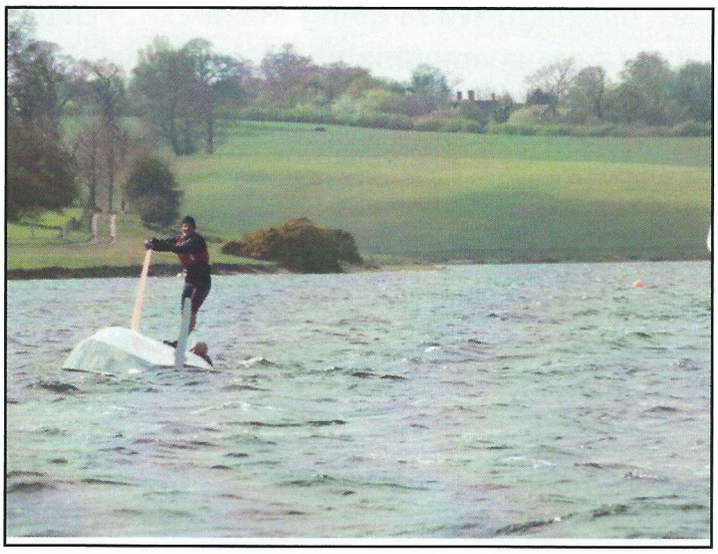
But not everything at Blithfield went according to plan.....



kenny says

"we have really come on leaps and bounds"..."we have nailed this maneuvere"

Can anyone hazard a guess how the conversation progressed here?

...***then kenny says*** "... we might (Chris might) have a problem..."

Ken... "can't see how we will get this up with out droppin' 'em first"



Ken.... thinking to himself " I'm dry, its cold he's wet, I've got the high ground he has not, not my boat. Kite problem is a crew problem, kite problem is a wet and cold problem best resolved by those best equipped to solve such wet & cold problems.....

Ken suggests to **Chris**...I'm concerned that the boat may start to invert; with water shortages, the likelihood of getting the mast stuck in putty is a clear and present danger... as I'm the most experienced of the pair of us - being a sailing instructor, a senior instructor and a vice commodore it's best that I remain in this important but difficult position and maintain a lookout for any potential danger."

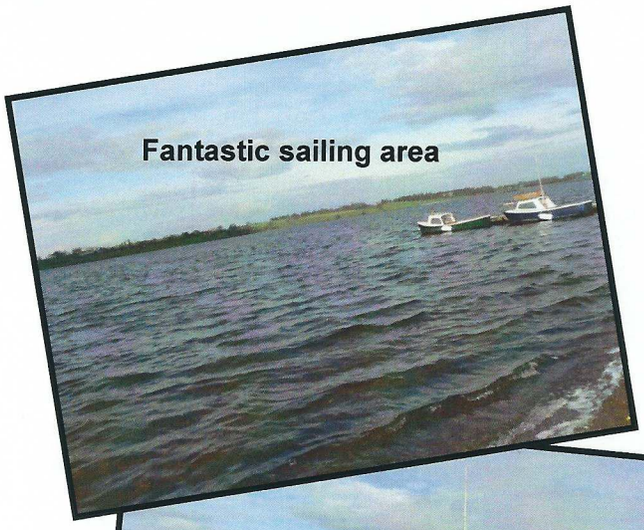
Ken..." the best course of action is that you swim round, drop kite, stow the kite, drop the pole and I will remain here."

The response was not the expected one of "OK...that's a good idea Ken...I bow to your experience & will take your advice...."

...so at that point I began the task of retrieval myself (with a few choice words I might add aimed at Mr Butters who staunchly remained at his assumed post) .. Is it possible to retrieve kite and remain dry? .Well with careful foot placement and sufficient ballast pinning the board great things are possible .the kite was successfully dropped into a neat package onto the foredeck, the pole removed from its mast mount and returned to its home, the boat now ready to assume its normal attitude the stick was brought upright. throughout all of this yours truly remained perfectly dry. But Chris, not too impressed with the smug grin on his helms' face would have the last laugh...
Kenny emboldened with his latest demonstration of his oneness with the boat maintained that smug grin for no great length of time, that grin transferring from helm to crew, proving that strengths are balanced by weakness. Kenny`s particular weakness in this case being the ability or rather inability to execute a bowline that would successfully secure his toe straps, ensuring that he too would be deposited unceremoniously into the water
So with the training concluded we anticipate great things



Blithfield sailing club. The editorial team thought it would be a good idea to put a focus on clubs that feature on the Open circuit trusting it will encourage more participation when people realize what they are missing!! We're going to start with Blithfield Sailing Club in 2012 home to the Midland Area championships. It is always a well attended event & this year there were 21 enthusiastic travelers, making it a pretty fierce competition. It's a great club, cosy & friendly & a super sailing venue located in the middle of the country, allowing Osprey sailors from both North & South to reach it with a reasonable journey. In recent years the Training weekend, heralding the start of the season for many, has also been held at Blithfield & it is possible to leave your boat there between events. Those who have been there know what I am talking about, for those who haven't, it is a gem waiting to be discovered...



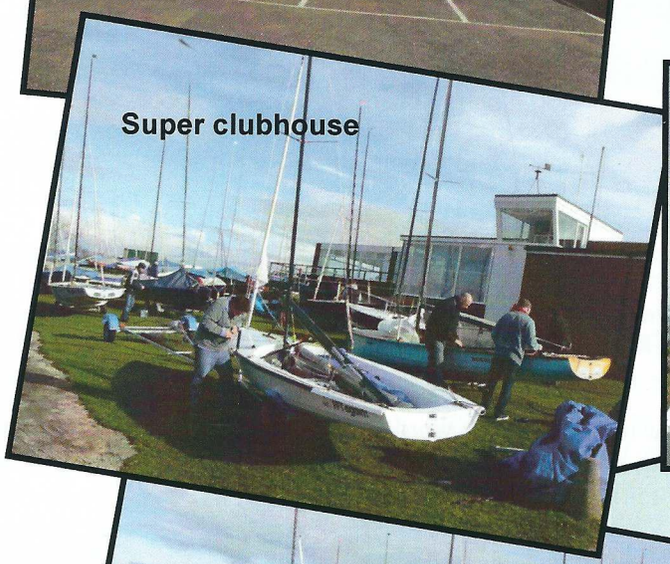
Fantastic sailing area



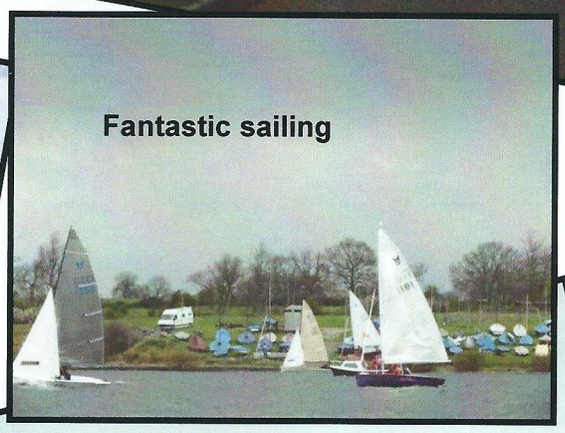
Lots of parking for cars & boat trailers..



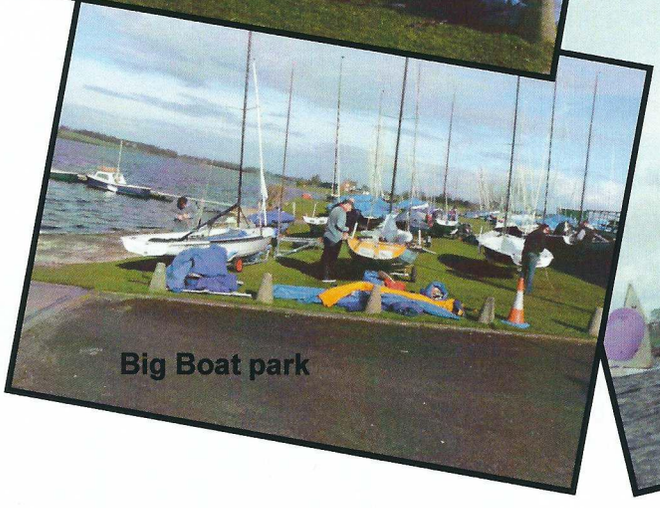
Plenty of space for camper vans (even yellow ones allowed)...& tents



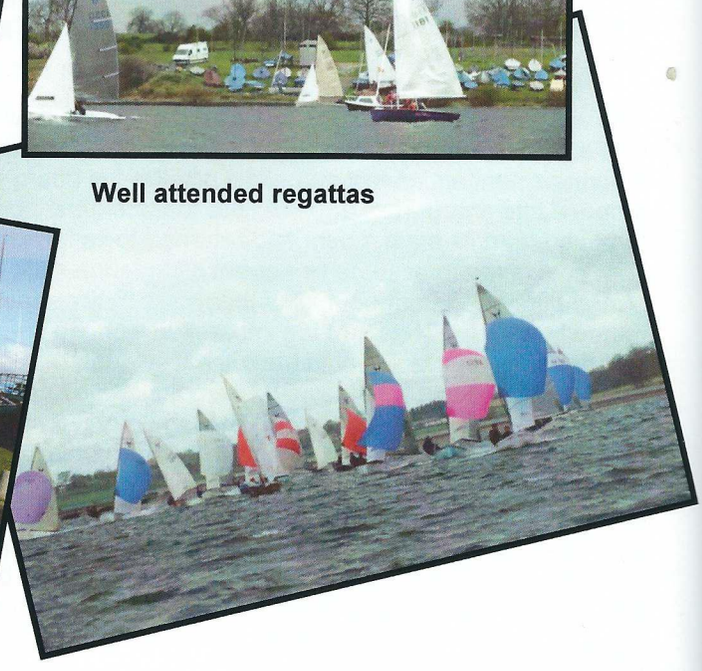
Super clubhouse



Fantastic sailing



Big Boat park



Well attended regattas

As part of the focus to celebrate 60 years of the Osprey we asked Andy Barker to pen some reflections on his involvement in the class ...his answer? Read on!!

My first connection with Ospreys was reading in the Daily Telegraph the report of Ken Robertson from Rock (my home) winning the Osprey Nationals at Scarborough (about 1965).

For a local lad to be written about in a national paper was amazing especially as in those days Rock was a small Cornish village that no-one had heard about. Ken's success fired me with enthusiasm for sailing and he was my hero and became my mentor in later years and a great friend before he died.

Ken was already building very successful Ospreys and Wayfarers with Westerly Boats in Rock. I was sailing Enterprises at the tender age of 14 years old and slowly improving my racing skills. Now and then I would crew in Ospreys as the "3rd man" when it blew.

As I got better at sailing Ken would ask me to crew for him in the Scorpion (he won the Nationals a few times) and I learnt a great deal from him, especially sailing in heavy winds (he was crap in the light airs!)

I moved to Grimsby after teaching college (because they had the best Enterprise fleet there in the country at that time) and honed my sailing skills against the best in the country.

Eventually I teamed up with Lawrie Smith to race Enterprises, Fireballs and 470s, Merlins and for a few years we won most of the major championships and Endeavour Trophies.

As we became more successful I needed more sailing time so gave up teaching and set up my own boat building business which enabled me to sail abroad when I needed.

In 1980 I moved to Dorset and set up High Performance Sailboats, building Fireballs and GRP Ospreys. Ken Robertson once again came to my assistance, giving me the Osprey mould to build the boats.

I modified these moulds and developed the rig which was sheeted at the end of the boom instead of in the middle and we sheeted the genoa 12" further inboard than other boats, our competitors wondered why we pointed so high up wind.

Mark Simpson, my crew, was 6'6" but only weighed 11.5 stones so we used a D section mast with adjustable spreaders. Mark used to stand on the boom on the run to change the spreaders for the next beat – we never capsized doing this, but we came close. In this boat we came 2nd to Nick Powell in Two Time Winner. The following year at Mounts Bay, Mark Simpson and I won every race bar one to win our first Osprey Nationals. Ken was there – to a certain extent I took over his mantel and he was chuffed that his prodigy had done just that.

At HPS we built a few Ospreys although the orders were slow, but we sent eight to Lagos which was a good order. I left boat building in 1982 and rarely sailed an Osprey again until about 1990 when I sailed number 1234 (a Hewitt boat) with Vyv Townend. This was a very fast boat and we won the Nationals three years in a row always after epic battles with the great Oscar Chess!

Vyv retired from Ospreys so I teamed up with Adam Bowers. I set up my own boat building business again, this time building wood epoxy boats. Adam and I spent three years coming second to Oscar but in the fourth year, sailing with Phil Angrave we secured a win at Plymouth, winning again for the next two years.

Boat building and I parted company for the last time which was quite timely because Hartly Marine started building excellent boats looking very similar to Ospreys!!

I was always surprised that with all my experience in the class and building Ospreys I have never been asked to help with the design or lay-out of the new boat, perhaps they thought that they would look too much like Ospreys if I was involved?

However, I think that the Hartleys now produce a good boat and have revitalised the class although I think a glaring omission was not to incorporate the split bow tank which I introduced in Adam "Doc" Ellery's boat. This greatly aids stoage, raising and dropping the spinnaker and also greatly adds to the life span of the kite. The Osprey committee seemed to agree – quote class magazine, Jan 2001.

I climbed back into an Osprey with Pete Greg to sail the Nationals in Poole in 2006. We sailed Des Menear's ex boat, again built by Nick Hewitt. Nick was an apprentice with Ken Robertson years ago and this again was a very fast boat. The following year we sailed again at Mounts Bay which was won by Colin Stevens. This boat was the same vintage as Nick Powell's boat which beat me in my first Nationals in 1980, nearly 30 years previously, which shows the durability of these great boats.

This year, whilst sitting in my dentist's chair, Mike Atkins said words to this effect "now, this could hurt a lot or if you sail with me in this year's championships in your old championship winning boat (which he now owns) it may not hurt at all". Obviously I'm joking, but me, being a coward took the painless route and the enjoyable option of sailing this year's Nationals at Parkstone. Unfortunately we were robbed of the title in the last race – sorry Gareth and Jonathan – by the way, well done!

It's great to see the class mature (some of us!) and develop over the last 50 years. It has a solid core and a great new boat builder, some good sailmakers and sailors. It attracts greats like Tim Rush, Matt Burge and the like and the res t of us who just think it's a great boat to sail.

Welsh & Midlands Championship Blithfield Sailing club

The season got off to a roaring start with 21 boats participating in the opening event of the year hosted by Blithfield Sailing club...report by Viola Scott

Spring is here, the season is upon us!

Time to go to Blithfield Reservoir in Staffordshire for the Osprey season opener aka Welsh and Midlands Championship.

As always at Blithfield the welcome was of the warmest midland fair, with the Gibbons family in particular, taking great trouble to see that everyone was looked after. Twenty-one ospreys came to join the fun.



The first race started in a gentle force 3 from the south-west. Kenny Brown and Chris Butters reached the windward mark first, but uncertainty about where to go next cost them. By the end of the race the breeze had built substantially, giving a hint that a proper work-out was in store. Martin Cooney and Peter Frith found a way through to take the race from Gareth Cauldwell and Jon Gibbons, with Viola and Mike Scott third.

Race 2 (after tea and cake) started under a somewhat ominous sky. This





did not disappoint as a huge squall came through, causing spectacular mishaps right through the fleet. Weaving through the wreckage unscathed was the key to success here. Will and George Odling took the race ahead of Martin and Peter, and fleet newcomers Mark Weston and Simon Hawkes who, after navigational errors in Race 1, were starting to show promise of good things to come.

Race 3 was not a quite as eventful as Race 2 but still notable for a spectacular hail storm and a searing final leg along the dam to a running finish yards from the shore. Mike Pickering and Mike Priddle found their speed and won this one from a consistently fast Gareth and Jon, with Martin and Peter a lowly third.

The day was also memorable for some bizarre and terrifying medical procedures. Paddy Lewis, taking time from training up new crew Peter Greig, noticed that too much oxygen was reaching Mike Pickering's brain. A spinnaker sheet tourniquet was swiftly applied to unhorse him. The patient objected and was fortunate to be discharged. Whilst Paddy and Mike are good mates, total uncoupling of the "mated" boats was achieved along with about a third of Paddy's kite through efficient swipes from the patrol boat Stanley knife.

Post racing Kenny Brown was found bent double in the corner of the changing room, his back having seized up. By good luck Nurse Springett was on hand to barrow him across to the duck van for treatment where followed a lurid cocktail of hard drugs and 'intimate' massage. The howls could be heard around the boat park. Amazingly Kenny emerged with a smile on his face and was still sailing fast the next day.

Nurse Springett, (or the Duck as he is more commonly known), had also had an eventful day and a second weekend of modifying his brand new but appallingly named Hartley Osprey. Last week in training he adjusted the bow in an attempt to lighten the ends, this week he decided to "borrow" the Mills' shrouds to saw notches out of his plate. In the spirit of fair play, these mod's will be reversed over the next week or so, none of it however was enough to dampen his enjoyment of the event tho' and his return after an enforced absence from the fleet.

The day was concluded with the legendary Blithfield hog roast, washed down by a couple barrels of the brown and foamy - a proper Osprey social. Don Stokes' video of the racing played in the background – somehow it looked more serene than we remembered it.



Photos kind permission Don Stokes

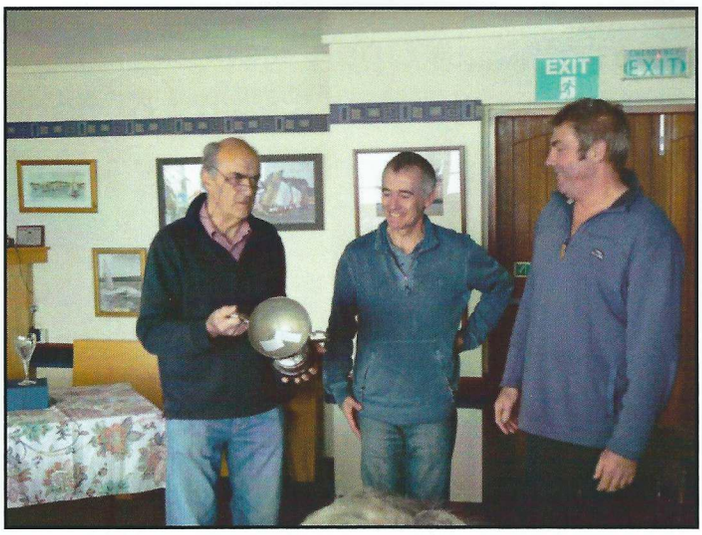


On the Sunday the fleet was lined up ready for the start at 10am sharp. The wind had other ideas – a cool force 3 but shifting all over, requiring a recall and course change before we were under way. The course was a figure of eight with some testing mark rounding's causing the occasional difficulty. Martin and Peter won this with a very consistent score-line which gave them the championship with a race to spare. The two Mikes took second and Paddy and Peter third, meaning that competition for the places was going to be extremely close. After another general recall the final race got away under the first black flag of the meeting. This race was won by Ian McDonald and Steve Hendon. Mark and Simon took second and Gareth and Jon third.

Martin and Peter had won impressively with 7 points, but with two boats tied on 13 points and three on 19 points, it emphasized the closeness of the competition. Two Blithfield boats in the top four was a great home result. Sadly Jon Batt and Nick Broomhall had one of those weekends when nothing would go right. Many boats had a couple of good results mixed with assorted mishaps, suggestive both of rust at the start of the season and the promise of great racing to come. Many thanks to Blithfield for delivering efficient race management, superb food and drink. As usual they were also guilty of getting the season underway in great style.

Roll on Mounts Bay in two weeks

Watch out in 2014 for a Hartley Laminates special event to celebrate their stable of Boats including the mighty Osprey!! As soon as the date is known put it in your diary...be there or be nowhere!!! This will be an event & social occasion not to miss!!



The Rear Commodore was reluctant to hand over such a magnificent trophy...



But he was only joking...



2012 Welsh & Midlands worthy winners Peter Frith & Martin Clooney pictured with a magnaminous Rear Commodore

Mounts Bay Open Meeting...50th Panmorra Cup is welcomed at Mounts Bay after 3 years of poor turnouts. Story by Mike Grieg...



After a few years of poor support the attendance was very welcoming and a great delight for the moaning groanies of the home club!!!!

With the off shore breeze leaving a slight anticipation on the beach as the fantastic sight of 13 osprey rigs appeared in the dinghy pen. The 1pm start time was looming, some boats pulling on wet kit from their Friday night tune up and other boats having the cover pulled of for the first time of the year, it was to sea we went.

A slight delay due to the exceptional low tide hindered the committee boat getting to sea, but as the boats sailed to the start area the breeze built and built and built until we were faced with a cold hard 4-5 from the North (025 degrees to be precise).

Anyway back to the sailing, it was hard out the blocks as the fleet split, some hitting the right some the left and some sticking to the middle. Colin and Mike rounded first with Martin and Peter second, the kites were flown for a hard reach towards Penzance and then the gybe out to sea. The fleet spread over the course quickly as a few casualties limped back to the beach to get back for the next race.

An unfortunate misjudgement by Colin and Mike opened the door for Martin and Peter as they hit the windward mark and whilst doing their turns watched Martin and Peter sail off into the distance...

They were able to hold off the consistent speed of the one off pairing of Mike Atkinson and Robin Hobson. Will and George Odling showed exceptional pace in the oldest boat of the weekend and finding their own technique of footing off upwind and going for speed certainly worked out well.

Also complete respect goes to the female helms and crews who showed massive courage and commitment with Alex Willis completing all races.

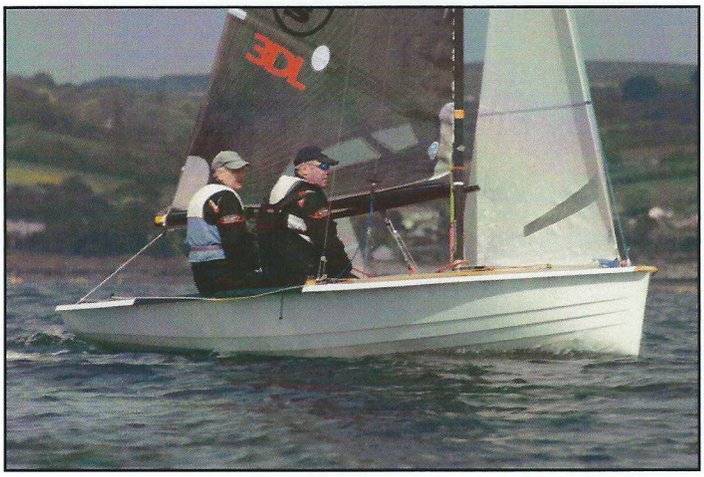
After a very quick turn around by Pippa Baker (OOD) a few boats refueling with some refreshments missed the 5 minute gun. Again the boats came up to the line spread from the committee boat to the pin end and with a higher percentage hitting the left it was again Martin and Peter who also hit the front and seemingly untroubled sailed a clear race for line honours. As were 2nd Will and George and 3rd Paddy Lewis and Peter Greig who didn't drop a note for the 3 rounds. After them a tussle between the 3 local boats of Jeremy Williams and Steve George, Mike Pickering and Mike Priddle and then Colin Stephens and Mike Greig resulted in Colin and Mike taking 4th, the 2 Mikes 5th and Jeremy and Steve 6th, all 3 boats crossed the line within 25 seconds of each other.

With the cold setting in and still the Race team getting another quick turn around for the breeziest race of the weekend. We did have the return of Celia Rushten and Tim Bowden in 1175 for this race. With the race team noticing the cold setting in, a 2 lap race was set, which seemed like a mere sprint compared to the previous races. But as the whole weekend proved Martin Cooney and Peter Frith were on fine form and nothing was going to upset their weekend. But again a 4 boat fight went on for the following places Mike Pickering and Mike Priddle were the odd ones out hitting the right hand side of the beat and managed to foot off and round the windward mark 4th behind the immaculate Martin and Peter, Colin and Mike and Mike and Robin.

Unfortunately the reaches could only be thrashed out once and then it was all crew work on the run. Mike Pickering and Mike Priddle went from 4th to 2nd, dropping Colin and Mike to 3rd and Mike and Robin to 4th.

The evening was spent in the newly refurbished clubhouse, with some home cooked food provided by Gabbie, Natalie and Vikki. Some filming was attempted on the water but the conditions unfortunately hindered the quality.

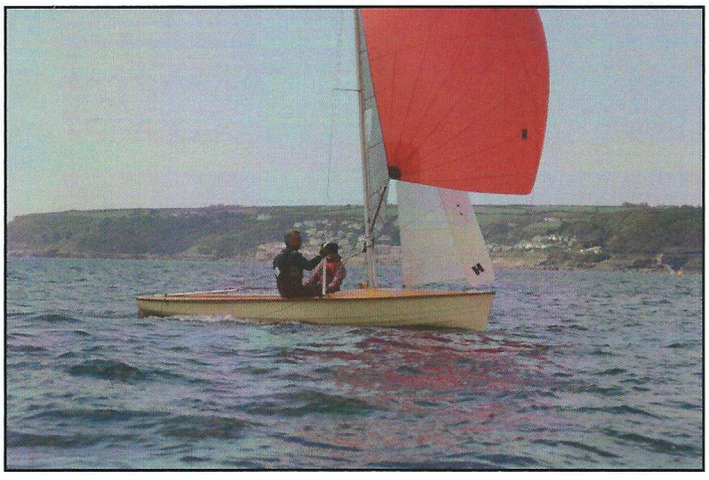
Mounts Bay Open meeting continued...

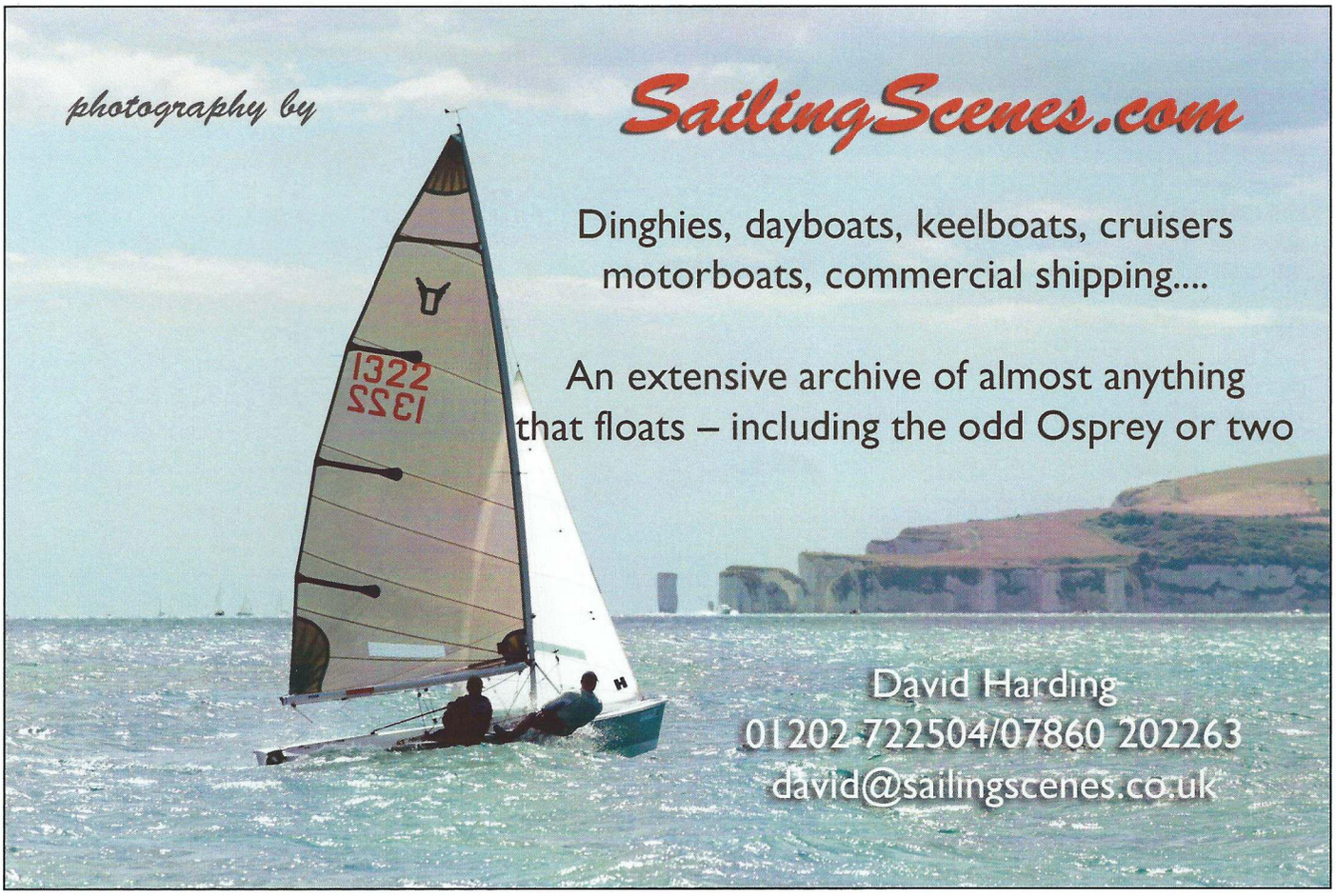


Sunday morning saw very light winds and glorious bright sunshine. A delay on the start time allowed for a breeze to settle. With the lighter crews rubbing their hands with glee, the race got underway as the fleet split. As repetitive as it sounds Martin and Peter were again off and away followed by Colin and Mike, Mike Pickering and Mike Priddle. The 2 Mikes had the legs and slipped past Colin and Mike to hold onto 2nd. Colin and Mike held onto 3rd in everything but their conditions and also Mike and Robin will probably also agree when they crossed the line for 3rd. Paul Heather and Jonathon Osgood enjoyed a good result coming in 6th which after surviving the Saturday turned out to be their best result. The breeze built slightly more to make it now marginal trapeezing for the final race, just to rub salt into the wounds Martin and Peter stayed out for the final race, there were early signs that they may not have it their way as Paddy Lewis and Peter Greig rounded 1st with Martin and Peter 2nd and Jeremy and Steve 3rd. But the slightly over adventurous Race team put on a 5 lap race which gave plenty of position changes.

Martin and Peter slowly ate into Paddy and Peters lead and in the end passed them to take line honours, Jeremy and Steve also did extremely well to pass Paddy and Peter and held onto 2nd and their best result of the weekend. Paddy held onto 3rd. For a while Kenny Brown and Chris Butters showed their bow towards the front of the fleet, but with a competitive fleet on the water they did slip down to finish 10th.

Finally a big thank you to all the visitors for making the trip down to Cornwall and putting this weekend back on the map this year. Mounts Bay Sailing really appreciated the Panmorra cup returning and the fantastic spectacle of the fleet.





OSPREY SCOTTISH AND NORTHERN CHAMPIONSHIPS at Coniston by Alex Mamwell



The Osprey Class returned to Coniston Sailing Club this year to hold their Scottish and Northern Championships as part of the Clubs three day Jubilee Regatta. Competitors came from Kent, Cornwall, Holland and Wales to join local boats and were met with a mixed bag of wind and weather. The fleet extended a warm welcome to newcomers Ros and David from Tata and Alan from Prestwich and Coniston SC provided the usual party atmosphere which competitors associate with this event.

The series involved 7 races with 5 to count and the first two on the Saturday gave competitors a sharp reintroduction to Coniston with a force 2-4 North Easterly and the odd gust a little heavier. The early front runners were Rob Shaw and Ian Little, Viola and Mike Scott, Mikes Pickering and Priddle and Alec Mamwell and Jerry Dixon with Alan Henderson and Russell Gardner showing some good speed at times. Shaw and Little took the first race and Pickering and Priddle the second. Paddy Lewis and David Slater, old hands at Coniston, and usually up at the front had serious cordage problems which necessitated scouring the chandleries of Windermere for replacements. The best part of the day for those boys was an ice cream waiting for the ferry whilst Paddy contemplated sacking his valet for not preparing the boat properly. Poor Paddy. Worse was still to come later that night. Accustomed to more palatial accommodation he had been squeezed into a small motor home and, given the low temperature, had decided to sleep in his one piece body warmer. Unfortunately whilst conducting his ablutions he managed to get a particularly important and sensitive part of a gentleman's anatomy caught in the zip. Nothing daunted and in some pain Paddy decided that, in the absence of his dresser, he would text his fashion guru, Mike Pickering, for further advice! Mike's advice was to put ice on it...to Paddy's horror the pain & it, disappeared!!

On the second day the weather provided a force 2-5 from the North. Overcast and bitterly cold conditions saw most teams digging out steamers and dry suits. The RO, Judy Leese, struggling calmly with some trying conditions and disparate fleets set a series of long courses which allowed the Ospreys to stretch their wings. The fleet made a fine sight as the teams spread out, set kites and planed down the lake towards Peel Island. Paddy, obviously recovered from his night time traumas, led all the way to the death when he let through the two Mikes and the Scotts. Pickering and Priddle also won the next race as they started to take control of the championships but their domination was threatened in the last race of the day as the Scotts powered to an impressive

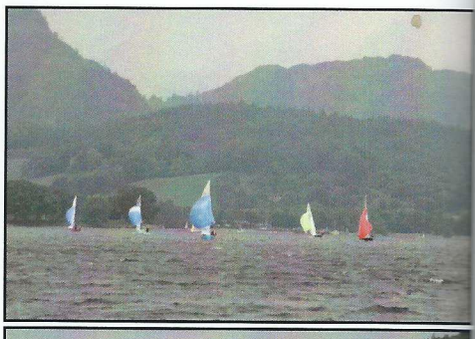


victory.

So as the fleet packed up for the night and prepared to enjoy an evenings entertainment from ex-Osprey sailor and virtuoso guitarist Dave Metcalf, everything was still to play for. Although the two Mikes were in the driving seat the Scotts and Shaw and Little could still win. Fourth place was also still up for grabs with Mamwell and Dixon, after a poor day, fighting off growing challenges from Lewis and Slater and Henderson and Gardner.

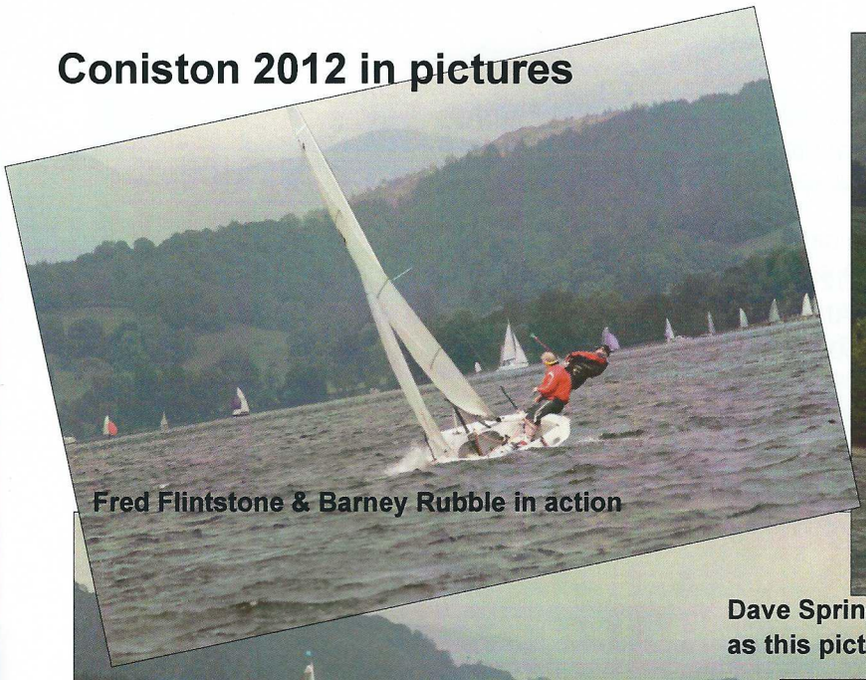
Thankfully the next day brought sun and in the morning a force 1-3 Northerly. The Scotts battled with the two Mikes all the way round another long course to secure a fine victory in trying conditions as the wind started to fade. An extended lunch gave time to let the competing wind systems sort out which would prevail but still left the RO with a difficult decision. In the end the fleet set off in a drifter that never got much better. Mamwell and Dixon faced the unusual situation that the opposition had been bored into submission as neither Lewis and Slater nor Henderson and Gardner came out to play thus securing their fourth place overall before the last race started. Shaw and Little drifted faster than everyone else and took Ros and David Downs and the two Mikes with them whilst the rest of the fleet anchored and became entangled with the other two fleets. This result knocked the Scotts down to third but was not enough to wrest the championship from the two Mikes who proved popular and decisive winners of their first Osprey event. It also allowed the Downs to post a warning to the fleet of their potential with a solid second place that could easily have been their first race win.

As a footnote most of the boats competing were the splendid Hartley Mk 4s but wooden boats managed to secure 2nd, 4th and 5th overall and still allow a competitive and low cost entry into the fleet. Overall although three boats were generally near the front the racing was tight all the way down the order and small mistakes cost places with every team enjoying at least one good result. It was a tired set of competitors who packed up for the long drive home or lingered to sample more Coniston SC hospitality and Doug's excellent beer whilst watching the lighting of the Beacon atop The Old Man. A spectacular conclusion to a splendid





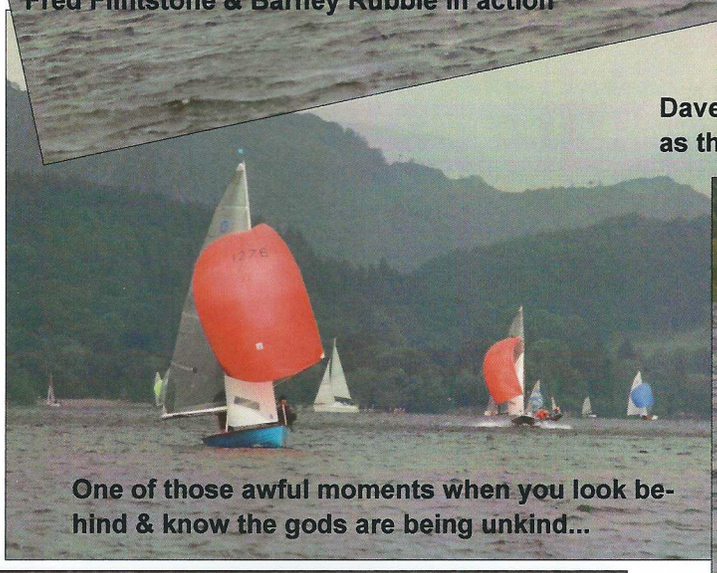
Coniston 2012 in pictures



Fred Flintstone & Barney Rubble in action



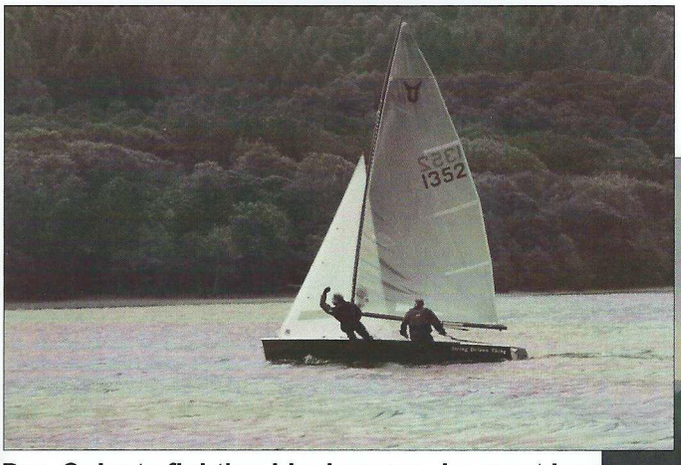
Dave Springett, who was not always as in control at Coniston as this picture might suggest!!



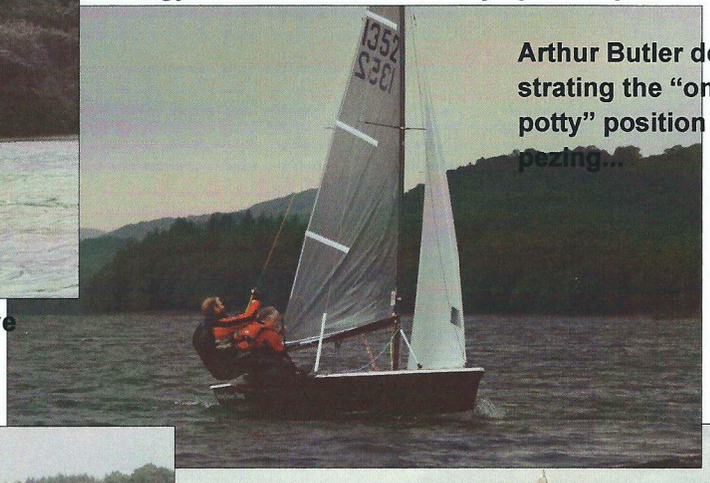
One of those awful moments when you look behind & know the gods are being unkind...



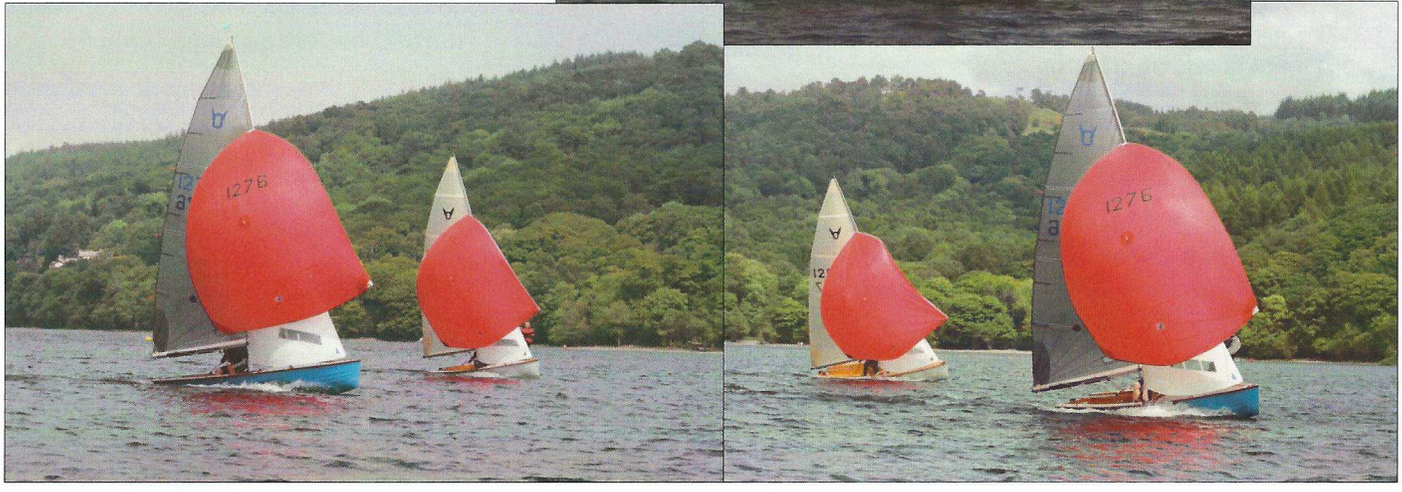
Text book...posterior perfectly positioned for the gybe...what more can I say...picture perfect



Don Quixote fighting his demons...he must have spotted a windmill...



Arthur Butler demonstrating the "on the potty" position of trapezing...



What happens when you take your eye off the spinnaker just for a moment...

My Sabbatical from the Ospreys by Robin Hobson



Jerry asked me to write a piece about my sabbatical from the Ospreys. It is a sabbatical, 1206 is still and will remain in my possession for use by me or by Ollie but it just so happened that circumstances led to the opportunity to rethink my life, take a leap of faith off the metaphorical cliff and see if I could achieve my childhood dream of sailing round the world.

I always have believed that travel broadens the mind and travelling by yourself multiplies that experience many fold – you have to meet people, you have to get on with people and if you embrace those statements, take a big run up and hurl yourself off that metaphorical cliff you will find that you can fly and that whilst you will self doubt and you will have moments of loneliness that these are acceptable costs for the reward. I am sure that travelling with a partner allays some of those fears and I am sure doing it with bountiful fiscal reserves allay even further those fears but the bigger the perceived risk the bigger the reward.

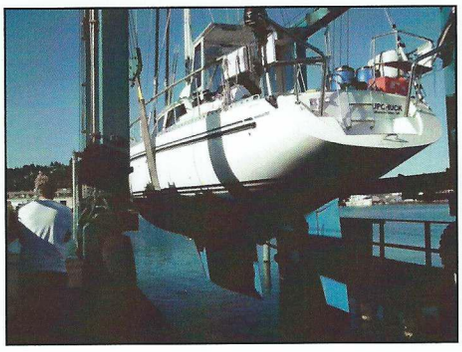
My full(ish) blog of my mid life adventure is recorded on www.robintoozshobson.co.uk but for Jerry I am providing a synopsis and some pictures.

Background – 2010 was a major change year for me following a few "not so happy" years. I sailed for about 12 weeks, passed my commercial Yachtmaster, did 2 world championships and 2 national championships +++.

2011 was not so great on the sailing front, the year was probably the most planned I had ever had but as the army says "no plan survives contact with the enemy" - it went pear shaped.

January 2012 – Plan a) – through good friend Jerry Bethell , buy Beneteau 505 in St Lucia, spend May / June preparing and in July set sail across the Pacific to Australia and sell the boat. Come April I really reluctantly pulled the plug because costs were rocketing.

May 2012 – Plan b) – go on to www.crewseekers.net and either find a job or find a trip. I see an advert to sail the North West Passage all expenses (apart from beer) paid. The trip is from Seattle to Scotland through the Arctic. I am not giving a history lesson here but look up North West Passage on Wikipedia. I meet the owner and he showed me the charts, the itinerary, talked about the history, enthused about what will be



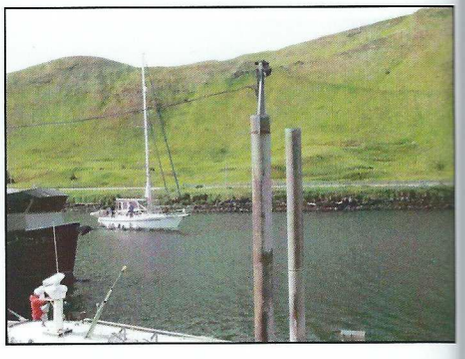
seen and states what skills he needs from the four crew. I am enthused, excited and signed on.

June 2012 – Fly to Seattle and the adventure begins and after a weeks full on boat prep we set sail. My main task was provisioning the boat for 5 people for 4 months and cooking whilst we were prepping. First port of call for one night – Port Townsend and then the itinerary changed for the first time, rather than go up the inside of Victoria Island and see the Orcas we head off down the Juan de Foca Straights direct to Dutch Harbour (home of "Worlds deadliest catch") in the Aleutian Islands Alaska. 1500 miles – 10 days.
We had 4 days in Dutch doing more prep work before setting off for Nome, Alaska to wait for the Ice to open up.

July 2012 – Nome Alaska – 18 days spent with extremely hospitable people, excellent company and loads of experiences just totally off the radar – see the blog. Nome is home to

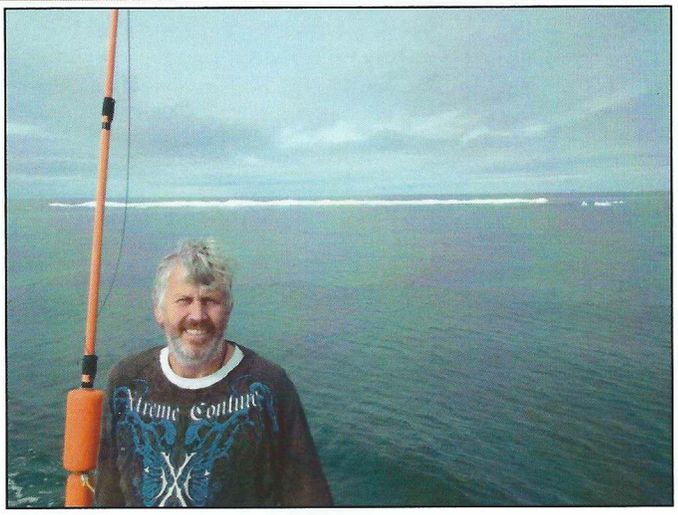


"Bering Sea Gold" – we meet the film crew and the stars and may even appear in some episode.
After 18 days the Ice is clear at Barrow Point and we are off – 2500 miles with some sea ice thrown in we arrive in Cambridge Bay after 14 or so days at sea. At this point, deep in the Arctic Circle I left the boat. It is a sad parting from the other 3 crew, we were united after 2 months sailing

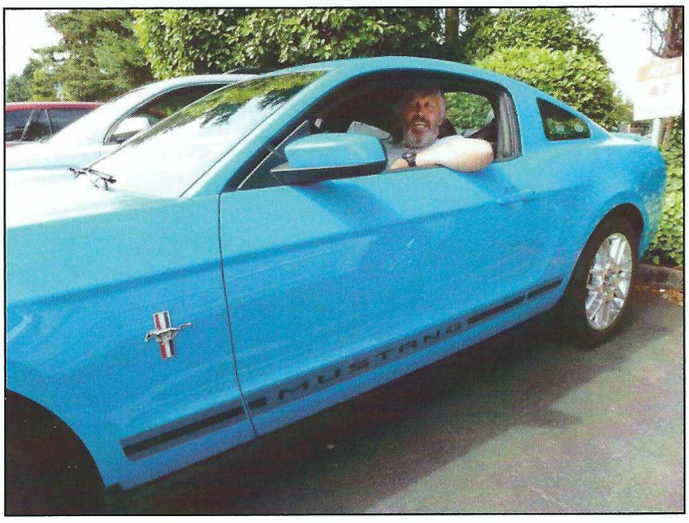


together however the owner had his own ideas of what he wanted from the trip which was at odds with the original plan and the crew.
On a yacht, the captain (owner) decides the agenda – a principal I wholeheartedly agree with. The boat arrived back in Scotland a whole month early.

I really enjoyed my time on the boat, I remain grateful for the opportunity and it has fired me up to return and do the trip properly under my own terms. If you would like to read a beautifully written version of how to do it, read the Blog of a boat called Tokimata, a kiwi family that became friends who were there with us.



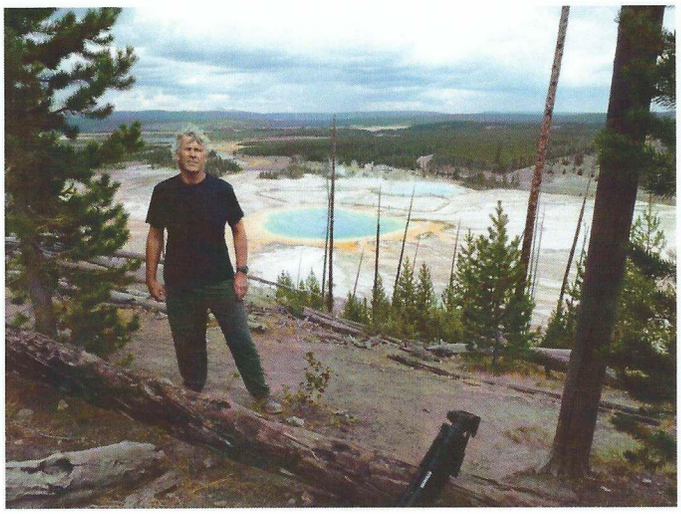
August 2012 – Plan c) – Fly to Yellowknife with no hotel booked (no room – medical conference in town all rooms sold). I got chatting to an Architect who was on the same flight as I was – he introduced me to his wife and nephew who had come to meet him at the airport and the next adventure started. The next month included sailing, kayaking, hiking, Northern Lights, hitchhiking from Yellowknife (home to "Ice Road Truckers") to Vancouver through the Rockies (1500 miles, 3 days, 7 lifts), 3 days with friends in Vancouver, train to Washington and 5 days with friends, hiring a Mustang ($33 per day), driving 2,500 miles to Las Vegas in a week whilst visiting Yellowstone, Bryce Canyon, Grand Canyon and Las Vegas (less than £300 in petrol!).



I had then signed up to crew a 70' sled across from New York to the Solent but with 9 days to go, the trip was cancelled because the new carbon boom had delaminated in manufacture putting the trip back 2 months so my tour of the south and east coast of US was put on hold and I flew home.

September / October 2012 – six weeks at home sorting out ties – time to go.

November 2012 – I write this missive sat in the terminal in Houston awaiting my flight to Panama. What am I up to now? I had bought a yacht over the web, a Roberts 38 fully equipped for world cruising but got gazumped so I am going to look physically. Why Panama? Panama is the place of dreams and broken dreams, people get here and then plans change, the theory is to pick up a fully equipped yacht for a song. I am full circle, on plan a) with a twist, I aim to sail the 505 worlds in Barbados in April / May.



With luck and a fair wind, I hope to be back in the Osprey in 2014 but you just never know what fate will bring.



Probably the wrong time to ask yourself if you remembered to insure the boat you have borrowed....

Southern Championships Poole

A wild weekend in the harbor

By Paddy Lewis



Many of the Osprey fleet had had a close eye on Windguru ahead of the Poole Open. It had been windy all week and particularly on the Thursday night; some of the local Ospreys had been out club racing when they were hit by 40 knot gusts which left the entire fleet swimming apart from Pete Frith and Martin Cooney who took down their main and cunningly sheltered behind the Condor ferry. The wind gods spotted the fact that they hadn't had a swim but as you can see from the pictures (next page) they didn't escape so easily on Saturday! I feel a caption competition coming on!

Saturday morning dawned and the 20 strong fleet awoke to see it was going to be a day for the big lads. Mike Pickering was up at 4am pacing around his room looking at every weather forecast he could find. We were staying at the wonderful Watkins sailing lodge, which is the best accommodation in Poole. It has 6 landladies and a resident doctor who is always on hand to help with any sailing injuries or general ailments. An extra banana and a croissant were added to the normal light weights breakfast of an apple and a glass of water and we were all set to do battle out in Poole Harbour.

The drama began before a single flag was raised on the committee boat. Mike Pickering and Mike Priddle had gone out early to test the conditions and broke a shroud but luckily didn't loose the mast. This proved to be terminal for the 2 Mikes as they had to return to base missing both races on Saturday. Anna Watkins (landlady No 5) had commented to the Mikes before the race, that having shrouds made from string didn't seem like a very good idea!

Race one had Cooney and Frith at the windward mark first closely followed by Will and George Odling. Cooney and Frith went in just past the windward mark (see the pictures to prove that even the best swim sometimes). The Odling went for the kite and swam as well which led to an exploding mast foot and a return to shore and sadly back on the road trailer and home. Andy Barker and Mike Atkinson took the lead closely followed by Paddy Lewis and Pete Greig. On the second reaching leg Barker and Atkinson broke the adjustment rope on the trapeze, splash went Mike followed by a 100 yard swim back to Barker on the upturned Barking Mad. Lewis and Greig went on to win but not without a certain amount of pressure from Cooney



and Frith who had recovered their composure to get back within spitting distance only to swim a second time down the last run as they gybed, eventually finishing 3rd with Francis and Male in 1296 2nd at their first open meeting in an Osprey... ones to watch in the future, welcome to the class guys.

Phil Angrave and Pete Smith made a welcome returned to the open circuit after a two year break but also had a breakage in race 1, which required a return to the club house. Despite the Watkins girls rushing around to help them get the tiller extension fixed they didn't make it back to the race course in time for second start, but they chased the fleet down showing some of the old magic. Love the new look Phil with flowing locks!

Race 2 was just as breezy with nearly half the fleet returning to the beach. Cooney and Frith battled it out with Lewis and Greig eventually getting the better of them to take 1st.

After a very wet and windy night the wind had dropped a little and repairs had been done, meaning a return of the Mikes and others but sadly in vein for the series with only two races being sailed on Sunday and only one discard available.

Less wind was a welcome relief for most and both races had more boats vying for the top 5 or 6 places. Russ Wheeler and Mark Mawhinney found themselves at the windward mark in the top 3 in both races and hung in well giving them two good results to leave them 6th overall. Mark commented to Russ at the prize giving that he thought his bank manager would be delighted with the prize of a couple of bottles of wine to show for the line of credit he had given him to buy his new boat. Russ had of course promised his bank manager that the new boat would more than pay for itself within the first two years with all the extra prize money that would flow his way!

Cooney and Frith took both races on Sunday to win the event, (which is why bank managers should never trust Osprey sailors). This is the first time they have won it since 2004 which just goes to show that home waters at Poole isn't a factor. Lewis and Greig took 2nd in the first race just ahead of Alan Laing and Steve Brown and in the last race Laing and Brown sailed the shifts well to take 2nd from Lewis and Greig.

Thank you to Poole Yacht Club for a great weekend sailing, a great warm up for the Nationals, sailed in the same waters a few weeks later.



Martin Cooney & Peter Frith winners of the 2012 Poole Open