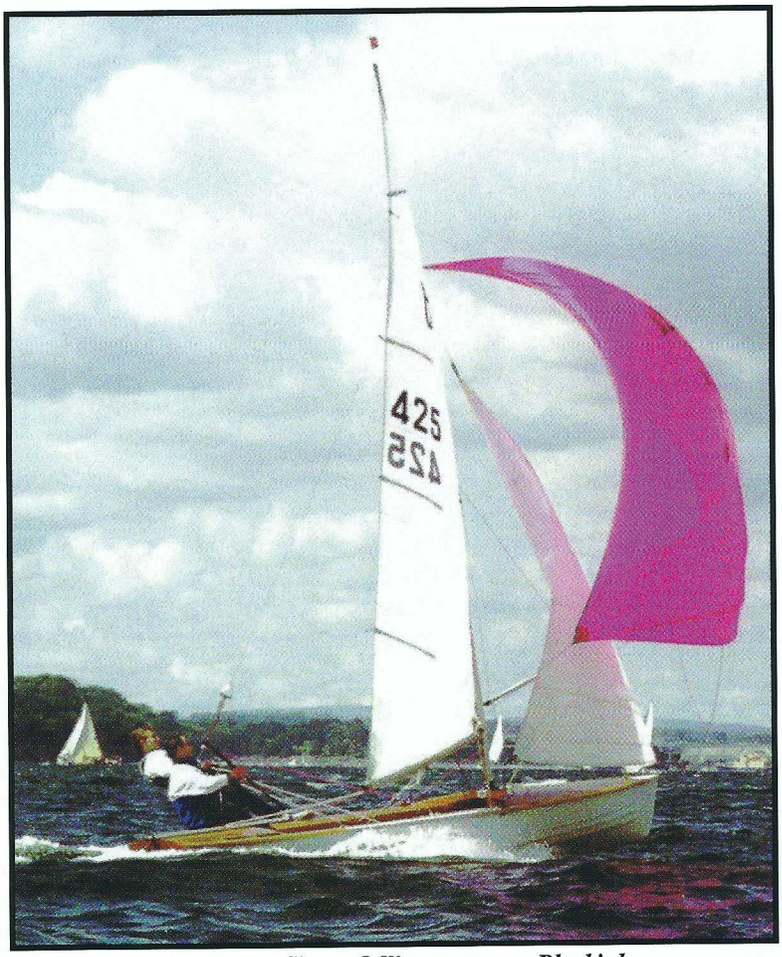
Bluebird was built in 1963 and registered in January 1964 with the number 425. She came from The Bell Woodworking Co. Ltd of Leicester, and while I don't know whether she was amateur built from parts or completed by Bell, you can still see part numbers stamped on one or two panels. In either event she was extremely well built, with immaculate panel scarfing and tight joints. The adhesive looks like cascamite, and it is impressive that this has held firm for forty years. Once built, Bluebird received 2-pack varnish inside and out, top and bottom. Even now on a warm day you can smell the old International 707 varnish when a hatch cover is removed!

As some of you will remember, the early boats had fantastically heavy and rather ineffective spoon-shaped rudders with long tillers and minute tiller extensions. I still have Bluebird's with its magnificent oak or ash tiller. In contrast, the centreboard was a light single plank of mahogany. Rigging comprised a Proctor E mast weighing a ton(ish) and a bendy boom, secured via bottle screws, with galvanised halyards and a hole in the hog for a mast step. Fittings were robust 'tuffnel', and included a substantial mainsheet traveller on Bluebird. The sails from Goldfinch were as flat as a mill pond, with a spinnaker which would look small on a Mirror dinghy.

Bluebird's early years were spent at Stone Sailing Club on the Blackwater estuary in Essex. I have no idea how she performed, but based on our later experience I would like to believe she was a star.

The boat changed hands in 1971 when my father-in-law to be, Alan Russell, bought her and moved her the five miles from Stone SC to Maylandsea Bay SC, my home club then and now. My only competition in her in those days was a pursuit race with some fifty boats, which we won convincingly in light airs, passing everyone and keeping well clear of the fleet of Flying Dutchmen which were a bit "stuck to the water".

Twenty-four years later in 1995, Bluebird was still sporting the 1964 sails, rig and foils, still at Maylandsea, and still well cared for, mainly living in the dry under an elevated bungalow near the club, and sailed very occasionally by the family.



George and Simon Odling power up *Bluebird* at Plymouth 2002

After a long and keen dinghy racing period in the Fireball and the 505 I hadn't sailed much for years while our children grew up, and we lived in the Midlands well away from the sea and our Essex estuary roots. A telephone conversation occurred early that year when Alan said he wanted to sell the Osprey and buy an old 420 for the grandchildren to use. We struck a deal. I bought an old 420 and swapped it for Bluebird, mainly out of sentimentality. I did not for a moment expect her to be a competitive prospect, I just wanted her to stay in the family. My brother George developed an unhealthy Osprey fetish after borrowing and sailing Bluebird for a week in August 1995, and we started talking about sailing together.

Towards the end of 1995 I spoke to Terry Macdonald and Ian Madeley and found out more about Ospreys. I weighed the boat and found it to be about 20 pounds overweight, which didn't seem much for its age. We visited Sailboat 1996 and took loads of photos and measurements from Des Menear's and Nick Willis's boats, and sent off for the template for a Mk11a conversion.

George and I discussed what to do with the boat. He put up some money and undertook to chase a deal for new sails, and I found a friend with a large garage which we could borrow. In March 1996 we took the boat from Maylandsea to Knowle near Solihull and into the borrowed garage. Being sad ***tards, that's where the work became totally out of hand.

We looked at the underside, and found regular one-pack paint over old two-pack, so decided to hot air it all off. While we were at it we brought the centreboard case back to precisely 26mm opening width with strips of formica and epoxy/ microballoons, trimmed the bilge keels down to length by over a foot and re-profiled them from square to the same as everyone else's. Because of the original varnish coat, everything went back to clean wood very easily.

Then we turned her over. At this point I should mention that I was spending my time alternately working on the boat as therapy and looking for a job as a necessity. Out came the jig-saw for the Mk11A conversion, and while I was at it I carved down the gunwales, spray dodger and everything else that looked superfluous. The thwart literally came away in my hands, was replaced, and the old wood made the new mast gate. The traveller was replaced with a mini-bulkhead to take control lines and support the rear of the centreboard case. All varnish was stripped inside and out, and the boat sat in a polythene box for three weeks with a de-humidifier for company. Lots of sanding followed, and loads of epoxy was applied liberally inside and out followed by layers of white two pack underneath and varnish on top. The old centreboard was brought up to thickness and profile with epoxy, micro-balloons and glass, and hey presto we had a spangly new looking hull, but no gear on it while I job-searched.



Merlyn* and *Bluebird

The job was found in July 1996, and the final hoard of savings went on fitting out *Bluebird*. A brilliant deal struck by George with a nameless sailmaker gave us a new mast, boom, pole, rigging and sails for about a thousand pounds, while I bolted money on from Ronstan, Harken et al. I have to admit that my sentimentality for the family boat led to me spending nearly four thousand pounds on boat, rigging, sails, fittings, rudder, trailer and covers by the time we were on the water in late August 1996.

The story since is better known in the Osprey fleet. We started open meetings in 1997 and *Bluebird* has sailed in the Nationals every year since, except 2001. Our proudest moment was probably scoring eighth overall at Pwllheli in challenging conditions, a position repeated at Sunderland. The boat can take a real pounding and then come back for more. *Bluebird* was seen last year in George's hands first to the windward mark in one race at Plymouth, and remains one very quick boat in immaculate condition through being kept in a garage all year round. People still find it hard to believe that the decks are original. Finally I recall two bits of 'amusement with hindsight'. Firstly we finally gave up spinnaker bags in 1999 and installed a carbon fibre chute. Hoisting with bags was a dream, but dropping it at Mounts Bay in a blow was not! Secondly I might be good at boat restoration but I have given up trying to make my own rudder blades. I made and broke three on *Bluebird* before trotting off to Milanes!

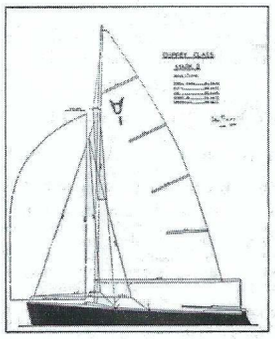
Things move on, and I bought 1199 *Merlyn* in 2001, selling *Bluebird* to brother George. This year I bought 1295 *Big Girl's Blouse*, and George has bought *Merlyn*. So *Bluebird* is up for sale (call George now on 01256 851785) and I wish her future owner good sailing. She is a fantastic and fast boat, looks great on the water, and has another forty years in her.

The Bell Woodworking catalogue of 1962 had the following to say about the Osprey, which the company supplied in kit form for home-building, as a part-finished boat for home-completing, or as a fully-finished and fitted boat.

"Versatility is the keynote of this boat. Because her length reduces her sensitivity to weight variations, she can be raced with two or three aboard and she is safe for family sailing with greater loads. Easily handled out of the water, she is no more trouble to trail than a 14-footer.

...The price of completed boats compares favourably with many much smaller and less well equipped and finished dinghies with nothing like the Osprey's performance or versatility.

Extract from the Bell Woodworking catalogue



Page 45

L.O.A	17' 6"
L.W.L.	16' 7"
Beam	5' 10"
Hull draft	7"
Hull draft with centreboard	4' 6"
Displacement with 2 crew	650 lbs.

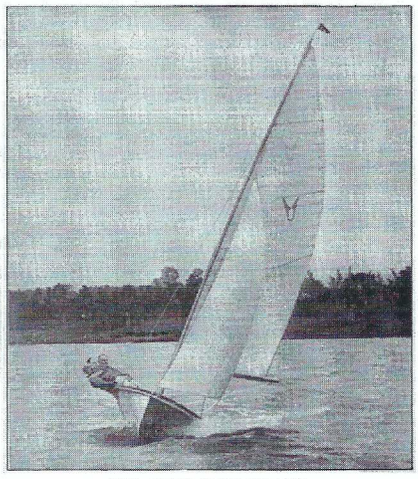
Sails Areas :—

	sq. ft.
Mainsail	100
Genoa jib	50
Storm jib	33
Spinnaker	150

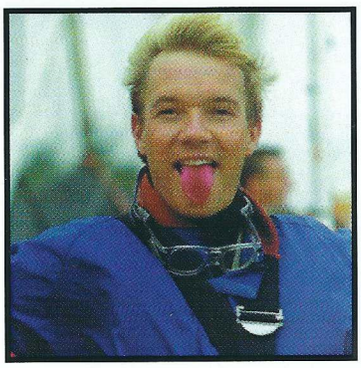
SUMMARY OF PRICES

	£ s. d.
Plans	15 0
Prefabricated Timber Parts incl. spruce mast...	112 0 0
Fastenings	6 15 0
Fittings and Rigging	29 17 0
Paint Kit	4 17 6
Total delivered price to build *	£154 4 6
Bare assembled hull with all remaining timber parts of kit with spruce mast sent loose including fastenings, fittings, paint, plans, ex works	£191 9 6
Completed boat, ex sails, ex works, with spruce mast	£262 10 0
Extra for metal mast with kit or hull	£22 0 0
Extra for metal mast with completed boat...	£15 0 0

* Plus £10 deposit on crate and frames.



Fast, Strong, Light and Safe



A Sailing Pen Portrait

As a veteran of 29 National Championships, 28 of them consecutively, (a feat currently only matched by Oscar Chess), **Malcolm Clack** *thought you might be interested in how he first got involved in this fantastic class, and more importantly, his love for the National Championships.*

MY INTEREST IN sailing started way back in the mid-60s, when I was about twelve. As a family we used to visit the resorts on the Yorkshire coast and increasingly were drawn back to Filey where there was a thriving sailing club. I watched with keen interest the many different types of small sailing boats, (mainly Enterprises in those days) and wondered how I might possibly get to have a go. I started to pester my parents and a couple of years later we took delivery of our first Mirror kit. This was completed, mainly by Dad, in the living room of our home during one winter, and was proudly launched at Filey in June 1967. We had no instruction, other than reading a book or two, but as father and son, had a fantastic summer, learning the ropes together. Yes, we made mistakes, but the Mirror was so forgiving, we were able to learn from them, without putting us off the sport altogether.

We joined the club at Filey at the start of 1968, by which time there was a flourishing Mirror fleet. It wasn't long before we were talked into racing, but Dad was never that keen and we didn't do particularly well. Before very long I was hankering to have a go at the 'back end' and Dad allowed me to do a bit of single-handing. Much to my surprise I was actually quite good at it, and from then on quite a lot of my sailing was single-handed in the Mirror.

The following year Dad had to work every other weekend so we sailed on the sea at Filey one weekend and then I sailed on the River Ouse just outside York, the next. Nothing like a bit of river sailing to sharpen up the boat handling. By 1970 the club at Filey had gone from strength to strength, one hundred and twenty plus boats in the dinghy park and just under 500 members. The Mirror fleet alone boasted forty plus boats and the fleet made the decision to have class racing for crewed and single handed Mirrors. In June I won my first club race, single-handed, the day after I'd done the Lyke Wake Walk, (40+ miles across the North Yorkshire Moors).

I'd started work by this time and was yearning for my own boat, so in July ordered my own Mirror and in August, Dad and I collected a brand new, but unpainted Mirror from Bell Woodworking. A month in the garage, painting and varnishing and it was launched at Filey in September. The boat was fast from day one and very, very quickly became the boat to beat.

One of the other fleets that was popular at Filey at that time was the Osprey. I used to watch with admiration this fantastic boat which was incredibly fast and had a spinnaker and a trapeze. Filey was hosting the Osprey National Championships in 1971 and one of the



Osprey fleet's 'elder statesmen', Bill Poole, had joined us in the Mirror class. We used to have some ding dong battles on the race course in the Mirrors, him with all his skill, knowledge and experience, and me with the innocence of youth. Honours were about even on the race course and we became good friends.

Bill Poole still owned two Ospreys, sail numbers 2 and 402. He particularly wanted to sail Number2 in the forthcoming National Championships and asked me if I would crew for him. Number2 was the original Osprey in its Mark 2 format, (having been modified after Number1), it was built in 1953, weighed in at 355lbs and even in 1971 had long since seen better days.

Having never been in an Osprey before, we went out for a trial sail and I've been hooked ever since. We had about 4 weeks to go before the Nationals and sailed together every weekend until the event. A hundred and ten Ospreys turned up for the Nationals, a magnificent sight. We managed to finish in the 80s most races, although we were last one day when the race turned into a drifter. It was a marvellous experience, but all too soon the event was over. On Sunday I went down to the club and Bill Poole was there. The conversation went something like this:

"Did you enjoy yourself last week?"

"Yes, very much."

"Would you like an Osprey?"

"I'd love one, but I can't afford one."

"You can have Number2."

"How much for?"

"Your Mirror and £30."

So the deal was done, there and then. And the rest, as they say, is history.

Number2 was stripped back to bare wood during the winter, excess weight removed wherever possible and completely repainted and varnished. She returned to Filey in spring, unrecognizable from the previous year, and earned many complimentary comments. She was, however, still very heavy.

I'd had to try and find a crew during the winter and had recruited a friend (called Kari) from college. He'd never sailed before but seemed enthusiastic. He was a quick learner and developed into a reasonable crew. His party piece was wearing a bowler hat whilst trapezing.

Despite trying our hardest in the club races we were always bringing up the rear and by the end of the season we had become a bit despondent. No2 had served her purpose by getting us into the fleet but we needed something more modern, so with some sadness she was put up for sale.

Finding someone to take a twenty-year-old, overweight Osprey off my hands proved difficult.

Selling her however was not that easy. Finding someone to take a twenty-year-old, overweight Osprey off my hands proved difficult. Eventually I got £150 for her off someone who wasn't interested in racing, and I haven't seen her since.

In April 1972 I answered an ad in Yachts and Yachting where Osprey 722 was for sale for £300. The following weekend Kari and I drove down to Colchester to view, and the weekend after that she was delivered. Osprey 722 was a composite Mk2. Built by Paul Wright, she had a glass hull with wooden decks, an appealing combination, or so I thought. We spent a month or so sprucing her up and proudly turned up at Filey for the 1972 season. Kari and I spent the next two seasons learning the ropes in 722, gradually starting to make some inroads into the fleet. Sadly, Kari became more interested in women and alcohol than his sailing and became very unreliable so we had a parting of the ways, (a bit embarrassing, because his Dad had lent me the money to buy 722 in the first place).

1974 season started and I had no crew. Bill Poole had by now sold Osprey 402 to another young member of the Mirror fleet, John Price. He'd never been able to find a regular crew either, and the season was spent with either him crewing for me or me crewing for him. We got on well together and each of us was pretty competent at either end of the boat, so we decided to make the arrangement permanent for 1975.

402 was sold during the winter, (also never to be seen again). John bought a half share in 722 and with the spare cash we invested in a brand new suit of Mountifield sails. (You may never have heard of them, but they were the sails to have at the time). We started the 1975 season with me helming and John crewing, and intended to swap regularly, but John turned out to be a far better crew than me and we stayed that way for most of the next 2 seasons. Early in that season we took in one or two local open meetings, (Hornsea & Tees) as we prepared for our first ever National Championships together, which were being held in Carnoustie in Scotland.

A friend welded some angle-iron to the chassis of my 1967 Volkswagen Beetle to form some sort of a tow bar and we set off on our expedition to the Nationals. With the hand-brake cable snapping in Newcastle, the exhaust blowing a hole in itself before Edinburgh and the front brake-pads giving up the ghost by Dundee it was an eventful journey, but we arrived in Carnoustie in one piece. We located the caravan we'd hired for the week and then the dinghy park, where one hundred and thirteen Ospreys were gathered, (10 of which were from Filey). The most startling boat in the park was a brand new, all varnished boat, sail number 1085, called *Infidel* and sailed by Tony Blatchford.

The racing was a real eye-opener, introducing us to big fleets and gate starts. Our race results were in the mid-fleet area, although we did have a retirement one day, when the mainsheet jammer exploded. We lost a race to fog one day and therefore had two races on the last day, Friday. In the first of these we started late through the gate and had an abysmal race, finishing in the 60s. Our strategy for the second race was clear: start early. Pathfinder, for this race was number 793, Wandering Star, helmed by a tall, spindly, ginger-haired lad, called Oscar and crewed by a scruffy urchin called Tiger. Yes, they were at their first Nationals too and had somehow managed a tenth in the previous race.

Superstars Tony Blatchford and Mike Corbin passed us on the first reach and we dropped two more places in the remainder of the race to finish seventh.

We started early (third through the gate), and as I looked over my shoulder, I could see the pathfinder struggling to complete his run in a dying breeze that was also heading. Just what us early starters needed and much to my shock and amazement we arrived at the windward mark in third place.

Superstars Tony Blatchford and Mike Corbin passed us on the first reach and we dropped two more places in the remainder of the race to finish seventh and just out of the prizes, (there were prizes for the first six in each race in those days). Nevertheless, it was a fantastic way to end our first Nationals. The social side was unbelievable, with a formal Dinner/Dance midweek in Dundee. Someone from Filey won first prize in the raffle, a gallon of Asbach brandy, which was duly consumed by the Filey contingent within fifteen minutes, (and Steve Watson thinks he's the only one who can drink). But the highlight was the inter-club cabaret, also won by Filey, where 4 sailors, supported by 4 choristers carried out their own version of the Full Monty, their dignity preserved only by strategically placed red and green balloons, to renditions of 'Whispering Arse', (a version of Whispering Grass) and 'The Botty Men', (a version of Ken Dodd's, Diddy Men).

Four sailors, supported by four choristers, carried out their own version of The Full Monty, their dignity preserved only by strategically placed red and green balloons, to renditions of Whispering Arse...

Our last race result had hoisted us to the dizzy heights of 41st overall, which far exceeded our expectations and my appetite for the Nationals was well and truly whetted. The overall winner of the event was that man Blatchford in 1085.

Back at Filey in September was the club's annual Osprey open meeting for the Chalmers Park Trophy, a prestigious event in the northern calendar, attracting entries from all over the North, Midlands and Scotland. That year was no exception and forty-plus Ospreys turned up. It was also to be my finest hour as a helmsman. With two results in single figures already, a third in the last race meant we finished a magnificent fourth overall and highest place Filey boat. A perfect end to a fantastic season.

To be continued.....

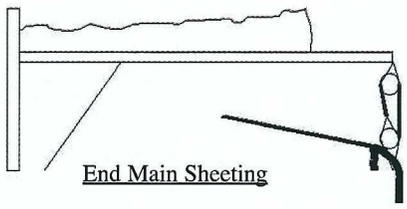
Osprey Mainsheet Systems



Mainsheet systems used in Ospreys have evolved over the fifty years of the boat's production. Or have they? **Oscar Chess** *analyses and compares the ones on offer.*

THE OSPREY MAINSHEET system has evolved over the years. It started as a Topper system, with an extended boom to reach the transom, sheeted on a 2:1 block to a horse, a metal rod, directly over the tiller.

This system was simple and effective, but the boom could never be



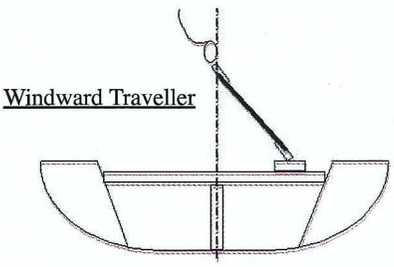
End Main Sheeting

brought to the centre-line. As the boom length was extended, this gave an increased mechanical advantage, equivalent to about 5:1 on a centre-mainsheet system. The very early Mark 2 Ospreys were equipped with this system.

The first development was for the end-mainsheet system to be replaced by the new-fangled adjustable centre-mainsheet horse. This started life as a tube between the inside of the side tanks and a moving carriage with a 2:1 purchase to adjust its position either side of centre. As the mainsheet was now attached to the boom much closer to the gooseneck, it needed to be increased to a 4:1 purchase system.

As fittings evolved, the tube was upgraded to an X-section track with a more sophisticated carriage, but the basic principle remained unchanged for the rest of the Mark 2 production. When the Mark 3 came out, with a wider cockpit, the traveller track simply got a little longer.

At this stage, back in the Seventies, the standard technique was to centre the

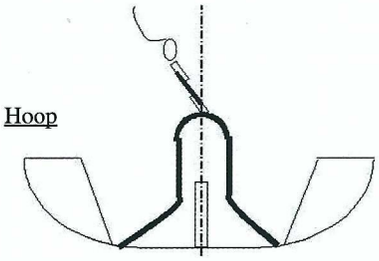


Windward Traveller

carriage in light to medium conditions, and ease off as the rig power became excessive, and needed to be dumped by feathering off the mainsail.

It was about this time that a new philosophy emerged. This was to get the boom as close to the centre-line as possible when beating in medium conditions. Using the traveller system, this meant pulling the traveller to windward, to allow for the angle of the sheets.

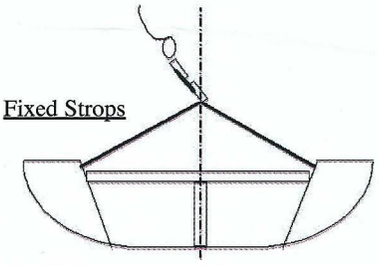
Two other systems started to make an appearance in the Osprey, both intended to make it easier to get the boom near to the centre-line in moderate conditions. The first was the hoop. This



Hoop

had the advantage of being very easy to use, but was fixed in height and heavy.

Fixed strops were also used. These had the advantages of being lighter and



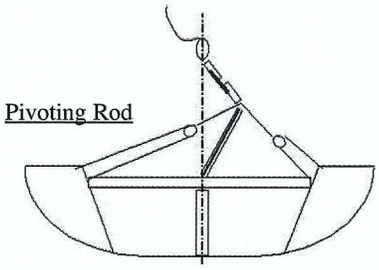
Fixed Strops

cheaper than a hoop and could be fine-tuned in length to suit the exact rig set up.

The problem with both the hoop and fixed strops is that the boom is still not quite on the centre-line. It drops off by a few inches. This is a critical problem and will prevent the boat pointing to its maximum potential in moderate 'just about fully powered up' conditions.

Several manually adjustable systems have been used to combine the benefits of the strops and the hoops with the ability to get the boom fully onto the centre-line. Richard Marshall has for many years used a system where a mini-traveller sits on top of his hoop. He can then pull the traveller a few inches to windward to get the boom onto the centre-line.

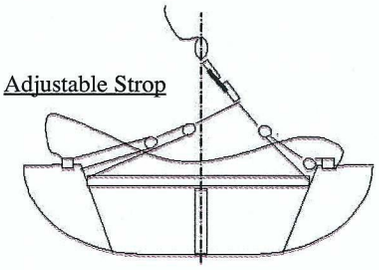
Poole has produced a number of interesting variations. One of the most



Pivoting Rod

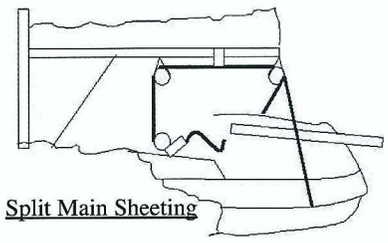
enduring is Martin Lewis's pivoting rod-hoop. The tubular loop is replaced by a single vertical tube that pivots from side to side at its base. This is then pulled by a multi-block purchase from side to side, again to allow the boom to be centred after a tack.

The other method of remaining with the centre-mainsheet while having the facility to get the boom on the centre-line is to use adjustable strops. This is the system used on 1085, with a four-to-one cascaded block and a continuous control-line to allow the leeward purchase to be released from the windward side.



Adjustable Strop

In the meantime, other dinghy classes such as the GP14, Scorpion and particularly the Fireball had gone to a new system, where the mainsheet is split and attached to the extreme outer side decks beneath the tip of the boom. It runs through a single pulley and goes forward along the boom through a strap to prevent sag before returning through a second pulley above the centre mainsheet cleat assembly, then down to the jammer and block mounted on the centreboard case.



Split Main Sheeting

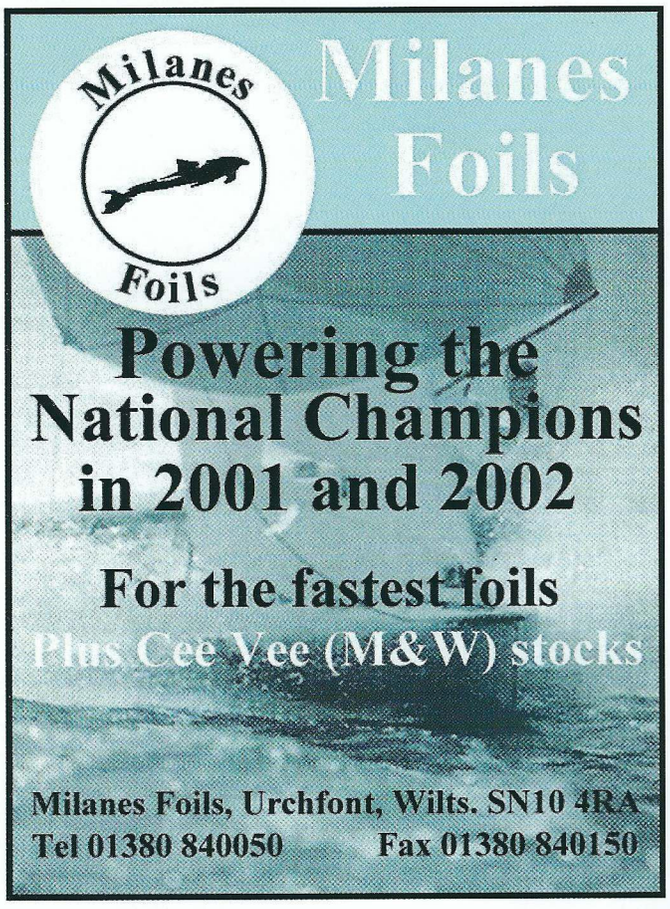
This system is very attractive, and in the hands of Mr Barker can be made to work effectively in all conditions. What is particular interesting is that the 505s have not adopted this method. In my opinion the 505 rig is too large for this to work on. The Fireball rig, though, is small enough for this method to be completely effective. The Osprey sits between these two, and this results in the split of techniques. I think the average club sailor actually goes slower in heavy air conditions after converting to split-mainsheet from centre-mainsheet and traveller. This is due to the fact that the vertical component of the mainsheet tension pulls down on the boom, directly tightening the forestay. This has a direct effect on how well the jib sets, making a boat with a tighter forestay much faster to windward. Ten units of tension on the mainsheet translates to about 30 units of tension of the forestay.

The shrouds also tension the forestay, but because the shrouds are mounted only just behind the mast, they have a very poor leverage. 10 units of tension in the shrouds translates to about 3 units of tension in the forestay.

Having tried both systems, and swapping from one to the other on occasion while running in the middle of races at championships, I prefer an adjustable centre-mainsheet system, and I assume Martin Lewis does too. I can certainly see the attraction of the split-mainsheet system. It is interesting to compare this with the original Osprey system. They are not so different! Of course, jibs used to be tacked to the stem head fitting too. Are we just going round in circles?

Comparison of split and centre mainsheet systems

Split Mainsheet	Centre Mainsheet Adjustable Strops/ tilting rod
Simple	More complicated
Cheap	More pulleys and jammers
No adjustment after tacking	Needs to be adjusted after each tack
No adjustment required for different mast rakes	Has to be adjusted to suit different mast rakes
Low mechanical advantage of 3.5:1 compared to centre mainsheet, but one less pulley and lower wrap angles	Optimum mechanical advantage of 4:1, but 4 pulleys and larger wrap angles
Very low vertical mainsheet tension once boom is eased off centreline	Adjustable so vertical mainsheet tension can be maintained with boom off centreline
Gybing can be complicated by the mainsheet catching on the transom Laser style	No sheet problems when gybing
Need strap from boom to allow control during gybing and pumping	Grabbing loops of mainsheet gives full direct control of the boom



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Open Meetings and Championships

12-130 July	Blithfield	Nick Daily-Hunt	01782 620846
26-29 July	Nationals, Poole	Nick Jones	01525 751712
13-14 Sept	Kielder, Northumberland	Dave Shilling	0191 490 1736
27-28 Sept	Netley, Southampton	Bob Thomas	02380 454187
26-27 Oct	Inland Champs Rutland Water	Nick Jones	01525 751712

