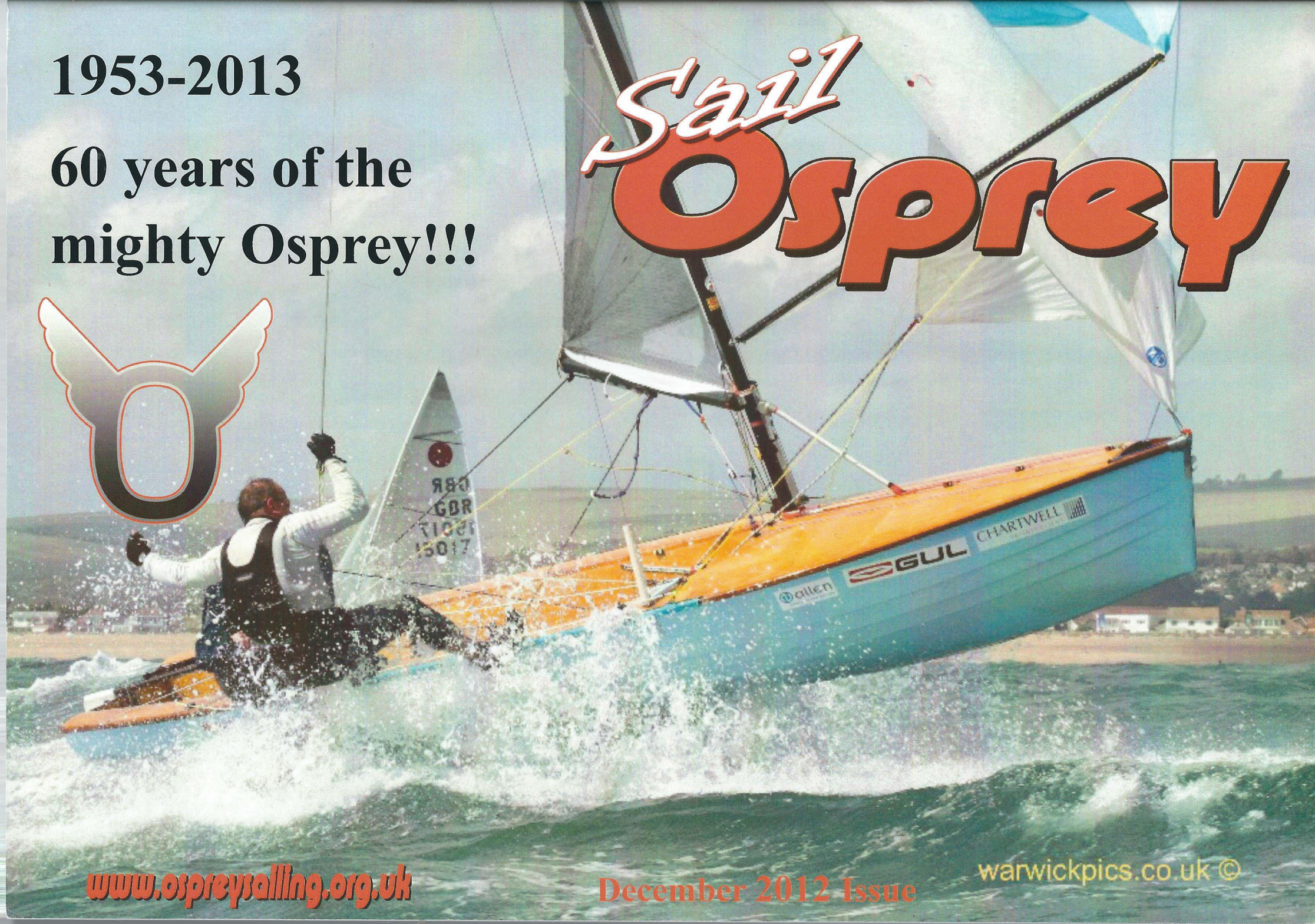
Sail Osprey

1953-2013

60 years of the mighty Osprey!!!

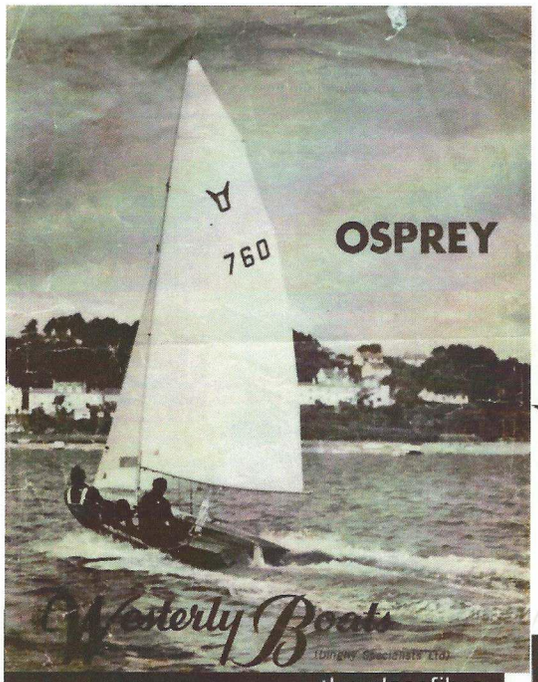


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December 2012 Issue

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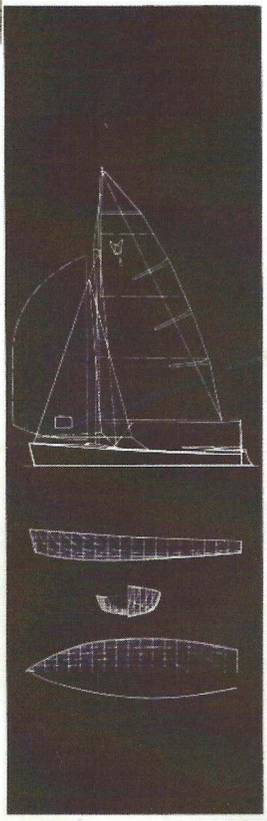
Jog any memories? After 60 years, a little focus on our heritage featuring some past adverts...





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the man who designed her . . . .



Ian Proctor began designing small boats 20 years ago and has produced more than 70 d-fferent designs. Much of his work has been with the "Development" classes and his designs have won 29 Championships—an unrivalled record. He was elected "Yachtsman of the Year" for one of his designs which became the first British design to be chosen for Olympic use since 1948. In 1966 he won a Council of Industrial Design Award—the only time it has been given to a yacht or boat designer. One of his designs won a silver medal at the Milan Triennale—an international design exhibition—in 1964.
He was appointed Royal Designer for Industry in 1969, and is a Fellow of the Society of Industrial Artists and Designers. He has been Joint Editor of "The Yachtsman", yachting correspondent to the "Daily Telegraph" and author of several sailing books.

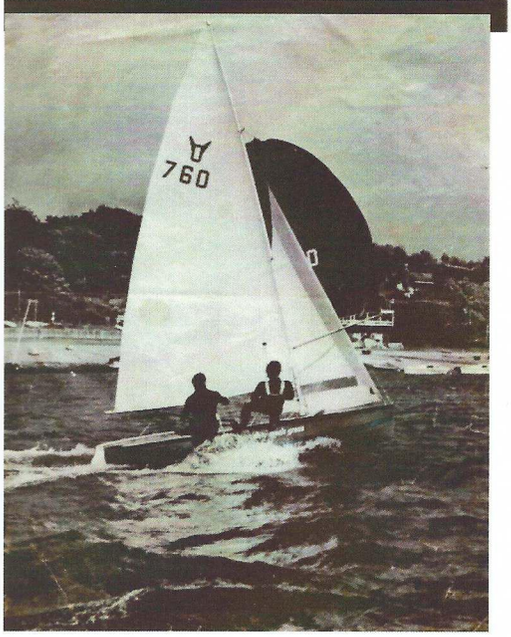
the man who builds her . . . .

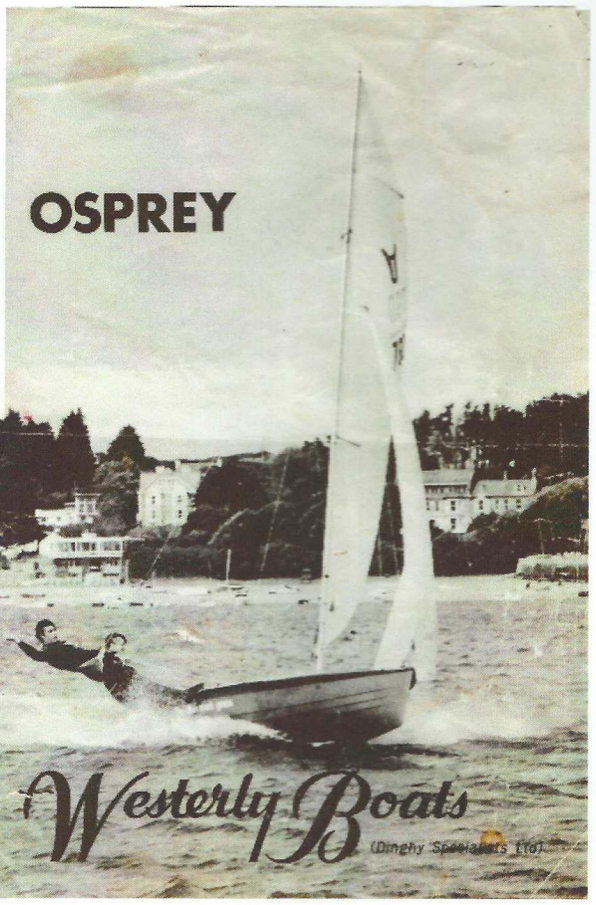


John Gmach started his boating career at the tender age of four. He represented his school at Henley from the age of 15—one of the youngest ever to do so—and subsequently he rowed for RAOR.
After developing the first ever successful glassfibre canoe the company was established. Later products consistently won a whole series of races and broke many records. John himself held the civilian record for the gruelling 125 mile Devizes to Westminster canoe race for four years. Establishing the Kestrel class was John's chief venture with sailing craft. This boat soon acquired a reputation for quality and in John's hands won Pool Week for three successive years among other achievements. Other craft soon followed in the same tradition.

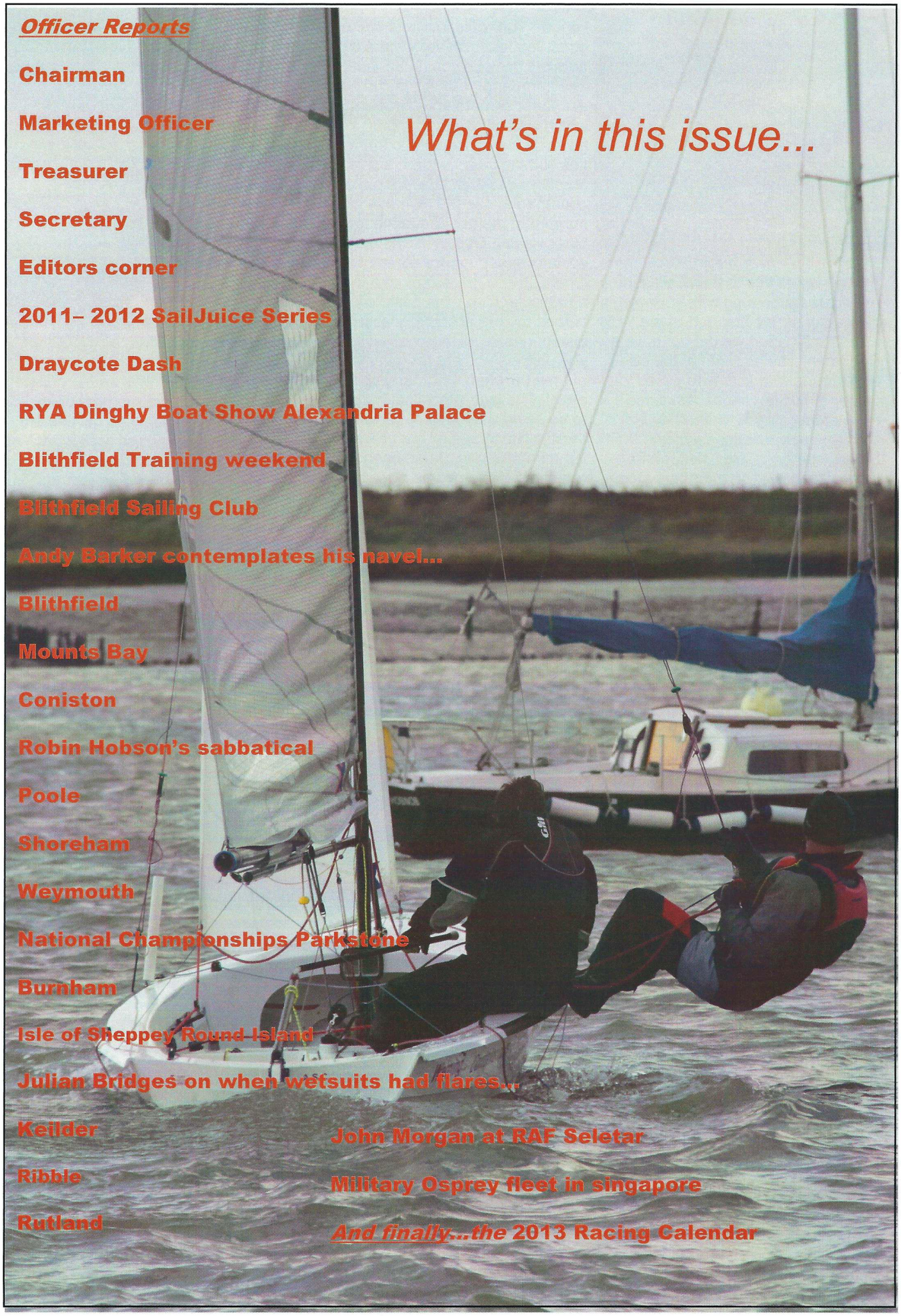
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Thanks to Mike Jakeways for this blast from the past



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***And finally...the* 2013 Racing Calendar**



Chairman Peter Frith

Firstly I would like to thank all Osprey members for bearing with your committee during the first part of the year when for a period we did not have a Chairman. The strength of the class is in the membership who pulled together to fill the various tasks, the main ones being Membership, Nationals, Open meetings, Dinghy Show, web page, Newsletters, Publicity and answering members Questions. To those members who took on these tasks I say a Big **thank you.**

The year began with a very successful Dinghy Show organised by Robin Hobson it was felt that we needed to establish our identity whilst supporting Richard Hartley in his push for sales. Mike Pickering allowed us to use his Osprey as the show boat, it having just come 7th in the prestigious Juice series. The stand was manned by team Osprey all dressed in matching rugby shirts, these identified us and gave the appearance that we were all over the place making a talking point and bringing Joe public to the stand. Once there was interest potential customers were taken over to Richard's stand. This approach did turn into orders; we intend to go to the Boat show once again in March 2013 with an adjoining stand to the 505s; by being next to them we both benefit by effectively having a seamless pitch. The sailing season started for real at Blithfield, as per usual a well attended event with the legendary Hog roast. Over the years I have found the uncomplicated layout of the sailing area with 4 marks down each side of the reservoir to be a huge benefit to starting the season because in order to set a course the race officer has to use a lot of marks on each round, pushing everyone to do many changes... spiny up spiny down etc so with always tight racing you get the benefit of honing your boat handling. Make sure your boat is ready for this venue!! Turn outs for most of the other venues this year were a little down - I think you could attribute this to a number of reasons including the economic climate and the weather which was not always helpful. This gives us extra incentive to improve this coming year - we are sure to get numbers back up. I have been encouraged to see the increase in the number of members offering to put other visiting Osprey crews up, so sustaining support for some of the Opens. It is a great incentive to visit a particular club if the costs can be helped by free accommodation!! It also brings us all together - if I put you up then you are far more likely to put me up when it is your club's event. The web site still only appears to be being used by a few members, I would like to see all members taking an active part. It has been unregulated for sometime now, meaning posts are instantly made at the click of a button. Please use it to gather info and help others, make it your regular place to find out what is going on and make some posts, someone else may be interested in what you have to say. This year we were treated to not one but 2 excellent mags well done Arthur and Jerry I am sure this one will be just as good Just remember they don't happen by themselves they need your input!! Jerry is always looking for budding journalists to put pen to paper splashed with some good pics and some good banter.

This years Nationals was a big success with the crowning of new National Champions. Well done Gareth and Jonathan; they put a concise series together to clinch it at the last from Andy and Mike. The format for the Nationals has gradually been changed over the last few years with the introduction of more shorter length races. This year saw us try a 9 race series over the 4 days. Although the last race was cancelled due to lack of wind, this format makes more meaning to consistent performance and allows us to give 2 discards. It also means that the fleet is kept closer together during the racing which gives greater opportunity for place changes and generally makes the sailing more fun.

Looking forward to 2013 Mike Pickering has taken great care and a good deal of advice and has come up with an exciting fixture list for us all to enjoy, so if you feel like coming along to some opens I look forward to meeting you there!!

All The Best in 2013 Peter



Marketing Officer Paddy Lewis

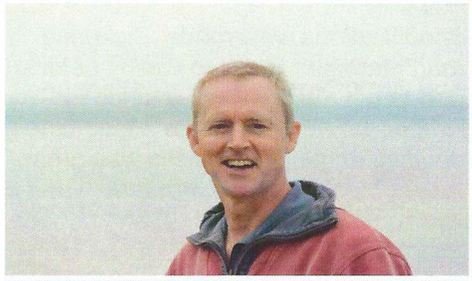
This year has been a good year in terms of raising the profile of the Osprey. Having three boats taking part in the Sail Juice Winter Series certainly turned heads and got people who haven't seen the boat at non Osprey events for years.

Mike also went to Camel week at Rock in the summer and I made a trip up to the Broads to take part in the Hickling regatta and also did the Glyn Charles Trophy at Hayling. Mike and Viola went north of the Scottish Border for the equivalent of the Endeavour Trophy and attracted more interest up there.

We had a great stand at the Dinghy show, which Robin & Ollie Hobson did a brilliant job of using Mike Pickerings boat. There was lots of interest from people who had sailed the boat in the past as well as new faces and they were amazed to see the modernised and fully pimped boat.

I am 100% convinced that the way we will increase the sales of new boats is to take them to places other than our open events. It isn't going to instantaneously transform things but if we can get 5 or 6 boats built a year we will soon find a 50 boat Nationals will become the norm again.

Please come and support the stand again at the Dinghy Show in March.



Treasurer Will Odling

2012 draws to a close and before I get into the Treasurer stuff I thought I might reflect on the sailing. George and I ended 2011 on a high by squeaking an overall win at the Rutland Inland Champs. I don't go club racing but as ever I had great ambitions to do more events in 2012. In the end we only managed Blithfield, Mounts Bay, half the first race at Poole before breaking the boat, and of course the Nationals at Parkstone. And as many of you know, our nationals was a mixed bag including a win, three seconds and some results we don't really want to admit to. Fortunately we had not just the oldest boat in the fleet at Parkstone (by some margin) but also the most amazing with 1085 Infidel which still can be persuaded into the lead! And yes this is a plug to remind everyone that you can be competitive in a brand new or an older Osprey, unlike so many other dinghy classes.

So not a bad twelve months for us at all. However following the nationals I decided to step away from sailing to protect my hands from joint problems I have experienced over the last couple of seasons. I'm not saying I won't sail at all, but it will have to be limited. As for the boat, well Infidel stays in the family, so watch out for George and his son Harry Odling.

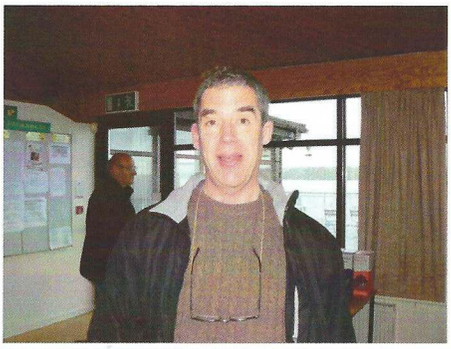
On to the numbers bit - The association remains soundly financed. At as 31 December 2011 the net funds on the balance sheet stood at £12,512. This was an increase of £1657 on 2010 principally due to our not having a stand at the 2011 Sailboat show at Alexandra Palace. We expect 2012 to be largely neutral on overall association funds with a small increase in retained funds in the year. This reflects the cost of our renewed presence at Sailboat this March and the relatively high cost of staging the National Championships at Parkstone (which was a great event). In some years we show a surplus at the Nationals, but this is not the case this time. The membership agreed at the last AGM to keep membership subscriptions unchanged in 2013. Oh and in case you wonder what happens with your subs, the main expenses are the magazine newsletter, the Sailboat Exhibition and class liability insurance.

If you were not at the AGM but would like a full copy of the approved 2011 accounts, please write to me at 20 White House Green, Solihull, B91 1SP or email to will.odling@btinternet.com .

On membership, we have recorded 123 members this year including 5 Student, 12 Associate, 23 Member, 79 Full and 4 Honorary. Now I know this does not reflect the full tally of people racing Ospreys. So please encourage others to join and reap the benefits of the newsletter, access to measurement certificates, the pride of racing on a 'legitimate' basis, supporting the class etc etc.

I wish you all Good Sailing and Racing in 2013, Will Odling

November 2012



Secretary Mike Scott

Secretary says: I bobbed to the surface at the end of an excellent and eventful Nationals at Parkstone to discover that they had made me Class Secretary. Not only that, but I have to try and fill the extremely efficient shoes of Janet Shenton, so I will start by offering a big thank you to her for her term in office. The good news is that she has promised to help out with the administrative side of things at the next Nationals at Weymouth, so we will only be partly at sea.

Please feel free to email or phone me if you have queries about anything, secretarial or otherwise. If I don't know the answer I will try and put you in touch with someone who does.

Finally I would like to give a plug for next year's open meeting calendar – specifically the new look Wilkinson Sword series. It is now a calendar year traveller's series, culminating in a final shoot-out and prize giving at Rutland. There are 11 events, your best 5 results will count. Simple as that. The Bloody Mary on 12th January is the first qualifying event, then, after that, Blithfield. The winner's trophy really is a full size sword, and there are take home trophies for second and third. What more could you want to tempt you out onto the circuit? See you on the water.

Editors Corner

My sincere thanks to everyone who has kept a flow of race reports & articles going for this year's edition of the Newsletter. The reward for the enthusiasm with which people have been prepared to provide copy & photos is a bumper edition that I hope everyone will enjoy reading. One alteration we have had to make due to constraints of space has been to focus on the articles themselves so the result tables have had to be excluded but can be accessed on the web for those who are interested in this aspect of the racing.

This year we have had lots to celebrate with a fantastic series of well attended Open meetings. The is a really exciting racing calender for 2013 & of course 2013 heralds the incredible landmark of 60 years already of the mightly Osprey...I hope you'll enjoy our nostalgic delve into the recent past & occasional meander down memory lane in this magazine...it helps to reinforce the pedigree of the class & remind everyone of how much fun has been had by so many people over the many years of the existance of this magnificant boat.

2011—2012 Winter SailJuice Series

This year's season started early for a number of die-hard Osprey teams who participated in the SailJuice - Global warm up series during the winter months. This was the third season for the Sailjuice which is becoming a focus for dinghy handicap sailing in the UK over the winter. The 5 events are listed in the enclosed picture which was taken during a presentation given at this year's RYA Dinghy Boat show at Alexandia Palace to promote the



2011- 2012 SailJuice series

Series - Grafham, Queen Mary, Northampton, Rutland & Draycote.

The series has one discard so the four best scores count. Each event is run on a different format which adds to the fun & a scoring formula has been devised to balance up the relative value of each event, whether it's one massed fleet such as at the Bloody Mary or Tiger Trophy, or in smaller divisions such as at the Grafham Grand Prix and Steve Nicholson Trophy.

A number of sponsors offer their support so there are some great prizes up for grabs. Prizewinners for this year's event should have received their prizes at the RYA Dinghy Show...Mikes Pickering & Pringle & Paddy Lewis who all took part in the 2012 Series & won prizes took along their personal photographer to the presentation at the Dinghy Boat show in the expectation of being given their respective prizes during this prestigiuos & very public forum but sadly, the photgrapher was only able to record their crestfallen faces in an otherwise well attended presentation (see photo) when their prizegiving appeared to have been



Three wise men waiting for gifts....

dropped from the agenda...well chaps you do it for the sailing, not the prizes, don't you?!!

For more on the SailJuice read the article from Paddy Lewis below on his experiances & also Viola & Mike Scott, who joined the series for the Draycote Dash event in February.

Sail Juice series 2012 by Paddy Lewis

What tends to happen is we all have a jolly good sail at Rutland, say our good byes and head off home for a winter of reading sailing websites (amongst others) and looking forward to Blithfield in the spring.

Not this year, Pickering, Priddle, Lewis, Holland and the new boys, Weston and Hawkes, from the fat tubs got out their diaries and entered the dates for the Sail Juice winter series. Pickering quickly spotted a commercial opportunity knowing none of us had the requisite winter gear! New dry suits all round, winter gloves, woolly underwear and hats. I have to admit my dry suit is brilliant, I wasn't cold once all winter and my bum doesn't look big in it either.

Grafham Grand Prix

January was upon us, turkey and stuffing a distant memory and the first event dawned in the form of the Grafham Grand Prix. Three shiny white Ospreys all lined up proudly for all to see. There was a bit of the inevitable boring on about the latest modifications we'd made. Pickering had managed to get to Rushy before me to get a trial 3DL to test for the winter, so we spent quite a long time looking at that! The sailing was great, bright blue sky, force 4 but the water was cold and despite that one or two elected to have swim! Tom and I sailed badly and ended nearly last in the fast handicap fleet against the Fireballs, Merlins and 505s. Pickering and Priddle did OK as did Mark and Simon but none of us covered ourselves in glory. Ospreys will always struggle against Fireballs and particularly Merlins on their dodgy handicap.

Bloody Mary

The next event the following weekend was the Bloody Mary. Nice to be so close to home for me, only 20 minutes' drive from Chiswick. Tom had a lie in, full English breakfast lovingly cooked by Nicola, he even managed to clean his teeth and have a shave! The Bloody Mary is a big event with a lot of boats (310). Now who would be the one person you'd hope not to meet on the slipway given there was going to be multiple opportunities for crashing into each other? You guessed it, Basher Marshal! in his newly acquired boat, all shiny and well-tuned out of the Hartley stable. Robin Hobson was there as well, looking very big in the front of a Shoreham fireball!

What was becoming clear, as we all rigged, there was an amazing sense of camaraderie attached to getting ready to brave the cold of a winter sailing event and this has created a real team spirit amongst those who took part in the madness. I'm hoping we can attract more to the team this year. Osprey opens are great fun but there is something a bit different about these winter events, more people, different boats and real pride from the Osprey team that the new boat with all the mod cons turns people's heads and prompts younger sailor to ask what it is.

As with all the events we did OK, the general order of things at all the winter events were Pickering, Weston then Lewis.

My lasting memory from the Bloody Mary was the extremely steep slipway, lots of toppers to get past,

two of which called us on starboard and made us do turns and finally the incredibly noisy 29er girls and boys coming from behind us at the end of the race. Screaming and shouting; must be in the training manual because they all did it. Needless to say Tom heard none of it because he's young as well and was more worried that his hair looked good for the 29er girls!

Starcross Steamer

We had the next weekend off to repair our bodies and boats before heading down to Exeter for the Starcross Steamer. In my infinite wisdom I thought this was a good weekend to fulfil Nicola's desire for a Mini break! Nice hotel, walk on the beach on the Saturday before racing on Sunday, dinner in a posh restaurant, you know the sort of thing. It wasn't quite what she'd had in mind it seems, she was thinking more Paris or Venice. Needless to say, I made a bit of cock up of the hotel, it would have been fine for me and Tom but not the Memsahib; it was bloody cold, the sheets were damp and she had to wear my dry suit in bed to keep warm. The walk on the beach was fun and dinner in Exeter was very good, but Nicola all zipped up tight in a dry suit was completely out of bounds!

A report on Osprey sailing wouldn't be the same without the mention of the Watkins girls. As we were leaving London at 9.30am on Saturday Kate Watkins (the mummy) called me to find out what time we would be arriving to which I replied about 9am, "but it's already 9.30" said Kate; "tomorrow" I said.....there was silence from the other end of the line followed by a long list of expletives. Kate and the girls had arrived a day early! They unhitched the boats and made the 2 hour return journey to Poole because the dogs were in the house and they didn't have their tooth brushes!

They reappeared the next morning just as enthusiastic and launched into the caldron that was the River Exe. This was not a day for the faint hearted but this didn't put the girls off. They were the slowest boat in a Mirror so went off first and sailed round for 2 hours grinning all the way; a good example to all those sailors with their feet up in front of the fire.

The same three Ospreys were there joined this time by Jeremy Evans and Mikey Greig, Jeremy sporting the summery look of a shorty! Mikey forgot to put Pete's dry suit in the car for him to borrow. Despite the lack of suitable clothing they led the way in the Osprey fleet until they got toó cold and headed for the warmth of the club house. Pickers had Frithy with him this time because Priddle had back problems. Sadly they didn't make it off the start line because Pete sat on a jib car which broke so it was back to base. Tom and I battled round behind Mark and Simon, tacking round the jibe mark and not flying our kites until the last couple of laps downwind when we got braver and found the boat didn't plough into the waves nearly as much because the kite kept the bow up, we went extremely quickly as well. This was great event and a very friendly welcome.

Steve Nicolson Trophy

Next Stop Steve Nicolson Trophy at Northampton, again three Ospreys. Pickers had Hobbo in the front this time because Priddle was still crook. This would have been fine but there wasn't much wind so having a big old bugger in the front when you've used to Peter Pan skipping around the boat at high speed tends to make you a bit slower, which allowed the only win for Tom and I over the little fella! Not much more to say about the event other than there was a distinct lack of water, which caused a bit of bottom touching, which Hobbo didn't enjoy (*I thought he liked bottom touching- ed; I suppose it depends on who it is..*)

Tiger Trophy

Rutland in February is a very different place when compared to October. This was a two day event, big turnout and on the Saturday plenty of wind and some great racing. We were very ready for our dinner in the newly identified digs in Oakham. Open fire, a bit of 6 nations on the tv was just what we needed to prepare us for the next day. We awoke to 4 inches of snow and no wind. That's OK we thought, back to the club pack up and hope the roads had cleared by the time we got away.

AP went up due to lack of wind, the young built snowmen; we had tea and more tea, AP down still no wind and a 1 hour sail out to the start line. What a nightmare. This was the Pursuit part of the event so the slow boats went off slowly and we all followed on slowly. The race went on for 2 hours and at one point we rafted up round the windward mark with about 50 boats. Pickering was way behind us for most of the race until this raft up. Only he can overtake 50 boats in one go in 100 yard driftathon. He approached the mark at a snails pace, there was no water until he got to there when a big gap opened up, round he went onto a gust and away into the distance as we cuddled up with a load of noisy 420 sailors shouting water, windward boat etc.

Getting back up the slipway was interesting in the snow.....luckily Paul Heather was there in his Arthur Daly sheepskin coat to give us a pull up the ramp.

All in all the Sail Juice was great fun. Pickering ended up 7th overall out of

610 entries, we were 12th and Mark and Simon were 22nd.

Come and join us this winter, you'll be sharp as hell for Blithfield then.

2012 Open meeting Boat numbers

Blithfield	**21**
Mounts Bay	**13**
Coniston	**11**
Poole	**20**
Shoreham	**10**
Parkstone Nationals	**29**
Burnham	**11**
Kielder	**11**
Ribble	**9**
Sheppey	**10**
Rutland	**18**

Viola Scott reports on her participation with husband Mike at the Draycote Dash held over the weekend of 25th/26th February, part of the SailJuice Series...

The itch to get back in the boat had been growing as the snows disappeared. We had been reading the reports of the winter sailors on the forum and, as our boat was being repaired at Hartleys it only made sense to combine collecting 1314 with going to the Draycote.

The weather was fantastic – the sun was shining, a pleasant force 2-3 blowing but the water did look rather low. Lots of scare stories on the forum about shallows but at least we couldn't see any mud banks. Three other Ospreys were there – The Mikes in 1348, Paddy & Tom in 1317 with experimental 3DL swirling sails, and Robin with guest helm James Rusden in 1206, twin poles to the ready.

The format was to get at least 4 short races in, maybe 5, on the Saturday - each with 3 flights at 3 minute intervals. Sadly it took a bit longer than usual to get the boat up and ready so we missed the first race, but at least we could study the other 3 Ospreys, Mikes in the lead, which looked beautiful in the sunshine and gentle breeze. Coming at them from curious angles were a lot of B14s which I reckoned meant there could be interesting moments at the gybe mark.



It was fabulous to be sailing again! In perfect conditions with a decent fleet size – sheer joy to be on the water. The wind was a bit twitchy and we soon learnt we had to play the shifts. On our first race we were close enough to the other three to be pleased. The Mikes finished first Osprey then 1206 just slipped through 1337 & us into 2nd on the line. The next race we had to remind a voluble B14 that you cannot just sail over the top of a symmetric boat - they were surprised and puzzled that we did not like enormous gennikers coming between us and the wind and hurt when their sails collapsed and they fell behind – but they did learn. Eventually. 1206 held 1st Osprey place from 1348 and we finished 3rd Osprey this time which cheered us.

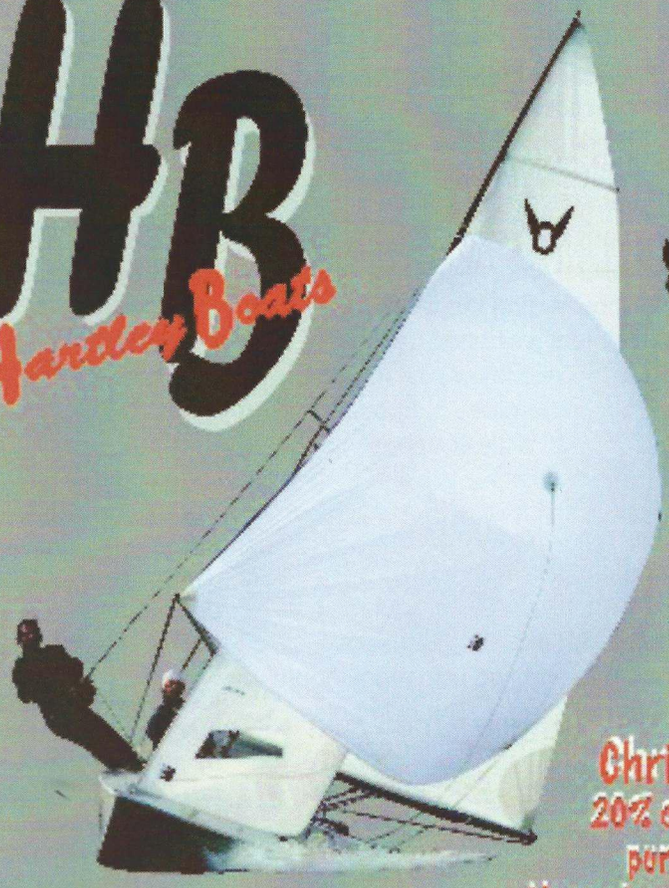
Race 3 started with the top kicker block going which meant to a slow first beat and a skying boom on the reach and the others vanishing round the course. Michael jury rigged the kicker but we were unable to make up the pace and by now were feeling our lack of fitness and looking forward to going in. 1348 had a good lead, followed by 1206 and 1337. Then we realised they were planning to run a 5th race and our spirits sank. A shocking tack on the first beat filled us with water – which had the only merit of showing that our new, larger, non-leaky self bailers work nicely. Our results were getting worse and worse and thank goodness that was the last race of the day. 1206 had another good result, keeping the Mikes at bay.

That evening we both seriously ached, although neither of us admitted it to the other. Thanks to Robin we got a replacement block for the kicker, then watched Robin set up new control lines for his twin pole system and learnt new dyneema locking techniques. We were delighted to meet Simon, who although now found at the front end of Osprey, was in excellent form in his Phantom, finishing 4th overall. We were trying to persuade his son Ben to become an Osprey helm but the thrill of the wire is more appealing and Ben is aiming to be part of a twin trapezing crew boat, when not in his Topper.

Sunday was another gorgeously sunny day but with very little wind. Postponement was inevitable but some wind did eventually come in. This time we got a beautiful start, had some excellent shifts and were third at the windward mark, just behind 1206 and an RS400. Then the wind started to fade and we all ghosted on to the leeward mark, still nicely ahead. However a slight breeze behind meant that the bulk of the fleet began to catch up and blanket just our wind, allowing the other two to slip off for the final mark. We thought all was lost but taking a smooth, wide line round the mark to ensure we did not get involved in a gaggle of B14's, Furballs, etc enabled us to keep our speed and we were 4th over the line! We knew the handicap calculations would pull us right down but it still felt good.

We thought ahead to the long trek between car park and boat for packing up, followed by the distance back to Scotland, and decided that as we had no series position to consolidate we had no inclination to stay on for the 100 minute pursuit race; something we did not later regret as we saw the drifting boats when we finally drove away. However we thoroughly enjoyed the weekend, great to see friends again, thought the venue was good and the race management excellent, and the obvious camaraderie of most of the boats who had done the sailjuice series was very heartwarming. Maybe we could be tempted south a bit more next winter.

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RYA Volvo Dinghy Boat Show

March 2012



Every year the sailing season is opened with the Volvo Dinghy Boat Show staged at the imposing Alexandria Palace in north London, a spendid setting for exhibiting all the major classes, boat builders & chandlers...It's an awe inspiring building, the former site of the BBC perched on top of a substantial hill with a magnificant view overlooking the heart of London rivalling the view over Los Angeles. The Palace itself is surroundeed by parkland, used by runners & strollers alike with plenty of parking nearby.

After an absence of a number of years we are delighted to report that the Osprey was once again showcased at this year's Boat Show held on 3rd /4th March.



There were in fact two Osprey's on display; one on the Hartley stand, the cornerstone of the Hartley's stable of boats; the other on the Osprey association stand; surrounded by, but standing out from, the Fireballs & 505's.

The boat attracted a great deal of interest over the two days with enquiries being fielded by the members of the current committe, who were strongly represented & whose enthusiasm was infectious.

The stand of course became a focus point for the many members & ex Osprey sailors who visited the Boat Show during the weekend; conveniently situated, as it was, close to Take away restaurants, keeping committee members & visitors with a steady supply of food & hot tea & coffee....

This years hot topic was the twin spinaker poles fitted on the next door 505 which kept the more technical members of the Osprey sailing fraternity amused with many hours of technical chatter. The twin poles were later to make their appearance at the Draycote dash...

The above all said by way of introducing the Marketing officer Robin Hobson who picks up the story....!!

"*On the weekend of the 3rd and 4th of March, a series of reprobates from the Osprey committee manned a stand again at the Dinghy show.*

The guilty culprits posed happily in the photograph that accompanies this script with the notable exception of the newsletter editor who had rung in "sick" (read hungover) from the upmarket accommodation he had taken opposite Harrods.



There had been much debate about whether we should spend NOCA funds on attending; the straw poll taken at the end was unanimously positive. We had received much interest in new boats and shed loads in second hand. Test sails were requested and we believe Hartleys had more interest than was practical - new boats not available until June/ July earliest... John Shelton turned down offers on his boat being shown on the Hartley stand.

Next year it is imperative we have some innovation and your current, ex by the time you read this, marketing rep believes a twin trapeze demo boat maybe with mannequins (although Willy Crichton has volunteered to be one for the Saturday) to show the potential and bring on-board people that normally walk on by.

Do you not think we look great in the matching shirts - not the moody pose struck by Mike P, who could not fail to be impressed?

So was it money well spent, we believe so."



Ken Brown provided this extensive report on the pre-season Training weekend held at Blithfield SC15th/16th April. ...(The comprehensiveness of the report no doubt fuelled by pangs of guilt having promised & then failed to deliver copy for the 2011 Newsletter. No worries Ken ...all is forgiven...) but this report is worth reading because it provides an invaluable insight into how a training weekend is run & the benefits for aspiring sailors...Read on...

The 2012 osprey season kicked off with a great weekend of coaching & training.

Those of you who did not make it missed a highly beneficial two days hosted by Blithfield SC. Our coach and mentor for the weekend was James Hunt of HD sails , , Jim's record of success is impressive - Multiple wins in National and world championships; he currently campaigns a 505. His expertise, skills and knowledge were highly prized and welcome. So we mere mortals understandably waited on his every word ...it was said "A pin could have been heard to be dropped "as we listened to his presentation.

Luckily for the few eight boats turned out for the sessions.

The structure of the course was heavily focused on the practical. The initial briefing concise and to the point outlined the aims, goals and objectives of the weekend. .Jim clearly and modestly put across the fundamentals that he considered attributed to his success .

Five key things emerged as his mantras:

Get a plan...any plan, but get a plan

Observation...get at least one head out of the boat &

Communication...dialogue between helm and crew

Anticipation ***(Ken didn't know what this mean't ...Ed)***

Calibrate...calibrate calibrate

Sessions afloat...

Very simple: we were to focus on starting followed by short windward legs approx 5-10 minutes long then return to the starting area after a downwind leg.



The starts following a two minute countdown were "in your face". After nerves had settled we were all mixing it up pretty keenly once we had a few starts behind us. There were a few scrapes and plenty of near misses; strangely a solitary duck relentlessly pursued the fleet happily oblivious to one particular bird of prey`s attentions then as suddenly as it had appeared it was no more, disappearing without a trace . We don't believe it survived, a sad sad day.

As the starts banged out repeatedly the teams slowly began to find their pace, boat handling sharpened in the chilly but brisk moderate breeze. The beats were of sufficient length to focus on developing & testing strategy in the shifting and gusty conditions distance between the boats narrowed. Situations developed testing all crews in boat handling , anticipation and application of tactical solutions to lesser and greater effect.

The first session concluded with a series of down wind starts. Personally I thought that more was gained from the windward starts as group control with this exercise is a tough nut to crack, however it clearly demonstrated the lack of boat handling control throughout the fleet and hopefully the participants recognized the benefits of this part of the session.

We returned to the beach for a working lunch during which James set about a piece by piece diagnostic of the mornings performance. One to one observation from the coach boat yielded an array of points from fine tuning to basic setup and fundamental principles. Sail trim, in particular more advanced aspects of spinnaker trim. James moved into areas concerning development of a strategic plan and determined actions to meet tactical threats and capitalize on potential opportunities.

As has been already stated someone mentioned that during this debrief a pin could be heard to drop.

Once James had covered his key observations the floor was opened to questions which came thick and fast: tips on assessing and measuring performance, clarification of specific points were made more apparent from an alternative perspective. But the mantra remained the same, dialogue, calibration, planning. ***(Anticipation?)***

The afternoon session proceeded in a similar fashion to the morning except the wind was freshening & the temperature was dropping. We had been briefed to focus on mixing it ever tighter on the start line. The fleet complied resulting in repeated recalls until the fleet became more compliant we were all by now itching to get to the windward mark.

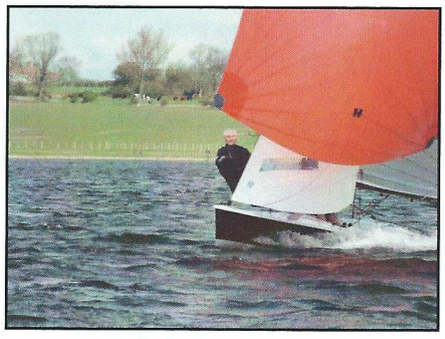


Mike Pickering and Viola were picked out as the primary targets, ourselves in 1338 along with Jonathon Osgood and Gareth and Jonathon (the home boat) constantly vying and pressing the front markers place; changes both upwind and downwind made for very exciting and rewarding racing while all along one to one coaching continued, closing the gap further.

James continued to up the anti layering on further refinements and increasing pressure. An additional mark being laid to set up a full triangle allowed greater focus on mark rounding and gybes satisfying the clear need for focus in this respect, once again the fleet complied. Initially James on several occasions could be seen head in hands but as the work continued control finally arrived and the fleet once again looked elegant.

All the while the temperature continued to drop as the breeze freshened during the final stages of this session. A deep, forbidding skyline hailed the onset of a prolonged squall, it's arrival coinciding perfectly with the dying seconds of the final countdown of a running start which proved to be electrifying as well as testing. Kites popped and the birds flew, hitting the finish line almost as soon as they were airborne. A rapid plane back up wind to the shoreline concluded the first days sessions, then the homework began once more finally retiring to the warmth of the bar and good conversation.

Day two… saw a moderation in wind speed and an increase in both sunshine and temperature. The objectives for the day would be a continued focus on the gains achieved the previous day. The format remained consistent; refinement of starting and greater emphasis on implementation of strategy and tactical planning, improvements in boat speed continued to be honed via direct intervention from the coach. The fleet continued to close up even though the course had been stretched out from the previous day, tracking the shifts and the hunt for pressure became vocal; no longer was the picture silent, it was stereophonic.



The runs continued, countdown, gun, recall, beat, place changes, frustration and elation, well executed leebows, repeated feedback, pressure on the sheet, pressure fifty yards out, gust coming in and so it went on..

James concluded the day with a final debrief revisiting the key points that he had worked so hard to ram home. My belief is that he not only hit his goals but surpassed them.

From a personal note my expectations for the weekend were greatly surpassed. In my experience of coaching sessions this rates amongst one of the best I've experienced in terms of what I personally gained unparalleled. This weekend, for the boats that attended, offers raised confidence going into next weekend. It will be interesting what impact it will have on this training fleets performance; my expectation is that it will prove significant. We shall see.

Viola compiled a few notes during the weekend and kindly offered to share her thoughts and recollections.

"The key elements gained from our weekend of training:

Knowing our calibrations to enable us to get to best setup for the conditions in shortest amount of time. We sort of knew before but now we understand that getting to the most appropriate setup must not be a matter of guesswork but of knowledge. So no re-inventing the wheel every time we go out on the water. Rather a lot of tape about to be added to the boat in consequence….

Greater understanding of what is required from the setup according to the conditions. We had the general principles of upright for light winds and rake back to reduce power as the wind increases but we have learnt more about the finer details….

Dialogue between helm and crew to be more of a constant stream. Relevant information on where the others boats are, what is happening generally, so that the one concentrating on the sails is not tempted to have a look around for themselves.

Agreement beforehand on who has responsibility for what - and keep to that agreement. If the helm asks the crew to call the tacks the helm must act on instruction, not disagree or prevaricate. Hmm, I rather think I am going to have to work on this bit. After the event analyse what worked and what did not, in a calm 'America's Cup' type manner, with no unnecessary words or heated phrases. Simple!

So finally, many thanks to Jim Hunt for a fascinating weekend – we did not expect such a lot to take in and put into practice but we certainly intend to try"

On a final note to underline Viola's words, I would like to express Chris and my thanks to Jim and all the team at Blithfield SC. This was my first visit to the club and I look forward to many returns in the future.

