









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Editorial

A winter of de-hospitalising myself (the legacy of a high-speed B14 crash in November 2005 and previous silly events involving stairs and skis, though not necessarily at the same time) has provided ample time to follow the exploits of our intrepid winter event travellers. The class really does seem to be alive these days, due in no small part to Barnsie's efforts in (a) getting a fantastic turnout of B14s at all the major winter handicap events, and (b) pumping out B14 news to the popular web-based sailing media channels. Top marks to all those who have attended events over the winter.

Feeling somewhat guilty sitting back in my chair watching a small band of making efforts which benefit the rest of us, I volunteered to be of some small help if at all possible. So here I am, collating the input from the various sources to bring you an occasional newsletter. I'm no artist (well not that sort) so excuse the amateurish layout & graphics, it's all you're going to get!

Hopefully I'll be back on the water in time (just) for the Brightlingsea and Whitstable opens, if somewhat rusty. In the meantime I'll sit and look at the new ship 771 (roll up roll up to buy 754...) and hope you all have a great weekend at Rutland.

Mike Bees, B14 GBR771

PS – Got anything to contribute to the newsletter? Send me a private message from the forum at www.b14.org

Subscription overdue?

Hop to it!

1st of March brings a traditional greeting of "Hares" I believe but it shares a huge "Thank you" from the Membership Secretary and your Class Committee to all of you who have paid up your subscriptions on time. The 2007 season officially starts today!! Exemption can no longer be achieved by the traditional doctors certification of insanity, the favoured note from mum, or even the well tried perpetual state of inebriation when cornered at a social.

If you want to play you've got to pay! And don't forget it only requires one paid up member per boat.

Take it from me , the work that is going on behind the scenes is monumental. Give your Committee the chance to realise their goals on your behalf and continue taking the Class from strength to strength. They wont spend it all on sweets (or in the bar!) honest.

For those of you just coming out of hibernation but haven't paid your sub, just download the membership form from the website and drop me a cheque for £35 to the B14 Class Association. The forms are a great way of keeping the system up to date. So even if you don't think anything has changed, just humour me, fill it in and keep me sane.

The membership cards will be going off to the printers imminently so secure yourself one of the posh printed ones rather than the hideous hand crafted version for those who miss the deadline. Post your cheque today. Any queries just drop me a line.

Have a wonderful season all.

Trish Dixon, B14 GBR766

Barnie's winter report

Over the winter the B14 Class Association Winter Pursuit Team has been attending the major handicap open meetings. Starting with the Brass Monkey at Leigh-on-Sea which Readycrest (b14 768) won and finishing with the Starcross Steamer at Starcross, Exeter. Attendances have been good with a record entry of 12 B14s at Starcross. The class has featured in the prizes at most of the events and has received a lot of positive feedback with regard to raised profile and performance on the circuit. On the back of this we have seen many less used boats change hands over the winter resulting in more boats attending/intending to participate in the TT circuit and major events.

This has resulted in a change in the way the Class Association operates as of October 2006, and a substantial growth in membership. When a new member joins the Class Association, they will be allocated a Guardian – Buddy for the duration of their membership, so giving all sailors access to the class's top sailors throughout the year. Without cross class communication and assistance a class cannot survive in the modern era on boat reputation alone. A new website has been built, www.b14.org which is newsworthy and maintained on a weekly/daily basis. Again this has resulted in much activity and from new and old members.

During 2007 the Class Association will be conducting training at 3 TT events. The format will consist of one-to-one and group training on the Saturday and a 3 race no discard shoot-out open meeting on the Sunday, similar to the Tide Ride scoring system. The first of these will be at the 9er Rutland open meeting on March 24th/25th.

Mark Barnes, B14 GBR 768 'Readycrest'

From the chair

So already 6 months in as the new UK Class chairman and the fleet is going through an amazing change that sees new teams, new interest in the class and a real buzz around the fleet as the ashes defence returns to UK waters in July. All hail the new Chairman.... In fact **NO!**

The first thing I have to do is to pass on an enormous vote of thanks to Barnsie (AKA Mark Barnes) Deputy Chairman for the UK class, and all that have supported him over the last 6 months. He has put in an amazing amount of time and dedication that with support has seen the class build exciting momentum for 2007.

Looking back at 2006 the fleet had a mixed season as most of you will have recognised for a number of reasons. We saw an amazing start to the year for the 14 UK teams that made the trip to Sydney Australia to do battle for the ashes, which once again returned to UK soil in the hands of deserving winners Matt Searle and Andy Ramus (if only just! – see the report). The Sydney worlds was also to be the swansong for a number of class veterans who due to family commitments, new challenges, emigrating or just plain old age hung up their B14).

So 2006 was something of a transition year. The secondhand market was buoyant and a number of teams upgrading to newer boats. This influx of new blood and loss of some of the veterans saw the 2006 circuit with patchy attendance. The highlights of the season being the opener at Brightlingsea, the Europeans at Whitstable and finally the Nationals at Lee-on-Solent (who will forget the breeze and the dresses!)

The committee this year has been re-formed to bring in some new blood with a passion for seeing the B14 forward as the premier hiking skiff, one of the first actions being to recreate B14.org as the focal point for the class communications which you will all have seen has been a great success.

Some important lessons have been taken from 2006 and transferred to 2007 which will see us looking at the following focus areas to bring the class forward:

- Bringing new teams onto the circuit
- Optimising the circuit for maximum attendance
- Encouraging fleet development at key clubs
- Maintaining momentum in the winter months
- Increasing class exposure and publicity

The 2007 calendar has been restructured based on feedback to include fewer events to focus attendance. 2 of these events are now combined training and TT events. With the Saturday as a training day and Sunday a 1 day shootout style open meeting with no discards, the hope is to encourage teams onto the circuit to enjoy the best that B14 sailing can offer.

The nationals will continue the theme of last year which showed the success of focusing the event on smaller friendly clubs, providing a welcoming and low cost nationals over the August Bank Holiday weekend. This year goes one stage further with free camping next to Weston sailing club so no excuses for not attending.

The new buddy system ensures that members are supported and encouraged in progressing up the B14 learning curve. Coupled with fleet captains driving local fleets this is already showing great results and will continue for the future.

You will all have seen the success of the B14 Winter Events Tour coordinated by Barnsie. This is already seeing the class profile being raised and a number of new enquiries. The secondhand market has never been so buoyant and we are running out of boats.

From the chair continued...

2007 sees the Worlds in Falmouth. Tim Fells has done a great job of organising this event and I look forward to making the most of a great venue and enjoying the battle for the ashes on UK waters, an event not to be missed. It may be the worlds but this shouldn't discourage (in fact the opposite) new teams from attending so I hope to see as many of you there as possible.

Roll on 2007 and see you all on the circuit, first stop Rutland. I personally can't wait.

Mark Watts, B14 UK Class Chairman. B14 GBR 772 'Pocket Elephant'

Touching cloth

Hi Everyone,

This is the time of year that, traditionally, the wather is getting warmer (although I think it is safe to say that Global Warming is definitely here now) and the fleet are just starting to contemplate the coming season and think about all the things associated with another campaign; a new wetsuit, replacing those kite sheets the crew kept moaning about last year and of course sails.

This season a lot of you seem super-organised and have already planned ahead. I think that shows what an evolution the class has gone through recently in terms of who is sailing the boats. It is also a testament to Barnsie and his 'winter pursuit team' whipping the class into a frenzy of excitement.

Over the winter I have tried to help Barnsie, in his role of Technical Officer for the class, to iron out a few anomalies in the rules regarding sails. One of those rules I looked at was a ban on Polyester kite cloths.

Most spinnaker cloths are nylon, but there a few in polyester and they offer a slightly different option to the sailmaker and sailor.

As there is no significant difference in performance or cost it seemed strange to ban it, so Mark has given dispensation for Polyester to be used until the World Council can meet at the Worlds and formally change the rule. Also it is impossible to police, as proved by other sailmakers in the past, as only a sailmaker with a keen eye can tell the difference.

Often people order mains and jibs and say to me that 'the kite seems OK, it will do another year'. If there is only enough in the war chest for 2 sails, I try to encourage teams to think about changing a jib and kite instead of the main, as these are the sails which get the most abuse. This is also a cheaper option.

Leading on from the two previous paragraphs, there are some spinnaker cloths which we are able to offer at a reduced rate as we no longer use them regularly. One of these is a North brand polyester 0.6oz cloth. It is slightly lighter than the current standard cloth and would be ideal for a light summer's day. A quick disclaimer though, this cloth would perform fine in a strong breeze for a Championship but it wont stand up to a season of abuse. If you want a sail for a big event at a small price it is ideal, but remember to put your old sail back on the boat for club racing or a windy Open.

If you are after a whole set of sails at a special rate, remember that Tim Fells is holding the rights to the Association Sails available 'VAT FREE'. Contact me through the Message board, or through the North link on the B14 website or come and chat to me at an Open.

Richie Bell, North Sails. B14 GBR757 'MJF'

Leaky on...

What a marvellous effort has been put into the B14 fleet during the autumn and winter months. I forward a huge slap on the back to all concerned for the new website and especially Mark Barnes for the work he has put into organising and badgering us to chip in. (I wonder if we should be calling him "daddy" sometimes!?!)

I don't want to get too boring, but well done to all who have managed to sail the B14 fleet flag during the winter. I think it's been noticed. The past few months always seems to be a tough time to sit on a boat, especially if you are one of the less fortunate sailors out there. These are the times that you have to enjoy the B14 "crack" because maybe your achievements wasn't quite the result that you wanted. No matter, there will be another day. After all, El Presidente himself, Tim Fells, once retired, has perhaps found that the lure of this fleet has brought him and Shaun back for more. Ahhh!

With a number of the old school away with "lifestyle changes" (babies etc), we welcome a new set of faces, all eager to dream up the most spectacular way to get off on a B14. Much power to them. After all, they find the B14 skiff in the best form ever. The whole package working faster and more reliably. Ooo, it's so exciting!!

The forum seems to be working well. However, I fear that there are many out there that prefer to read rather than stick their neck out and chip in. Please do exercise your comments and ideas there. It really helps us brainstorm, bond and show the outside that we are a family of fun, who still take our "performance skiff" sailing reasonably seriously. (Notice I said "reasonably"!)

Thanks for reading. Yours, Seriously Leaky. B14 GBR 760

Club news

King George

The small but committed fleet of B14 sailors at King George SC, North London, is a growing pocket of resistance inland against the usual armada of Solos and Lasers. The winter fleet consists of (the famous) Leaky and Gerry with "On Purpose" B14 760, although they don't always manage to get up in time for the racing... Ian Priest's B14 738 has been at KGSC for a while now but with his imminent departure we could be one down. Then, new-ish to the fleet is "Killer B" (recognisable by the clash between turquoise hull and hot orange spinnaker), B14 728, having made the permanent move down from Liverpool in September. Sailed by Allan Stuart and George Morris, she will be seen at all the circuit events and is a regular attendee at club racing. Finally, B14 678 "Re-arranger" (Gerry Brown's old boat) has joined the club, being now owned by Barry Price, King George's Commodore. Along with the Club Secretary, Michelle Fearnley, they have been getting to grips with the B14 after a long stint sailing some boat called a Laser 4000 (we'll never forgive you for that Barry!). After a shaky start (no-one told them that dropping the kite is much easier on the windward side than the leeward side...) they are now firmly in control of the boat and will hopefully be persuaded to the odd TT event in the future.

The future is bright for the KGSC fleet. There are always many enquiries and admiring glances, and with the Commodore of the club now regularly sailing a B14 only more people can be persuaded to join the dark side for some asymmetric fleet racing.

'King' George Morris, B14 GBR728

Brightlingsea

We've had a small amount of turnover in the dinghy park over the winter (and I don't mean the rafts which weren't tied down...). Dan & Stu have sold 757 (Dan is looking for a house to buy - at this rate he'll give up and buy another boat, far less bother!), and Dave & Tom are unlikely to be out since Tom has been lured to the dark side (raft sailing, maybe he can teach them how to tie a boat down), leaving Dave to contemplate the lonesomeness of singlehanded sailing.

Chris & Dave will be getting as much practice in as possible for a full-scale assault on the World Championships, Piers & Tim have got their carbon rig working better over the winter and Mike & Ferret have acquired 771 from Jono Pank so it's a case of "Never mind the width, feel the quality" for the Brightlingsea fleet this year. Rumours that Piers' new kite will be so bright that you can still see the luff to trim it with your eyes shut have yet to be substantiated...

Apart from the carbon-rigged-Ovi-77x boats, we have a few other members who put in occasional appearances, hopefully we'll see more of them this year, and it'll be good to see Ed & Steve 750 on the water when they're back from Uni. We're also hoping to persuade a couple of other not-too-far-away B14ers to join us from time-to-time, and also Barnsie who makes the odd foray up into Essex to enjoy the competition, the mud and the beer - not to mention the banter and abuse.

We would also welcome anyone to race with us at any time on a 'guest' basis for free - any of us will be happy to sign you in (there is a limit on the number of times per year, but hopefully we can persuade you to join before you break the limit!).

Mike Bees, B14 GBR 771

Starcross

It is almost the start of the new season and there are now seven B14s sailing at Starcross. The latest recruit is Will/Liam McGrath who have bought 730 from Draycote Water SC. Only a year ago I was sailing around as billy-no-mates on my own and now we are the most active fleet at the club. I am not entirely sure what changed (deodorant?), but once the ball started rolling and other club members found out that it was only my incompetence making the boat look hard to sail, the flood gates opened and a number of folks looking for something a tad more exciting jumped into the class.

Our experience at getting new owners able to race effectively is that the learning curve is relatively steep, but fortunately short. We have had several races where the three leading boats have finished within a few boat lengths of one another. I am still hoping that we can close the deal with a couple of other boats to swell the ranks of the fleet further.

From the start of the spring series the fast asymmetrics (primarily B14s) have been "offered" our own start (apparently the Merlin sailors object to scaffolding being in close proximity to their varnish on the start line). We will also start using windward/leeward courses whenever the wind direction allows.

We are also planning to turn up mob-handed at the Worlds - any chance of a team prize based on the top seven boats from each club! (BTW - Mark Watts counts as an honorary west country yokel).

Club news continued...

Other clubs in the west are also seeing a mini-resurgence of B14s - we hope to see these boats at the training session/mini-open on 9th/10th June and also try and coordinate a good turnout at local events such as the Plymouth Final Fling. We are not quite ready to take on the might of the east coast boats yet - but look out in 2008.

Mark Elkington B14 GBR 762

What's on in 2007

Main menu

March

- 24th Rutland SC - Training
- 25th Rutland SC - UK Series Event 1

May

- 5th/6th Brightlingsea SC - UK Series Event 2
- 12th/13th Whitstable YC - UK Series Event 3

June

- 9th Starcross YC - Training
- 10th Starcross YC - UK Series Event 4

July

- 7th-13th Restronguet SC - **World Championships**

August

- 25th-27th Weston SC - **National Championships**

September

- 15th/16th Hayling Island SC - UK Series Event 5 'The Tide Ride'
- 22nd/23rd Great Yarmouth & Gorleston SC - UK Series Event 6

October

- 27th/28th Weymouth Sailing Academy - UK Series Event 7

November

- 10th/11th Grafham Water SC - UK Series Event 8 and **Inland Championships**

Light snacks

April

- 6th-9th Weston SC – Weston Easter Grand Slam

June

- 16th/17th Weston SC – Skiff classes open meeting

August

- 11th/12th Ullswater YC – Scottish Skiff Event
- 12th-17th Brightlingsea SC – Pyefleet Week

September

- 22nd/23rd Prestwick SC – Scottish Skiff Championships

See the **Events** section at www.b14.org for more details..