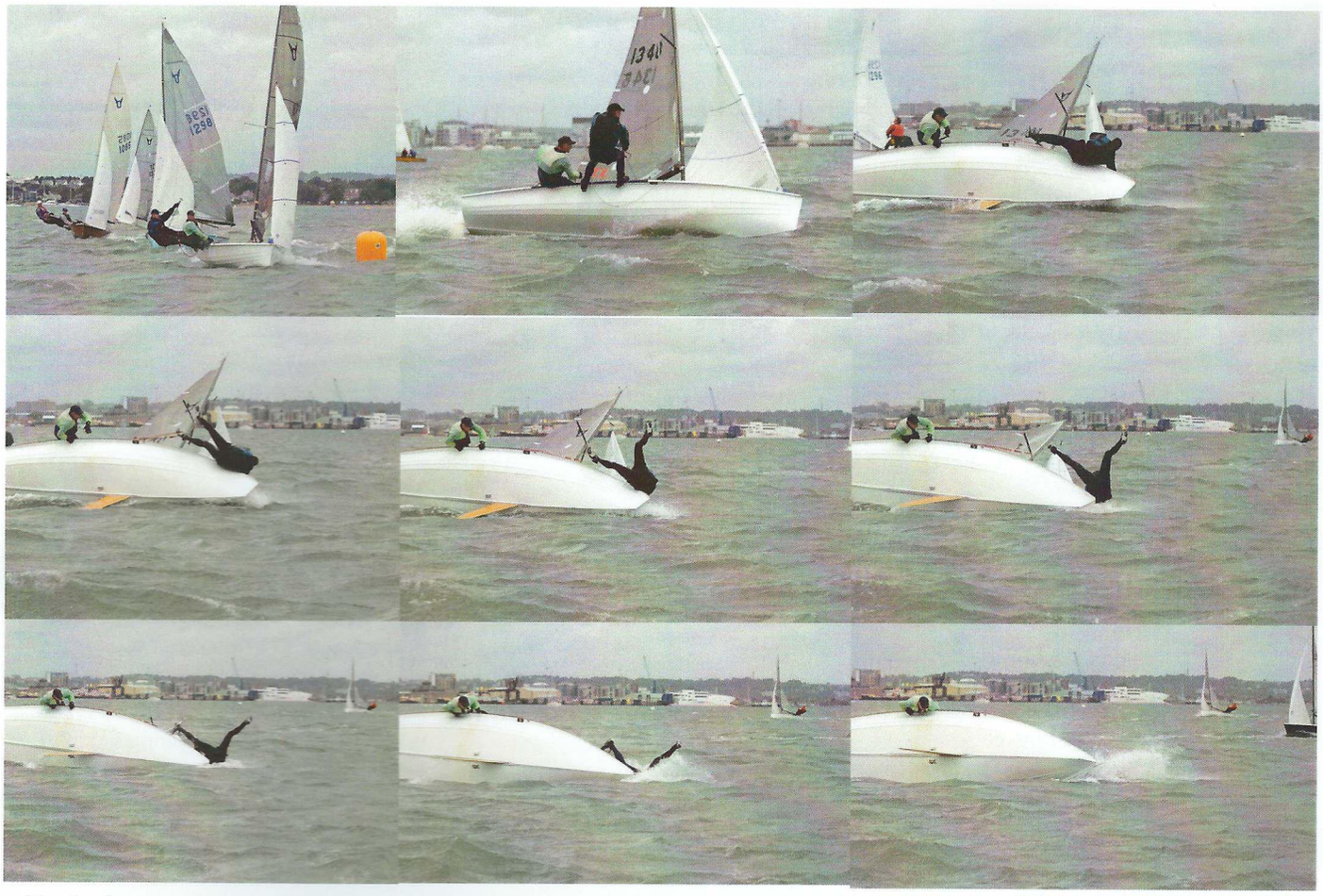


Martin Cooney & Peter Frith proving that even the best of sailors get it wrong sometimes...or had Peter said something to Martin that had seriously upset him? We shall never know but Tom Daley has nothing to fear from this hapless diver...



Grateful thanks to Mike Millard for giving permission for publication of all the Poole Open photos, including the fantastic series culminating in the unceremonious dunking of Peter Frith!!

'Mods and Rockers on the Beach at Shoreham' by Paddy Lewis

Just when you thought it couldn't get much wilder than last weekend at Poole along comes Shoreham! Take a south westerly force 5, add big waves, sunshine and 10 Ospreys and you've pretty much died and gone to heaven! This was the real thing, what Ian Proctor had in mind when he designed this brilliant boat. I'm absolutely certain you can't have this much fun anywhere else with your trousers on!

Once again windguru took pole position on my workstation all week. Mike Pickering was still exhausted from last weekend pacing around his digs, but true to form he managed a full night awake on Friday in front of his ipad, laptop, iphone and TV, which meant he could look at windguru, XC Weather, Met Office and "One flew over the cuckoo nest" on the TV at the same time. The problem was he was so tired by the time I turned up for breakfast he thought he was Jack Nicholson in the film and was trying to break out of the B&B!! Thankfully after a bowl of Alpen, a banana and a cup of coffee he came back down to earth and it was off to the club to rig.

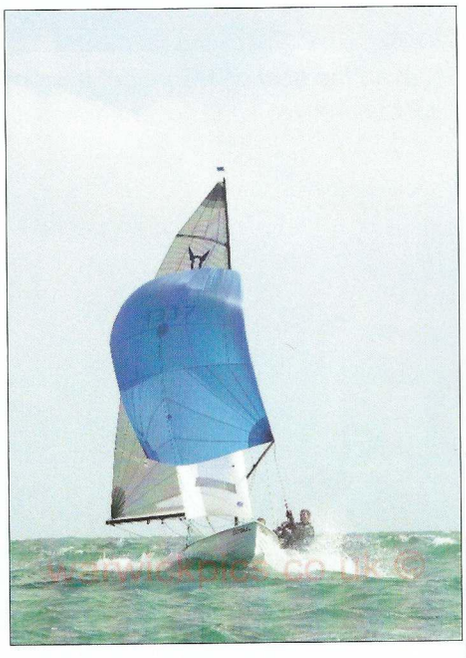
The club was a hive of activity with the Fireballs having a meeting at the same time as the Ospreys. It was like a scene from Quadrophenia, Mods and Rockers clashing on the beach. Imagine the Osprey fleets (Rockers) surprise when they spotted the leader of their gang, Matt Burge (2011 Osprey National Champion) dressed in the proverbial Fireball (Mods) fishtail Parka jacket and a Fred Perry shirt sporting the Fireball logo. Pickering, still slightly delirious from lack of sleep, ask me to take Burge round the back and have a word, but when I pointed out that he was a jolly nice chap and he had kindly had one of the Watkins girls doing work experience at his veterinary surgery, he thankfully let the matter drop.

Boats rigged and ready to rock, just to continue the theme! Both fleets headed out of the relatively benign harbour into the white tops with full rake, max cunningham and strut right off (if you're reading this and you were set up any other way, then you'll have been one of the swimming team!).

Race 1 got away first time, spray everywhere and helms not really being able to see a thing. Mike Pickering (still tired) and Mike Priddle arrived at the windward mark first, kite not deployed so the rest followed suit to the gybe mark which felt a bit wimpy so Lewis and Greig went for it down the next leg... jet fighter to the leeward mark only to be taken by Andy Barker and Mike Atkinson conservatively two sailing it on the waves but going just as fast.

Lewis and Greig, with adrenalin out of the system, dropped and rounded up in third. Pickering and Priddle, still leading at the top mark next time round, followed by Lewis and Greig, went for the kite down the run as did the rest of the fleet. Sadly, half way down the run they got a wave just at the wrong time and in they went, breaking their pole in the process. A thicker Pole was suggested in the bar afterwards but Pickers said he was very happy with Mike Priddle for now!

Lewis and Greig took the lead only to throw it away on the last reach when they were clear ahead by being greedy and going for the kite and neglecting to let the kicker off enough as they hoisted. They flapped about in a state of half capsize trying to get the kite down as Barker & Atkinson passed them. Adrenalin still pumping they hoisted and set again in an attempt to catch up, jibed well and got back to within 30 yards at the finish, exciting stuff with the immortal words of Del BoyTrotter running round their heads "You plonker Rodney".


wwwwickpics.co.uk ©

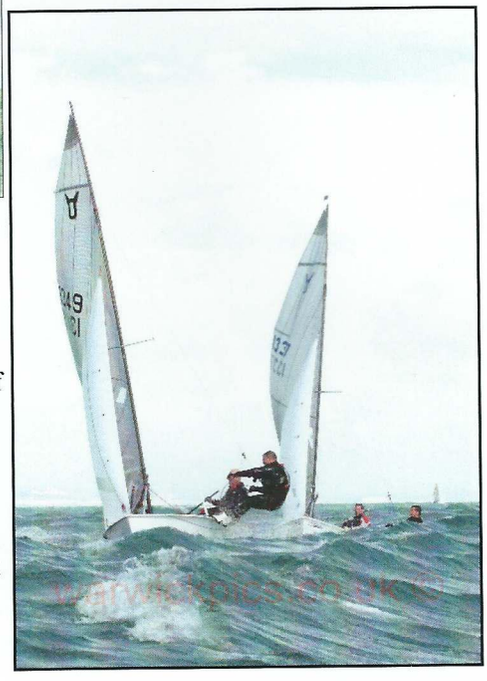
Race 2 was just as exciting; Lewis and Greig lead at the windward mark, hoisted and shot away from the rest of the fleet with Barker and Atkinson going for their kite as well. At the gybe mark Lewis and Greig got their spinnaker sheet round the end of the boom letting three boats through, "here's another fine mess you've got me into" springs to mind! Poor Pete, what's he let himself in for!

Mark Weston and Simon Hawkes in 1349, back in form after a break since their successful winter Sail Juice series, came into the running and took up the lead half way through the race and held on well, particularly uphill, till the end just ahead of Lewis and Greig who splashed and crashed down the reach again to try in vain to catch them. Weston and Hawkes will be ones to watch at the Nationals.

Day 2 was windy! Tide going out, wind coming the other way... big waves! Half the fleet sensibly decided to stay on shore and watch the mad men and woman go out into the mountainous waves, including Alex Willis, a seriously gung ho young lady, completely unfazed, brilliant!

Needless to say the wind picked up as the course was set, some elected to return to base to avoid breaking anything with the Nationals just around the corner. Eventually the race officer abandoned racing before the start and sent everyone home. This was much to the relief of Russ Wheeler who was trying to remember, as he was doing 20 knots down a big old wave, if he had altered his insurance policy from his old wooden boat to his nice new Mark IV, which is really owned by his bank manager! All in all a brilliant weekend at a fantastic venue, with the best BBQ for a long time all beautifully laid on by the wonderful members of Shoreham Sailing Club.

Rock on Tommy!!


wwwwickpics.co.uk ©

Glorious Shoreham in pictures...thanks to Warwick Baker for the top shots



Russ Wheeler yawning on the stick because day 2 at Shoreham just wasn't windy enough..

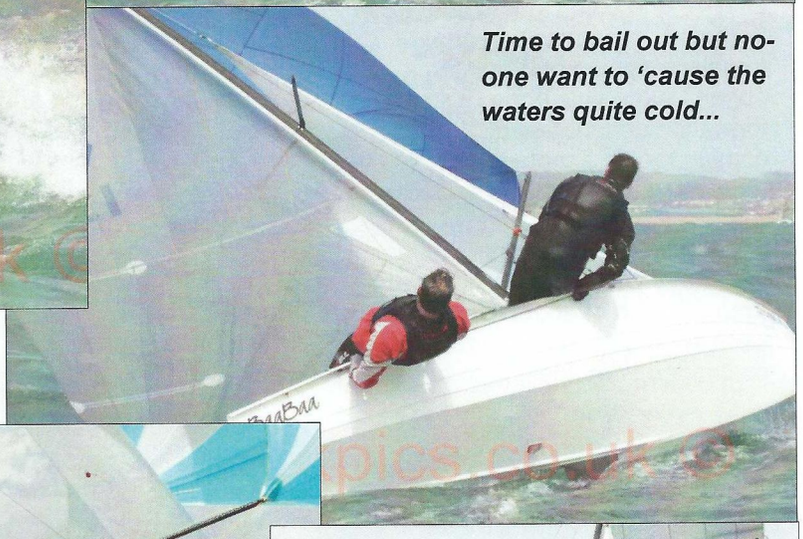
Dogfighting Ospreys





Above: Mark Weston doing some needlework on the wire while his helmsman Simon Hawkes battles through the waves

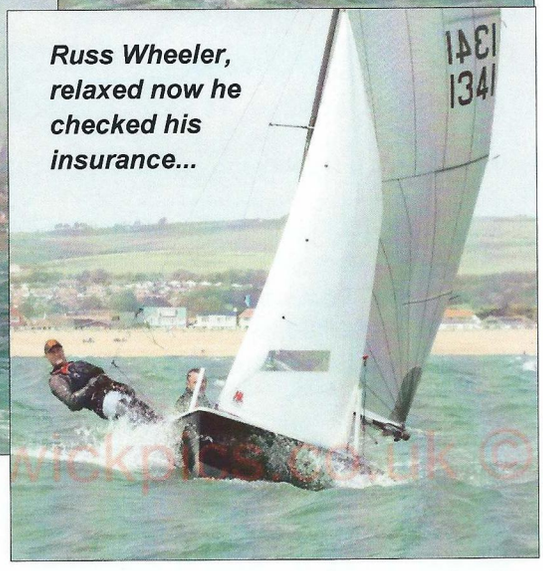
Time to bail out but no-one want to 'cause the waters quite cold...





The Osprey is such a well balanced boat that it doesn't actually need a helm or crew...

Russ Wheeler, relaxed now he checked his insurance...



Weymouth was back on the Osprey Open calendar in 2012. Kev Francis & Phil Male sailing Osprey 1296 'Whitestar' were sufficiently enthusiastic to write up their experiences of the weekend & quite rightly have been rewarded with a feature in our Newsletter!!

Ospreys at Weymouth regatta 14th & 15th July 2012

5 Osprey's graced the waters of Weymouth bay for this year's regatta, which had attracted some notable names in various 'bandit' boats all aiming to pick up the first prize shield for fast handicap.
Wind Guru had been consulted and with the indication for an ideal breeze on both days things were looking good. The drive to the club was typical of pretty much every weekend and in fact every day since March with rain, rain everywhere. Still, with a car load of eager pie eating Osprey crew nothing could dampen our enthusiasm and sure enough on entry to the club it was like a scene from the Dinghy show with all manner of craft assembled to varying degrees, making quite a sight.
We quickly located our only visiting Osprey of Martin Cooney and Peter Frith and immediately began the systematic mapping of all systems aboard in the vain hope of some performance enhancement for the forthcoming racing.....note to self, it takes more than a few pulleys and string to win these things.
There were 3 races scheduled for both days and with a time to course from our club of about 40 minutes we were soon all dodging around the committee boat, looking to bribe the race officer in some way or another - having already spoken to (attempted to bribe) said person before leaving shore
I was less than impressed to find he was on the 'other 'race course and I had brought nothing but a double-decker to bribe with.
As far as the racing went we decided it would be best to get all of the bad things out of the way in race 1 so combined a bad start with ensuring we were on the wrong side of every evil wind shift and with 'rubbing' up against an OK 'just for fun' to see how quickly our new rudder would spin us around a couple of times.....sometime later and I was struggling to recover all of my toys from the pram my crew honourably remained silent and dignified all the time wanting no doubt to throw me off the boat too !
Race 2 was different; somehow we popped out in front at the windward mark with Martin and Pete behind. This was new to us and led to unprecedented tweaking and tuning and talk of 'covering'. Echoing in my head were the famous words 'all they have to do now is hold on' like a replay of the commentary for euro 2012 or Wimbledon ...and we did, right until the last beat to the finish where experience showed itself and our attempts to cover tack proved fruitless, still not a bad race and all toys still in pram.
Race 3 was more routine as were the 3 races on the Sunday with Swiftun motoring away from the start line and into an unassailable lead within the first lap leaving us to fend off the Merlin Rocket of Jon Turner and John Pym in Osprey 1247 Stringbag. My excuse was the poor wind direction and varying speed which did everything it could to send you the wrong way up the beat with the wrong rig setting. No one else seemed to have any excuses so I fell on my sword and admitted to helming incompetence.
Overall it was a good regatta with Martin and Peter picking up the shield for first place in fast handicap fending off 27 other boats in the process, a deserved victory for them and a warning to others for the forthcoming nationals. We learnt some new things thanks to their advice and put this to good use to finish 6th overall in class. One thing that a certain Scorpion sailor learnt was that hitting an Osprey amidships was very bad news for their foam sandwich bow.....we did offer them some tape... which was politely refused!.
Maybe next year we could have some more visitors and call it an Osprey Open...?

The Osprey has had & continues to have an International pedigree...

There were fleets based at various RAF Sailing Clubs in Singapore during the 1960's until 1971 when the Armed forces were withdrawn from the Far East... Certainly RAF Changi (now Singapore International Airport)...(+/- 6 boats), RAF Seletar (+/-8 boats) & maybe RAF Tengah (at least one boat in 1967!). The current Changi Sailing Club has an archive in it's library chronicling those halcyon days.

There were 3 Ospreys at Singapore Yacht Club in the 1990's...

It is still sailed at Lagos YC in Nigeria, Mombasa YC in Kenya & Surrey Sailing club, White Rock at Vancouver in Canada. Your editor contacted all these clubs in the hope of a contribution to the magazine but sadly no one sparked...probably all fanatical Osprey sailors out enjoying big winds, glorious sunshine & capsizes where there is frankly just no incentive to pull the boat upright when you're swimming in water that's hotter than the bath water here in Europe...On the other hand they may just be a little slow putting finger to keyboard so watch this space next year...

2012 UK National Championships Parkstone

Paddy Lewis gives a day by day, blow by blow commentary as events unfolded at this year's National Championships...starting with a review of the potential movers & shakers before racing got underway...apologies to anyone not captured in Paddy's searchlights ...time to put that right at next year's Nationals!!

This Years Runners & Riders...
Competition would be hot at this year's Osprey Nationals with some new faces having joined the fleet over the last 12 months. There were also some notable absences as well as the resurfacing of one or two old faces...

Mike Pickering & Mike Priddle: Current holders of the Scottish and Northern Trophy, 2nd in the 2011 Inland Championships, always at or near the front this year and firing on all cylinders after sailing all winter in the SailJuice series,finishing a respectable 7th out of 610 entries. Handy in the lower wind ranges and a real contender for the top spot this year if the light weather pattern were to hold. But...spends to much time looking at Windguru in the middle of the night...

Martin Cooney & Peter Frith: 2008, 2009 National Champions, Inland Championship and multiple winners of open meetings and regional Championships over the years. One or two boats have got past them in the odd race at Opens but no one has managed to get ahead of them over an entire meeting. They posted an impressive five 1sts at Mounts Bay this year. Very comfortable in light and heavy airs, they would not be worried what wind guru is saying! Very much the team to beat this year.

Andy Barker & Mike Atkinson: Barker has been National Champion 5 or 6 times over the years and would be very much in the mix again this time. He hadn't taken part in the Nationals since 2006 when the event was held at Poole, which he won. He should feel at home in the boat he's sailing with Mike Atkinson, "Barking Mad" as he built it. They showed their experience in the big wave action at Shoreham 2 weeks earlier winning the first race of the weekend in style and were not afraid to fly their kite when others kept them in the shute.

Mike & Viola Scott: Winners of many open meetings over the years and always near the front of the fleet particularly in the lighter stuff. Brilliant at picking the shifts and always in the front row on the start line. If the forecast is correct this could be the year a lady wins the Osprey Nationals, which would be brilliant. Viola is a great inspiration to other female Osprey helms, which has led to a number of younger lady helms coming into the fleet.

Will & George Odling: The brothers have teamed up again in the old Oscar Chess boat "Infidel". There have been Odlings in Ospreys since God was a boy and this pairing are a force to be reckoned with. They won the Inland Championships at Rutland in 2011 and have been in the top three at open meetings all this year. Great upwind speed in a blow and tactically very consistent. A breakage at the Poole Open put them out of the running but they would be ready for the weekend and should be expected in the top three at the windward mark 9 times out of 10.

Gareth Caldwell & John Gibbons: A new pairing over the last two years winning races at open meetings and getting close to winning an Open at their home club Blithfield. Gareth is an imported Rock Star from the International Canoe class where he has conquered the lofty heights of World Champion. Certainly a top 5 finisher and possibly higher as they are very good in the light airs...

Rob Shaw & Ian Little: A very high pedigree team who have been winners of multiple Open meetings, Inland Championships and races at the Nationals over the years. Shaw was virtually born in Osprey number 1. To date the only thing that has eluded then is a Nationals win. This year they were sailing Ian's Mark 3 "Excalibur".

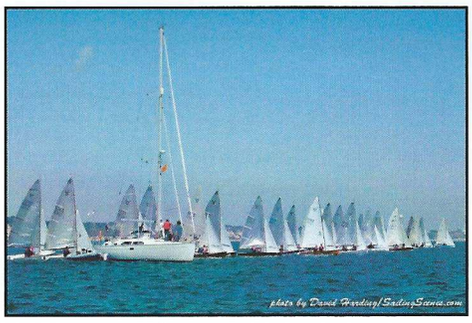
Paddy Lewis & Pete Greig: The Lewis Holland pairing has taken a break this year due to Tom heading to Greece for the summer to avoid the weather, find a Mrs Holland and teach sailing and Windsurfing at Wild Wind before his final year at University. Lewis & Greig have teamed up and worked well together particularly in the storms off Shoreham to win the Southern Area Champions. Light wind forecast led to starvation the week prior to get the weight off! They had to beat Pickering & Priddle or they won't hear the end of it; the problem is that most of this year Pickering has triumphed unless he have broken something.

Mark Weston & Simon Hawkes: The Phantom team with a twin pole set up that works! Sailed all winter in the SailJuice Series and posted some great results. Second in the Southern Area Championships this year at Shoreham. Good in heavy wind as you'd expect a couple of Phantom heavyweights would be. Simon's got a very cool van as well! Finally, the girls were back in town to give the old boys a run for their money..

Alex Willis helming with her Dad **Nick Willis**. Alex is no stranger to the front of the fleet under the experienced and watchful eye of Nick. She isn't afraid of anything and showed everyone what she was about with a port flyer on the entire fleet two years ago at the Porthpean Nationals when she was just 13.

Rosie Watkins of Poole 420 fame taking the helm of "Indecision" with **Ollie Hobson** at the front. Hopefully Ollie told his Dad he'd borrowed his boat! Nothing Robin can do about it because he's somewhere in the North West Passage in his woolly underwear! Rosie will push Ollie hard and doesn't stand for any slacking on the wire. She will be determined to beat her Dad, **Alistair Watkins** who is crewing for **Chris Playfair** in the boat that won the Nationals last year, so no blaming the kit Alastair!! Rosie is one to watch for the future... Viola has some competition for top lady helm!

Day 1 Today was not a day for big lads! The weather was perfect for sitting on the beach with a Pimms. The forecast was not looking good at the beginning of the day, everyone expected to be poking around the boat park all day looking at the latest go faster fittings or admiring Will Odlings amazing woodwork repair skills on Infindel which had blown up at the Poole Open, certainly a boy who did extra handicraft at school.



As lunch approached the wind built to around 5 knots and we were sent out to the top triangle inside the harbour. Ahead of the start most had established that the left corner would pay. The first start everyone was over the line at the pin end and back we came to a black flag.
The race officer reset, the 5 minute gun went, the fleet approached the line as the 1 minute gun went and Andy Barker & Mike Atkinson took off a minute early! Barker realised what he'd done, turned back then remembered the black flag, whoops! Gareth Caldwell & John Gibbons went hard left to the lay line and arrived at the windward mark 1st and weren't troubled by anyone else for the rest of the race. A good start and first beat were the order of the day.
Alex & Nick Willis sailed a perfect race and logged a fantastic and very popular 2nd place followed by Rob Shaw & Ian Little.
Race 2 was much the same from a wind perspective and the start was just as important. This time Barker arrived at the correct time and sailed a mirror image of the first race to take 1st with Caldwell & Gibbons in 2nd and Viola & Mike Scott 3rd.



The first day saw some great results from a number of people who didn't get a mention in the Runners and Riders report I wrote before the event (I'll never make it as bookmaker!) ...and those who did get a mention were down and out and hoping for lots more wind tomorrow. Too many to mention in this report but the results sheet tells the story well.
Dave Springett & Jerry Dixon do deserve a special mention with two 4th places and lying in 2nd place; I expect David was pacing around his camper van all night looking at Wind guru, no sleep!
Great to be out sailing whatever the first day results were, Out in the bay on the second day for more fun....

Chess covered in sun cream

Sunday was like a game of chess out in the bay covered in suncream.
Light airs again, bright blue sky and everything to play for. The results were very mixed with people that had had a difficult first day popping out at the front at the windward mark and



normally hanging in there to take a prize. Gareth Caldwell and John Gibbons did well in the first and second race with a 3rd and a win then but then dropped in a 9th in the third, which they would be hoping to lose as when the next discard kicked in.
Andy Barker and Mike Atkinson were in their element with a 1, 2 and 3 to bring them level with Caldwell and Gibbons on 7 points...Barker had been able to discard the school boy error from the first day.
Mike Pickering and Mike Priddle also had a good day with a 2, 3 & 4. As a result they were much better company at the Watkins Sailing Lodge BBQ in the evening as a result. The first night they were tucked up in bed early in their Jim jams both armed with their iPads set on Windguru auto refresh.
The last race there was a new, very popular win by Mark Weston and Simon Hawkes who we have stolen from the Phantoms. They were written up in Runners and Rider as heavy weight high wind specialists but this win puts them firmly in the heavy weight light wind specialist category. Well done chaps for sticking to the twin poles by the way, you are now the only successful twin pole team after Rosie Watkins and Ollie Hobson set fire to their system as did John and Caz Mills after a very frustrating day.
The forecast for the third day was much like the same sort of wind. More suncream and lots of concentration. Beyond the top 3 there were lots of points and the chance for some big position changes if some of the higher numbers were discarded.
The third day would be a day all those lucky enough to be out there will talk about for years to come. The expectation at the beginning of the day was for light or no wind and the first pint of Pimms for elevenses! The race officer stuck the "where's Wally" (AP) flag up and said he'd keep checking the wind and return at 11.30 with a decision. Alastair Watkins jumped at the opportunity to go shopping for a birthday present for his wife Kate, having been reminded by her at breakfast that it was her birthday on Thursday. He did a reasonable job of pretending he had remembered but was well aware he would be sleeping in the rabbit hutch if he didn't get it sorted.
The rest of the fleet were relaxing in the beautiful sunshine when the race officer came rushing out of his hut with news of 15 knots in the bay, which wasn't expected. Happy days, you've never seen a group of sailors move en mass at such speed. There was cheering from the big lads who'd spent the last two days sitting in the bottom of the boat and lots of calculating what might happen to the leader board if the wind held and those of us carrying a bit extra took a jump forward in the results.
The conditions out in the bay couldn't have been more perfect, bright blue sky, 15 knots of breeze and flat water. Race 1 got underway first time



with the Odling boys out of the blocks off the pin end of the line like a rat up a drain pipe. They tacked and crossed the fleet and arrived first at the windward mark followed by Steve George and Mikey Greig who had finally got to use their perfectly tuned Charles Atlas shaped bodies to romp up windward leg like a team being chased by the class secretary for their subscriptions!

The first reach was broad and the temptation was to get dragged up but the lighter crews took the chance to stay low and take a bit out of those going high who ending up running down to the mark. The gybe took the fleet onto a good tight reach and then we were on the edge, which gave the grunters a chance to take a step forward on the rest of the fleet. There was a bit of changing in the top order but the Odlings took it from George and Greig followed closely by Martin Cooney and Peter Frith who were starting to find the old magic again. This was almost certainly because Martin was back in his pink 1970s spray top, which seems to have the same effect as spiderman pants have to Mr Pickering (so Mrs Pickering tells me).Race 2, the wind was still going and we were off again quickly. Many of the same people as the first race were at the top mark but were also joined by Paul Heather and Jonathan Osgood, who had had a rub down with some special performance enhancing gel they had brought from Steve George - not sure what it was but he's got more if anyone wants some. The Odlings were in command of the race right up to the last leg when Cooney and Frith just got them on the line very closely followed by our friends from the fat tubs, Weston and Hawkes.

On the way in Weston and Hawkes took a left turn at the mouth of the harbour and headed for the beach either to see the topless trimmer or to get an ice cream. As they are both well past it we thought it must be the ice creams and we were correct. Mark's comment back at the slipway was the if you come from Yorkshire, as he does, and you're on ya holidays then you've got to have ice cream. Needless to say Simon had to pay for it!

The leaders, Barker and Atkinson, at the end of day two were hanging in there with a 5th and 8th today. Caldwell and Gibbons also had a more difficult day posting a 10 and 13 to leave them 4 points behind Barker. Pickering and Priddle were still in the hunt if they get their finger out and stopped scooping up water. After the top three there were 6-odd boats on around 32 points who all had a shot for a 4th and 5th. In the rest of the fleet there was still a lot that could change so everyone was well advised to get an early night... no chance!

Tomorrow's wind looked light again when we would return to the top triangle inside the harbour for the last two races. Let's hope we would get to go because it would be a very exciting last day at Parkstone.

A hot hot hot final day!

Sitting on the balcony at Parkstone Yacht club with a cold drink in bright sunshine looking at the mill pond that was Poole harbour might sound like the perfect way to spend the day. Not so if your were hoping to move up a place or two on the last day of the Nationals.

The wind was completely non existent all morning until about 11.30 when a light breeze kicked in and the race officer sent the fleet out to the top triangle for what looked like a very unlikely chance to race. The doubters were surprised to see the wind fill in to a steady 5 knots, which got the whippets out on the wire and the big lads sitting bolt upright on the side tanks like a couple of well behaved children.

Talking of well behaved children there was another swarm of Watkins girls joining the proceedings today due to missing helms and crews. Ollie Hobson had to go back to work at his accounting firm because he had asked for the wrong days off because he thought the Nationals started this Saturday (he has a new diary now!) so he gave his place to Anna Watkins. Alastair Watkins had to go Doctoring so gave up his seat to Midge Watkins, who was then handed the tiller by Chris. There was hot competition between the girls and Midge got the better of her older sister by one place. Three new Ospreys on order this winter I think and Mirrors and 420 for sale!

The top spot for the Championship was all to play for with Barker and Atkinson 4 points ahead of Caldwell and Gibbons. There were two false starts. The first by the race officer going a minute early and recalling when it was pointed out by those starting at the committee boat end and then a second when the fleet got a bit keen and were all over. General recall, Black flag and we got away. Caldwell and Gibbons went left as did Barker and Atkinson who then tacked back up the middle. Caldwell got to the top mark 3rd and Barker came round in about 9th leaving a gap and an exciting race to watch for those who were aware of the scores.

This is how they finished leaving Caldwell and Gibbons ahead with one race to go.

Needless to say there was going to be some match racing in the next race for sure. The fleet came up to the line and, as before, pushed too hard and the race officer called another general recall. Reset and this time under a Black flag, you would have thought everyone would be shy of the line but no, there were countless boats over and a recall was sounded. Interesting! What happened next you might ask. Two options, pick out those who were over and rerun with those who weren't, which was about 4 boats or AP over H, thank you gentlemen and ladies, time, please drink up and go home! Option 2 was selected and so Caldwell and Gibbons had it.



As the penny dropped the cheers went up and Baker and Atkinson sailed over to congratulate the victors in true Osprey sporting fashion. This was a fantastic win for Gareth and John who have been in and around the top 5 for the last couple of years since they started sailing together at Blithfield. John is the son of Keith Gibbons who has been sailing Ospreys forever. At the prize giving there was an almighty applause from the crowd and I turned around to see John's Mum and Dad beaming smiles and with a look of absolute delight in John and Gareth's achievement. I have to admit it brought a tear to my eye to see such proud parents; well done team Gibbons.

It only leaves me to say thank you very much to Parkstone Yacht Club for a great Championships. Thank you also to our sponsors, Gul, Allen, Marlow, Hartley Boats and Selden, without whom sailing would be difficult or impossible because, between them, they build the boats, provide the masts and fittings, rope out the boats then dress us in the most brilliant sailing kit known to man.

2012 Parkstone National championships Prize giving in pictures...



Northern boat Mark Weston & Simon Hawkes



Endeavor Trophy John & Caz Mills



Mumbles Trophy & Wilkinson Sword Mikes Pickering & Priddle



Osprey Class special award Rosie Watkins



Stubbs Potential David Springett



Stone challenge Trophy Andy Barker & Mike Atkinson



Offer Team trophy...The Cornishmen



2012 National Champions Gareth Caldwell & Jon Gibbons



Lady Helm & Filey Novice Alex Willis

2013 National championships at Weymouth.

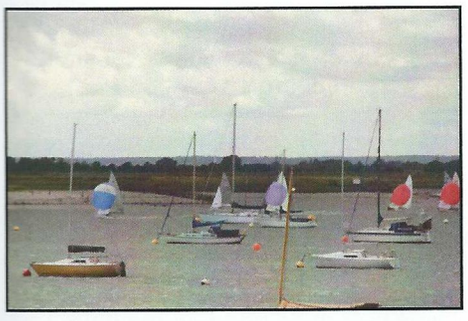
Yes Weymouth, venue of choice for the 2012 Olympic Sailing games will host the Ospreys in 2013!!...the planning is already underway to make this a very special event...looking at the accommodation options; planning some special fun social events within the context of 60 years of the Osprey. . Based on the successful formula of last year's competition (at Parkstone) there will not be a practice race & the emphasis will be on running as many races as practical, the priority being to run more shorter races rather then fewer longer ones.

Book early to take advantage of the early discount; book the dates now in your diary so that you can plan your sailing calendar around this special event: maybe think about a week in the West Country with the family as an add on. 2013 is the 60th anniversary of the Osprey...wouldn't it be fantastic if we could get 60 Ospreys out racing?!!!!! Go for it...look forward to seeing you there!!!

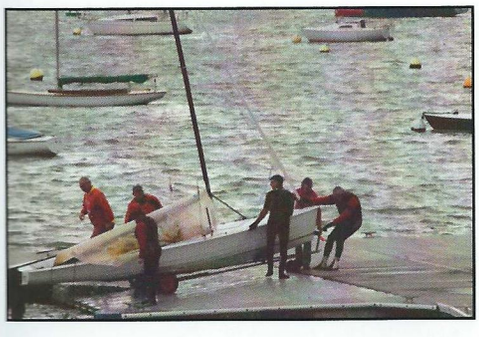
Burnham 2012 by Viola Scott

Competitors watched the forecast for Burnham-on-Crouch rather anxiously in the preceding days – not liking the look of a gale on Saturday followed by calm on Sunday – luckily it got less extreme by Friday and we all looked forward to another great weekend of racing in Burnham week, being pampered by the Shaws and, for us northerners, basking in unfamiliar warmth.

Saturday morning showed there was a mixture of regular Open travellers and some rarer teams from the south. Weather-wise the sun peaked out occasionally, the wind was fairly strong and grey clouds were becoming blacker. The temperature was not the balmy heat I had hoped for but at least it was not poring with rain. The usual long Saturday course was set over water that involved a lot of wind against tide - the heavier crews loved it! 1341 Russ & Mark led off, relishing the conditions, hotly pursued by 1348 the Mikes and 1287 Rob & Ian. 1348 just got through 1341 on the final beat to the finish. 1276 Alec & Paul enjoyed the wind, coming in 5th. Some teams did not continue, some could not continue and some had not read the course.



Returning we had a dedicated trolley dolly volunteer in the shape of John Shenton, who was unable to sail himself. He acquired some glamorous assistants who were very welcome getting the boats out of the water and onto the jetty.



Luckily the afternoon rain went away so a great Shaw barbecue put together by the superb Helen, left the competitors replete and happy.

The morning was not so windy but wet on Sunday, and the Race Officer used the upriver buoys to ensure a first beat. Staying out the tide was crucial, as was choosing the correct side to do it on. Mike & Jon 1297 got an early lead, keeping well in on the club side, followed by 1314 round the first buoy. After a fast run down with the tide 1314 chose the wrong side to short tack up and slipped to 4th, letting 1287 and 1350 Dave & Jerry through. 1338 Chris & Ken kept ahead of the next pack, followed by 1341 and 1348.

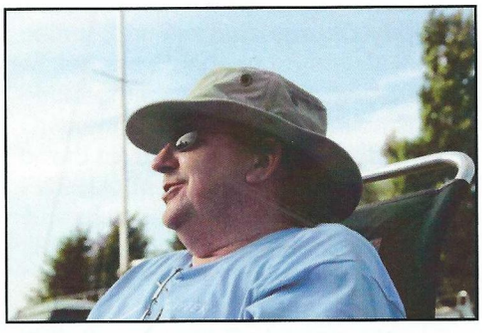
The next race was somewhat shorter, again upriver...at this point the author had a memory blank & appealed to the editor to pick up the story. (Unfortunately the editor had spent this race standing forlornly on a mud bank up to his loer knees in soft, sucking mud patiently, then impatiently awaiting a tow back to the club after a capsize literally bent the pintails on the rudder fittings preventing further sailing. He has recollections of Ospreys creaming up the roach with crews cheerfully shouting across to David & himself marooned on the river bank to reassure us that someone was sure to come along before dark. They did indeed, since a rescue boat doing the last sweep of the evening finally picked us up after initially driving past without seeing us on the bank...we were not amused...next time we will carry a white flare for when we need to attract attention...clearly a spectacular capsize is not enough... Ed)

Sunday night saw the competitors washing up nicely, ready to be marched to a formal dinner at Royal Corinthian. Our bagpiper led us up the ramp with a mighty swagger and we had an excellent dinner followed by an embarrassing display of 1970's dancing to 1990's music in the disco for those sufficiently inebriated to throw caution to the wind... & there were a few!!

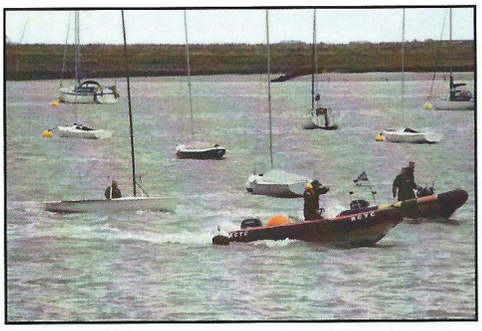
By Monday the wind was up again, not to Saturday's level but enough to put a smile back on the heavier crew's faces. Sadly a shoulder injury kept 1350 from the water but all the rest were looking forward to the running starts. There was some misidentification of the true start line so 1314 had the best position, but the heavier boats soon reached past, 1341 again benefiting from serious weight on the wire, impressively vertical on the water. However 1348 the Mikes were close behind and slipped through, short tacking up the Roach. 1341 kept 1297 and 1287 behind.

The final race was again a running start. There was a slight lull in the wind encouraging most of the fleet to hoist the kites – something they later regretted as the wind returned, pushing them all down out of the tide to some interesting retrievals. This let 1314 through by the first buoy ready for the short tacking leg. 1348 showed how much they had improved by tacking their way through, and it was hard work keeping 1276 and 1292 from doing the same – the tacks had to be short and slick – any grounding or getting in the tide was swiftly punished. Finally the turning buoy was reached and it was back the club as fast as possible. 1348 had an unassailable lead but 1314 was vulnerable poundage wise and was eventually passed by 1287, Ian using all his height and weight on the final, long close reach.

The competition was deservedly won by Mike Pickering and Mike Priddle with minimal points. Rob Shaw and Ian Little were a convincing 2nd. There were many memorable moments further down the fleet – John and Caz Mills laughing off the stong winds on Saturday to finish 7th, Roger and son Jamie Blake getting to grips with Fish for Tea, Dave and Jerry having great speed before injury ruined play.



Dave Springett enjoys some well earned R&R while his crew brings in the boat..



Thanks to Christine De Graf for the terrific Burnham photos!!!

The 54th Sheppey Round the Island Race was held this year on Saturday 2nd Sept. Local reporter & part time sailor (or is it the other way round?) Mick Greenland embedded in the friendly fleet, sent us this report...

A reduced entry of 84 mainly due to the predicted weather but six Ospreys were all up for the challenge; Rob Shaw drove down overnight to join up with his old boat Light n Bitter (1292) with Jonathon Osgood on the wire (he did look shattered before the start), John and Caz Mills (1340) came up from Shoreham, Jerry Dixon nipped across the Channel on his BMW R850 to join up with Mick Greenland (1322), the other Sheppey boys were Tim Bell Ian Brunger (1335), Ken Brown & Chris Butters (1338), and after his recent fame at Burnham Russ Wheeler with his light weight crew Jamie Andrews (1341).



Jolly Osprey sailors...

Our Start 11.30, 'gun' off we go with kites up (1322 downhaul jammed around a block, 2 out of 10 for the time it took finding problem!), 1292 and 1340 at the committee boat end (seaward) 1335 in the middle, 1338, 1341 at the pin end and shot off inshore for the theory of being out of the incoming tide, 1322 went straight but last, shadowed by the other late starters!

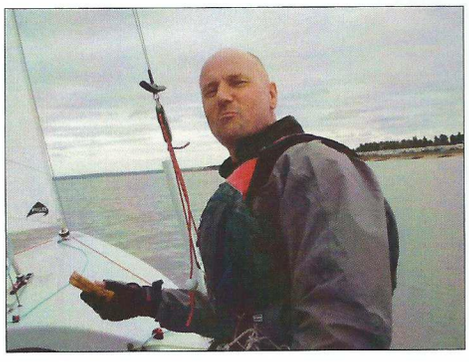
20 minutes later sailing with a F1-2 south westerly and straight into the spring tides all six of us line across; 1292, 1340 out at sea 1335,1322 in the middle and 1341,1338 inshore and 1322 in front by 50m! (Well that's what I thought).

After another hour the inshore boats were losing the wind from the cliffs and 1335 joined 1292 and 1340 out at sea; then with Warden Point approaching, 1322 was losing wind from behind with James Bell (Tim's son) and Helen in a 4K which forced 1322 inshore to get clearer air; then it happened: 1322 almost stopped 1338 1341 had stopped! And the others left us all, 1292 vanished and 1340, 1335 were just in view about a mile in front. Lesson number one don't go near the cliffs – last year no problem!

After 1322 had lunch at Leysdown (Tuna and sweet corn)... thought you would like to know that... we eventually rounded Shellnest and entered 'The Swale' which takes you around the southern end of the Island and eventually brings you out into the river Medway.

1338 1341 were way back, 1322 could just see 1340 and 1335, with 1292 totally out of sight! The tide was due to turn at 2pm but before we reached Harty Ferry the tide was on the Ebb, picking every shift and looking for wind 1322 passed 1340 and slowly edged pass 1335 just after Harty ferry; which is opposite Ore Greek and leads into Faversham. Jerry spotted a wooded Osprey (1292) about 2miles ahead! Oh dear. No chance to catch up but 1335 wasn't letting 1322 get away either , and with 30° wind shifts we were all having a hell of a time.

Time for second half of lunch; this time Red Leister with white onion in wholemeal bread flushed down with peach flavoured water, Jerry was impressed!



Jerry being impressed...

It's about a ten mile run, 'now beat' to the next turning point called the Ferry Bouys, the original crossing point to the island (by boat) before you and I and our parents were born, Oh & Harty Ferry is where they filmed the Fiesta 'keyless entry' car advert with the driver looking for his keys and the water up to the doors! – Time you read this you won't have remember the add! So, we are now all spread out; 1292 smiling all the way, 1322 gritting teeth, 1335 what the hell I'm doing wrong to watch 1322 fly away, 1340 thinking the same, 1338 my nemesis miles in front and 1341 never going inshore or following 1322 again!

The wind was now picking up and 'the bird' was starting to fly thro' the rest of the competitors and as we passed every boat I yelled out '*get an Osprey!!*' (Merlins , RS400 etc etc – they must have thought "*crazy Osprey sailor*"... so did Jerry) - after the Ferry Bouys the River (sorry, its called The Swale) headed NW towards the Sheppey bridge where we have to get wet, tip the boat on its side to get under the bridge structure, easi-pizi John Mills jumped in and didn't find the bottom – good swimmer our John.

After the bridge kite up and away again but it was a bit tight, 1322 hit the putty then ..."*what the hell was that?*" A Seal popped his smiling face up behind us, the usual shock when you see one; then you say "*doesn't he look cute*" – I don't think he liked my carbon board on his head though...

Thro' Queenboro' harbour then it was kite reach for two miles to Garrison point, Jerry took the helm on the wire flying the kite while I sorted out afternoon tea for 4 o'clock – do you know he's quite good on the helm? Gybed at Garrison and reached all the way to the finishing line with Jerry still helming, I was washing up the tea cups and putting the cake plates away.

32 miles of fun and frustration but always great Osprey sailing; what a pleasure to sail with such a great bunch of like minded guys and girls.

Rob and Jonathan (1292) won the fastest of the 11.30 handicap start, and 4th overall, their prize was The Napier Cup (circ 1909 solid silver) and a ferry ticket from P&O for a car and trailer across the channel; sounds like Helen is off to Paris!!! ...P.T.O.

Sheppey Round the Island race continued...

8 minutes behind was Mick and Jerry (9th o/all) winning best Sheppey boat for first past the post; and on PY, receiving the Abbotts salver (another solid silver plate to polish and clean) and the Ship-on-Shore trophy (local Pub) Mark Mawhinney's Dad's pub (Mark sails Osprey 1197). Tim and Ian were next 10 minutes down the briny in 15th o/all and Ken and Chris just pipped John and Caz by 54 seconds; 24th and 26th. Russ and Jamie finished 31st, 30 minutes behind Rob but was that luck on Rob's side or was it bad luck on Russ's side as they had sat there with no wind for 20 minutes?! Rob will say it was skill!

By 8pm prizes were handed out and the overall winner was Mike Lyons in a Blaze, Rob then drove 330 miles home!

As Safety boat coordinator for the event we had 8 ribs, 2 yachts, 1 35' motor cruiser, 5 spotters on the ground from the Medway 'Raynet' local amateur radio club with base station at the club, and 2 spotter planes in the sky. We lost one wind surfer which we took off the water with our safety boat & dropped him at the club - but he didn't tally off and his wife phoned to say he wasn't home, obviously lost between our club and his home!

Pastyman has said to me next years event maybe part of the Wilkinson Sword trophy. If there are enough entries I will see if we can have our own start.



As part of the 60th anniversary of the Osprey we cast out our nets & hauled in a catch of some note Julian Bridges aka Tiger...one half of a highly successful Osprey duo together with "Oscar" in the 1980's replied with happy memories of former campaigns: *When wetsuits had flares....*



Peter Frith, the current head of the herd is a lot bigger than me so I had no option when asked at Rutland to put together some of my memories of Osprey sailing In the 70s and 80s. It has been a delight to look back on that era although with the horrifying realisation that my time spent Osprey sailing is now half a lifetime ago. Almost all of this is made up, but there may be occasional bits that are true.

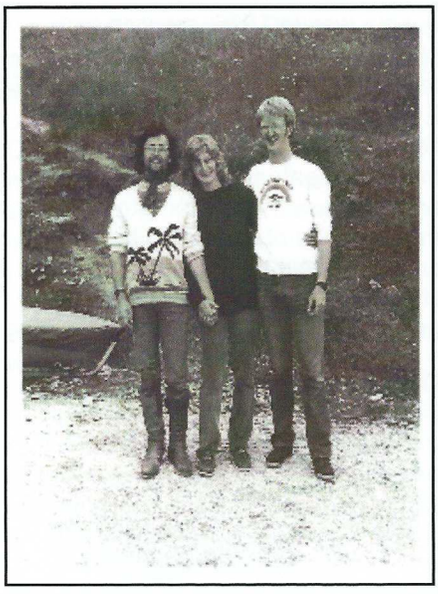
The first time I ever sailed in an Osprey was as a 14 year old in 1973 at a Mumbles YC Open Day. After helping pull boats up the slip for most of the day I was rewarded with the offer of a quick ride. I was passed a Musto harness 'Shall I put this on now, or when we are on the water?' 'Better put it on now son, you're only little we'll be needing it.' I don't know how many in the class now will remember Gordon Cooper, but I do, just for the inspiration ignited in me by that 30 minute ride. This was much more real and intense than plodding about in my homebuilt Mirror.

The class was in a period of transition at Mumbles with some beautiful and well maintained wooden boats and some ratty older ones competing against the fairly hideous Gmach glassfibre Mk2 (the class equivalent of a Lada) and the all new Westerly Mk3 glass offering.

Part of the coming of age rituals for young lads of the time was to be incarcerated in the front tank of an elderly wooden boat and not be allowed out until you had either installed a spinnaker chute or removed your own weight in mahogany. Other delights of the period included large diameter race blocks which would stop working instantly on exposure to sand or salt, bendy booms and of course, the delights of pre-combi trailers requiring lifting the boat from trolley to trailer before tying the trolley on top. Being a precocious little tyke I badgered crewing places, blagged loans of boats in light weather and began to move into Osprey sailing. My first championship was in 1976, crewing in 1032. We were participating spectators to the titanic battle between Nat Eynon/Graham Boylen from the Steel Company of Wales who were narrowly beaten by Tony Blatchford and his crew from Lymington SC. I must be one of very few Osprey crews to have national championship finishing positions of both 103rd and first...

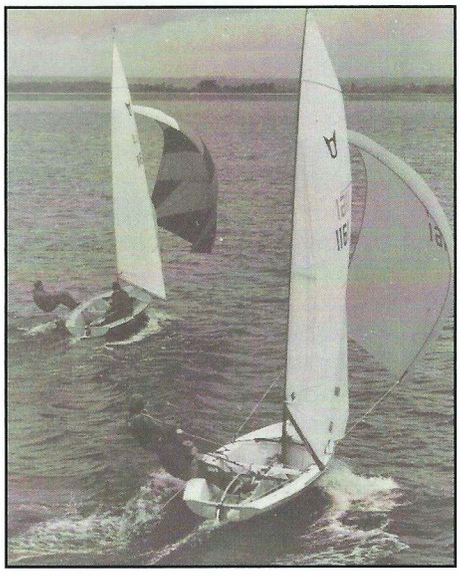
Oscar, the beginning. Part of life included Mirror racing on a lake at the Steel Company of Wales SC especially for the frostbite series, after open sea racing at Mumbles in October became a little too health and safety even for the seventies. Due to a crewing vacancy Oscar Chess courted me with chocolates and flowers to sail with him in the 1977 Championships in Filey. This was in Oscar's first Osprey which had come to him from Mike Corbin, via Tony Powell, 793, Wandering Star, was commonly known as Blundering Star. A new boat came that winter and Blundering Star was last heard of being used for fishing in the Orkneys. Oscar was able to buy a brand new Westerly hull 1161 Easy Picker to fit out. Although neither of us realised until much later, 1161 is the index number of the Admiralty chart of Swansea Bay and Mumbles, a gloriously random coincidence. With the rig from Blundering Star transferred and slowly being improved we started to make some impact coming 18th in 1978 and in the top ten in 1979. Now both in university we did a huge amount of events. I just had to turn up on the motorbike with my wetsuit and harness while Oscar had to persuade his Sunbeam Rapier coupe to tow the boat. We did a lot of minor regattas in South Wales because they were fun and accessible.

The mixture of events continually added to our bank of experience, from the big handicap events like the Burnham Icicle, the Nathan Silver Salvers at Draycote, the Courage pursuit on the Solent and the Bloody Mary. We came ashore after having been out of sight of land in Middlesex due to the heavy snow during one Bloody Mary, the deck fittings all had small streamlined snowdrifts around them and the pole and trapeze shockcords were useless as they had frozen in their extended position



and would not retract. Our girlfriends ran a shuttle service from the club with pint mugs full of hot water to enable us to thaw the knots out to dismantle the boat in the still snowing twilight. There were more appealing events too; the Caldy races from Tenby and Saundersfoot and the Three Rivers from River Towy, the home club of Tony Powell, which took you from punching through the open sea of Carmarthen Bay upriver to ghosting past cows grazing in fields. There was also travelling all over the country from Bridlington and Ribble to Marazion, Sheppey and the Solent to compete in as many class events as we could afford. Sleeping in the changing rooms of North Devon YC, on peoples' floors and once in a public toilet on the prom somewhere we slowly climbed up the rankings. Our first real win was at the end of 1978, when we were able to sail back up Lymington river as the winners of the Jack in the Basket Open Meeting, having beaten the Corbins and Carters of the home club.

Glory The scariest moment during the whole time we sailed together was at Mounts Bay in 1980 At some point Richard Marshall and Nick Willis were leading us down a windy top reach when they disappeared in a welter of spray. Our usual sporting and considerate response to this was 'What a rotten shame, ha, ha, ha!' as we passed first a very expensive piece of Milanes driftwood before seeing them right the boat & trying to sail home without a rudder. Here we achieved our first championships race win. Until then we had just been having a bit of a laugh but suddenly there was the realisation that if we could do this once there was no reason why we should not be able to put



a whole series together. It still took two further years of paying our dues, not a proper structured campaign, but, as was mentioned during this years Olympics, treating each race as a practice for the following one.

At the Nationals at Filey in 1982 we only had three races. The third was held in a good force four to five and thick patchy fog. Trying to estimate the time spent on each tack to enable us to find the windward mark while avoiding boats appearing out of the gloom only about 50 yards away left us with a tiny lead over Alfie Hawksworth. On the Friday morning the fog was thicker than the previous day so we spent the morning counting the beach huts we could actually see...

The number varied as the hourly postponements were posted until 1400 when we suddenly became National Champions. I think that at 24 and 25 years old, we were at the time the youngest team to win the Nationals. By this time I was also Newsletter editor and a member of the committee. In those days this meant meeting at an hotel near Bristol where on one occasion I was delighted to have a very fine lunch actually sitting beside Ian Proctor, which is a claim to fame that I value almost as much as having being reasonably good at sailing.

The next year we went to Shoreham to lose against John Marsh and his evil henchman Mal Smith in 1198. Fellow Mumbles sailors and renowned hard men and funsters, these were the two who found a JCB with the keys in it at Stewartby and drove it round the campsite for a couple of hours after the bar shut. I crewed for John Marsh at the Endeavour trophy that year because Mal wouldn't go that far into England. Shoreham began with a dramatic practice race in which the race was abandoned and the whole fleet was sent back to the shore but we were hit by a 30kt plus line squall. Oscar was on the plate and I climbed over into the cockpit to drop the main. Kneeling on the lower side tank there was a warning shout from Oscar and my world turned upside down as the boat had swung to the wind and then flipped. I was now standing on my head on the lower side tank with my knees at water level. After getting sorted I realised I couldn't see properly, and went to adjust my glasses. As one of the lenses had been smashed I poked myself straight in the eye. Back on shore the St. Johns Ambulance tweezered out lots of tiny glass fragments from my eyebrow and cheek but thankfully nothing more serious.

The climax of the whole Osprey adventure came in 1984 at Tenby. We felt we still had something to prove after the manner in which we had won at Filey. It was sunny, warm, and we were in South Wales on home ground with almost 80 boats to play with. By Friday morning we were in the position that we would win if we were sixth or better, otherwise it would be Ian Porter and Tim Hancock. Knowing we needed to be conservative and safe we managed to screw it up so badly that we were in the 40s going round the first mark, with the leaders so far away we could not read the numbers.