Issue 18 Feb 2024
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National Solo Class Association UK

Solo *Interactive*



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Brightlingsea 2024
Mr Blue Sky Revisited
3D Printed Fittings
Gingerboats

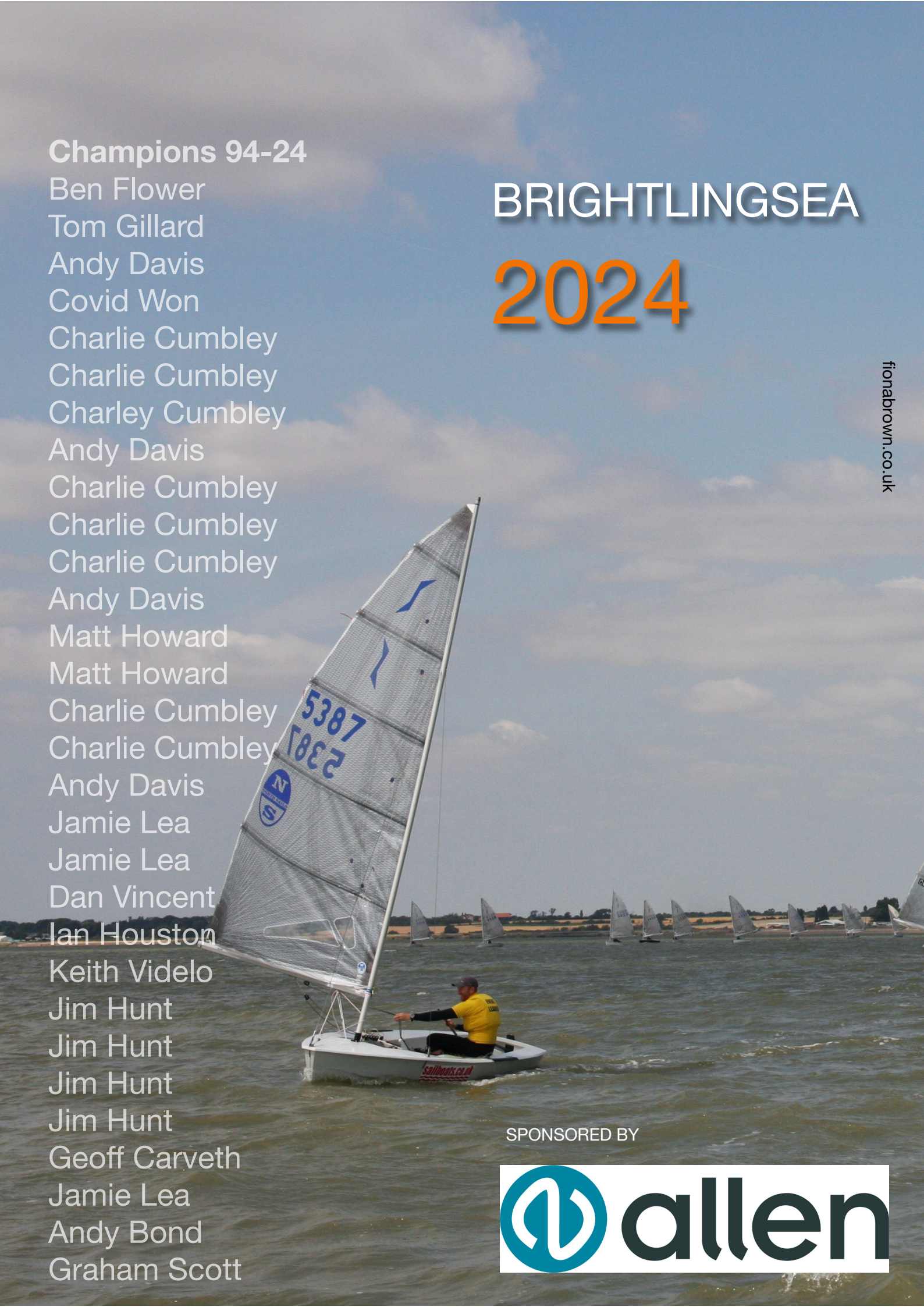
Allen Thimble Applications
Gosling Solo Campaign
Area Series
Noble Marine Winter Championship Report

BRIGHTLINGSEA

2024

Champions 94-24

Ben Flower
Tom Gillard
Andy Davis
Covid Won
Charlie Cumbley
Charlie Cumbley
Charley Cumbley
Andy Davis
Charlie Cumbley
Charlie Cumbley
Charlie Cumbley
Andy Davis
Matt Howard
Matt Howard
Charlie Cumbley
Charlie Cumbley
Andy Davis
Jamie Lea
Jamie Lea
Dan Vincent
Ian Houston
Keith Videlo
Jim Hunt
Jim Hunt
Jim Hunt
Jim Hunt
Geoff Carveth
Jamie Lea
Andy Bond
Graham Scott



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Cover pic; Charlie Cumbley punches out of the start at the 2014 National Championship, Brightlingsea


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PRESIDENTS REPORT Guy Mayger

Dear Solo sailors,
I hope I find you all fit and well as we venture forth into the 2024 season.

As you'll have likely seen, the Super Series kicked off with a great days racing at Chew Valley for the Noble Winter championship. Details of the racing are included in this edition of Solo Specific, but it was especially good to see Ben McGrane getting more than the most out of his lovely wooden Gosling, 4257. I'm sure this will be an inspiration to those with wooden boats and it would be great to see more attending the open circuit as well as the popular Vintage championships.

Next up is the regular open meeting season starter at Broadwater SC, and the Midlands Series opener at Banbury SC, both 23rd, March.
These are quickly followed by the Welsh championships at Tata and then the Spring championships hosted by King Georges Sailing Club. Please check the website calendar for all the details.

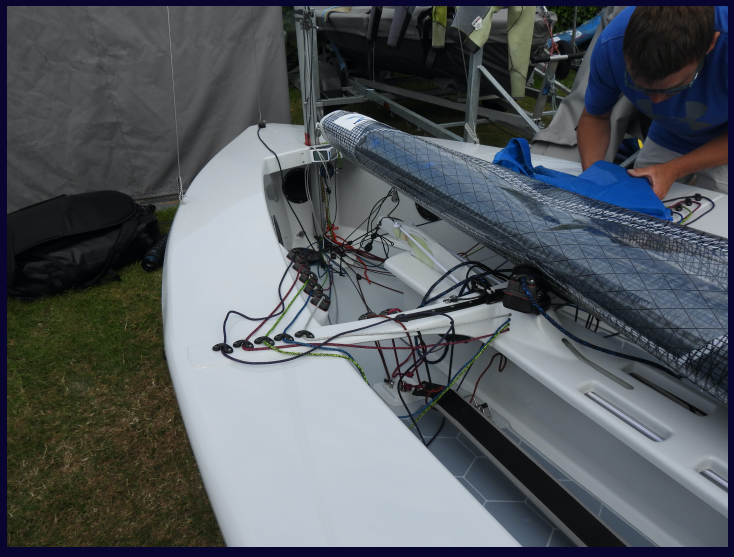
Looking further into the season, at the upcoming Dinghy Show we will formally announce **Allen** as our title sponsor for the Nationals and Nations Cup being held at Brightlingsea SC, 22-25 August. On online entry will also open then.
With 10 races scheduled over the 4 days, we'll follow the successful on-the-water model from last year at Hayling Island.
Off the water, we have two competitor meals, an evening talk from our sponsors, plus sponsors swag and beers, as well as all the usual Solo banter. With the proximity to channel ferries, we are also expecting a strong showing from our Dutch friends. We are also holding a draw for one free entry.

Mentioning the Dinghy Show, the Association stand will be hosting two boats this year.
Of interest to many members will be getting a closer look at Tom Gillard's multi-championship winning boat, 6021.
Over the last few years, Tom has won a large number of events in his Winder Mk1, Allen fitted and North Sails powered ship.
Indeed, Charlie Cumbley used the same boat to finish second at last years Nationals, so she has a very strong track record.
The second boat on the stand will be a Ginger Boat produced Solo coming out of the former Boatyard at Beer mould.
This again will be one for the keen Solo sailor to pick over as she will have a very smart fit-out.
Two further Solos will be at the show, one on the Selden Masts stand and the other on the GOAT Marine stand.

As always, huge thanks to the Solo committee members for all their help in getting the 2024 season planned out, and if you do get to the show, I know they'll also be on hand to offer up help and advice on all things Solo.

Ben Harden commented;

"The Solo Class and Allen have a history going all the way back to the inception of the boat, so we are super excited to be on board as a major sponsor of the class for this years National Championship and Nation's Cup."



Andy Tunnicliffe raced a Ginger Boats Solo at last year's Nigel Pusinelli Trophy and a Ginger will grace the Solo stand, along with the Winder Mk 1

Solo 6021 will be on the NSCA stand at this years Dinghy Show.

The all-conquering Winder hull/Selden D+, North P2, fitted out with Allen hardware has been the weapon of choice for Tom Gillard. Charlie Cumbley also powered it to second overall at the 2023 Nationals.



Visit us on the Solo stand I10, Feb 24-25



2024

BRIGHTLINGSEA SAILING CLUB



Solo National and Nation's Cup
August 22-25

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SOLO

National Solo Class Association UK

NSCA SUPER DRAW

Dear Solo sailors,

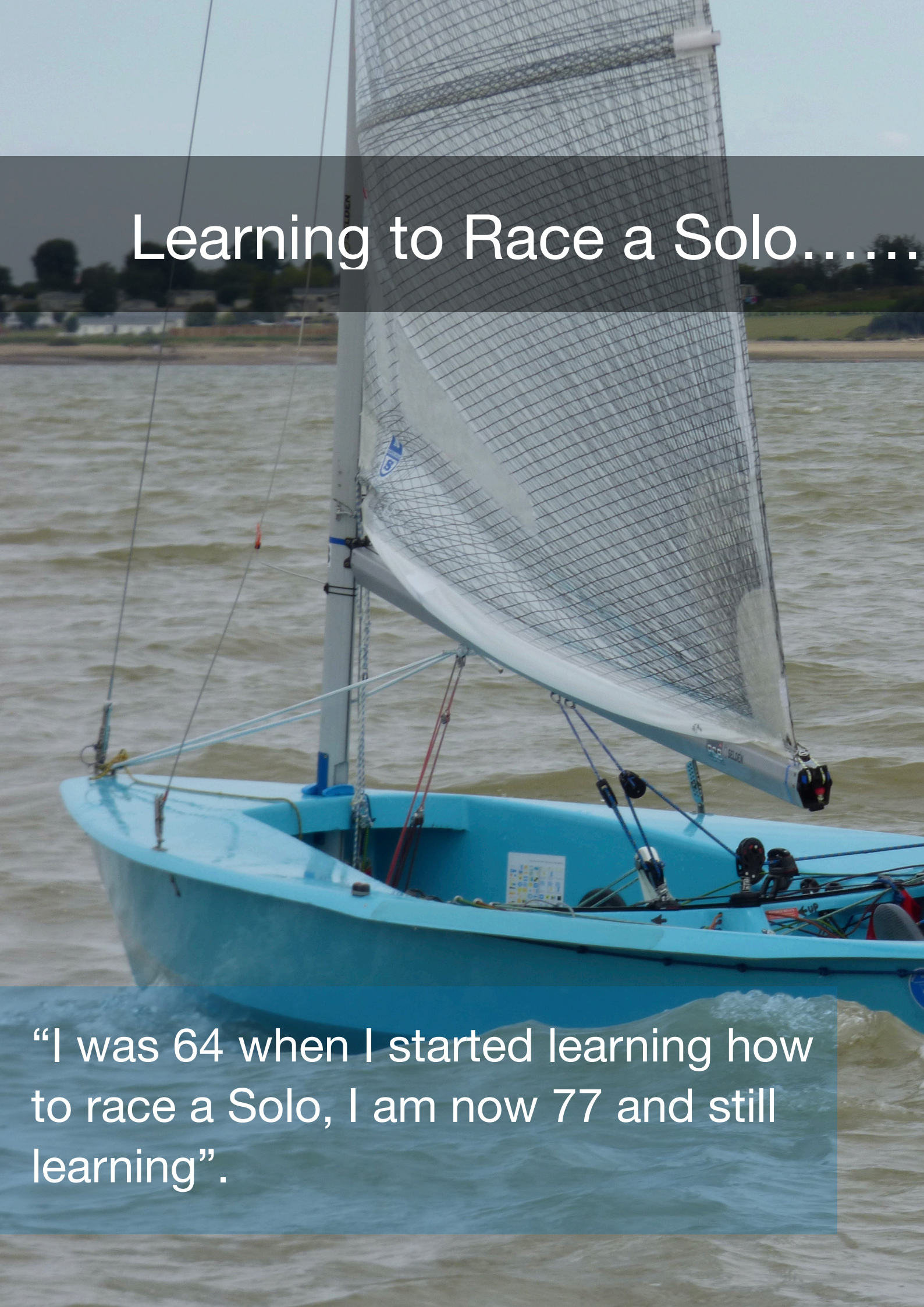
With the imminent opening of the 2024 National Championship entry, being held by Brightlingsea Sailing Club, I'm pleased to let you all know that the Class Association has agreed to ***draw one free entry from the first 50 competitors to sign up.***

The entry will open on Saturday, February 24th, the first day of the Dinghy Show, along with our formal announcement of our title sponsors, Allen.

Entry for the draw will close at midnight on ***March 9th****, so get your entries in quick to be in with a chance!*

Class President Guy Mayger





Learning to Race a Solo……

“I was 64 when I started learning how to race a Solo, I am now 77 and still learning”.

When you are very old

Malcolm Mackley



My previous racing background was mainly National 12s where many issues of racing involved boat design, boat rig and all things complicated and these offered an infinite number of reasons (excuses) as to why you didn't win a race. The Solo is different. Over the decades it has evolved to be very similar to the ILCA. The Solo design, rig and layout have converged to form essentially a strict one-design class. Yes; there are still small (sometimes important) differences in the boats and rig, but basically I know all my own failings are now related to the helm and not my 13 year old boat.

In 2011 when I bought Mr Blue Sky, my age didn't seem to be too important; now however at 77, I know that it is. I still want to Solo race, however, strength, manoeuvrability and perhaps most of all, balance become increasingly significant. I also didn't want to be the person that monopolises the rescue boats and so the ability to self-recover is a high requirement.

In terms of extending my ability to sail with increasing age. I have 'played' around with a few 'life extending' Solo modifications and the purpose of this article is to share these with you.

Boom Height.

We all know that a raked boom makes a Solo go fast upwind in a blow, however that also means that a low boom can make 'getting under it whilst tacking' difficult. They say, 'let the kicker off when tacking in a breeze'. You try that trick whilst short tacking up a Salcombe shore against the tide! So, as the years slipped by I found getting under the boom more and more challenging. Investing in a Zhik life jacket was marginally helpful, however the big positive difference has been using a 'short leeched sail'. The Solo Class rules specify a maximum leech length, but not a minimum so there is scope to tweak this measurement.

In 2019, I initially tried a boom raising 'flattener idea' that for example Merlin Rockets use for increasing mast rake and upwind performance in a blow. The photo below shows my trial experiments on Mr Blue Sky. I was excited by this as I initially used the outhaul deck controls to pull the flattener on and off. This worked well and I had a couple of positive sails using the flattener upwind and then letting it off at the windward mark for the downwind leg. All illegal at the time, but with the permission of our wonderful long serving Salcombe Fleet Captain, Adrian Griffin.

The Solo Class has subsequently made the use of flatteners legal (by allowing an extra eyelet in the leech), however sadly they have also specified that adjustment has to come from the boom. For me this means any flattener adjustment needs to done before the race and so utilising the flattener upwind, but not downwind seems to be lost.

Plan B was to persuade sailmakers to make a short leech main. Andy Davis of HD Sails suggested a 50mm reduction of the leech would be a good compromise between raising the boom and loss of sail area and my golden sail HD main enabled me to race at Salcombe in more comfort. Subsequently both North Sails and Hyde have provided me with short leech mains and I am very happy with this tweak. I still use the magic 5950 mm setting for mast tip to transom, but now I can get under that boom more easily.



Self recovery into boat after capsize.

Recovery after a capsize for me is usually a two stage process. Firstly, I have to get the boat upright and then secondly get into the boat. Ensuring that the kicker is off before righting the boat helps the first process, however in terms of the second process, I had difficulty to get a hand purchase onto the grab slots on the side of the centreboard. Last year Dave Winder told me of an arrangement he had proposed for another Solo sailor and the photo below shows my version on Mr Blue Sky. The close proximity of the 'grab handles' to the side deck enables me to grab something positive in order to hike myself into the boat. I give the system 9/10 for



Comfortable floors.

Knees are wonderful things and I find myself sailing my Solo in light airs and on a breezy run kneeling in the boat. I tried gluing my own spongy material to the floor of Mr Blue Sky without much success and eventually got SeaDek to do a proper job. Maybe I now kneel in the boat more than is necessary, however when I do, it's very much more comfortable!

Current Solo racing at Salcombe is fantastic as there is such a strong fleet to sail against. I'm now no longer aiming high, I just want to get round the course in the best way that I can. The modifications that I have described have helped to keep me Solo racing.

Perhaps the greatest stimulus to keep me going was purchasing an aluminium launching trolley, as those of you who know Salcombe will be aware at low tide the Salcombe Launching slipway is very long and very steep. Getting old has limited advantages, but one very big and greatly appreciated advantage is that other younger (everything is relative in the Solo fleet) Solo sailors now help me up the slipway with Mr Blue Sky after a low tide race!

My advice is 'Keep Solo sailing for as long as you can'.







Mr Blue Sky at his beloved Salcombe
Photos Lucy Burn

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AREA CHAMPS:
Southern: 1st • Eastern: 1st.
Midland: 1st • Western: 1st.
WINTER CHAMPS: 1st.
INLANDS: 2nd.
END OF SEASONS: 2nd.
SOLO NATIONALS: 4th.
SUPER SERIES: 2nd.

#TEAMPB RESULTS IN 2023

NATIONALS: 1st, 3rd.
NATIONS CUP: 1st.
SPRING CHAMPS: 1st.
WINTER CHAMPS: 1st, 2nd, 3rd.
INLANDS: 2nd, 3rd.

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High Load Thimbles - Exploring Their Use

Also known as low friction rings, these versatile pieces of sailboat hardware have a rich history, evolving from wood on old tall ships to lightweight plastic and now precision CNC-machined aluminium. But when and where should you use high load thimbles?

What is a high load thimble?

A high load thimble, or low friction ring, is a doughnut-shaped aluminium piece with a concave outer shape, resembling a traditional pulley sheave. The rope typically runs through the thimble's hole, and the outer concave is used to secure it to a control line or deck eye. High load thimbles come in various sizes to suit different ropes and applications.

Why choose a high load thimble?

High load thimbles stand out for their simplicity, made from a single piece of aluminium with no moving parts, resulting in strength and lightweight efficiency. For instance, a 20mm high load thimble offers an 80% weight reduction compared to a 20mm block, with a substantial 247% increase in working load.

When to use a high load thimble?

Despite their advantages, high load thimbles aren't a universal replacement for all blocks. Their low friction nature makes them ideal for static loading scenarios like halyards or backstays. In dynamic applications, such as mainsheets or spinnaker systems, the added friction can impede performance and degrade rope quality.

Where to use high load thimbles?

High load thimbles find applications in various scenarios, including:

Take up systems: Their small size and cost-effectiveness make high load thimbles suitable for splicing or tying into take up systems, keeping control systems tidy.

Sheet deflectors: Ideal for spinnaker tweaker lines or jib sheet deflectors, high load thimbles provide a lightweight and low-profile turning point when spliced into a control line.

Line sliders: Dinghy sailors using a bridle or traveler for their mainsheet system can benefit from the low-profile traveler system created by attaching a high load thimble to a mainsheet block.

Cascade Systems: In highly loaded cascade systems like backstays or vang cascades, high load thimbles serve well at turning points with minimal rope movement.

Understanding the specific characteristics of high load thimbles helps optimize their usage in different sailing scenarios. If you have any technical questions, feel free to contact the Allen technical team – Sales@allenbrothers.co.uk





Just a few of the applications where high load thimbles are used





You can also check out this useful Allen info link HERE

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TEAM ALLEN SAILOR - TOM GILLARD
SOLO NATIONAL CHAMPION



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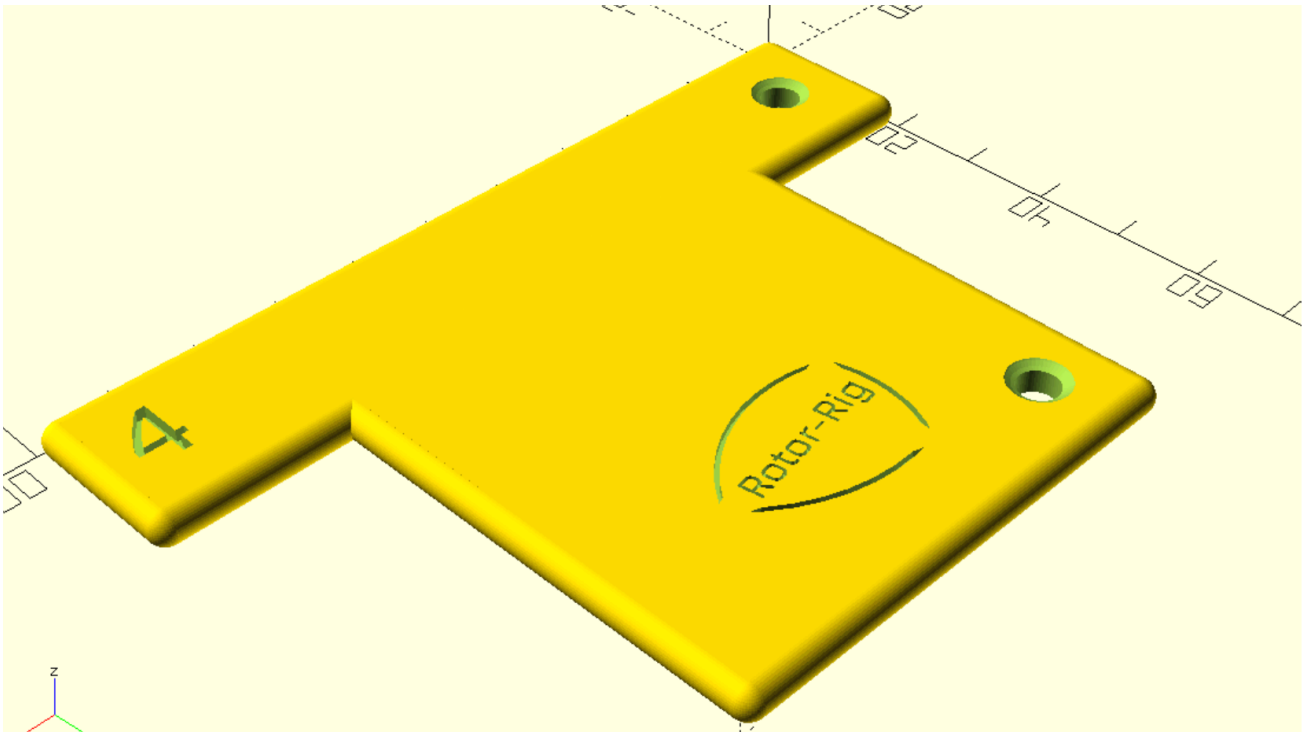


Solo 3D Printed Fittings

Ian Cherrill, Solo 4650, Frensham Pond SC
ian.cherrill@rotor-rig.com

When the winter weather forces me off the water I try to keep myself busy and recently that has meant learning about 3D printing. It might seem like a very nerdy subject (it is) but it has been useful for fitting out my Solo too. Let me explain.

I made things like mast chocks and transom flaps for my boat. These are not too hard - you need the right material (Acetal sheet offcuts on eBay are my favourite), a template of the thing you need and a saw - maybe a file for smoothing the rough edges. But if you need a fitting with a more complicated shape, basic tools are not enough.

I had some ideas for fittings that might be useful and 3D printing was the only cost-effective way to make them. The basic 3D print processing is like icing a cake: the machine squeezes hot plastic onto a plate and when it cools you have your fitting. A computer is used to control the process so you can make very complicated 3D objects to precise dimensions and tolerances. This process is called Fusion Deposition Modelling or FDM. There are a number of newer processes now, but FDM is what most affordable 3D printers use.

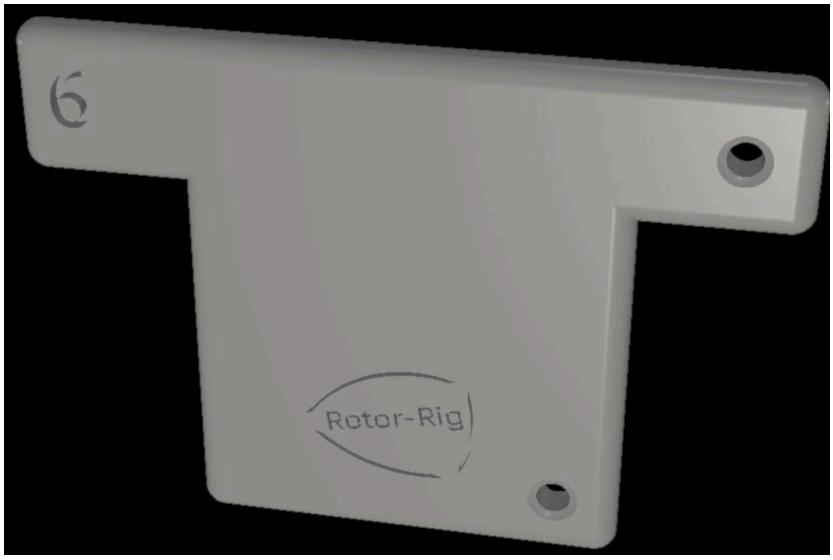
But I didn't want to buy a 3D printer - even the basic ones cost hundreds of pounds and I was not sure where I would keep it or if I would use it enough to justify the purchase. My next door neighbour is a proper engineer and he told me he has two 3D printers in his garage, though neither of them work as the nozzles that deliver the stream of plastic have seized up. That put me off. A bit of research helped - I found there are plenty of companies out there with 3D print services and quite a few of them are aimed at low volume production and prototyping. So no machine required - you just need a design to print.

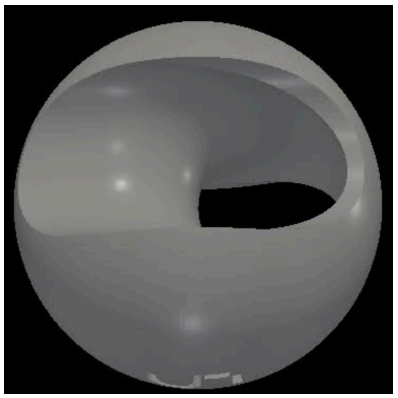
There are computer programs available like AutoCAD, Blender and FreeCAD which let you draw your design. They are quite complicated for the beginner and take a while to learn. I do software development for a living and I was hoping to avoid drawing anything as I am terrible at it. Luckily I hit upon OpenSCAD (https://openscad.org) which is a "design-by-code" system. You write code that describes the design instead of drawing it. For sailing, it has a very useful advantage: you can make a design that scales up and down just by changing a number in the code. For example, if your fitting is designed to handle 4mm rope you can also make a version that handles 3mm or 5mm rope by changing one number - no redrawing required and virtually no extra work.

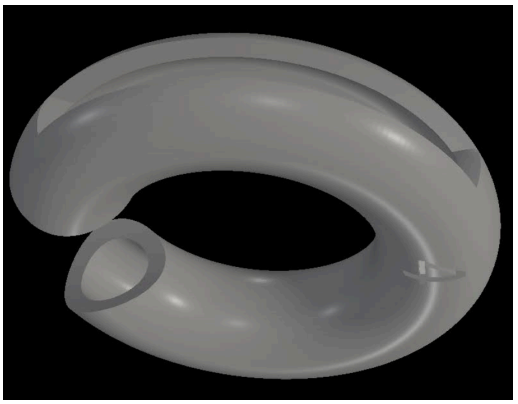
I started by making some simple fittings like rope stoppers (three different sizes), mast chocks (five different thicknesses) and toe strap plates that you can buy at any chandlery. I sent off my designs in the STL format to a company called 3DPrintUK (https://www.3dprint-uk.co.uk) and they sent me back the fittings. They looked good, so I produced some more designs.

I designed a double rope stopper - you don't seem to be able to buy them, but it seemed like a useful thing for cases where you have a loop with two ends. You can try to push both ends through a normal stopper, but it is fiddly and untidy. I wanted to hold the toe straps up by looping elastic cord around them and pushing the two ends through the eye screwed into the underneath of the thwart and use a stopper to hold them there - the double stopper is great for this. Having elastic rubbing against the toe strap is not ideal, so I also designed a hollow plastic circle to go around the toe strap which I could put the elastic cord inside - I called it the "rope-core control guide" (yes, I am not great at naming things either). But it proved useful not only for toe straps but also - in a smaller size - for keeping control lines in the right place. I also designed a "loop stopper" - a stopper you loop the rope through instead of tying a knot in it - this is good if you want to prevent the stopper sliding up and down the rope or if you want to splice rather than tie the rope.

So I have been using some of these 3D printed fittings for a while on the boat and they are working well. I am currently working on a new forward-facing tiller joint, but it is not quite finished yet though the prototype has been in use already and looks promising.







If you would like to try out 3D printing without the faff of creating a design, the STL files for my designs are freely available from my web page (https://www.rotor-rig.com/fittings) and there are some notes on what options work best when ordering them too. Of course you may have a great idea for a fitting- I am open to ideas. Or you might even want to design something yourself. There are other sailors out there making 3D designs too, if you go to the "ThingiVerse" website (https://www.thingiverse.com) you can find wind indicators, cleats and TackTick Compass brackets. Let me know how you get on.

The 3D printing world is expanding all the time and some 3D print services can offer to print your design in carbon fibre and aluminium, though these are rather expensive at the moment. So the way we make fittings in the future could change from "only 2 left in stock" to a "do-it-yourself" model, who knows?



Pic fionabrown.co.uk
2014 The fleet line up for the race start

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Gosling Revival Ben McGrane Hyde Sails

I'm going to try to get to a few events this year in my boat which will be interesting. A 20 year old wooden Gosling which I generally just use as a club boat when my crews go on strike, gradually fettled over the past few years; painted, varnished, new D+ and boom, refitted, foils sprayed and new Hyde sail of course. A little rough around the edges, mostly done by me and there will always be that 'I will sort that bit of the varnish when I do the final coat', been thinking that for 2 years, but as best possible the bits which matter to go fast are all up together…ish.



So can an old wood compete with a modern FRP if in good working order?
Is it the hulls that have developed or the other elements?
If it is the hull development, is it stiffness or shape?
Gosling probably the closest wood to a modern winder on the shape front but more weight to the ends? Still 2kg correctors required.

Certainly all of interest, the bit of 2 boat sailing I did with Richie out of Hamble when we were doing sail testing suggested there wasn't much in it and I like to allow a little for the fact he is a far better solo sailor than me! If it isn't on pace then it won't change my mind on owning the boat, it's still been a cheap option for me to sail locally and there is something about the pride of appearance with a wooden boat even if they are a labour of love and it will probably never be finished to the standard I would like. Suspect of all the boats I currently own this will be the one I have the longest.

Hopefully, I can get to my first Solo Open in more than a decade in 2024!

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WINTER CHAMPIONSHIP 2024
CHEW VALLEY S.C.

Report by Nigel Davies/Guy Mayger

NOBLE
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Nigel Davies writes;

I've been kindly volunteered to put a few words together for all those unlucky Solo sailors who were not able to join us at Chew Valley. You missed a near perfect day's sailing!

I got there early, 09:40 for a 12:00 start. At least two thirds of the fleet had already arrived and I wondered what time they got up!

We were greeted by a cold dullish day and very little wind. I slowly got my boat together and chatted to David Winder, parked alongside, about the new boat he's building for me! I had a nice bacon and egg sandwich, cup of tea and a chat with the Torpoint boys. All very civilised.

By the time fleet of 35 boats set off from the shore a nice 8-10 knots was blowing, still cold but for January it was more than ok.

Our PRO did a sterling job with the course, setting a Triangle Sausage Triangle, so three beats in about 35 minutes per race. The 4 races only took about three and a half hours and with only one recall! The wind was pretty stable with gusts of about 12 knots coming down the lake.

Oli Davenport from P&B and Andy Davis HD Sails both had two wins each, Taxi just getting the overall win by one point. Next came Ben McGrane from Hyde Sails, Nigel Davies, well, from himself (he does have a CB Cover Store jacket so that almost makes him a jockey) and Guy Mayger were the next three places all within 1 point of each other.

Ben was in a wooden boat 4257 (below) proving there really isn't much between any Solo and it's all about the helm.



The format of four races worked well, race turnaround was fast and, although the races were short, we still had three beats, so they felt longer. I had a moment of fame leading the last race until the end of the run when Andy stayed right and just got to the mark ahead.

Andy showed good speed all day; it was like he'd been practising for some big event. For me it was a good day, I even won a bottle of alcohol-free wine! Was the class trying to tell me something?

Hope to see everyone at the next Super Series event in a few months' time.

Guy Mayger adds his take on the racing from the perspective of class president

Chew Valley laid on an excellent day's racing with close battles throughout the fleet. As always with Solos, small mistakes led to losing many places and I can confirm that if you got off to a bad start it was tough to pull back boats with everyone going a similar speed.

Of course, a bad start was one thing, but capsizing no more than 50 yards up the first beat of the first race gave, let's call him Jonny Coate, an extra challenge! Not to be deterred, Jonny came back with a nice set of single digit results thereafter... and kindly took the pictures of the prize-giving.

Elsewhere, Jonathan Swain was hot out of the blocks in race 1 showing his prowess as a front of the fleet sailor. Sadly, he was a little too hot in race 2, picking up an OCS. A real shame as Jonathan, Andy and I had a good race between the three of us having extended a little on the fleet behind.

As Nigel has mentioned, seeing Ben's performance in 4257 was very impressive. The wooden Gosling has been very well looked after and proved to be equally competitive with her FRP cousins. Of course, Ben is a very skilled sailor (and fun to race against), but it goes to show what can be achieved.

Finally, my thanks to Tim Wade who kindly delivered the prizes for the day and picked up a bottle of wine (with alcohol) for his troubles.

And of course, huge thanks to our event sponsors Noble Marine Insurance for their continued support of the Solo class. Next up in the Super Series are the Spring Championships, Saturday 13th April at King George SC.

With rumours of new sailors and new boats joining, the Solos are once again looking to be one of the strongest fleets to race in the UK. Add to that a bumper Nationals and Nations Cup at Brightlingsea in August, it's going to be an exciting 2024!





Andy Davies collects the spoils

Race 1 Action from Ben's Solo HERE

1st	6082	Andy Davis	South Staffs SC	-3	1	2	1	4
2nd	6049	Oliver Davenport	Northampton SC	1	-5	1	3	5
3rd	4257	Ben McGrane	Netley SC	2	3	-8	5	10
4th	5911	Nigel Davies	Draycote Water SC	5	4	-9	2	11
5th	5691	Guy Mayger	Hayling Island Sailing Club	-15	2	5	4	11
6th	5775	Tom Lonsdale	WOSC	-13	8	3	7	18
7th	5130	Jonny Coate	South Staffs SC	-24	6	4	8	18
8th	5843	Matthew Chapman	Chew Valley Lake SC	10	7	-11	6	23
9th	5838	Mark Cooper	Burghfield Sailing Club	9	-13	6	11	26
10th	6093	David winder	Hollingworth lake	7	9	10	-13	26
11th	6055	Jonathan Swain	Carsington	4	(OCS)	13	10	27
12th	5615	Andy Carter	Leigh and Lowton SC	6	-14	12	14	32
13th	5901	Charlie Nunn	Torpoint Mosquito SC	18	12	7	-24	37
14th	5642	Steve Roberts	Torpoint Mosquito SC	11	15	-23	12	38
15th	5704	Jamie Cuxson	Shustoke SC	17	-25	16	9	42
16th	6066	Tim Wade	Lymington Town Sailing Club	-27	10	15	23	48
17th	5210	Neil Wilkinson	Shustoke SC	14	-18	17	18	49
18th	5353	Chris Meredith	Chew Valley Lake SC	19	17	14	-22	50
19th	5902	Ian Bartlett	South Cerney Sailiing Club	-26	16	18	19	53
20th	5726	Andy Jones	Burghfield Sailing Club	8	19	-30	27	54
21st	5926	John Steels	Starcross YC	-23	22	19	15	56
22nd	4792	Gareth Wilkinson	Chelmarsh SC	20	20	-22	16	56
23rd	4809	Stephen Penfold	Chew Valley Lake SC	32	11	(DNF)	20	63
24th	5497	Olly Saunders	Shustoke SC	12	28	24	-29	64
25th	5740	Mike Cossey	Shustoke SC	16	23	-25	25	64
26th	5401	Andrew Bownes	Barnt Green	-30	27	28	17	72
27th	5844	Nick Fisher	Torpoint Mosquito SC	22	21	29	(DNC)	72
28th	5976	Toby Peacock	Chew Valley Lake SC	28	24	(DNF)	21	73
29th	353	Jaye Rickards	Chew Valley Lake SC	31	26	21	(DNC)	78
30th	5904	Pat Overs	Grafham water	25	-30	27	26	78
31st	5675	Maria E. Franco	Northampton SC	21	-31	31	28	80
32nd	5671	Simon Dipple	Shustoke SC	-33	33	20	30	83
33rd	5731	Vernon Perkins	South Cerney Sailiing Club	-34	29	26	31	86
34th	5701	Damian Gardner-Thorpe	Chew Valley Lake SC	29	32	32	(DNF)	93

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Pic; fionabrown.co.uk
2014 Andy Tunnicliffe works his way through the fleet



Women Sailing Solo

Maria E. Franco Ferro

Solo 5675, Northampton SC

Last year, at the February 2023 edition of the Solo Interactive, as a newbie to the Solo class I was given the opportunity to share a little bit about myself and my journey into sailing and into the Solo fleet (Link here). Another year has gone by, and I can say, my enthusiasm about being part of the Solo fleet continues to grow. There is one thing that I would really love to see and is more ladies taking part in the regional and national events. There are a lot of things that make it a great class to join, as we know, it is a very popular singlehanded dinghy, affordable thanks to an active second-hand market. It's an ideal option for anyone wanting to develop their racing skills, since most clubs will have a fleet, and with a good number of big regional and national racing circuits. As a woman, there are things that I do still struggle with, like putting my mast up and down, handling the boat on very windy conditions but thanks to being surrounded by a very friendly group of fellow sailors I feel like to any challenge I've had they will offer a hand with the mast or ready with advice about how to best rig my boat for the different conditions so I can manage.

So, what can we do to increase the numbers of women taking part? I hope that each one of you supports and encourage more women to embrace this wonderful sport and to join our Solo fleet. We hope the stories below and the one I shared last year can help you start the conversation to encourage other women sailors at your club.



NED 565 Barbara Schapers

Barbara fully committed to the reach at the 2023 Nationals.



Justine Davenport

Solo 4715, Burwain SC

So why would a woman want to sail a Solo? That's a good question, and here's my story… I'm Justine Davenport, I started sailing at the age of about 7 at Burwain Sailing Club. I learnt in a Mirror and crewed for my friend for a few years. Then I moved on to being a "rent-a crew" mainly in Merlin Rockets (occasionally GP's) for whom ever needed a crew at our club and then the university years put a stop to this. I tried out for the Leeds University Sailing Team and they turned me down! I was just too quiet and shy and on the day of the trial you couldn't really tell if I could sail or not - I was so knotted up with nerves! So what to do? I couldn't let being turned down put an end to sailing for three years. I was knocking around with friends who sailed OK's at the time, so with new-found bravado I bought a knackered old OK. I never spent a weekend in Leeds, I toured the country and Europe with the OK fleet and had a ball, often at the back, but what the heck, I was out there and doing it! I sailed the OK for about 9 years and you'll find my name on the Nationals Lady's trophy and the Inlands Lady's Trophy, but that all came to an end when I moved out to France for career reasons. I spent 14 years living in France and did next to no dinghy sailing the whole time I lived there.

Fast-forward to 2019 and I moved back home near to Burwain SC. I re-connected with old friends and thought that sailing at my old club again would fit well in my life once more. I looked at what boats were sailed there and who I could sail with. My partner Innes had a GP and a Solo, never being keen on crewing a GP, and with my love of helming I opted for the Solo, there was a good Winder Mk1 for sail at the club, good condition, competitive and affordable, so the decision was made, I bought Solo 4715, re-joined Burwain SC, started sailing against the home fleet and on the national circuit. I'm nowhere near the ideal height or weight for a Solo but it's still possible to be competitive in certain conditions, and obviously there are times when being lighter than the average Solo sailor is an advantage. The boat is so easy to care for, easy to rig, easy to tow. There are great circuits available across the country and even some international sailing – unusual for a national class boat. What's not to love? There are of course challenges, I have to actively work out to keep fit and strong enough to manage the boat, I have never (I hate to admit) put my mast in

myself, and I have to have someone to help me with the trolley. 99% of the time it's Innes that helps me, but the Solo sailors are a friendly bunch and there's generally someone willing to offer a helping hand.

Competing in a male-dominated fleet can be difficult, as a woman I'm often sailing in conditions that overpower me, but there are things you can do; softer mast, flatter sail, and a good survival technique are essential. I often benefit from sailing safe when others are falling in, I think I was credited as the only boat that didn't capsize at the WPNSA Nationals in 2019! Normally, you'd say – if you're not pushing to the limits you're not trying hard enough, but in this case staying upright gains places and it becomes one of a few tricks in my arsenal that has its advantages.



Being a woman in a male-dominated fleet certainly isn't for every female, you definitely need physical strength, determination and guts. It would be great to just sail when the conditions are right, but that's near-on impossible. How often would you want to spend hours travelling to an event and pay the entry fee just to have to sit it out and watch everyone else enjoy the top end of a force 3 and above. It would soon become something you'd lose enthusiasm for. No, you've got to be able to cope with the conditions, and you need to equip yourself with knowledge of the rules and the tactics to feel confident out there. This wasn't meant to put anyone off, I hope it hasn't! I would encourage any women out there who are tempted to give it a go! If I can do it, anyone can, and I have an enormous amount of fun doing it. There is nothing like the buzz after a good day on the water. You get to meet amazing people, travel to some fantastic venues, and challenge yourself physically and mentally each time.

As I mentioned before, the Solo fleet is a friendly bunch, and the Solo is an excellent boat to sail. Any questions you've got, just ask! More women in the Solo fleet would definitely be a good thing.



Amanda Henderson is not fazed by the Hayling Bay waves



Brenda Hoult is one of the most successful female sailors



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Sal Erskine-Furniss

Solo 5262, Torpoint Mosquito SC

When I started sailing a solo, it was the first time I had sailed and raced a dinghy - I joined the fleet in 2020. For me, the solo has enabled my husband and I to both compete at the same events, and the choice of masts and sails for different weight people is in my view a real strength of the class. Initially, I did find open meetings and larger events nerve wracking and disorientating. I remember getting completely distracted by the number of trains passing by at Starcross. Looking back to shore at another meeting and not being able to work out where we had launched from. Between races at one event, I thought I'd sail over to where it appeared a group were waiting for the warning signal only to find it was all men having a wee! Yes, men with those convenient zips - how lovely that must be when you have a long day on the water.



So, it has been all a bit of a steep learning curve. I'm happy to step my mast on flat ground at the start of the day, after a long day on the water I do find it a challenge to un-step it on my own, but the fleet is friendly on the whole and there are always people around who will help or offer advice. In a very short time, I have acquired a whole herd of new friends, as well as joining the Torpoint Mosquitoes and gaining a bright yellow t-shirt.

The most memorable solo sailing I have done so far includes racing at Carnac which was just so much fun. Looking across at a fleet of 100 or so solos sailing in front of St Michael's Mount and wishing I had a camera onboard. Pulling my own number out of the hat to win a North sail voucher and sailing alongside Barbara on that last exhilarating reach of the Hayling Nationals in 2023.



Anna Nankervis

Solo 3969, Shropshire SC

Sailing has always been a part of my life. One of my earliest memories is standing at the water's edge with my Mum waving to my Dad as he sailed off in his Fireball at Midland Sailing Club. Fast forward a number of years and at age eight, we join Telford Sailing Club and I start racing regularly with my Dad, Tony. My brother never took to the sport like I did so I was Dad's principal crew for many years, with Mum joining in from time to time. South Staffs became my home club aged twelve where I gained valuable experience crewing in different boats for various helms both at the club and other events around the country. I spent a lot of time competing in the Lark Class during and after university and amongst life-long friends this is also where I met my husband, Lee. We decided to stop sailing and watch our family grow for a number of years, before gradually introducing our children to the sport little by little. We joined Shropshire Sailing Club in 2016 (I think!) and slowly but surely encouraged our offspring into sailing, building them up to learning with other youths their own age. There was obviously a selfish side to this as Lee and I wanted to get back to racing! At this time, we had a Lark so every now and then we'd compete in a couple of races to satisfy our need to sail.

The Solo came into our lives quite by chance. Lee had been saying to me that he was looking for a single-handed boat to sailing when I didn't want to crew (I questioned when didn't I want to sail!) and he found an old wooden Solo needing a lot of TLC. As a skilled carpenter he relished this challenge, and we soon had a restored Solo ready to launch. He was going to test it out after the morning's races in the Lark, but he had forgotten the Lark rudder and had to return home to retrieve it. Before he left, he suggested I take the Solo out myself. I'm not sure what happened, as I don't feel I actually decided, but before I knew it, my fellow sailors had rigged the Solo, put it on the water, encouraged me to hop in and I was off… helming!! It was a beautiful sunny day with a gentle wind – perfect conditions. I questioned if I actually knew what I was doing as I had only helmed a handful of times and joined in a couple of Crews races over the years. My helms had always offered me the chance to helm but I just enjoyed the crewing side and besides, helming looked like a lot of hard work! To say I enjoyed myself that day is an understatement. The freedom on the water, in control of what I was doing and where I was going in the race was something I had never considered. I loved it. Finding a new side to a sport I love in my 40's is something that I hadn't counted on and something that I am grateful that came my way. Yes, it was always there but sometimes a push in the right direction is what is needed! That boat fondly named 'Patch' following my husband's handiwork, became my first Solo. I have since competed weekly at the club, gaining confidence week on week with encouragement from the other sailors, then progressing to my very first Solo Open Meeting at Chelmarsh. What a wonderful welcoming group of sailors! And there were a couple ladies competing as well. It shouldn't have surprised me as I have never really looked at the sailing world as being male dominated as I have always been surrounded by female sailors, both friends and family (my aunt also sailed!) and I have been accepted as an equal competitor at events. I hope that's the case for all girls and women. It would be wonderful to welcome more ladies into the Solo fleet and also encourage juniors. Our son has also become a keen sailor and tried out a Solo a year or two ago. He has now taken this on as his new boat. He even competed at South Staffs Solo Open last year amidst much encouragement from the fleet. As with all Open meetings, this was a great event to attend, but particularly as my Dad, husband, our son and myself were all competing. We're all looking forward to what this year will bring!

So, hope you have enjoyed reading these stories, and please use them as a starting point to encourage women sailors at your club to join our Solo fleet, and please let them know they can get in touch with any of us!

Maria, Anna, Justine, and Sal.



Problem with a Trailer Ross Watson

My boat was at it's builder Dave Winder for a minor repair and when I came to collect it Dave casually mentioned that the bracket supporting the mudguard was a bit loose. It was, and I decided to take a closer look when I got home. With the boat off the trailer and the mast support removed I turned the trailer over which is not something you would want to do every day.

To my horror it was immediately clear what the problem was. There is a flange welded to the axle unit on either side and this is bolted onto the trailer frame and bracket for the mudguards. This flange is 4mm thick and yet was badly cracked on both sides. The picture shows the damage clearly. There was no corrosion in either the flange or the bolts. A piece of metal from the bracket fell off when the bolts were removed on one side.

It was clear that the entire axle unit would need to be replaced and for a while I struggled to find the correct one. Most websites were showing axles with an axle load way beyond what is needed for a small dinghy. I found Western Towing where I was able to input the exact dimensions and part number from the existing axle. They were able to supply a replacement for £256 including delivery which seemed reasonable for the key part of the trailer. Delivery was quoted at a month as I think they are manufactured in Austria. When it came I was pleased to see that it was complete with hubs and bearings which I had not expected. I replaced the bolts securing the axle to the trailer at the same time and also treated myself to a new coupling.

If the flange had broken completely whilst the boat was being towed the consequences could have been horrific as the entire axle unit with wheels weighs over 30kg and it would have bounced down the road until it hit something. Perversely the boat would probably have been ok as the trolley wheels would have supported the boat until the car stopped.

The trailer was manufactured by Rapide and is older than my boat so I am unsure how much use it had before I got it. It may be a problem with the design that means there is some sideways pressure on the bolts. The holes in the flange are oval and not round which could be a reason. There is no easy way to check for this potential problem without turning the trailer upside down but in my case it was well worth the effort.



Allen Solo Midlands Series 2024 Calendar

- March 23rd – Banbury SC
- May 4th – South Staffs SC
- May 25th – Northampton SC
- June 29th – Trimpley SC
- July 14th – Shustoke SC
- September 1st – Carsington SC
  Joint event with Northern Series
- **September 28th and 29th – Midland Area Champs** – Notts County SC
- October 5th – South Cerney SC
  Joint event with Western Series
- October 26th – Stauton Harold SC

5 events to qualify

National Solo Class Association UK

SOLO MIDLAND AREA

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Solo Inlands @ Northampton SC - November 4th 2023



Brownie finds space at the top mark, though the boat to windward might disagree.



Western Area Report Vernon Perkins NSCA Western Area Rep

Not long now until the Western Series kicks off for 2024. A total of 10 events with 5 to count.

Firstly, we are very happy to announce we have new sponsors for the 2024 series with DinghyShack and Goat Marine. Both based in the West Country and providing a range of products and services as well as prizes for our events; culminating in some very nice prizes for the series to be given out at the End of Season event. There will be an attendance requirement to be eligible for the prizes, so put as many of our events in your calendar as possible not to be disappointed. We are proud to have these companies as our sponsors. More will be communicated through the year.

Following a very successful 2023 the series starts on 6th/7th April with the Welsh Championships at Tata Steel, Port Talbot; a fantastic event if you have not been before. With discounted accommodation available, depending on availability, and an NSCA supported 3 course meal on Saturday night, not one to be missed. See the NSCA Website for accommodation details, online entry to open later this month.

We have built on the huge success of 2023 and have now got 2 weekends with back-to-back events. Starcross and Dittisham again, and now Bristol Corinthians and Chew Valley. The intention is to minimise travel and allow us to get together on Saturday evening.

The Western Area Championships are being held on 8th/9th June at Plymouth Mountbatten, a totally new event for us. But this will lead into the proposed Nigel Pusinelli there in 2025 and Nationals in 2026, subject to confirmation. Again, the NSCA will be supporting the event with an aim to encourage as many competitors to travel as possible, especially given the large local Solo fleets along the coast, not to mention the Yellow posse from Torpoint, what colour shirts will they have this year?

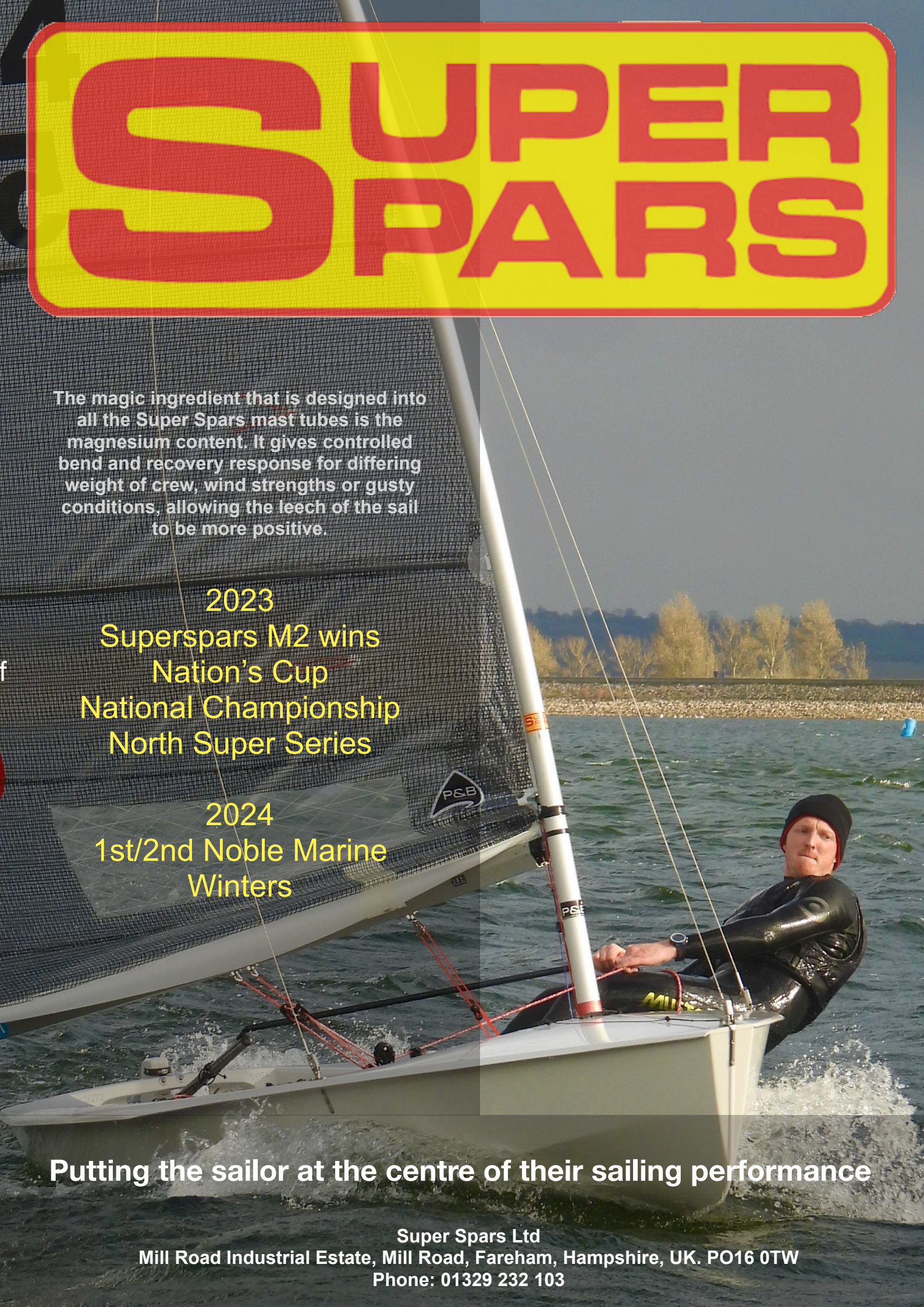
South Cerney Open will be a joint Western and Midlands Open, building on the success of last year, we believe Martin Honnor already has it in his calendar.

Then we finish the series in glorious Salcombe which this year is also the Nigel Pusinelli 2024 on 19th/20th October.

Our aim this year is to encourage more competitors to travel to events regardless of experience, age or sex. Please talk to us about how easy it is to attend and whilst the competition on the water can be of very varying levels, the off-water friendships and banter is hard to beat.

Look forward to seeing you on the water.

SUPER SPARS



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AFTER THE WELSH IT'S

THE SPRING CHAMPIONSHIP

KING GEORGE S.C. APRIL 13



Qualifier of the Super Series 2024

A Diamond in the Rough?

Paul Davis, our NSCA Vice President and Sponsorship Co-Ordinator is embarking on a mission to build a Solo that will be visually, very different to the current trend in FRP construction, and while the overall finish is shrouded in secrecy, Paul has agreed to reveal some of his ideas and evolution of the hull shape with us.

Somewhere, in one of the UK's deepest darkest coastal villages surrounded by the New Forest lies one of your own with a why not attitude and itchy fingers after sitting behind a desk for too long (or is that the itch from the glass fibre who knows?), dusting his tools off and embarking on a little mission. After being in the Marine Industry for 20+ years he has seen many developments over the years, and provided support to the top end of the sport including the Olympic Teams at London 2012, stands him in good stead on what will stand out. Yes this is your very own VP……..

As a boat builder by trade, with the skill set and facilities to build boats along with the gentle persuasion of a very close work colleague, a plan was made to build a couple of OK's for the Worlds held down in Lyme Regis. Why an OK's we hear you all screaming? Well, a UK Worlds was pretty hard to pass up especially with a best friend in boats you'd built together, sadly this was not to be. Sam 'Sparkles' sadly passed away after a short fight with cancer and I lost all drive and motivation without Sam. If any of you knew Sam from the OK's, he had a few outside the box idea's, this might have been something to do with him being a Kiwi but I wont hold that against him.

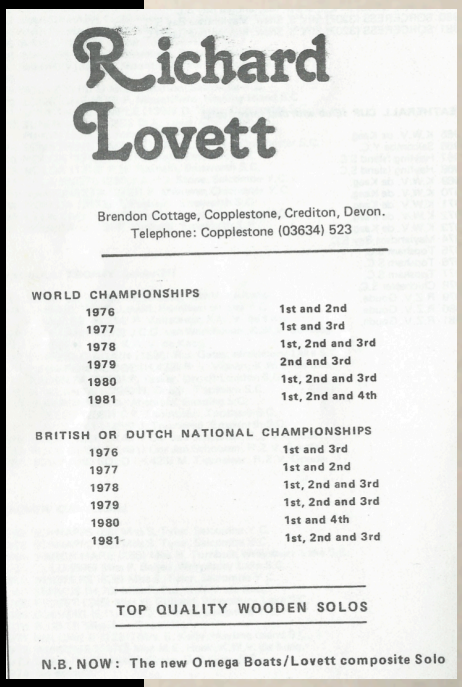
With the Dutch Solo fleet on the up and Paul Dijkstra bringing his new Solo to the Dutch waters it certainly got people talking and thinking as it was a step away from the current Solo's. This was the spark I needed to put the wheels back in motion and get building, so the idea's started bouncing around and investigations started. There are a few Solo mould's in the UK sitting locked away in barns not being used I thought why don't I get a set and have a play. I have very kindly acquired a set of mould's to build a one off from, but the mould's have been dormant for a while, but the shape of the moulds have been referred to as one of the most successful shapes over time, so cant be a bad place to start. In my mind, given what people had said about the shape of the moulds and if it was built a certain way it could be quick, it sounded a little like it could potentially be a bit of a 'diamond in the rough', which fits quite nicely as Sam's nickname was 'Sparkles'!

Some chap called Carveth or something once produced some average results for a couple years in a Lovett which these moulds came from!





The hull shape (data extracted from the NSCA magazine archive)
In the mid seventies a chap named Richard Lovett started building and sailing the Solo. He was a supreme craftsman and also had some ideas to produce a fast hull. The rules allow +/- 5mm for builder error and this was exploited by him and other builders to make the bow entry finer, to widen the hull to promote lift onto the plane and a flat aft section to increase downwind performance. Richard also introduced the flared gunwale which was appreciated by many pairs of legs when hiking. Interestingly, there are now a few Solos' with sharper gunwales which theoretically produce more efficient leverage but require hiking pads! Another stand-out feature of the Lovett Solo was the beauty of the build quality and was matched by longevity of top level performance.
The early eighties saw the dominance of the Lovett hull and, matched with the Needlespar or Proctor C' mast and the Batt or Hyde sail proved super competitive and was used to win by both Geoff Carveth (Nationals' 82, 83, 89, Worlds' 83,84, 89) and Ken Falcon (Nationals' 85,86,87,88, Worlds' 85,86,87). There were some exceptions, Simon Cray won the National title at Brixham in 1984 in an Uttley built wooden Solo with a Hyde sail and lots of mast rake. He also wore a weight jacket, the last time one would be allowed.


Richard Lovett

Brendon Cottage, Copplestone, Crediton, Devon.
Telephone: Copplestone (03634) 523

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

1976	1st and 2nd
1977	1st and 3rd
1978	1st, 2nd and 3rd
1979	2nd and 3rd
1980	1st, 2nd and 3rd
1981	1st, 2nd and 4th

BRITISH OR DUTCH NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

1976	1st and 3rd
1977	1st and 2nd
1978	1st, 2nd and 3rd
1979	1st, 2nd and 3rd
1980	1st and 4th
1981	1st, 2nd and 3rd

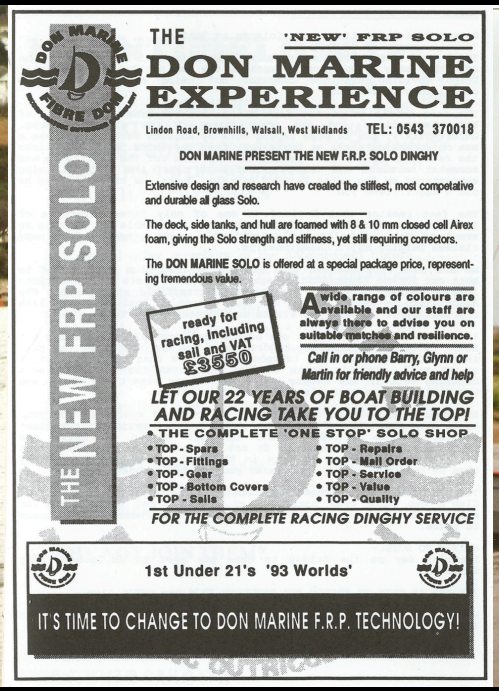
TOP QUALITY WOODEN SOLOS

N.B. NOW: The new Omega Boats/Lovett composite Solo

After some investigation, I ascertained that the Don Marine moulds were based on the Lovett hull shape.

Paul Cunningham writes; “3769 Blaze was my varnished hull Don Marine built by Glyn Walker in 1991. He measured Bungler and adapted his jig to be as close as possible within the rules to the front end of the Lovett but smoothed out at the aft stations to be more stable in a blow and to plane sooner. He then built 3908 Merlyn as a plug in order to make a mould for building the FRP boats.







Above; Paul sailing Blaze of Glory and Merlyn

Below; Steve Parker built 5288 from the Don mould

SOLO CLASS NEWSLETTER SUMMER 1992

THE HEART OF GLASS

The West Midlands is known as the Heart of the Country. So it would seem appropriate to entitle this article 'The Heart of Glass'. This is the first of the planned extended series of interviews with, and articles by, all current Solo boat builders. And it would seem fitting to start with the newest boat (or should that be plug?) in the class.

Barry Richards founded Don Marine Limited some 20 years ago to be not just a boat builder but a complete service for racing dinghies. Don Marine have been associated with GP 14's Enterprises and Solos for all of those 20 years and have had a programme of constant shape, weight distribution and stiffness development. The craftsmen within the company have always turned out hulls of the highest quality and to that end the 'Don Solo' has been well known on the circuit as a strongly built and very pretty boat. Over the last few months the shape has been seriously modified to produce what is undoubtably the fastest and most stable Solo to come from the Brownhulls company yet. This shape has proven to plane very early and yet still be sure-footed and fast to windward.

It is now that Barry and Glynn are convinced that they have the 'right' shape that they are embarking on a project to produce the first new all glass Solo hull for 10 years. To this end Barry Richards intends to emulate the huge success of the IFS. boats in the late '60s and early '70s by producing a competitive hull at a very competitive price. Barry's marketing format is to produce a stiff well-built boat of all glass construction (including thwart and case capping) consisting of 8mm hull and 6mm decks that will provide a good and cheap entry into the class that can also be bought as a second boat for sailors of two man boats and as is increasingly seen as a second boat for cruiser sailors. How long will it remain the second boat?

As for the development of the glass fibre construction Glynn and Barry have been able to draw on the vast experience they have gained from developing the FRP GP14 which is proving almost unbeatable within the class, not only at club level but at championship level also. Of course with every new boat there are bound to be new ideas and we will be looking closer at those then the first production hulls appear later in the year. However probably the best news, for all of us who get a little tired whilst sitting-out, is that the 'Don FRP Solo' will have large and comfortable gunwhales due to a unique foam/glass bonding system which means that the hull and deck mouldings only come into contact with each other where the builder wants them to. This means the two mouldings encapsulate a large amount of high density foam to support the large gunwhales with immense strength.

Don Marine will of course still be building their very attractive all wooden Solos and there are also plans to introduce a composite version towards the end of 1993. This may include a wooden bow panel and transom along with the decks, bulkhead, tanksides and floor battens.

And just in case you were wondering, the new glass Solo will be available in every colour of the rainbow.

More from Don Marine next year. We will be looking inside a different builders yard in the next edition.





After a few discussions with ‘Dutch’ Paul and a previous Solo National Champ / Dragon maestro (Martin ‘Stavros’ Payne), I had a plan in place. Yes this plan is taking longer than planned as I keep having random idea’s but things are progressing.

You all have to admire the shear beauty of Glyn Walkers handy work in ‘Blaze of Hope’ which is believed to be in Holland still going well.



Ed; Blaze of Glory undergoing measurement, the base line providing the position from which all hull measurements are taken.

The Lovett hull was quite deep in the rocker which produced powerful roll tacks, the flatter aft section promoting early planing.



Rough Diamond hull lay-up in it's very early stages

Now Ben McGrane managed to sail his stunning classic Gosling to 3rd at the recent Winter Champ's, could this be the comeback of the older Solo's, could this little mission be that little diamond in the rough with a little 'Sparkle'??? While the overall finish is shrouded in secrecy, watch this space and hopefully the finished item will be hitting the water soon this year so watch this space……

And before you all think you can come quiz me on this years Solo Class Stand at the RYA Dinghy Show, I won't be divulging too much, it would take a few beers before that happens (Mr Hopwood, stay away! If last years Nations Cup was anything to go by you're a bad influence with the beers!), those that were at Medemblik will know the story behind this, but that's another story for another day!





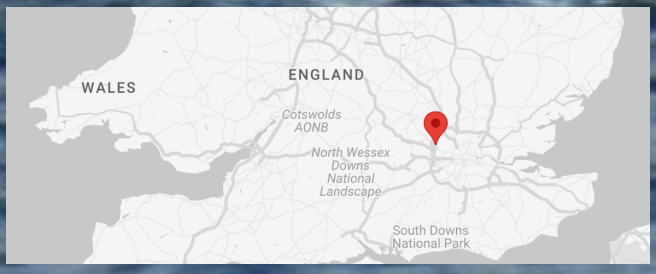


Paul concentrates on his mark rounding in Medemblik 2023

Pic; Helen Macvean

Broadwater S.C. Open Meeting

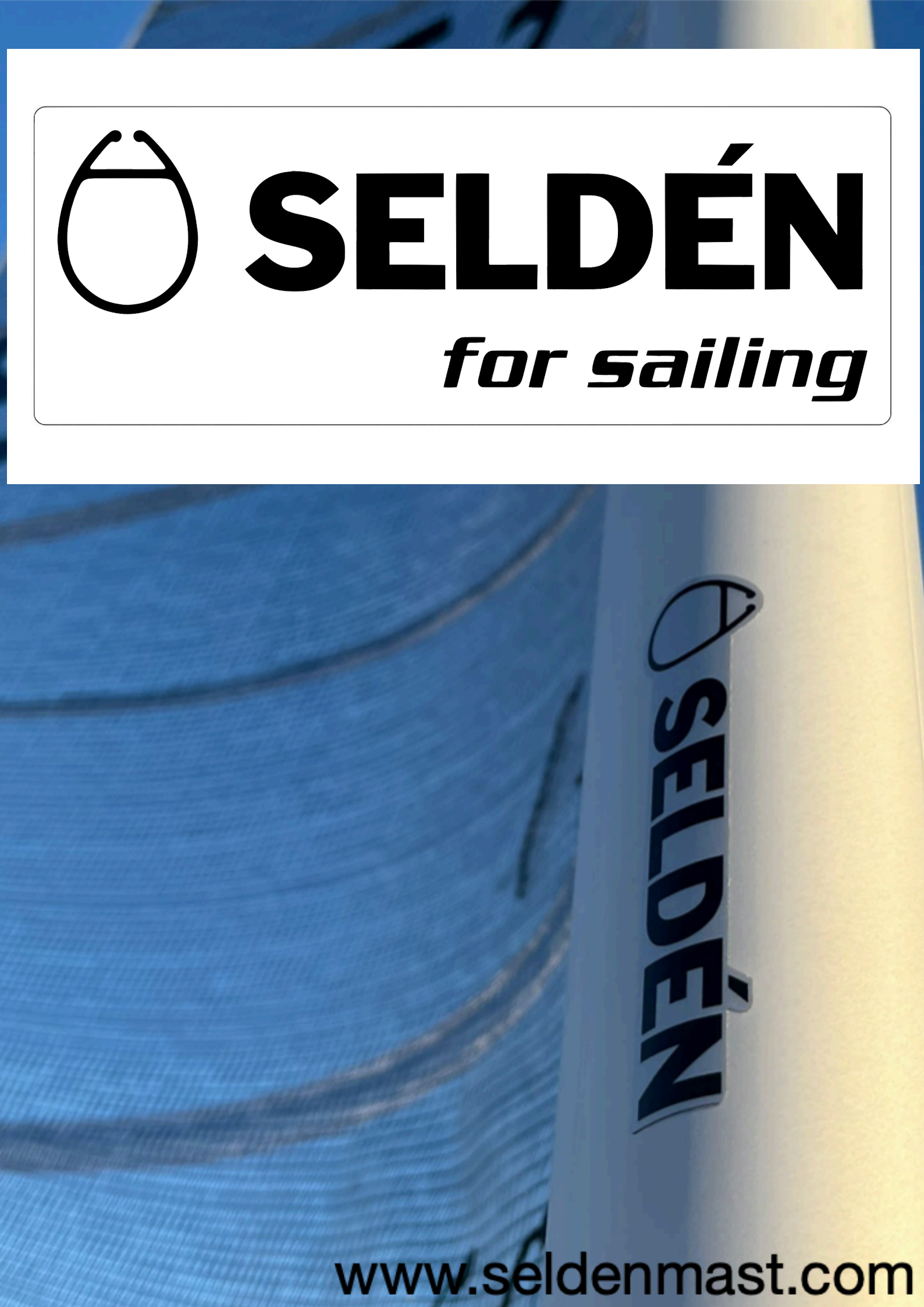
TV, Eastern and Southern Qualifier



Sat March 23 Start 11.00

Contact; broadwatersc.co.uk

Harefield, Broadwater Lake Moorhall Road Harefield note: entrance opposite 'The River Garden' pub, formerly 'Bear on the Barge, Harefield, Uxbridge UB9 6PE, UK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