Issue 23 August 2025 www.solosailing.org.uk

Solo Nationals North Berwick 2025

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Presidential Report Guy Mayger

2025 Solo Nationals – North Berwick

Venue & Atmosphere

Having had to cancel the 2020 Nationals due to Covid, I'm super excited that the Solo fleet finally get to go to **East Lothian Yacht Club (ELYC)**, for this year's Nationals.
The event promises a spectacular blend of competitive sailing and coastal charm. North Berwick, nestled on Scotland's East Coast, offers a stunning backdrop with its sandy beaches, historic landmarks like **Bass Rock**, and a welcoming seaside vibe. The town will also be buzzing with the **Fringe by the Sea festival**, adding music, arts, and entertainment to the mix. The Boomtown Rats are playing on the Wednesday, and we have arranged the social schedule around this to allow the aging punks and New Wave fans in the fleet to attend. Thursday's racing might be interesting after this! If you haven't already booked your tickets, they can be purchased here… https://www.fringebythesea.com/

Racing Conditions – fingers crossed!

North Berwick is renowned for its **steady sea breezes and sheltered bay**, making it ideal for dinghy racing. ELYC has prepared multiple race areas depending on wind direction, with the **Elcho Green dinghy park** providing easy access to launch zones. The eastern race area offers exciting wave conditions, while the western course features scenic sailing between **The Lamb** and **Craigleith.** With racing planned to start each day at 13:00 this will allow for a very relaxed start to each day and the best chance for the sea breeze to set in.

Logistics & Hospitality

The club's **Beach Team and RIB crews** will assist with launching and navigation, ensuring smooth transitions from shore to racecourse. After racing, sailors can unwind at the clubhouse with sponsor supported beers and sweet treats from Tunnocks! Oh yes J

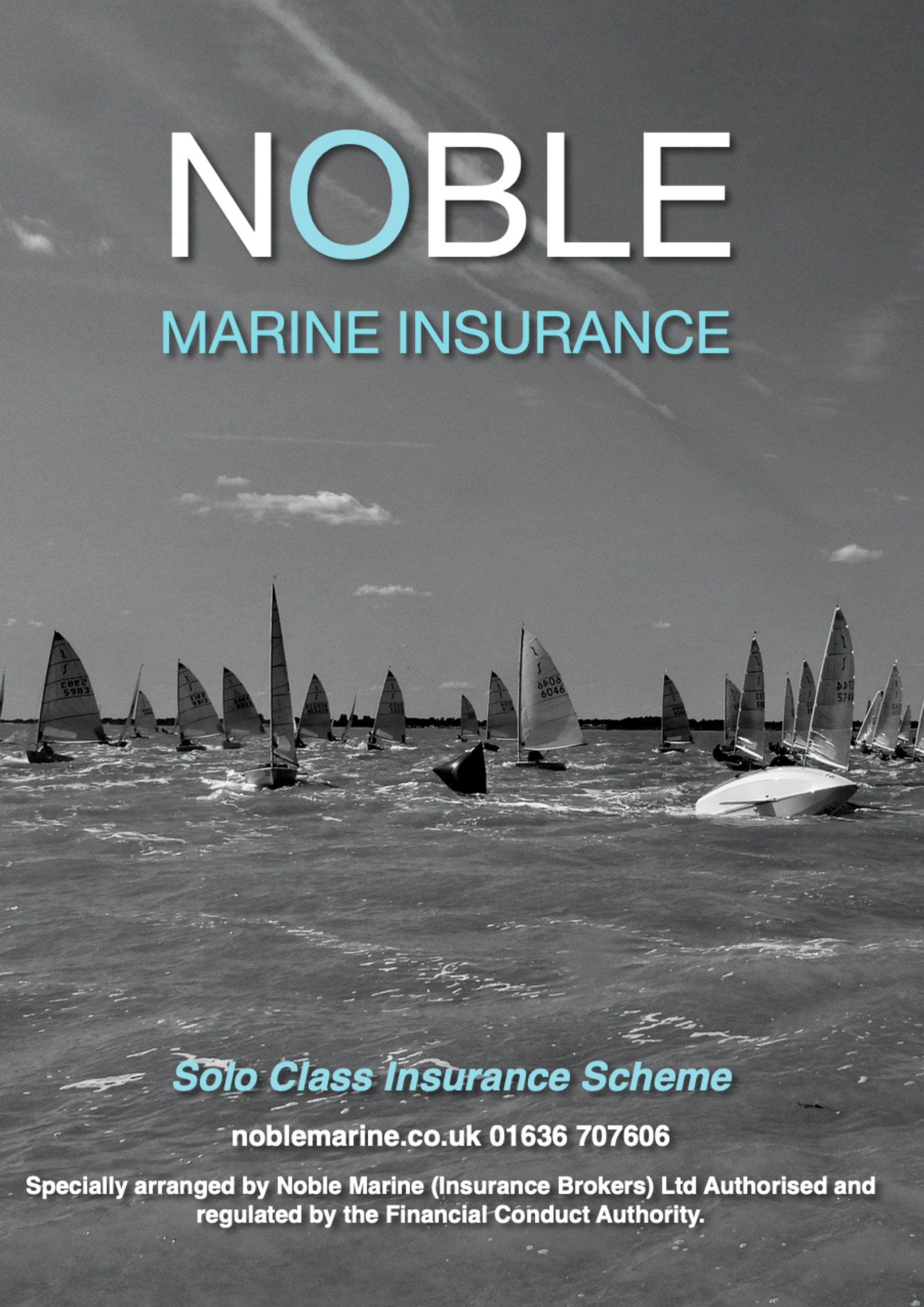
As always with the Solo Nationals, we will have a daily prizegiving at 21:00 in the clubhouse bar.
Race winners will be awarded their trophies, and the infamous random number draw will see our excellent sponsors swag dished out. Remember, you must be there to pick up your prize!

Bonus Perks

If we're lucky, we might spot dolphins surfacing alongside mid-race—though they won't offer a tow or Tunnocks teacakes, sadly.

Final Thoughts

With top-tier race management, scenic sailing waters, and a vibrant local culture, the 2025 Solo Nationals in North Berwick is shaping up to be one of the most memorable championships in recent years. Whether you're competing or spectating, this event offers a perfect mix of sport and seaside relaxation.


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Jump on the event WhatsApp group to keep up with the latest info and our excellent race coverage from Will Loy. You must join before the event to see all the event posts.

Don't forget your tow rope!

https://chat.whatsapp.com/C1MVQpmTEvu67m4TKpxuFt

Solo Nationals North Berwick – sailing and social schedule.

Saturday August 2nd

1. **Registration 10.00 - 1300**
2. **Equipment Inspection 13.00 - 17.00**
3. **Practice race/session 14.00 - 16.00**

Sunday August 3rd -

1. **Registration 10.00 - 11.00**
2. **Equipment Inspection 8.30 - 10.00**
3. **Briefing in Marquee 10.30**

Solo Nationals North Berwick 2025

WhatsApp group

Social schedule – daily prizegiving at 21:00

Sunday 3rd - Commodore's Reception sponsored by Fidra Gin 6.45pm in the ELYC Bar

Monday 4th - Solo class AGM - 19:00 in the Sail Loft Cafe at ELYC Clubhouse

Tuesday 5th – Noble sponsored class dinner - 7.30pm in the Sail Loft Cafe at ELYC Clubhouse.

Wednesday 6th – Free evening or Boomtown Rats at Fringe by the Sea

Thursday 7th - Noble sponsored class dinner - 7.30pm in the Sail Loft Cafe at ELYC Clubhouse.

Friday 8th – Free evening

Prize Giving - ASAP after racing

Xalient Solo Nation's Cup Day 1

I awoke to the unfamiliar roar of an engine turbine as it throttled up, the local ferry utilising a hydrofoil system that, from the estimated weight of the beast, required as much thrust as the flux capacitor could give her to hit 88 miles an hour and lift-off.

I took a moment to reflect on the previous evenings opening ceremony which was cut short by a weather system which we all saw coming but like a deer at night, mesmerised by the headlights of an oncoming truck, stood motionless as it careered towards us.
Every cloud has a silver lining and NSCA Vice President Paul Davis's attempt at public speeches was mercifully drowned out by the screams of children and Chris Brown as it tore through the town. Competitors, already drenched from super-sized rain drops scurried to their Solos as fork lightening erratically touched down across Lake Como, the booms of thunder, inevitable and equally humbling.

There was only minor damage to the Solos, I am unsure as to whether there were human casualties but they are inconsequential with a Championship to contest.

Undeterred and resolute, Circolo Vela Bellano took the drama in it's stride, pizza, beer and conversations about the weather being what the UK do best and sure as eggs are eggs, the Italian summer returned and we could get ready for the action.

I dragged myself from my bed, adjusting the crouch of my pyjamas and looked out from my vantage point overlooking the lake. A light northerly pushed it's way down the valley but soon it would give way to the more dominant southern breeze as the mountain range heated up.

By race time we were into a perfect 10-12 knots and with the temperature dial flicking towards 30 and unbroken azure skies, the fleet launched for what would be the first 2 races of this event.
Circolo Vela Bellano provided a press boat for myself and also for a local videographer who would be arriving for days 2-3-4 so today I would juggle my camera and my phone. Utilising WhatsApp provides almost instant coverage and a connection for those on shore and abroad. The shore team strapped me into the harness, one of the team operating the rib crane to transition me and, once aboard and after checking I was still male, we set off for the arena.



Race 1

The pin end looked favoured and with Solos already bailing out with ten seconds to go it was no surprise to have a general recall.
The second start saw a more even spread, I would suggest some of those a third of the way up the line were those that had been burnt in the first attempt.
NSCA Chief measurer Jonathan Woodward, midway down the line must have used a Ford Transit with the handbrake off as his start line reference point and was judged UFD along with Ted Bakker and Innes Armstrong who were just a second early at the favoured pin. The real culprit was Chris Brown who was arguably so far forward the line judge he was out of his peripheral vision. My theory is that the chap owns the local Gelato shop and they are on first name terms.

The fleet smashed through the chop, the lake produces some decent action and it tends to swirl around like a big bath of water so current also has to be factored into the computer.

Top mark and Tom Gillard rounds from Chris Bunn and Chris Brown and with Ted Bakker UFD, Steve Denison inherits fourth with Gilles de Coombe hot on his transom. The fleet navigate the spreader before heading off down the long run to the gate, splashes of aqua blue cooling and exhilarating as they weave down the complex wave systems.

Gillard extends on Bunn with Denison up to third, no mean feat since his initial flight out to Italy was cancelled before being delayed and then diverted to the other side of the country due to Storm Verstappen.
He eventually arrived one hour before the race, no time to dwell and the technique seems to be paying off though his wife would argue the performance does not justify the stress.
Gilles de Coombe is forth from Brown and a fast improving Matthew Frary with Menno Huisman starting to look dangerous.
The left paid on lap one and my driver, Claudio advised that this was the way to go in these prevailing winds and Gillard was all over it, flicking across on small port knocks before heading back to the left to gorge on more lefty, extending to a commanding position with Bunn holding off a fast finishing Gilles de Coombe for second. Bakker must have been gutted to see his number on the board and so Frary took fourth, robbing Paul Davis on the line. The finish was well down from the gate which made it a run, entertaining from a spectator viewpoint but heart stopping for the gaggles of Solos as they weaved left and right to the gun.

With the first race in the bag, competitors finally had a chance to replenish depleted energy stocks and analyse what went right and what went wrong. For the three UFD casualties the obvious improvement would to be below the start line for race 2 and after a ten minute rest we were into the start sequence.

My apartment was here!





Race 2

Breeze fluctuating between 8-12 knots, full on tanning weather for me and factor 50 for the majority of the sailors.
Hans Duetz nails the pin end with Bakker and Bas de Regt on his bow wave, the distinctive Ferrari red numbers of Woodward's sail bow forward on the fleet in the middle of the course….UFD.
Vice Horey, Gillard and Brown are flying in a tight formation as they bank left, only a few are breaking rank and heading towards the right.
Duetz leads into mark 1 and heads to the spreader mark with Horey throwing the dice and tacking on top of Davis whose expression was of surprise and astonishment. Deep down though he knew that Vince would now owe him big-time. Bas de Regt, Gillard, Frary and Bakker T completed the top seven from Bunn, Robert Witt and Brown.
The short spreader mark provided a moment of optimum boat speed before driving the bows down onto the run. That sounds more exciting than the reality but it makes the report pop a little.

Hans pretty much did the identical route to the top mark on lap two but Horey, who had made big gains down the leg opted to choose the gate which would take him to the right of the course and the separation so eagerly sort in Sail GP. Didn't help him though and he would drop a place or two but he was not finished yet.

I locked my broken body into the bottom of the press rib and gesticulated to Claudio to accelerate towards the top but he must have been paying for his own fuel so we held along the rhum line and waited for the fleet to roll down to us.
Duetz had worked the favoured side and held a decent lead as he passed by, sitting quietly, peaceful and without an ounce of panic, the cookies he consumed before racing, direct from Amsterdam and totally legal, keeping his heart rate below 50 bpm.
The gentle giant took his first win of the week with Horey recovering to second, third fourth and fifth filled by Gillard, Huisman the Bakker T.

The fleet returned to shore, past terracotta roofed houses, diminutive in size but blessed with one of the nicest views in all of Europe. Their eyes though, already trained on the beer tent which would provide free beverages and focaccia.

Tom Gillard leads overnight from Hans Duetz and Menno Huisman with Matthew Frary and Vince Horey completing a star studded top five. Admittedly I am stretching the realms of imagination but an AI algorithm would not be allowed to. Human creativity lives!

The UK have bragging rights but the Dutch spirit is strong so let's see what day 2 brings.



Jonathan Woodward finished day 1 with a brace of UFD's. I wonder if he saw red?

Hans Duetz 637 nails the pin end with Ted Bakker 649 on his shoulder while Steve Denison 6126 and Chris Bunn 6067 decide to give the Dutchmen a head start.




Day 1 HERE
Paul de Gues interview HERE
NED637
NED649
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Transom Cam

Jonathan Woodward

Our class Chief Measurer may have started the regatta with two UFDs but he did it with style.

Jump on Board HERE

Day 2

The night had been sultry, and not in a Monica Bellucci kind of way though I would have happily discarded my pyjamas in her presence. The skies had become overcast as the Sun fell between the mountains on the western horizon and the humidity could have provided a perfect environment for the fermentation of focaccia, no wonder it is so abundant here.

Fortunately, the accommodation's air con of open doors and fans presented some release from the torture my feet were experiencing. Outside, my trusty boots stood obediently, the stench from the trip out here had nearly dissipated and soon they would be re-united with my feet which do not smell at all.

With racing not scheduled to start until 1pm I took the opportunity to prepare breakfast for my room mates, they all seem very friendly when I am writing reports pertinent to their sailing performance so I figured a good meal would at least reward me with free beers later.

Sous chef Paul Davis was sent out to procure a list of ingredients which proved a task too hard so muffins were replaced by ciabatta rolls and a form of edam substituted the extra mature cheddar I had demanded. After blasting the team with expletives and getting my KP to pick up the pans and pots I had thrown we all settled down for toasted ciabatta, a bed of lightly seasoned sautéed spinach providing the super food. Perfectly poached eggs would add some protein and a perfectly smooth cheese sauce topped with locally sourced chorizo provided a nice alternative to the ketchup which I had hidden from the northerners.

The breeze, as gentle as a first kiss filled with promise was enough for the PRO to send us out to the race area which was further towards the opposite side of the lake than on day 1.

We launched into a light 6-8 knots, my press team of young Italian males doing nothing to boost my masculinity, thank goodness Monica was not coming aboard. I dragged myself towards the bow to extract my phone from it's water-tight bag, the four metre rib, six feet too long in my opinion but I made it back to the cockpit with no real drama. Behind me, Marco and Alessandro muttered away in their native tongue, possibly discussing how much I eat in a period of 24 hours.


Alessandro
Peak Production


Marco
Rib Driver

Race 3

Pin biased possibly but with the Lake Como current strong along the banks of Bellano it was really the only way to go. The fleet inched forward as the seconds ticked down, Denison and De Gues, just two of many who gybed off and hooked onto port, a tactic which seemed to pay as they would be in good positions at the top. It would be remiss not to mention the others so… Phil Popple, Bas de Rugt, Saskia Arnold and Hans Duetz, thanks for making that start so exciting!

The bow of Matthew Frary's Solo punched out on the gun and he quickly tacked onto port, crossing ahead of the majority of the fleet and would work the middle with Chris Bunn, Menno Huisman and Michiel de Boer following and all in good pressure.
Tom Gillard, his bright green leader vest illuminated by the Sun's rays was again working the left and would round a close third with Menno and Gilles de Coombe playing nice just ahead, Michiel de Boer, Mark Lee and Chris Brown completed a top six from Denison, Bunn, Frary and de Gues, nice recovery! The beat had been exhausting so I sat down and let the young lad take photos as the fleet piled through.

The spreader was very generously far away, I did question if it was indeed course one requiring a triangle but not so, had it been windier, Alessandro, the official club photographer/videographer would have got some money shots.

The competitors soaked down the run , their Solos at various angles to minimise wetted surface area though a few seemed unsure which chine to choose, opting instead to tilt between the port and starboard one with some alarming regularity.

Gillard, along with de Boer and Denison opts for the right-hand gate mark and heads left into the shore, choosing the perfect moment to tack off, away from the lee of a nearby mountain and just low of the lay line. Huisman had rounded second but, wary that Tom had passed him on that last downwind opts for the left gate, giving him clearer air but less pressure and current, a bold move and a minority follow the Dutch hotshot to the right of the course including Woodward who managed to start behind the line for a change.
The breeze has dropped and everyone is searching for maximum drive, some footing off for fast mode while others pinch and negotiate the small wavelets to maximise VMG. Acting NSCA President in waiting Paul Davis is having none of it, choosing instead to bulldoze his Boatyard at Beer/Impact radial sail straight through the eye of the wind and has Dutch Chairman Paul de Gues in his sights for the Battle of the Presidents.

Gillard extends up the final beat and is home and dry with De Boer and Denison nipping in ahead of Huisman who rolled the dice and paid the price. Brown, Frary and Bunn complete the top seven as the humidity rises and the fleet head down to the finish with no changes to the standings. Only one sailor managed to capsize, notorious for his Wally of the Day highlights and no surprise that it was Vince Horey who went for a swim, allegedly getting his leg tangled in a disobedient control line though Spurs forwards are known for their diving antics.

The Sun's opacity was reducing with every minute and with it the wind strength so the PRO wisely postponed for twenty minutes, allowing the competitors time to rest weary limbs and take on much needed fluids. The course was reconfigured with the axis further right and back towards its original position for race one and we went into sequence.

Marco, my rib driver had been deep into conversation with his compatriot, possibly discussing the balance of basil with salt for the perfect pasta sauce so we were a little late to the party for race 4 and this was compounded by our position behind the pin and a committee end busier than Milan Central in rush hour.





NSCA Vice President Paul Davis using a new Radial cut Impact Marine sail which he bought over on the plane.

It was literally' fast straight out of the box'.

Day 2 HERE

Paul talks about the Impact sail HERE

Race 4

The line of silver Technora arced across the lake with only the jet black Quantum sail of Tim Deacon's home build standing out like a shard of Obsidian in a diamond necklace.

There was some interest in the right hand side of the course while a minority held on to starboard and took their chances on the side that had paid handsomely for the first three races of this Championship.

Alessandro, our press photographer, with an attentiveness Mary would have given to baby Jesus, laid the Ronin camera stabiliser on the softest part of his kit bag and pulled out a drone, he had kept that a secret.
I watched with some awe and a hint of jealousy as he booted up the high tech on his control panel and launched the DJI into the sky, the propellers buzzing like a bag of angry Bees before he sent them off to capture some action at mark 1.

The left had paid….again and this time it was the Lymington Town brothers of Rob and John Martin who would enjoy that magical feeling when the plan goes right. My apologies, I knew the South coast based club had sent a squad of finely tuned athletes but these two had slipped under my radar. Phil Popple, Peter Jansen and Firebird NED 629, owned by Jean Smit completed a top five containing two wooden Solos and a combined age I estimate to be 330 years worth of experience.
The wind had tracked heavily to the left and with the inevitable congestion a raft of port tackers produces there were many heated discussions, none more so than from Gillard who was seen ducking, diving and spinning mid pack. The fleet were now having to beat to the spreader mark which must have been frustrating for the PRO to see but would make great drone footage.

The second lap was largely undramatic and Rob Martin would hold for the win with John just behind and a fast finishing Salcombe based Roger Guess third. Hans Duetz took fourth and afterwards explained he did not know why he did so badly in race 3 or so well in race 4! Fifth went to Ted Bakker who is putting together a series after an initial UFD.



Annemieke Beemster eyes up the beat, go left! Meanwhile, Tim Deacon heads towards the right side, oh dear.

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Day 3

Before I get into the action on day three, first a quick recap on the previous evenings Italian themed Solo social which took place in the shaded area of the nearby Palasole Pavilion. This must have been a popular choice as every seat was taken and the traditional antipasto and risotto, finished with a choice of tiramisu or panacota went down like a plate of mackerel in a seal sanctuary. A plentiful supply of red and white wine ensuring that the conversation got more raucous with every passing bottle. The combined class associations social experiment to mix the fleets failed miserably though with the UK to the left and the Dutch to the right. It was no surprise then that Jeff Dahl, from the USA but racing for the Netherlands, Patrick van den Zijden, Dutch but racing for Portugal and Maria E Franco, Colombian but racing for the UK found themselves in the middle of the table.
Fortunately everyone has a common love of the Solo so the night was a complete success with every competitor leaving with a goody bag and a pair of high protection safety glasses. The instructions were minimal but in about thirty languages so they must be universally recognised as the dogs.

It had turned out to be quite a late night and by that I mean after 9.30pm, the local bar providing Mojitos for a modest price and the fresh mint was a nice touch, that dried stuff you get in ASDA is just not the same. Our party had decided that the young American honeymoon couple required some companionship, their reward for putting up with us was some free drinks so they went away with a renewed love of the UK. It may have been awkward had been Iranian.

I awoke around 6.30am, as did most of Bellano, the sound, familiar and recognised universally a as the most annoying way to wake up, punctured the silence with an insensitivity only traffic wardens and building surveyors possess. I watched as the road sweeper continued its way along the street before turning around and doing the other side. A vital service but bloody noisy.

Breakfast was provided today by Georgina and Steve Denison with Chris Brown our Maitre D and the eggs on toast were just perfect following a stomachful of Rioja.

Regarding the protest that was lodged against the Committee for race four, well it was heard but unsuccessful, apparently you can move windward marks when the fleet are on the same leg.

So, out the race course and with the conditions pretty much standard Lake Como dreamy, 10-12 knots and 30+, we were set for an action-packed day with three races planned.

The course would be triangle sausage with a final windward beat, perfect for those who prefer the upwind challenge rather than the downwind aspect, so the heavier ones then.





Race 5

Ted Bakker and Chris Bunn hit the pin end with speed, Hans Duetz deciding to foot off rather than sit in their wind shadow as they head left along with the Dutch class Chairman Paul de Gues and Bas de Rigt. The Ferrari red third place rash vest of Davis is again prominent and he punches forward, the tactic of starting 75 metres up from the pin giving him plenty of room and options to tack off but wisely he holds to the favoured left side with Mark Lee and Chris Brown showing good speed and height.
Winder jockey Steve Denison is ducking transoms having been in the second row off the line but is once again showcasing the performance of the Winder hull. The time he spends building relationships with the sailors remains one of the strongest reasons the fleet go to the northern based builder and he has been seen splicing lines and offering advice every day this week.
Event leader Tom Gillard had been equally hindered off the line and throws in a few tacks to get into a fast lane out towards the left, why anyone would go right I do not know.

Bakker tacks on the lay line with those nearby following in unison while others including De Coombe have tacked slightly early to factor in the strange current which is prevalent here. The guys on the right which I am hash tagging as the ‘expresso line’ since they can almost smell the coffee must have hated the view as they tacked, seeing the majority of the fleet close reach into the top mark is humbling and I speak from a lifetimes experience of corner hitting.

Ted foots off with his disciples following closely, rounding from Menno Huisman and Paul Davis with Gilles de Coombe a close fourth. The cream is already rising to the top with two podium rash vests in the top three. Mark Lee sneaks inside of Roger Guess with Bas de Rigt completing the top seven, Gillard is in eleventh with race 4 winner Rob Martin, who had made a great start midline, on his heels and proving his win was no fluke.

The breeze holds at 8-10 knots, enough to get the Solo planing if you are the optimum 80kg or less and Gillard makes the most of the gold in them hills and is up to eighth by the leeward mark with Bakker still leading from Huisman, Bunn and Davis, his new Impact Marine radial cut sail glistening against a lush green mountain back drop which would not look out of place in any of the Jurassic films.
The leading group take the opportunity to tack early and head towards the favoured side, full hike mode with masts pitching forward and back as they punch through the wave formations which are increasing in number and height.

Top mark and Bakker is in control, his nearest rivals, much like formula one drivers, following his line through each apex, their hope is that he either misses an apex or his tyres degrade but that is unlikely. Gillard picks up another place to seventh after taking a short hitch in towards the middle of the course and with the run and final beat to negotiate, would be asking Scotty for maximum warp speed.

Bakker takes the win, the final beat to the finish line taxing on mind and body but after opening the Championship with a UFD, is displaying the form more appropriate for this top athlete. Huisman in second is putting together a great series and though he is getting into a few tangles, is able to compartmentalise, analyse and action, all in the space of a second. NSCA Vice President Paul Davis finishes third from Chris Bunn with event leader Tom Gillard gaining two more places to count a five.

The competitors take a breather, apply heavy layers of sunscreen and hydrate as the temperature rises to 33 degrees, the breeze holding at 8-12 knots from the prevailing south west.
Lake Como and the town of Bellano is delivering possibly the best event I have experienced and I do recommend it to any class, despite half the fleet nearly dying on Saturday.



Peter Jansen and Phil Sturmer battle it out in Bellano



Transom Cam
Paul de Gues

The Dutch Chairman put on a great display and showed some pretty slick boat handling.

Jump on Board HERE



Photo: Alessandro Cazzulani / Peak Production



Transom Cam

Alex Butler

Alex has shown some sparkling form in the UK and had a great final day in Bellano.

Jump on Board HERE



Maria Interview HERE

Maria enjoyed a fabulous week in Lake Como and competed against a strong field of Dutch female helms, Annemieke Beemster claiming the title.

Race 6

I sheathed my bottle of Fanta from the penetrating heat of the Sun and re-loaded a fully charged lithium battery into my Samsung 5 as Alessandro made his last minute flight checks to the DJI. We went into sequence and, with the drone hovering above the pin, awaited the competitors as they expertly steered into position, pinching into the very eye of the wind with the intention of developing a pocket of space below.

Vince Horey fancied the pin which usually provides me with the material for 'how not to do it' but on this occasion, and with a few tardy results on his scorecard, he delivered inch perfect timing, the P+B emblazoned Technora blasting forward of the fleet. Bas and Ted are keeping him on his toes with Bunn and Huisman prominent. Paul Davis is already bow forward as is Gillard, Denison and Jan Arends and they are holding nice clean lanes out to the left.
Davis looks in control but as the group cross he drops his mainsheet, fortunately all on camera so look out for the slow motion replays.

Roger Guess has nailed the beat, judging the lay line in and rounds from Horey with Davis, Brown and Gillard completing a UK white wash. Bakker is the leading NED sailor in sixth with Menno Huisman again in the top ten.
The first reach is a bit too deep and with the wind softening a knot or two, improvements were hard to create, therefore it was a surprise to see Gillard up to second by the wing mark and ominous for those with dreams of a race win. No wonder he does not want an NSCA transom cam on board, it would reveal his secrets.

We motored at some speed up towards the top mark as I continued to text updates on the WhatsApp group chat, I would recommend this form of media to other classes as the way forward, viewers get regular updates and audible notifications, maybe mute if you are at work though.
We enjoyed a moment of complete silence before Alessandro's control panel burst into life, warning the pilot that the drone's battery supply was almost depleted. I squinted my eyes to the horizon and picked out the dot of black tech as it weaved towards us like an over-laden honey bee before it was grabbed from the sky and immobilised.

Vince Horey has worked his Solo into the lead but, with Tom Gillard to leeward and in his clutches, holds the final tack past the correct windward mark and heads to the yellow finish line autobot which is not yet live. You could argue that he is more entertaining to watch than Tottenham.

Gillard would extend down the final run and hold up the beat to take his third bullet of the week and a tight grip on the Xalient Solo Nation's Cup. Roger Guess would take second, one better than his race 4 finish with Horey, Davis and Bakker your top five.



Vince Horey rounds the correct mark this time.

Race 7

The conditions, as though they could not get any better did, 33 degrees and 10-14 knots, if you contemplated entering and did not then those words must sting your eyes. Never mind, there is always Quiberon next year (provisionally).

The line seemed to suggest a more starboard side favour and this was re-enforced by the number of competitors who positioned themselves there but it was still those on the left, hooking into an almighty lefty who bore into the top mark, and with some force. Apparently the wind, when in the left quadrant, tends to roll down the mountain and explode across the lake, and does so with some force and with an erratic nature more common in the early stages of pregnancy.

It was no surprise that the top mark was busier than Milan Central on a bank holiday as competitors blasted in from both tacks, the mavericks amongst the sailors crash-tacking into almost invisible gaps.

Huisman comes in hot on starboard with Davis ducking his stern and tacking but the Dutchman is hit with a header from hell and goes head to wind right on the mark, eventually extracting his Solo from the mark but with the loss of the lead to Davis and with Bunn over him like a rash. Brown, Roel den Herder and Mark Lee complete the top six with Gillard seventh.

Gillard leads out of the leeward gate with Huisman and Davis following him up the right of the course before they tack in unison, already in their own personal battle away from the pack. The beat was without drama and with the breeze up to 14 knots, there was really no excuse for not enjoying the slog up to the top mark. Roel Bakker decided that a swim would complete his day and was later re-united with his broken ‘joy stick’.

Gillard covered Huisman up the final beat, both going to the un-favoured side of the course but with enough separation from Davis, Brown and Bunn to guarantee they would be first and second overall going into day four. The vindication that the leader rash vests were on the correct sailors was confirmed with Davis in red completing a great score-line of 3-4-3 and so we would go into the final day with some excitement with a second discard kicking in. Twenty points separate fourth to eleventh but the top three look safe to me.



Huisman and Bunn in close company

Day 3 HERE

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Transom Cam

Paul Davis

Our Vice President finished fourth overall, a fantastic result and very nearly on the podium but for a UFD on the final day.

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Steve Denison making a splash on day 4 in his works Winder 1a.

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Day 4

I shuffled out of bed and ventured over to the balcony with some satisfaction, the first challenge of clothing myself passing without incident. The mountain range to my right was already illuminated, announcing that it would be another sunny day paradise.

The sailing club lay idle, it was only 4.30am after all but I had made sure I was awake before the road sweeper got here. I readied my paper bag of rotten tomatoes and and took up position behind my fourteen year old MacBook Retina Air, flipping open the lid and began to type.

So, to the final day of racing and there would be three races planned before a prize giving reception which would be held at the Palasole Pavilion later this evening.

I ventured down to the boat park for final interviews. Sadly, Hans Duetz mother had unexpectedly passed away overnight so he would not be racing today. Our love and thoughts are with you and your family at this time.

The mood around the boat park was of a heightened anticipation of excitement, the current top three positions still not safe and fourth to tenth requiring a level of addition beyond my pay grade.
I made my way to the jetty and after rolling aboard the Press rib, headed out to the race arena for what would be the final time this week. We were met by a steady 10 knots, temperatures in the low thirties and an on the water ambulance crew who must have witnessed my pathetic attempt at boarding the vessel a few minutes earlier. Fortunately they could see I was still breathing so floated off with the blue lights still flashing and left me to ready my Samsung S5 for action.

Race 8

Huisman and Bakker hit the pin end hard with Chris Brown and Vince Horey judged UFD and with Paul De Gues well over towards the committee end. Some, like snakes beguiled by the mystical sound of a charmers flute are out of the wicker basket and off to the right of the course, their fate already determined.

Top mark and Bakker has judged the lay line in perfectly from Huisman with Brown UFD), Mark Lee, Gilles de Coombe and Roger Guess completing the top five. Horey (UFD) hits the mark and does a spin, he has ticked a lot of boxes in this race already. Bas de Rigt, Robin Millidge and Tom Gillard are in the shake-up with the tricky run next and Paul Davis is in the mid-teens.

Bakker is not to be denied and takes a start to finish win after the two laps, improving his overall standing to third with Menno Huisman and Mark Lee the top three from Gillard and Guess.



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Race 9

Davis comes out of the line like a human cannon ball and with Huisman bailing out and gybing off towards the right, the southern based Roker lad is contemplating the podium and the rich spoils it would bring….such a shame he would later find out he is UFD, especially as he led start to finish.
Therefore Roger Guess took the lead and a handy gap over Alex Butler, Ted Bakker and Mark Lee as the fleet headed down the first run. Gillard and Huisman were on the damage limitation mission, sitting in the low teens but both highly capable.The second beat saw improvement in advantage for the front two, Davis flogging his horse around the course not realising he had started forward of the stalls from Guess who was happy just to keep clean air on the favoured tack.
At the gun and after two rounds it was Roger Guess from Ted Bakker with Huisman clawing his way to third and cementing his second overall standing. Chris Bunn and Alex Butler completed the top five.



Day 4 HERE

Race 10

No mistakes from Gillard this time, leading from out of the left lay line and, freed from the weight of expectation, never challenged with Ted Bakker second, giving him a 1-2-2 for the day and third overall. Steve Denison took third and showed what the Winder 1a can do when you go left, this result pulled him into the top ten. Menno Huisman cut it fine but his seventh in race 10 gave him a one point advantage over Ted, one more position and he would have lost second overall on count-back. Paul Davis was fourth but had that UFD been a bullet, it could have been so different. Finally, Roger Guess finished fifteenth and that was a counter, his 5-1 securing fifth overall, a great performance.

A huge thank you to Circolo Vela Bellano, to Xalient for your sponsorship and P+B for their prize pot. Congratulations to the Nederlandse Class Association and thanks from the UK team for inviting us.
Bellano has delivered a superb Championship and everyone wants to return soon.

1	GBR	6021	Gillard Thomas, GBR, Male, 14/03/1989, 36, Fiber, Sheffield Viking SC Staunton Harold SC	17,0	1	3	1	(22)	5	1	1	4	(11)	1
2	NED	642	Huisman Menno, NLD, Male, 01/06/1971, 54, Fiber, KWS	30,0	6	4	4	(35)	2	(8)	2	2	3	7
3	NED	649	Bakker Ted, NLD, Male, 04/05/1989, 36, Fiber, WV Randmeer	31,0	(ufd)	5	(23)	5	1	5	10	1	2	2
4	GBR	5914	Davis Paul, GBR, Male, 21/06/1985, 40, Fiber, Lymington Town Sailing Club	52,0	5	7	(14)	8	3	4	3	9	(ufd)	13
5	GBR	5851	Guess Roger, GBR, Male, 12/08/1965, 59, Fiber, Salcomber Yacht Club	56,0	(25)	13	(15)	3	6	2	11	5	1	15
6	GBR	6067	Bunn Chris, GBR, Male, 11/07/1967, 57, Fiber, Lady Yacht Club	57,0	2	14	7	(27)	4	7	5	14	4	(18)
7	NED	646	De Combe Gilles, NLD, Male, 21/08/1987, 37, Fiber, WV Braassemermeer	62,0	3	(19)	9	(23)	7	6	14	6	7	10
8	GBR	6135	Brown cb solo store Chris, GBR, Male, 24/09/1968, 56, Fiber, Draycote	62,0	7	12	5	(39)	11	9	4	(ufd)	6	8
9	GBR	6126	Denison Stephen, GBR, Male, 03/12/1978, 46, Fiber, RYA	64,0	8	(30)	3	7	(18)	14	7	8	14	3
10	GBR	6006	Lee Mark, GBR, Male, 25/03/1963, 62, Fiber, Lymington Town SC	67,0	12	9	10	11	10	(21)	(36)	3	8	4
11	GBR	6122	Frary Matthew, GBR, Male, 04/06/1973, 52, Fiber, Norfolk Broads Yacht Club	83,0	4	6	6	20	(23)	10	13	(23)	12	12
12	GBR	5781	Butler Alex, GBR, Male, 15/06/1999, 26, Fiber, Hayling Island Sailing Club	97,0	11	16	(19)	14	17	12	(18)	17	5	5
13	GBR	6134	Horey Vincent, GBR, Male, 05/09/1961, 63, Fiber, King George v sailing Club	124,0	10	2	46	9	32	3	12	(ufd)	10	(dnc)
14	GBR	5927	Bailey Samuel, GBR, Male, 20/10/2000, 24, Fiber, South Staffordshire Sailing Club	125,0	15	(ufd)	16	17	(19)	16	16	10	16	19
15	NED	637	Duetz Hans, NLD, Male, 09/12/1959, 65, Fiber, WV Randmeer	126,0	9	1	20	4	8	15	6	(dnc)	(dnc)	dnc
16	NED	627	de Boer Michiel, NLD, Male, 01/01/1992, 33, Fiber, KWS	132,0	13	(29)	2	21	9	23	(38)	20	18	26
17	NED	692	de Geus Paul, NLD, Male, 28/06/1963, 61, Fiber, GWV de Vrijbuiter	133,0	16	17	12	(26)	26	25	22	(ufd)	9	6
18	NED	675	de Regt Bas, NLD, Male, 17/09/1957, 67, Fiber, ARZV	137,0	32	8	11	(36)	12	13	(41)	15	32	14
19	NED	605	Beemster Annemieke, NLD, Female, 18/12/1973, 51, Fiber, GWV de Vrijbuiter	139,0	18	15	(39)	13	22	(33)	28	12	20	11
20	GBR	5943	Popple Philip, GBR, Male, 29/02/1964, 61, Fiber, Shoreham SC	148,0	21	21	(28)	6	20	17	19	22	22	(32)
21	GBR	5925	Milledge Robin, GBR, Male, 15/09/1964, 60, Fiber, Lymington Town Sailing Club	158,0	23	20	21	(45)	14	11	24	7	(40)	38
22	AUS	664	Bakker Maurice, NLD, Male, 26/12/1991, 33, Fiber, Wv Randmeer	171,0	(39)	22	26	24	21	(34)	23	19	19	17
23	NED	594	van Bruinessen Ties, NLD, Male, 31/05/1985, 40, Fiber, WV Braassemermeer	173,0	35	10	27	(48)	27	19	8	13	34	(36)
24	NED	668	den Herder Roel, NLD, Male, 24/07/1968, 56, Fiber, WSV Giesbeek	173,0	14	(37)	(41)	32	25	20	9	27	13	33
25	NED	560	Verdel Len, NLD, Male, 03/07/1988, 36, Fiber, WV Braassemermeer	174,0	17	27	(42)	18	(38)	28	15	16	31	22
26	GBR	6004	Woodward Jonathan, GBR, Male, 13/03/1966, 59, Fiber, South Staffs SC	186,0	(ufd)	(ufd)	8	30	28	31	27	25	21	16
27	NED	570	Gaillard Marleen, NLD, Female, 13/01/1966, 59, Fiber, WV Braassemermeer	190,0	20	25	22	29	(35)	27	21	21	25	(37)
28	GBR	5796	Bines Andy, GBR, Male, 21/02/1961, 64, Fiber, Brightlingsea Sailing Club	193,0	19	28	25	(51)	13	30	17	(39)	27	34
29	GBR	5813	Armstrong Innes, GBR, Male, 12/12/1962, 62, Fiber, Burwain	201,0	(ufd)	11	24	28	34	22	20	36	26	(dnc)
30	AUS	660	Arnold Saskia, NLD, Female, 22/08/1973, 51, Fiber, GWV de Vrijbuiter	205,0	31	23	36	15	30	24	(45)	26	(44)	20
31	NED	678	Wit Robert, NLD, Male, 16/10/1968, 56, Fiber, GWV De Vrijbuiter	205,0	22	18	37	(43)	16	(43)	30	30	29	23
32	NED	689	Wiersma Severien, NLD, Male, 02/09/1961, 63, Fiber, Arzv	206,0	26	34	17	40	15	26	(42)	(42)	23	25
33	NED	658	de Boer Karel, NLD, Male, 10/02/1969, 56, Fiber, GWV De Vrijbuiter	220,0	34	24	13	(44)	37	(40)	31	37	15	29
34	NED	582	Moolenaar Ralph, NLD, Male, 15/02/1986, 39, Fiber, WSV Woudrichem	226,0	29	26	35	16	(40)	(37)	37	29	24	30
35	NED	567	Groefsema Anton, NLD, Male, 12/02/1986, 39, Fiber, WSV Woudrichem	237,0	27	(44)	(55)	38	41	39	25	11	28	28
36	GBR	5818	Markham Alan, GBR, Male, 20/07/1955, 69, Fiber, Lymington Town SC	253,0	41	33	18	25	(45)	29	(46)	41	42	24
37	GBR	5530	Martin Robert, GBR, Male, 08/03/1950, 75, Fiber, Lymington Town Sailing Club	258,0	33	38	40	1	24	45	(53)	34	(49)	43
38	NED	681	van der Burg Wouter, NLD, Male, 12/04/1978, 47, Fiber, GWV De Vrijbuiter	262,0	(45)	32	32	(49)	39	36	39	18	39	27
39	NED	682	Arends Jan, NLD, Male, 07/03/1958, 67, Fiber, WSVGiesbeek	275,0	(47)	31	33	41	31	(47)	29	32	38	40
40	NED	685	Hoogeveen Marinus, NLD, Male, 26/02/1954, 71, de Vrijbuiter	277,0	37	35	34	37	(51)	(52)	43	35	17	39
41	GBR	6030	Griffin Adrian, GBR, Male, 17/02/1953, 72, Fiber, Salcombe Yacht Club	278,0	28	(50)	38	(58)	29	32	26	38	43	44
42	NED	663	Bakker Roel, NLD, Male, 11/09/1954, 70, Fiber, WV Randmeer	284,0	30	49	(53)	31	44	38	(ret)	24	47	21
43	GBR	5129	Deacon Tim, GBR, Male, 05/03/1956, 69, Wooden, Frensham Pond Sailing Club	285,0	44	(51)	30	34	46	48	(51)	44	30	9
44	GBR	5822	Martin John, GBR, Male, 20/01/1954, 71, Fiber, Lymington Town Sailing Club	302,0	(dnc)	39	(50)	2	48	42	34	45	50	42
45	NED	635	Eijsink Floris, NLD, Male, 16/04/1958, 67, Fiber, WSV Giesbeek	303,0	24	36	49	(54)	54	18	40	28	(ufd)	54
46	POR	5419	Van der Zijden Patrick, PRT, Male, 10/11/1969, 55, Fiber, Club Vela de Lagos	307,0	36	40	52	12	47	(ufd)	35	48	37	(55)
47	NED	639	Poiesz Jacqueline, NLD, Female, 17/07/1974, 50, Fiber, KWS	318,0	42	46	29	(47)	36	44	44	(47)	36	41
48	GBR	4801	Clark Godfrey, GBR, Male, 08/09/1956, 68, Fiber, Fishers Green SC	319,0	38	41	45	42	42	(46)	(50)	43	33	35
49	NED	677	Burggraaf Edwin, NLD, Male, 07/07/1967, 57, Fiber, GWV de Vrijbuiter	323,0	40	(dnc)	44	(52)	43	35	33	31	51	46
50	GBR	5819	Sturmer Phil, GBR, Male, 27/02/1966, 59, Fiber, Brightlingsea Sailing Club	325,0	48	45	31	33	50	(54)	(55)	33	54	31
51	GBR	6073	Restall Stephen, GBR, Male, 22/04/1957, 68, Fiber, Elton Sailing Club	339,0	(49)	43	43	46	(49)	41	32	40	45	49
52	AUS	629	Smit Jeen, NLD, Male, 08/03/1970, 55, Wooden, KWS	364,0	54	48	48	19	57	(58)	(58)	50	41	47
53	NED	511	Jansen Peter, NLD, Male, 12/01/1961, 64, Wooden, Wv Giesbeek	388,0	55	55	(57)	10	52	57	47	55	57	(dnc)
54	NED	574	Dijkstra Hedser, NLD, Male, 16/11/1958, 66, Fiber, WSV Giesbeek	403,0	52	56	(59)	(60)	59	51	49	56	35	45
55	NED	653	koldewijn Anja, NLD, Female, 02/01/1968, 57, Fiber, WSVGiesbeek	405,0	50	47	54	(57)	(56)	49	54	51	48	52
56	NED	600	Fluttert Marc, NLD, Male, 22/04/1964, 61, Fiber, WV de Braassemermeer	406,0	46	53	(60)	(59)	53	55	52	53	46	48
57	NED	614	Dahl Jeff, NLD, Male, 13/11/1960, 64, Fiber, WV Braasemermeer	411,0	(56)	52	51	(56)	55	53	48	49	52	51
58	GBR	5675	Franco Ferro Maria, GBR, Female, 11/06/1980, 45, Fiber, Hayling Island SC	413,0	51	42	56	55	(58)	(59)	57	46	56	50

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Tom wins in Bellano Interview HERE

Miscellaneous Interviews HERE



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Transom Cam

Maurice Bakker

The Bakker brother displayed some moments of speed on Lake Como



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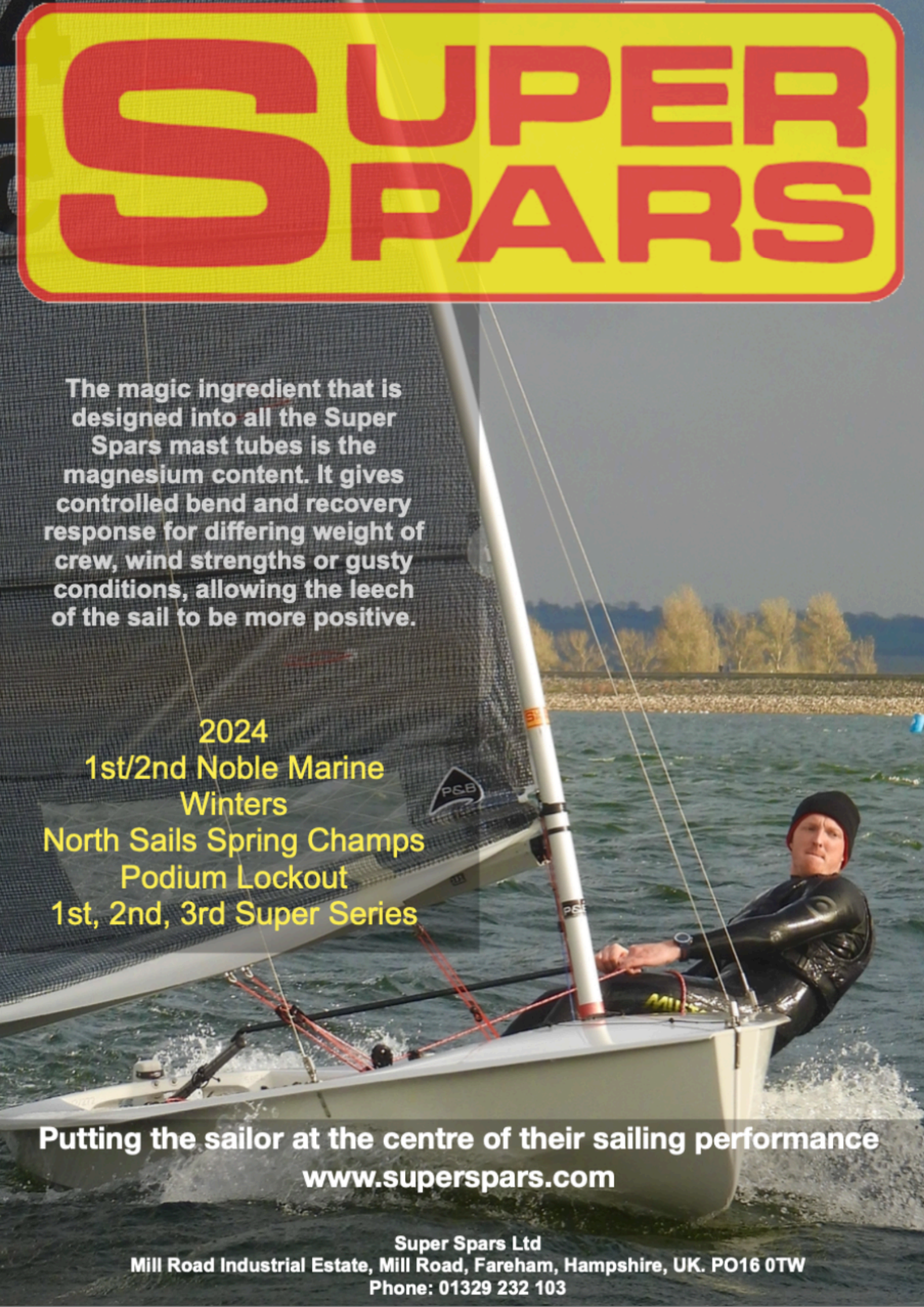
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Solo Vintage Championship 2025



Leigh on Sea Sailing Club turned on the Essex magic for the Vintage Championship, supplying champagne conditions which even Lake Como would have struggled to match, North Berwick, venue for the Solo National Championship in three weeks take note!

I had made the journey up from Brixham in the early hours, passing the World Heritage site of Stonehenge just after sunrise without even a second glance, my focus being on the relics of a Solo yesteryear and they're equally ancient owners.
The club is positioned in some prime real estate with easy access to local eateries, the beach, stylish apartments and a train line, if Phil and Kirsty had to choose a perfect location for a sailing club then Leigh on Sea would probably be it.
The narrow cobbled street to the club entrance would later be packed with punters sipping beer and comparing fake tans but for now, save for the odd shop keeper sweeping up dog-ends and eye-lash extensions, it was serene.

The club have their own parking area right on the promenade, not sure how they wangled that but it was ‘a right touch’. The club itself, though lacking the palatial opulence of Salcombe is a good representation of the Essex people, being honest, robust and filled with warmth. The clubhouse is in fact the old Leigh train station, the addition of a top floor commanding unbridled views across the estuary and a bar which would look at home in Eastenders completes the experience, and that is even before we go racing!

Matt Tothill was busy cooking breakfast baps and after confirmation that I was not a competitor, handed me a Cumberland sausage in a roll from the ‘safe’ pile, he would later be racing his Severn Sailboats Solo, therefore this treachery was understandable. I made my way along the concrete corridor, passing two families with suitcases and, dodging the signage for platform 9 3/4s, ascended the stairway to the generous upper decking.
The tide was due to be high at 14.28 so it was a vista of silt that greeted me, only a snaking sliver of a tributary hinting that we might be at the seaside, I took another bite of my breakfast and, identifying a Lovett and a Miles, headed to the promenade to go and bore their owners with information as valuable as a condom with a hole in it.



Bryan Morum’s Miles built Solo readies itself for a hard day of racing

Advert circa 1998

Get a feel for the venue HERE

WINDER BOATS

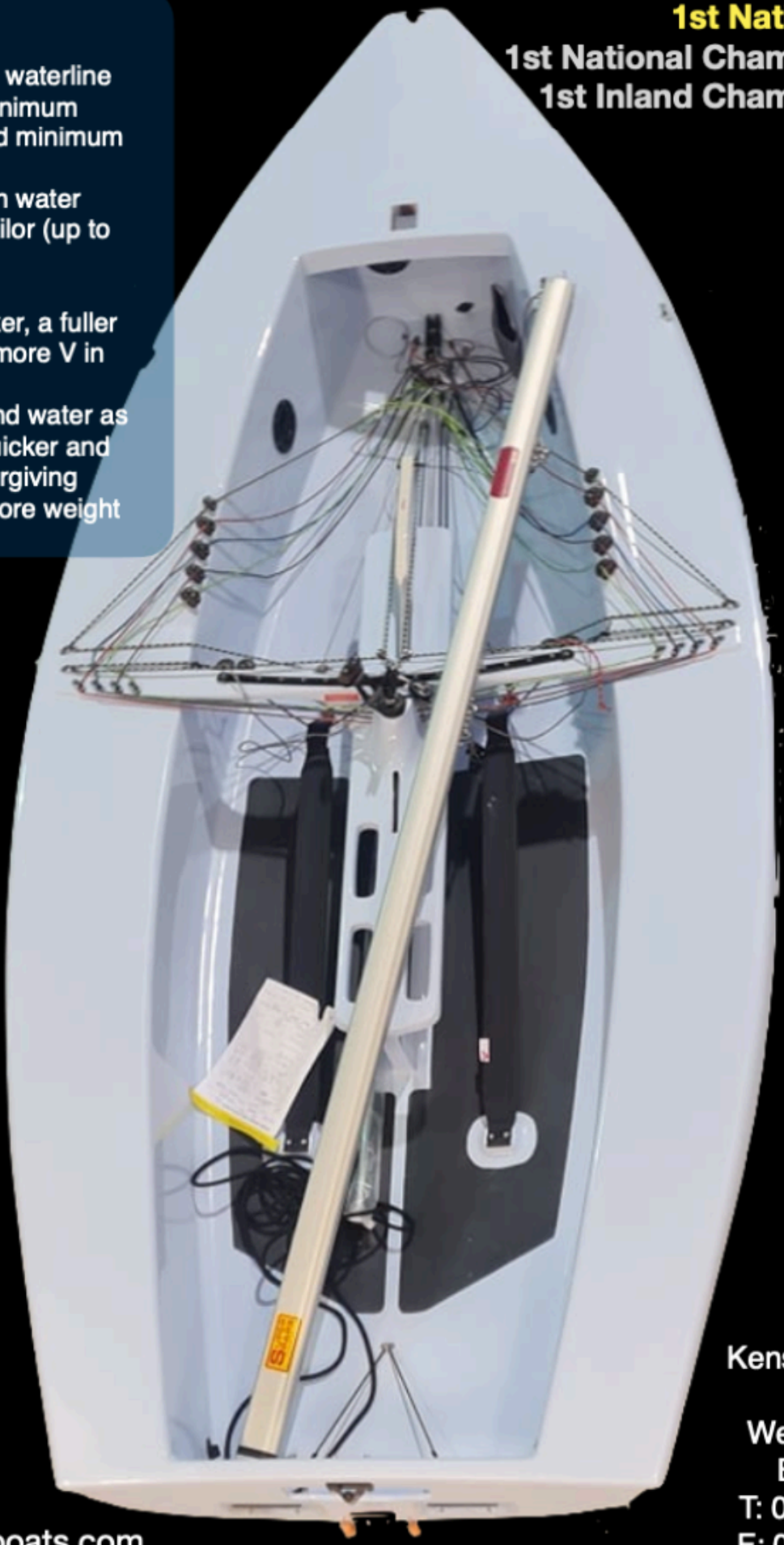
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Alan Roberts was busy assembling his dark blue hulled weapon of choice, confirming it was not just a Richard Lovett build but the multiple World Championship winning ‘Pogs” 3315. Once owned by Solo legend Ken Falcon, this boat was unbeatable in an era which is as fresh in my mind as today’s butty, his most memorable win I would suggest being the Battle of Pevensey Bay when he went head to head with Dick Batt (Lovett 3300) and a huge sea state for 6 days.

Nigel Pybus was busy fiddling with his brother’s Andy Miles build, 4236, these were pretty successful in the 1998-2002 period before the majority of the fleet switched to FRP. Brian Morum was also readying his Miles, 4443, suggesting that this was possibly Andy’s last build before resuming a more profitable career in cabinet making, in hindsight he made a good choice.

Mike Barnes has been campaigning his Beckett built Solo on the open circuit for the last two years following a sabbatical in Nigeria, the stratigraphic geologist’s oil find proceeds going mostly into the upkeep of his beloved 3847 ‘Top Drive”. The former Solo magazine editor and class President is still as in love with the Solo as he was forty years ago and his Solo is immaculate, mainly due to that Gosling fairy dust. Mike was busy munching on a bacon bap and would be regarded as strong competition to the cook so I hoped his constitution, toughened from years of a Nigerian strain of Delhi Belly would be sufficient to get him through the day.

I bumped into David Goudie who won this event a few years ago, owner of an immaculate Kevin Gosling build, unfortunately he is injured and would not be racing but bought his binoculars to cuss out the competition for 2026.

Former class Secretary Robert Laurie was hastily stringing his Young Brothers build (3722), his fathers boat but now under his vestige until he sells it. Incidentally, I purchased one (3513) in the mid eighties from Nigel, the novelty of waiting at Portsmouth ferry port and seeing it wheeled out by the staff seemed a little tight but now I know the costs of IOW ferries, it all makes sense.



Alan Roberts in ‘Pogs’ has Colin Walker in his sights as both battle against the steep Essex chop.

Robert Laurie leads race 3 in his father's Young build.
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The late arrival was pretty much the icing on the cake for me, Red Alert (3733) in the flesh. Chichester based Ian Barnett has, with the guidance and skill of Gosling, brought the Phil Morrison build back to it's head-turning best. The stunning striped sapele decks, rich in layers of varnish provide a depth and lustre that FRP cannot match. This is complemented by a shade of red that may have been mixed by Micheal Angelo and would not look out of place on an F40.

With the tide rushing in like a Tsunami, the competitors quickly changed and after attending a short race briefing, we prepared for battle.

The majority of the members keep their Solos on racks right at the water's edge so I headed that way for last minute interviews and to rendezvous with my media rib, negotiating the planked flooring with some concern and weighed down with calorific guilt which is way heavier than the normal sort.

I bounced past Threshers, Don Marines and Duffins, and with my eyes drawn towards inlays and case extensions, the crease of my perfectly formed lips let out a little trickle of saliva.
This affliction was quickly remedied, my mouth instantly dry when I saw the size of the media rib I would be stationed on, even the most desperate asylum seeker would have questioned the sanity.



Ian Barnett puts 'Red Alert' through it's paces

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Mike Barnes in ‘Top Drive’ and event winner John Charles thrash it out to the leeward mark with the packed beach of onlookers cheering them on.

Not only that, we were commissioned to transport two of the race team out to the arena so what followed was a 'Its a knockout' scenario of inflatable versus the elements, the estuary only losing by a pint or two.
The team members jumped aboard the committee boat with the swell causing no damage but it would have looked sketchy had it been on 'Saving Lives at Sea', I was just relieved to stay on the waterbed, for now anyway.

So we finally get to the racing and after a short postponement to right some capsized Solos, we would be into sequence which, to keep everyone on their toes and butting the trend adopted by the rest of the World, would be a 3-2-1 go!

Race 1

The Easterly is blowing a nice 16 knots and even though the tide is running with the wind direction, it's wetter than a car wash in the rib. Undeterred and aware that the NSCA WhatsApp community is waiting and watching, I pull out my phone and stabiliser, despite their protestations. My Nikon P950 has been through some tough times recently but I did not appreciate him sharing his negativity with the new guys.

Ian Barnett punches out at the pin end in an attempt to keep out of the strongest part of the tide while Brian Morum opts for the committee end with the locals, the bows bucking up and down through the short Essex chop. Most the rigs on these old horses are state-of-art Technora powered D+ and Superspars and while mast rake is limited by bulkhead position they still carry plenty enough in these conditions.
Alan Roberts and Colin Walker tack off, out into the middle of the course, Colin's Thresher getting the better of the Lovett in this first part of the race but both sailors looking comfortable as the breeze pummels the fleet.

Top mark and it is Draycote sailor Nigel Pybus in the Miles from a group including Matt Tothill, John Charles and Jonny Wells. While I appreciated the 'white water experience' Leigh had provided it did compromise my media capabilities so I apologise to the front runners I omitted from this report.
The trapezoid course made a nice change from the windward/leewards and the reaches looked exhilarating, the Holt design giving the sailors thrills but no spills thanks to that flat aft section.
Pybus and Charles worked the middle of the course for lap two, picking up a lift and maybe some advantageous tidal influence over the lee bow and they would fight it out for the remainder of the race with Charles taking the bullet. Matt Tothill was third from Jonny Wells and Ian Barnett who had recovered from a bad first beat. Richard Beechey had shown some speed in his Thresher 3923 but capsized at the top mark, at least someone was now as wet as me.
In the Constructors Championship, Miles took the win from Thresher, Severn Sailboats, Holt and Morrison.

I took the opportunity to transfer to the sightly larger 'Jubilee' safety rib which went without incident as far as I was concerned, the rib teams though seemed amused by my technique which resembled a baby Giraffe's first attempt at standing. Once aboard I was able to take up a seated position behind my driver, providing a welcome reprieve from the spray.



Matt Tothill leads Bryan Morum and Nigel Pybus into the top mark.

Advert circa 1990's

Race 2

Matt Tothill and Jonny Wells nailed the port lay line into mark 1 and they roared off down the reach, plumes of spray exploding from their bows, visibility impaired by the sheets of salty water. Mike Barnes was on the pace in third with Brian Morum keeping him honest and Robin Tothill a distant fifth.
The larger rib had allowed me to unholster my Nikon, it would have been criminal not to take some high resolution photos so with the phone safely tucked into the dry bag, I clicked away with the abandon of a gunslinger with anger issues.

The slog up the second beat provided some shifts and opportunities, Wells getting the better of Matt Tothill and Barnes losing position to Morum and Robin Tothill but in my book they were all winners on such a splendid day.
PRO Steve Corbet was having a lovely time on the committee boat and sent them around for a third lap, the finishing order staying the same but I am sure it was much closer than it reads on screen.
In the Constructors, Holt took the win from Severn Sailboats with Miles third, Robin was racing in a plastic fantastic but I am unsure of the builder, analysis of the photos indicating that it might be a Don Marine, Beckett was fifth.
With the deftness of a London pick-pocket I took a moment to clean the camera lens on the back of my drivers shirt before resuming my position to capture the action.

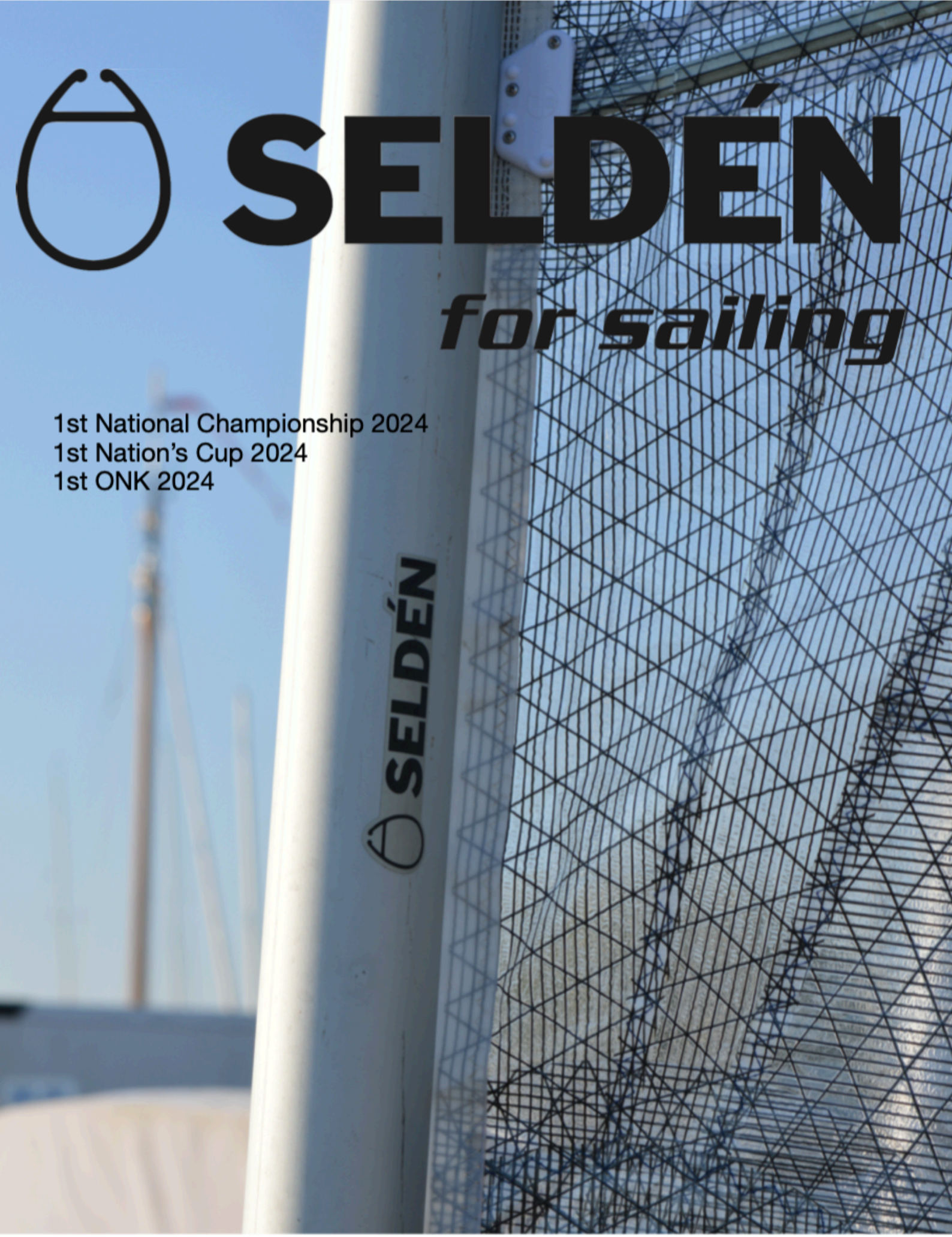
Jonny Wells in the foam core Jack Holt build leads Matt Tothill in a Severn Sailboat.



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Transom Cam

Bryan Morum

The Hickling Broads based sailor showed some pace through the event in the Miles built Solo and finished 4th overall.



Race 3

On to the finale of this Vintage Championship and with the breeze holding at 16-20 knots and with the tide now on its way to France we went into sequence. The chop was now steeper than the cost of living and with my camera once again dowsed, my driver offering me the use of the back of his shirt to dry it which I accepted with some grace.

Ian Barnett sends Red Alert off at the pin end with Robert Laurie punching out mid line and Brian Morum below him but showing good technique in conditions not usually faced on the Norfolk Broads.
Top mark and Laurie looks imperious with Morum on his quarter and Charles, Matt Tothill, Nigel Pybus the top five as the fleet scream to the gybe mark. The run is surprisingly drama free but with the front four extending by the leeward mark. Charles is up to second and with a race one bullet already, is looking strong for the overall title but Jonny Wells, winner of race two is right on his heels from Morum and Matt Tothill.
Ian Barnett comes into the top mark well over stood and capsizes in the bear-away, thwarting his assault on the leader board.

Robert Laurie though, looks quite at home leading and the Young hull, which has always been a strong build and acknowledged as fast in breeze and waves is in its element. The top four continue to tussle with the sea state and each other, the racing was as close and exciting as it gets but at the gun it would be Laurie from Charles with Tothill, Morum and Wells completing the top five.

In the Constructors Championship, Young took the win from Thresher, Severn Sailboats, Miles and Holt.

In Summary

The fleet returned to shore which was alive with the best the Southend massive could muster, golden brown bodies, accentuated by their expensive bling accessories absorbing far above the prescribed UV rays, think of the money they saved on tanning salons. The sailors were oblivious, most still blinded by salt penetration, pulled Solos up the short ramp to the promenade, the sound of Ibiza anthems echoing in their ears, quadriceps bulging with lactic acid.

Leigh on Sea know how to do events and, after a BBQ which was both generous and delicious the Prize Giving took place with the sunshine still beaming down.
Special thanks to Colin Walker for organising and providing sponsorship prizes from Rooster, the winners receiving vouchers towards some super Rooster sailing apparel.

John Charles in the Thresher showed the fleet the way but it was tough going and as close racing as you can get in a one design single-handed dinghy. Jonny Wells (Holt) beat Matt Tothill (Severn Sailboats) on count back with Brian Morum (Miles) and Robert Laurie (Young) completing the top five.
Thanks to all who attended, the Solo class, designed in 1956, has evolved into the state of art racing machine that we have today but that is only due to the vision of the builders of yesteryear, the diligence by the class measurers and the energy from its members, may it continue.



Transom Cam

Mike Barnes

The former class President has been campaigning his Beckett build for decades, rebuffing the FRP derivative and instead choosing beauty and speed.









Rank	SailNo	Club	HelmName	CrewName	Race 1	Race 2	Race 3	Total	Nett
1st	3875	Leigh on Sea SC	John Charles		1.0	(14.0)	2.0	17.0	3.0
2nd	3983	Essex YC	Jonny Wells		4.0	1.0	(5.0)	10.0	5.0
3rd	3987	Leigh on Sea SC	Matt Tothill		(3.0)	2.0	3.0	8.0	5.0
4th	4443	Hickling Broad SC	Brian Morum		(6.0)	3.0	4.0	13.0	7.0
5th	3722	Brightlingsea SC	Robert Laurie		7.0	(8.0)	1.0	16.0	8.0
6th	857	Draycote Water/ Cransley SC.	Nigel Pybus		2.0	7.0	(10.0)	19.0	9.0
7th	3733	Chichester SC	Ian Barnett		5.0	(6.0)	6.0	17.0	11.0
8th	3958	Leigh on Sea SC	Robin Tothill		(11.0)	4.0	8.0	23.0	12.0
9th	3847	RYA Lagos YC	Mike Barnes		(9.0)	5.0	7.0	21.0	12.0
10th	3909	Leigh on Sea SC	Richard Knight		10.0	(15.0)	9.0	34.0	19.0
11th	4023	Leigh on Sea SC	Colin Walker		(13.0)	9.0	11.0	33.0	20.0
12th	3315	Leigh on Sea SC	Alan Roberts		(12.0)	11.0	12.0	35.0	23.0
13th	3936	Leigh on Sea SC	Dave Gentle		(15.0)	12.0	13.0	40.0	25.0
14th	3802	Leigh on Sea SC	David Braun		16.0	10.0	(20.0 DNC)	46.0	26.0
15th	3978	Leigh on Sea SC	Rodger Smith		(14.0)	13.0	14.0	41.0	27.0
16th	3923	Leigh on Sea SC	Richard Beechy		8.0	(20.0 DNC)	20.0 DNC	48.0	28.0
17th	3648	Leigh on Sea SC	Nick Range		(20.0 DNS)	20.0 DNC	20.0 DNC	60.0	40.0
17th	3819	Essex YC	Peter Thorpe		(20.0 DNS)	20.0 DNC	20.0 DNC	60.0	40.0
17th	3999	Leigh on Sea SC	Nick Hann		(20.0 DNS)	20.0 DNC	20.0 DNC	60.0	40.0



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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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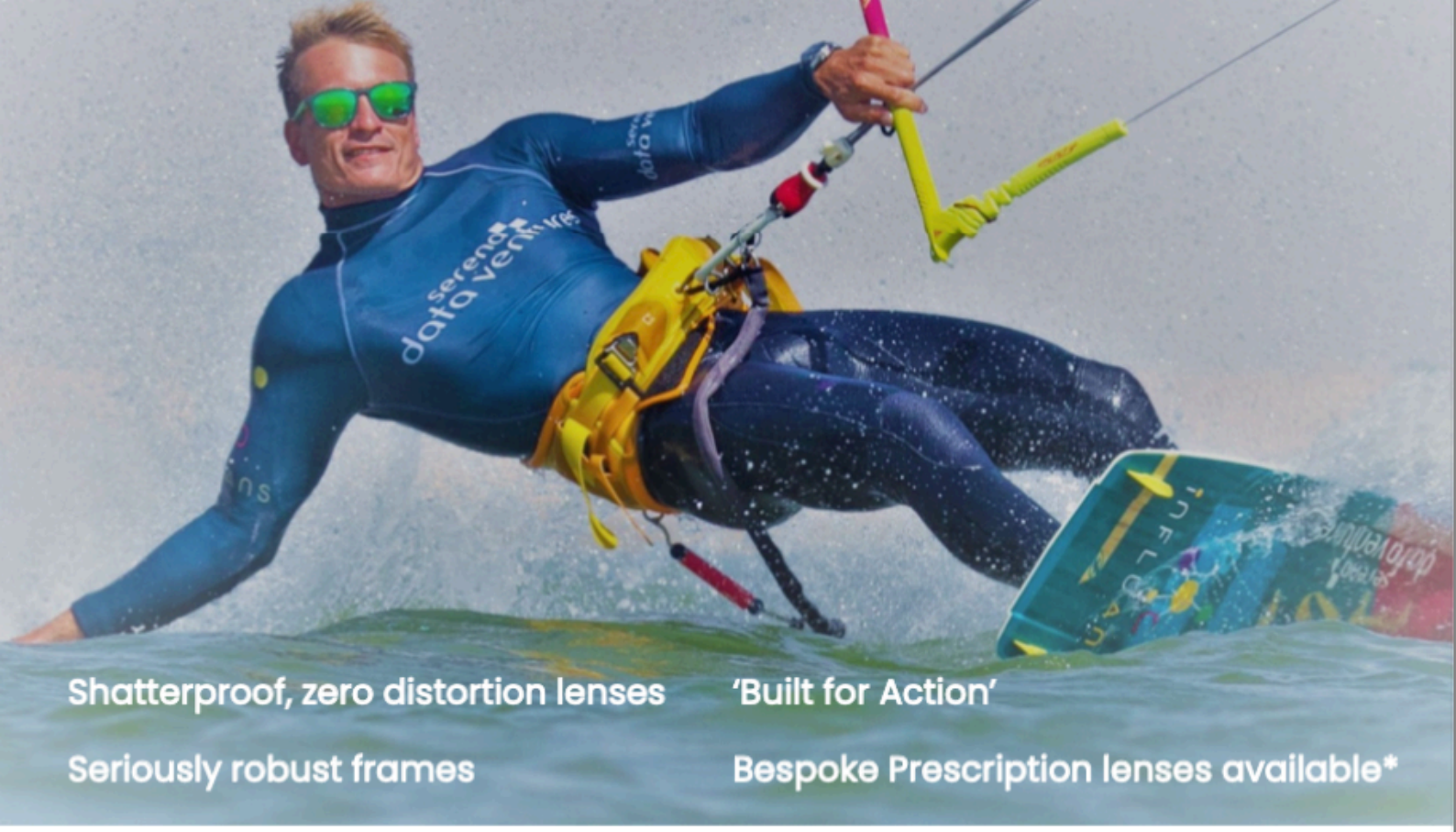
Some familiar faces chew the fat at North Berwick 2015.





Steve Denison working his Winder up the beat in Bellano

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Extract taken from 2015 Solo Specific

North Berwick Preview by Jo Catterall

For those of you attending the Nationals this year & who haven't visited before you are in for a real treat. A beautiful bustling Scottish Seaside Town surrounded by magnificent countryside awaits.
For those of you who have been there I hope that the following will serve as useful reminders!
The journey up from the South is pretty straightforward, Sat Nav wanted to take us across country from Carlisle but we found it much easier continuing North on the M6/M74 & going across Country from Abington, Junction 13 M74. Travel time for Cheshire was 4 ½ hours no traffic.
On arrival in North Berwick we followed the signs for ELYC Parking& were directed onto the beachfront area, some 5 minutes' walk from the club, which is where you will be parked for the event & where we (or rather you all) will launch from.
Cars then have to be moved & parked in the town. Whilst in the main there are lots of places which are free, securing a place in Summer may well prove tricky for those arriving later on. There are a number of free public car parks in the town, including the station & plenty of places along the beaches without timed restrictions, though vehicles over 7'6" are prohibited from here.
There is lots of accommodation in the town along with Tantallon Caravan & Campsite
http://www.northberwickholidayhomes.co.uk/
http://www.coast-properties.co.uk/
http://www.meadowhead.co.uk/TantallonHome.aspx

which has areas for tents, motorhomes, rents statics & even has Wigwams! The site is well catered for being a brisk 20-25 minute walk from the club & just 15 minutes from the Town's Tescos.

The clubhouse is right in the harbour 2 minutes from the main drag, & has good facilities. On the first floor is the most important Bar & on the second floor is the café. There looked to be a good variety of things on the menu, all homemade including fresh cream cake! I am advised that a marquee will be set up for the nationals to accommodate us all but you would need to check with the club on that! Launching is across from the club where the Dinghies will be parked, a jetty makes for easy access to a sandy beach launching directly into the sea reminding me very much of Mounts Bay. The trolley dollies are certainly going to be earning their beer!

Both of the beaches which stretch for miles are great for families & are dog friendly. Golden sands abound & on one beach there is a small Lido which retains sea water when the tide goes out & is great for paddling in. Away from the beach you can keep the kids entertained with a couple of putting greens & playground's, an expanse of playing fields & a tennis club for the more energetic. The main train line to Edinburgh runs from the town & it takes just 20 minutes to get to the centre. A real shame that our Nationals don't have a 'rest' day as it would be a real opportunity to explore the area with the family!

Facilities in the town are more than adequate for a week's stay though, meaning you need never venture far if you don't want to! Tesco's is a 15 minute walk from the centre, & on the High Street there is a Nisa Local & Co-op along with a Butchers & Bakery all of whom open on a Sunday. None of us will starve as there are a variety of cafes & Deli's great for lunch & for dinner there are;

- Thai Curry House
- Indian Restaurant
- Turkish Kebab Shop
- Chinese
- 2 Italians
- 3 Pubs
- 2 Bistros

Sadly Brownie will be disappointed as there are no Golden Arches!
A famous place for lunch is in the Harbour itself being 'The Lobster Shack' which serves local fish & Lobster which is on the menu at nearly every establishment I looked at!

And with the thought of Garda in my head, the local 'Gelateria Alandas' serves up a Fab array of amazing flavours for your delight.
Having been to visit this weekend I am really looking forward to my week there in August!

The sumptuous East Lothian Y.C. bar which will be busy in the first week of August.



Extract taken from 2015 Solo Specific

East Lothian Sailing Venue

East Lothian YC is a mixed dinghy and yacht club, situated just beside North Berwick harbour on a promontory. The historic harbour is complemented by the clubhouse, a 200-year-old listed building, which just last year was thoroughly modernised inside, giving generous changing and social facilities.

There is plenty of hard standing for parking large numbers of dinghies close to the club, and for erecting a connecting marquee during large championships. Launching is from the sandy beach to the west, just beside the harbour, and there is a choice of two race areas. One is just to the west, between the islands of Craigleith and Lamb, and the other to the east, towards the Bass Rock, a huge chunk of an island with vertical cliffs and seabirds clinging to every crevice. Both race areas are just a short sail out from the beach of about 15 minutes.

North Berwick is on the south side of a wide estuary, the Firth of Forth. The coast faces due north, and prevailing gradient winds are from the west or south-west, while easterlies are the next most common direction. Although North Berwick faces north, the sea breeze comes from the east.

The climate is sunny with little rain, so sea breezes are common. Whether the sea breeze develops depends on the strength of the opposing gradient wind, a westerly or south-westerly morning wind of up to a Force 3 is likely to give way to a sea breeze around noon. A stronger westerly is more likely to persist.

An occasional weather hazard in the Spring is the 'haar' a thick fog which rolls in from the sea, but usually clears by afternoon. The tide floods east-west and ebbs in the opposite direction. Only occasionally does it run at more than a knot and is stronger the further from the shore you are.

The tactical question is this: when the tide is ebbing and the sea breeze is in, the tide is with you on a beat, so do you go right for the wind as the sea breeze veers through the afternoon or left to the stronger tide? Or, in a westerly wind with a flooding tide helping you, do you go left to the convergence that exists near the shore or right into the stronger flow? The answer varies from day to day and from hour to hour.

North Berwick the Town

Ashore, North Berwick is one of the best venues for accompanying families. Those with young children will find North Berwick excellent for the simple pleasures of bucket and spades and paddling. Children seeking inspiration for their sandcastle building do not have to go far. Just three miles to the East is Tantallon Castle, a key defensive position a few centuries ago, while two miles west is another venerable castle with extensive gardens, Dirleton Castle. Both are open every day, and info is available online at www.historic-scotland.gov.uk

If history isn't your thing, just take a few steps from the sailing club to the Seabird Centre, to learn all about birds such as the puffins and gannets which nest in their thousands on the Bass Rock. See www.seabird.org North Berwick is also well supplied with shops and eating places, while a host of other nearby pretty little towns, such as Dirleton, Gullane, Gifford, Haddington, East Linton and Dunbar are also well worth exploring. The town also has tennis courts, sports centre, swimming pool, putting greens, spectacular coastal walks and plenty of parkland. Edinburgh is just 40 minutes or so away by car or train, and offers plenty of sophisticated shopping as well as tourist sights, and has a major Festival of arts, theatre and music, starting the second week of August every year.

For sporting types, anyone interested in golf will find East Lothian has plenty to offer, with championship courses at both North Berwick and Gullane among a total of 19 golf courses in the county of East Lothian. If that works up a thirst, you can take a tour of Belhaven Brewery, Scotland's oldest independent brewery, or the Glenkinchie distillery, at Pencaitland, about 20 minutes away.

Within five minutes walk of the harbour there is a great variety of places to eat. Just stroll along the High Street to find Italian, Chinese, Indian, Thai, and Scottish restaurants, plus two fish and chip shops and a good number of cafés. Equally close along the seafront is Millers Bistro on Forth Street. Local hotels and pubs are also a good bet for a meal. Try the Ship Inn, The Nether Abbey or The Blenheim. Along the East beach is the Tantallon Inn, while in the West end of the town is the Marine Hotel. As well as the bar at the club house, North Berwick is well served for pubs. Try The Auld Hoose on Forth St, The Ship on Quality St, The County, Golfers Rest or Quarterdeck on the High St or the bar at The Nether Abbey on Dirleton Avenue.

Getting to East Lothian Yacht Club

The main routes North are either the main M6, or the East Coast route by the A1 which has less motorway mileage, but is more direct and less congested. The A1 comes very close to North Berwick, whereas the M6/A74 comes up the west side of England, so another leg is required from central Scotland. There is a choice of routes from the A74 or M74; pick up either the A7 near the Scottish border, or from Abington take the A702. Both routes head towards Edinburgh, but are somewhat rural.

Alternatively stay on the M74 until you are nearly at Glasgow, then take the M8 east. From any of these three routes, pick up the A720 southern ring road, then the A1 into East Lothian, before selecting any minor road which links to North Berwick.

Contacts

- East Lothian YC www.elyc.org.uk

- See more at: http://www.yachtsandyachting.co.uk/venue-guides/east-lothian-yacht-club-venue-guide/#sthash.ITzyGgzK.dpuf

North Berwick 2015



Undoubtably the finest piece of cinematography I have been privileged to record in my short and unremarkable career.

We were about to motor into shore as the fleet approached the wing mark, just as an almighty gust hit. What followed was a white knuckle ride to the leeward mark and an experience that was captured forever.



Extract taken from
2015 Solo Specific

There is a lot you can figure out about a venue and what side of the course may pay before you even set foot in your boat or sail to the race area.

Common things to research are:

Forecast - Is there a weather system that will effect the days breeze, increasing/decreasing, backing/veering. Rain fall - head right into the cold air from above...?, clouds - head towards them.....thunderstorms etc etc

localised topography - hills, headlands, narrow channels causing increased current, dark land matter that will warm up quickly and start a thermal seas breeze, water temperature, you only need 2-3 degrees of difference between water and air temp to start a thermal system going, assuming the gradiant breeze is offshore.

Current - tide times, flow direction and probable location of the race course in relation to this.

All these factors you can research before you even go afloat so you can have a picture of which side of the course you would likely be favouring before any localised wind shifts are thought about, in reality 75% of the time I already know which side of the course I want to go before I hit the race area, whether I am correct or not is another matter!

Allow yourself plenty of time to get to the race area, the big sea champs are often held a lot further offshore than regular events/club racing so don't be afraid to get out there and start learning about the race area.

I have a routine I stick to for all my event races. firstly I get to the committee boat, often if you are close hauled or running to the race area you can get some compass headings pencilled into the brain. Once at the boat I sail upwind for 10-15 mins tacking every couple of mins to get the variance in headings according to the shifts. This also allows you to get the setup dialled in for the first beat, I then bear away and run back to the committee boat, by this time there is usually a start line laid so I get a good transit, if there is no land behind the pin end then try and get a reverse transit from the pin end to the committee boat, anything to help get your bearings on a long line. I always get a transit and if there is a general recall repeat the process so its just part of the pre race routine.

Once i have the transit I check the line bias, then I can firm up the first beat strategy, if I want to go right but there is pin bias or vice versa how do I deal with it, take the bias and hope I nail the start and can tack early? (high risk) or start at the unfavoured end and tack immediately? or trust my transit and start in the middle, usually ahead of the fleet around you if you nail a transit and there is always a midline sag and then work my way to the side I want? decisions decisions.....!!!

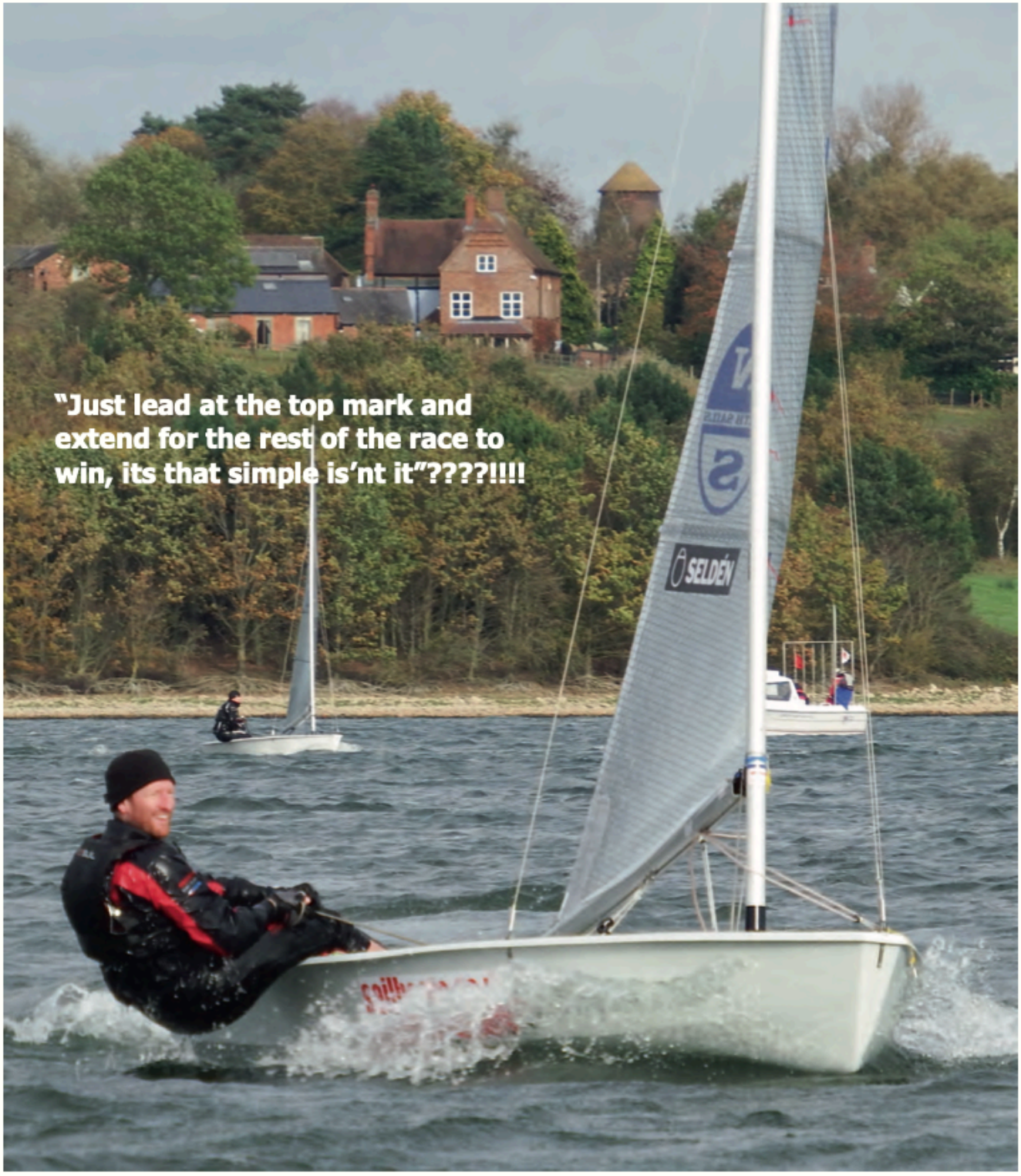


Extract taken from
2015 Solo Specific

In the final minute before the start it does not matter if its a 100 boat fleet as you are only racing the guy to windward and leeward of you, these are the 2 immediate boats you need to nail to get off the start line, its all about jockeying for position keeping as close under the boat to windward to make their life hard whilst opening a nice gap to leeward to accelerate into, but beware to protect this as if you open a nice gap someone will see it and come and join the party! Then you just have to be aware of rogue elements, usually early on in a big event there is some idiot reaching down the line with their boom banging off your forestay oblivious to any rules (don't be that idiot!!!)

"10-15 seconds to go its about accelerating whilst watching your transit", Be confident in it, and as long as you have done it correctly, ignore the calls from around you saying you are over! Their loss, your gain! having said that in 7 nationals i have done I have had an OCS in every one! You could argue you are not trying enough if you don't get one!

Once off the line its about putting your pre race strategy into action, stick to your guns and what you think should work, as there is nothing worse, getting frustrated as the boats heading the way you wanted to cross you miles in front after you got distracted and went the opposite way to your plan!



Extract taken from
2015 Solo Specific

North Berwick

As a venue it provides fantastic sea conditions, often mixed in with some unpleasant conditions for a day or so but fantastic for the rest of it, it will likely provide big waves and a decent breeze so you need to be on your game with setup and sailing style to make the most of it.

If its breezy it will be wavy so upwind you need to hike hard and be able to steer around the waves, DO NOT PINCH, its fine to do this on an inland flat water venue but you will get munched in the waves. depower, ease the main and foot, FAST, rake the rig back and raise the centreboard to balance the boat. a balanced boat is a fast boat, too much helm and you wont be able to go fast, the only way to remove this helm is flatten the sail and raise the board.

At the top mark the reaches should be fun! Ease the cunningham, inhaul, outhaul and power up the sail, raise the board up 2/3rds and get the boat planing. Downwind is not the time to rest and in the breeze is even harder work than upwind with constant sheet movements, body movements forward and back and steering, prepare to pant!

Do what you can (legally!!) to keep the boat planing, heading up in lulls and bearing away on waves and gusts to keep the average speed up, now its time for the gybe mark. easy, if its fresh to frightening a big ease of the kicker as you steer in will mean the main will 'auto depower' as the main fills on the new side due to the amount of twist in the leech so steer in confidently and get the boom over, you will survive!

Same down the next reach and prepare for the 2nd beat hike off.....once at the top mark its the run and where you can gain boat lengths over your competitors. Its all about steering, pointing dead downwind at the leeward mark is the slowest and rockiest way downwind, as the wind hits the sail and does'nt know whether to flow to the leech or the luff, this unbalance creates the roll everyone hates, by heading up to a broad reach or bearing away so you are sailing by the lee the airflow is settled in 1 direction across the sail and is therefore very balanced, this is why you see sailors at the front steering through big angles as they go from reach to by the lee to get the optimum route through, round and over the waves.

Cross the finish line, grab some drink as you recover and get ready for the next one! Nationals day 1 done!



Extract taken from 2015 Solo Specific

Andy Davis from HD Sails with Tips on the Nationals' Venue.

Really happy that we're going back to North Berwick, certainly one of my favourite venues.

The sailing club ELYC (East Lothian Yacht Club) are a friendly bunch and put great efforts in to making you feel welcome. The town has plenty of places to eat, probably why I like it. It also now has a Greggs so we'll be able to stuff our faces with plenty of sausage rolls.

Getting down to the business end, the sailing area is superb. It has plenty of scenery so when your not doing so well it can take your mind off it.
When the wind blows from the east large waves build enough to lose half a solo in the troughs. This makes for good surfing conditions so make sure your well practiced as good wave sailing can give you a good edge.
North Berwick is on the south side of a wide estuary, the Firth of Forth. The coast faces due north, and prevailing gradient winds are from the west or south-west, while easterlies are the next most common direction.

Although North Berwick faces north, the sea breeze comes from the east. The sea breeze will develop depending on the strength of the opposing gradient wind, a westerly or south-westerly morning wind of up to a Force 3 is likely to give way to a sea breeze around noon. A stronger westerly is more likely to persist.

The tide floods east-west and ebbs in the opposite direction. Only occasionally does it run at more than a knot and is stronger the further from the shore you are.

The main tactical questions you need to ask yourself is, when the tide is ebbing and the sea breeze is in, the tide is with you on a beat, so do you go right for the wind as the sea breeze veers through the afternoon or left to the stronger tide? Or, in a westerly wind with a flooding tide helping you, do you go left to the convergence that exists near the shore or right into the stronger flow? The answer varies from day to day and from hour to hour.



There is plenty of space up at the boat park but down on the shore it will be congested. Make sure you leave yourself plenty of time to get out to the race course.
Since returning this year the sand has washed away in the bay compared to when we were there last. Large rocks have appeared so keep right close to the harbour wall on your way out. Once you go round the corner of the harbour keep about 25- 50 metres from the harbour and spit, don't stray to far left as again there are large rocks. It's certainly worth taking a look at the beach at low tide and work out where your going to sail out and come back.

Hope you have a good week and look forward to seeing you there.
Andy



Mike Sims hiking hard at North Berwick 2015



Solo Builds

Some light reading for those interested in the history of the class.

Leigh on Sea Sailing Club is home to the largest fleet of Vintage Solos in the World.

Like thoroughbred horses galloping around a make-shift course, unaware that they were laid out to pasture decades ago, these fine specimens just do not know when to quit. Their owners too, display similar traits, one could argue that some should have gone to the knackers yard years ago but the Solo is forever and technological advances in epoxy repairs, medicine and joint replacements keep Solos and they're sailors strong. Good job too as generation X, fed on T foils and Sail GP media seem to have missed out on the fun you can have trying to push a 70kg hull through the water rather than over it.
The Solo, with its distinctive bow profile presents a challenge classes such as the Ok, Phantom and Streaker miss out on and that is to say, in a short chop it is nothing like putting a hot knife through butter.

The Solo design, first pencilled by Jack Holt in 1956 (next year is our 70th Anniversary) has seen plenty of development but like a small tributary, initially V-shaped and narrow has, over many decades and sometimes painfully slowly, evolved into a full blown river. This metamorphosis has only been possible through the clever + and - of 5mm tolerance Jack and the Solo Committee included in the first rules of the class, a tiny detail aimed directly at the amateur builder but providing huge scope for the professional builder to explore.



Early Jack Holt build with transom sheeting and no footsteps.



Alec Stone build 1102 ‘Minstrel’. Standard gunwale beading and no transom flaps.



Jack Holt O.B.E

The above waterline shape of course has no real bearing on speed but the addition in the 70s of Lovett type gunwales made hiking comfortable. In the 90s, maximum height side tank dimensions from Thresher reduced water scooping during over zealous roll tacks though the overall aesthetic looked a bit funky and the 2000s saw a fad towards hikers and away from flared gunwales, Boon instead maximising their height at the sheer line (an imaginary point on the top of the gunwale determined by an invisible line using the angle of the upper chine). Straight leg hiking being the optimum technique for leverage and better back health.

The original design incorporated floor battens either side to stiffen the hull and the centreboard case was glued and screwed to the hog but araldite and brass screws were no match for water and time. Bob Beckett sunk his cases into the hog, seeking forgiveness rather than permission and thankfully it was voted legal at the annual general meeting sometime in the eighties.

The Seamark Nunn GRP hulls had their moment in the spotlight and that was in the mid 70s but unfortunately water ingress and therefore soft floors were common. I did see a hull which had structural bars from sidetank to case and I guess these were legal once!

Another rule change allowed the builder to provide a small gap between batten and floor. thus allowing the water to drain out through the self bailers, all small incremental changes to improve overall speed.
Thresher introduced the female mould build in the mid 90s and double thickness floors were introduced, negating the need for floor battens and the uncluttered look was a real game changer for the sexiness of the class.
Early Holt designs were very much down the middle regarding underwater shape where as Alec Stone pushed the tolerances in rocker and beam, his hulls winning countless Championships with him steering and also in the hands of some great sailors including John Conway Jones. Positioning of the centreboard case was also explored but early Solo rigs were upright by todays standards so the centreboard position and therefore centre of resistance were well forward to balance the C of E, today's raked rig requires the case to be at its furthest back position and we still raise the centreboard to keep the weather helm at bay (centreboard is pivoted).
Thresher, very much an innovator in the 80s-90s cleverly reversed the rudder shape in it's stock, bringing it almost under the transom rather than the traditionally raked back (ILCA) style, again reducing weather helm.
Lovett had played around with all sorts of shapes in the late 70s, a number of his hulls obtaining dispensation and one in particular, with convex bottom panel was, I understand rejected. The shape that became unbeatable was notable for its deep rocker to promote tacking and yet flatter at the transom to aid planing time.
High Performance Sailboats played around with several shapes in the select number of hulls they built in the mid 80s, mine had a rocker as flat as a pancake and the chine at station 1 (just forward of the mast foot) had a very unusual kink, manipulating a Solo hull it seems is a bit like squeezing a square into a circle. I am pretty sure the other hulls had equally unusual measurements, albeit at the other ends of the tolerance spectrum.

Severn Sailboats composite hulls were all pretty much down the middle in regards to shape but they pushed for changes to the rules for cosmetic reasons, adding a thin veneer to case sides and transom, these were the days when no-one wanted to buy a plastic Solo! That said, Peter Bond was a formidable builder of Championship winning Fireballs and it would not surprise me if the Severns were ahead of the game in terms of weight distribution. Another Severn inspired change saw the transom thickened and this negated the need for the small knee which strengthened the area and almost always went rotten!



Unusual but totally legal transom mould on this Seamark Nunn composite build. Circa 75

The early 90s saw the introduction of the Kevin Gosling Solo, drawing on the speed and beauty of the Lovett but with an attention to detail that would now be classed as obsessive and these hulls proved very successful in the hands of Carveth, Falcon and Houston to name just three.
Again, the hull did not push the boundaries in terms of tolerance but its success was down to its symmetry and finish. Miles produced some of the quickest Solos in the late 90s, the ends of the hull were extremely light, just don't bash them into Andy Miles Solo on the start line.

Builders were very keen to promote early planing and great emphasis was therefore put into the angle of the lower chine at section 1 to get the bow out of the water.
Tony Thresher had been finessing his bow profile to obtain maximum waterline for many years, some of the early 4000s hulls did this well, as long as you were of a John Greenwood type physique.

The beauty of the wooden hull of course was and still is the ability to tweak the jig in order to adjust the hulls shape, increasing or reducing rocker curve, adjusting the aft section, widening or narrowing the beam and as the Solo hull is measured at 5 sections, the scope for tiny differences, matched to the sailor weight and where they race is limitless. I would say that over the first 44 years, over twenty professional builders dipped their toes into the dark art of Solo building and I will not even mention the amateur input.

Years of AGM rule proposals, resolute members votes for and against and calm balanced advice from our Honourable Chief Measurers, Martin Grounds, Jim Gates, Ron Green and Gordon Barclay have shaped the boat and the kind of sailors who race it and we may never experience AGM's like it again but maybe that is not a bad thing, we have a great product.

The modern Solo, almost without exception constructed in FRP rules the waves and Dave Winder pretty much monopolises the class with his two shapes, the Mk 1 and Mk 2. This product has seen the fleet grow to incredible numbers and now vintage Solos are a rarity across the UK.

Unfortunately, the FRP hull, circa 2000 is banned from the Vintage Championship, its superior weight distribution is something the wooden counterpart struggled to attain but maybe in fifty years they can have their own vintage event.

The Vintage Championship celebrates the ingenuity of those early craftsmen who spent many late nights and early mornings struggling to find the magic formula that would propel their build to the front of the fleet. Whether you own a Holt, Stone, Ledger, Poulson, Beasley, Lovett, Uttley, Avacraft, Beckett, Severn Sailboats, Don Marine, Young, Crawshaw, Thresher, Miles or Gosling or any of the multitude of builds from yesteryear, you are now the ambassadors of the legacy that Jack created all those years ago.



Brryan Morun's Miles build 4443, still on the pace with the modern FRP derivative.



Ian Barnett's Morrison build 'Red Alert'



Solos

Winder Boats	01535 604980
P+B	01604 592808
Gingerboats	07800 896818
Gosling Dinghycraft	01395 597603

Sails

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Edge Sails	07736 804915
HD Sails	0121 3562175
Hyde Sails	02380 457779
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