

B14

UK NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2004



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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Tim Fells

It is 10 years since we established the B14 class in the UK and we have just enjoyed probably our best year ever. The 2003 season surpassed all expectations and the class is in rude good health. Despite many obstacles thrown at the class over its lifetime, we keep bouncing back. Over the years we have seen new rivals as having the potential to wipe out our small class. The Laser 4 and 5-toner, various Topperware products, RS800 and 59er have been launched into our market space. However, the niche that the B14 occupies - The Best Hiking Boat In The World - remains unchallenged and the class continues to attract discerning sailors who recognise a classic of its generation.

Looking back to 1988 when I first came across the 'Exocet' while racing in the 505 Worlds in Sydney, it looked like an alien craft from a different world. Its introduction to the UK failed to make an impact, as it was so different to the current genre that no one gave it a second thought. 5 years later in its Europeanised B14E form with narrow wings, trapeze and large over-lapping jib it was more understandable (if a tad challenging in a breeze) and we managed to get the ball rolling.

By 1995, the UK market was getting its head around skiff sailing and after a couple of outings in wide wing form it was obvious that we should revert to the original design. With Racing Sailboat's involvement we brought the original design up to date and set off on a period of strong growth for the class.

Why have I given this history lesson? The reason is that over its 10-year life, the class has seen many changes - trapeze/wings/sailplan/builder. Throughout this the basic excellence of the design and the enthusiasm of the class members have carried us forward. It's clear that people who sail the B14 fall in love with it and remain loyal through periods of change. Looking ahead we have the possibility of carbon masts. I see this as just another step in the careful evolution of this great class and I am sure will keep us going at the forefront of the sport for many years to come.

Central to our success are the people who sail the class and I am constantly amazed at the spirit and enthusiasm the class generates. No greater example of this was the Whitstable Nationals, which was as good a championship as I have attended. We were blessed by some great conditions and Trish, Wayne and the whole WYC team, put in a fantastic performance to give the class what it wanted. But overall, it was you, the class members, who made it such a success. Thanks to everyone who pitched up and gave it their all.

The Whitstable success typified the whole season; turnouts were up across all events and many new faces joined the class, enjoying the remarkable 'bang for your buck' that the second hand market offers. In previous years, we have not been that adept at bringing newcomers into the class. The first year can be very challenging and unless you are a member of the one of the larger home fleets, it can be a rather lonely and dispiriting experience.

As a consequence, we have worked hard at welcoming and supporting our new members. The class website has been a great aid in this with many questions asked and rapidly answered by the experienced members. However, the big successes were the training events organised by Nils. More are planned for 2004 and we want to continue our focus on new owners. We need to hear from you on where you need support to get the most out of your B. To this end, I would like to appoint a New Owners Rep who can champion your needs within the committee. To my mind, this would suit someone who is in his or her first two years in the class and knows first hand what is important. If you feel you can contribute, please drop me an email.

One of the highlights of 2003 was seeing Dave and Sean triumph at both the Nationals and Eurocup. They have been sailing B's together for over 5 years and have been getting closer and closer to the front of the fleet. In 2003, they put it all together and demonstrated a complete mastery of all aspects of the game. Well done guys and we hope to keep you under pressure this year!

Looking forward, the Garda Worlds will be spectacular. The Aussies are sending their strongest team yet and I am already expecting a minimum of 40 boats to line up. It has the potential to be the biggest and best Worlds yet. There are still some opportunities to get your boat out on one of the big trailers and flights for under £100. Whether you are challenging for the podium or just coming for a blast, don't miss out on this one - this will be one of the best holidays you can have!

Finally, the Brightlingsea boys are working on a plan to out-do Whitstable for the Nationals. Again conveniently timed over the August Bank Holiday, we are assured a great welcome from one of this country's friendliest and dinghy oriented clubs.

See you on the water!!



Tim and Dave playing kebab sticks

B14 NATIONALS

The B14 class enjoyed a spectacularly successful championship at Whitstable from 22 – 25 August. The entry of 43 boats matches the largest ever UK turnout, the weather gods blessed the event with great conditions and the club provided excellent race management and great socials and refuelling opportunities.

Friday was a slightly grey day but a good force 3 westerly had all boats enjoying fully hiked conditions. Jono Pank and Rich Edwards showed good early form by leading race 1 and although they dropped to 3rd at the end, they went on to win race 2 to be overnight leaders. Tim Fells and Dave Cunningham were next best with a 2nd and 4th. Nils Jolliffe and Jon Branch won race 1 but struggled to make the top ten in race 2. Other pre-event favourites also found it hard to break through after bad starts, and posted mixed results.

A distinct lack of any breeze meant that no racing was held on Saturday, allowing the fleet to hit the bar even earlier than usual.

Sunday was a stunning day – as good as the sport gets. Clear blue skies and a force 4 ENE with rolling waves provided champagne sailing conditions. Four races were completed and each saw a different winner. Dave Hayes and Sean Dwyer started their charge in Sea-Sure battling all the way to the line with Matt Searle and Rich Bell in the first race. Jono Pank and Rich

Edwards took a commanding lead in the second with Aids Williams and Chimp Hobson following them home. Tim Fells and Dave Cunningham led the third race until in the last yards Chris Sallis and Mutt Frary flew past to snatch the win. The final race saw Aids and Chimp take the win from Dave and Sean.

Going into the final day with three races planned, it was close at the top with Dave / Sean and Jono / Rich a point apart and Matt / Rich and Tim / Dave still in with a chance if they had a good final day.

Competitors were met with a fully grey day and a full-on force 5 to test them all to the limits and further in many cases. Dave and Sean won the first race after a race long battle with Matt and Rich, with Tim and Dave steaming into 3rd on the final run. For the second race the wind picked up still further, and the tide had turned too, making for a rougher sea and an extremely exciting ride. With the early leaders going swimming, Dave / Sean had another race long battle, this time with Tim / Dave. They lost it, but their second place was just enough to give them the championship with a race to spare.

With many of the fleet deciding that discretion was the better part of valour, Tim / Dave won the last race to gain second overall with their main rivals either not starting, retiring, or being black flagged.

WHITSTABLE SOCIAL ...For those who don't remember

By Trish

Writing up the social report of any B14 event must be the shortest straw...its all rather a blur! No carefully recorded official results to jog the memory... beyond seriously breaking all bar taking records and expectations ever set. Vital stocks were only maintained by the fluttering of Bar manager Val's eyelashes as she begged and borrowed barrels from just about every Public House in Whitstable over the bank holiday weekend! There was no getting away from it, the B14s had definitely come to town and even the papers noticed!

Aaah, then there was the official recording of the number of noise complaints that were received following the band on the first night. (We feel sure that the number would have been somewhat higher if anyone had actually heard the phone ringing!). I have asked, but no one remembers much about the band beyond the decibel level. There is never too much difficulty in getting the B14 fleet on to the dance floor and in full swing and it was clear that the many newer faces who have recently joined soon let their hair down. More bewildered were the Musto sailors who were happy to share the event but had probably not been fully informed that removing most of your clothing was integral in dance floor activities. Our Brightlingsea boys pioneered and bared all (well almost) reestablishing the usual trend that left the dance floor a heaving mass of naked chests (could explain the sudden influx of gurlies among the fleet, we weren't playing though..this time!). It was all too apparent that the Mustos could not be educated in a single evening and there the divide remained...single handers kept their shirts most firmly on!

Saturday's recollections are even foggier than the rest. Racing was abandoned under scorching windless conditions, meaning that most of us hit the bar far too early in the day (only in terms of how much can be remembered that is!). Without racing to absorb the testosterone of such a highly tuned fleet (!) alternative duels had to be fought.. in the bowling alley, precision pebble hurling and challenging the Mustos to the ultimate display of fleet credibility – arm wrestling. Unfortunately the B's had not quite bargained on Mustos Team Stenhouse, Richard and Kit, who provided more memorable aches and pains than a full session in a Force 7. It was truly scary and even the boys paled as Kit beamed innocently that she would take them on, but could she use her right hand please, as she had already wiped the floor with the rest of us using her left!

For those with bodies still intact, the evening consisted of yet more dancing to seasoned B14 DJ Alex. With due consideration for all our poor suffering neighbours who had had their foundations (and dentures!) shaken loose the night before, moderation was of course exercised... doors were locked, phone off the hook..and then the volume went UP! The "last record" was spun obligingly at 11.30..but strangely didn't finish till gone 1.30 by which time the bar staff found their sport deluging the visitors and locals with machine gun styled water pistols (I reserve comment on whether this was an attempt to get even more clothes removed!).

Sunday's social conversely needs little prompting in the memory. Icy Northerlies arrived out of the blue in this the longest hottest summer on record. The 50ft x 20ft inflatable football pitch was eventually anchored to the Whitstable pebbles, but the accompanying 3ft deep of promised foam was less easily tamed. Never daunted the fleets soon mustered their valiant 5 aside squads as the B's star performers took on the Musto boys in a final duel to the death (OK you tell me if you saw the Mears Machine accelerating towards you in an uncontrolled foam lubricated tackle that would make Jonah Lomu wince, if visions of death weren't all that you might imagine!). Don't ask what the score was, it was enough to spot sufficient limbs in each foam filled pile up and to try and check that most emerged attached appropriately from under the side walls or more usually under at least 4 other bodies! Counting goals paled into insignificance! Collecting balls became a fulltime occupation, tending the wounded turned the marquee into a scene more reminiscent of M*A*S*H! Good effort B's, Mustos, Whitsable Ol' Gits and Whitstable Young Guns who survived to sail another day..maybe we'll anchor it at sea next time....

Whitstable looks forward to having the B's back to play. If the consensus was that this had been a good Nationals, it was due in large part to the fleet getting back everything they put in, sailin' hard and playin' harder. Oh Brightlingsea..we cant wait!



2003 UK NATIONALS RESULTS

Series Place	Boat No	Helm / Crew	Club	Race 1	Race 2	Race 3	Race 4	Race 5	Race 6	Race 7	Race 8	Race 9	Series Points
1	767	David HAYES Sean DWYER	Southport	8	2	2	44	2	3	4	1	2	16
2	758	Tim FELS David CUNNINGHAM	Oxford	2	4	44	1	8	4	2	3	1	17
3	746	Jono PANK Richard EDWARDS	Tameale	3	1	4	44	5	1	10	4	4	22
4	645	Chris SALLIS Mutt FRARY	Great Yarmouth	4	8	6	44	10	7	1	6	3	35
5	725	Matt SEARLE Rich BELL	Hayling Island	15	3	5	44	1	5	5	2	44	36
6	695	Mark BARNES Tom PYGALL	Whitstable	11	6	7	2	3	11	11	24	8	48
7	728	Nila JOLIFFE Jon BRANCH	Weston	1	10	10	44	14	6	7	13	44	61
8	688	Tim HARRISON Jonny RATCLIFFE	Burnham	28	14	11	3	7	10	8	44	14	67
9	713	Chris BINES Martin WORTH	Brightlingsea	9	15	8	9	44	44	9	10	10	9
10	742	Adrian WILLIAMS Paul "Chimp" Hobeon		17	12	1	44	6	2	13	21	44	74
11	618	Matt FLINT Simon WEST	Northampton	6	7	16	44	11	12	15	7	44	74
12	734	Andy DANIELS Neil BARBER	Brightlingsea	16	18	14	4	44	13	18	9	7	81
13	748	Mark ELKINGTON Mark POLLARD	Starcross	10	20	12	6	44	18	19	14	9	88
14	753	Alan DAVIS Allison WILSON	Stokes Bay	12	16	15	44	13	17	3	23	16	92
15	757	Dan WILLET Stuart PHILLIPS	Brightlingsea	22	44	44	5	12	16	17	12	11	95
16	749	Dan PARSONS Nick MANSELL	Whitstable	13	44	13	11	15	20	21	16	13	101
17	756	Jason ANDREWS Joel McDONALD	Eastbourne	14	5	3	44	44	15	6	15	44	102
18	750	Piers LAMBERT Tim BEES	Brightlingsea	7	19	9	44	4	14	14	44	44	111
19	764	Simon NELSON Andy RAMUS	Ranelagh	5	9	17	44	17	8	12	44	44	112
20	681	Mark WATTS Tim ROGERS	Bristol Corinthian	24	22	19	7	19	9	44	44	19	119
21	752	Simon HADLEY Pete NICHOLSON	Brightlingsea	20	11	31	44	9	22	23	17	44	133
22	718	Tom BOWSHER Will PARRETT	Hayling Island	34	28	18	10	44	24	24	20	12	136
23	766	Wayne DIXON Trish DIXON	Whitstable	27	13	44	8	36	25	27	25	20	145
24	760	Gerl BROWN Chris FERMOR	Whitstable	23	21	21	44	20	27	22	26	15	148
25	702	David BRIDLE Tom BRIDLE	Brightlingsea	26	24	24	44	21	28	28	19	17	159
26	709	Andy BROWN Alex MATTHEWS	Hayling Island	21	25	22	44	26	44	16	44	6	160
27	646	Jamie MEARS Matt GILL	RCYC	35	37	44	44	16	23	44	5	5	165
28	719	John PAYNE Matthew HUNT	Brightlingsea	29	39	28	44	28	31	31	11	18	176
29	743	Richard HARRISON Chris COULTARD	Weston	18	17	20	44	44	19	25	44	44	187
30	735	Dick ROE Kate DULIEU	Great Yarmouth	30	23	27	44	24	29	33	22	44	188
31	712	Charles AINSWORTH Paul ADAMS	Whitstable	33	36	33	44	31	33	35	8	21	194
32	733	Tom TAYLOR-JONES Adrian GREEN	Brightlingsea	31	27	26	44	23	26	44	18	44	195
33	739	Alex REID Emma SMITH	Dabchicks	38	29	23	44	25	38	44	27	22	202
34	745	Paul PATRICK Dom HARMAN	Emsworth	19	34	44	44	32	21	29	44	44	223
35	722	Tom POWELL Rachel WRIGHT	Oxford	32	26	44	44	22	36	20	44	44	224
36	765	Richard CANNON Keith BORDERS	Whitstable	36	30	32	44	29	37	26	44	44	234
37	716	Chris SEYMOUR Jane SEYMOUR	Shoreham	37	33	30	44	30	30	30	44	44	234
38	695b	Doug BIRD Pip PARDOE	Whitstable	25	32	44	44	18	34	44	44	44	241
39	654	Dan COWIN Stuart HADFIELD	Ely	40	31	25	44	34	35	32	44	44	241
40	641	Mark CRITCHLEY Tanja CRITCHLEY	Great Yarmouth	39	38	29	44	33	32	34	44	44	249
41	673	Francis STILEMAN Sonia MARRIOTT	Whitstable	41	40	34	44	35	39	36	44	44	269
42	668	Joanna PIEPER David SMITH	Whitstable	44	35	44	44	27	44	44	44	44	282
43	737	Chris BARNES Sam PYGALL	Whitstable	44	44	35	44	44	40	44	44	44	295

B14 Europeans at Torbole, Lake Garda

The B14 Europeans were held from Torbole on 2 – 4 July. A big thank you goes to Tony and Alan who, as well as driving Laser 4000s to Riva, acted as the B14s race officer and assistant. More of an enjoyable task than usual, however, given the array of bikini-clad assistants they managed to entice into the Committee boat!

After the long restaurant run / practice race down to the south of Malcesine on the Tuesday, racing kicked off on Wednesday with three races in Garda's famous southerly "Ora". Not as windy as it can be though with about 10 – 15 knots keeping the fleet busy but not too stressed.

Due to some last minute challenges with Italian organisation, the class had to run its own racing. Course setting at Garda is not an advanced science – two marks in the same position all week did the job nicely. Starting, however, was a new game and brave Tony signed up to be the first ever B14 gate boat. He quickly delegated the driving to Alan who was clearly unaware of what was about to happen as, confronted by the fleet planning in at warp speed, turned on his tail and went to hide amongst the windsurfers. Second time round, Tony got some blinkers on him and pointed him in the right direction with sensible encouragement to 'not look back!'

Matt Searle and Rich Bell showed their mastery of the conditions by recording an awesome three straight bullets. Dave Hayes and Sean Dwyer in Sea-Sure held on with what would normally have been a fairly impressive 4, 6, 2 and Tim Fells and Dave Cunningham, Jason Andrews and Joel McDonald, both recorded a 2 and a 3 to go with one they'd probably rather not mention. Nils Jolliffe and Jon Branch in Raymarine followed with a consistent 6, 4, 4.

On Thursday Garda really did its stuff. A 20 knots plus Ora kicked in and it was all change at the top with Matt and Rich not winning by quite as much. Tim and DC grabbed second and Dave and Sean took third to keep their series going. A little further behind, Aids Williams front tooth and Jamie and Gemma Mears rudder blade joined the chandlery at the bottom of the lake and Mark "Rocket Man" Elkington and Dan Bridger finished the race with their daggerboard pointing skywards. No further racing was held.

B14 Europeans at Torbole

Posn.	No.	Helm	Crew	Race 1	Race 2	Race 3	Race 4	Race 5	Race 6	Race 7	Points
1	767	Dave Hayes	Sean Dwyer	4	6	2	3	5	1	1	11
2	725	Matt Searle	Rich Bell	1	1	1	1	12	17	10	14
3	728	Nils Jolliffe	Jon Branch	6	4	4	22	1	2	4	15
4	758	Tim Fells	Dave Cunningham	2	3	10	2	3	7	7	17
5	756	Jason Andrews	Joel McDonald	3	2	12	12	8	4	8	25
6	713	Chris Bines	Piers Lambert	12	17	22	5	6	3	2	28
7	734	Steve Fisher	Neil Barber	5	7	5	4	7	8	22	28
8	742	Adrian Williams	Marcus Lynch	14	10	6	22	4	6	6	32
9	688	Tim Harrison	Steve Cumley	8	15	3	7	10	11	11	39
10	763	Don Forster	Kate Forster	15	13	8	22	2	18	3	41
11	764	Simon Nelson	Andy Ramus	7	5	9	22	9	13	15	43
12	748	Mark Elkington	Dan Bridger	15	14	7	8	14	9	9	47
13	743	Richard Harrison	Easy	16	8	11	22	13	14	5	51
14	752	Simon Hadley	Pete Nicholson	9	9	17	11	11	12	13	52
15	757	Dan Willet	Stu Phillips	13	12	14	6	15	10	12	53
16	753	Alan Davis	Alison Wilson	10	11	15	9	16	15	14	59
17	646	Jamie Mears	Gemma Mears	11	22	13	22	19	5	15	63
18	716	Chris Seymour	Jane Seymour	18	16	16	10	17	16	17	75
19	668	Joanna Piper	David Smith	22	18	22	22	18	19	18	95

After Thursday night's excellent fleet meal in the clubhouse Friday dawned thundery, rainy, but not windy. It brightened up, but all three races were held in a light and tricky northerly – Nils and JB weather, and they duly opened with a 1, 2. Dave and Sean also notched up a race win and going into what was to be the final race in a dying breeze, any one of four boats could win. Matt and Rich needed to add a respectable result to their four bullets. Tim and DC, Dave and Sean, and Nils and JB could also still win the regatta.

Tim and DC were the pathfinder and therefore committed to going right for at least two minutes. With the bulk of the fleet looking like it was going to start late Dave and Sean got away from their rivals by starting early, heading hard left, crossing their fingers and praying. They duly led the way round. The wind died to almost nothing, the race was shortened after a lap and Dave and Sean in Sea-Sure won the championship counting a healthy 1, 1, 2, 3, 4. Matt and Rich's early form was enough to gain second overall, Nils and JB's late form helped them into third and being the pathfinder in the last race did Tim and DC no favours, leaving them fourth.

Mention is also due to Chris Bines and Piers Lambert, who gained 6, 3, 2 on the final day; Don and Kate Forster who pitched in a 2 and a 3 and above all to Joanna and David Piper who finished a B14 race for the first time on the Wednesday and followed that with three more finishes on the Friday – but we won't talk about the time they started by crossing between the pathfinder and the guard boat behind it!



CHOKED AT GARDA

Jason's recollections of a few quiet drinks in Italy

As I sit here freezing my pinky's off with a constant pounding and bashing all around me (no not me abusing the internet, a loft conversion going in for the oncoming mini me due in April), I can't wait for the summer rays and the hundred's of Sea breezes. Sea breezes that come in like a dark wall around Lucky Point at Garda.

Last year certainly didn't fail to live up to expectations, on and off the water. Again it all started off at customs with the hope that Scamp was gonna get violated and thrown into jail for some unwanted back door deliveries, but no, he was found not guilty (shame we had a wash bag with tonnes of soap all prepared). A mad dash to beat the 12 1/2 hour record including getting lost in a place that Peter the goat herder would be proud to play hide the sausage with Heidi ,we finally pulled into Torbole around Saturday lunch time. A quick soft drink and time to watch the multi trailer of 8 boats be solely unloaded by Tim, oh and I possibly saw someone lean against it for a rest whilst enjoying a pint or two, nice work you guys.

Once we had regained our mojo it was off to the bar for a "couple." It's at this point I went back to England and got my identical twin to step in due to the fact he enjoys getting hammered whereas I don't!!!!

This is what he said, and by the way I think he and all of you need help! Apparently Moby Dicks hasn't changed. Still the barman will serve you a drink that will have you calling your Dentist for some glue to stick your teeth back in and he'll toss anyone out onto the street for not drinking properly(this was done to some German tourists). By late evening some more crew turned up only to be disgusted at the state of most people and decided to get an early night. (Fish did get an apology from my twin and Sandy). My twin tells me he woke with the sound of gunfire and a startled little Italian boy. It didn't make any sense to me but I hear the boy was not harmed.

The next day the B14's awoke to classic conditions and after some boat bimbling and banter even the sickest dog was made better after a sail, all in time for David's birthday.

After gathering a hoard of booze and gifts, David was ready to play with his best toy but nobody was allowed to see the unwrapping of the pressie (bugger, and Cat looked like she had trimmed her whisker's). We did however have a night cap with another Cat but this time she had some kittens. After repossessing David's Tequila present from his room, which by the way smelt like Jaba the Hut had just slid by, the party was on. Back massages, tales of an explicit nature and some unwanted blood pressure, it was time for my twin to go and sleep in the street.

Some last minute calls the next morning had a group heading off up the mountain for some downhill mountain biking. Preparation is key for a day out like this and they had it all down to a T; 1 litre of water between 10, drunk in charge, no map, no tools and no bloody idea. What should have taken 4 hours took 6, so there were some pretty unhappy people by the end of the day and those were wives and girlfriends. However a great ride normally.

Funnily enough that night they were awfully thirsty and after hearing about Scamps Bombay Shuffle, the fleet were ready for the next days entertainment, The all Day Down Wind Race. The location was a place that sells beer in foot high glasses. Some poor directions for the very hot and very tired women produced some great 'soap' style action, but as the beer flowed and the sun shone everything seemed a lot better

My twin informs me the afternoon breeze did not materialize so he decided to bring up the rear by offering to be 'Back door Charlie' or is it 'Tail end Charlie'? All I know is one is being generous the other is being greedy.

Racing started the next day and from what I hear Matt Searle was clearly on steroids by the end of the second day which blew dogs off chains. Even the hardest of sailors seeked calmer waters by tying there boat firmly to the trailer but Mat was in a commanding position. That evening there was the infamous yacht club diner but this year the wine flowed freely and after some rousing speeches from the chairman it was questioned whether the overnight and, quite honestly the clear winner, might choke.

Light and shifty was the order of the last day and it was a credit to our race officer that any racing was held but held it was and choke he did. Some serious place changing ensued and it was clear Matt's Nitrous North's don't fair so well unless you see a blindingly bright white flash followed by 5 billion degrees topped off with a mile high mushroom cloud and spinning Wok!

A fantastic week again, my shares in kidney dialysis machines went through the roof and no one ended up in hospital. Well there's always this year. Remember to book early to avoid disappointment, there are rumours of some big names jumping in the boat for this event so start downing vodka like a pike and myself and twin shall see you soon.

Jason

p.s. Everyone likes a drink, no one likes a drunk!!

SANDY'S SOCIAL YEAR

Well another fun packed, wine waving, puddle sleeping year on the social side of things for us B14ers. The pace was set early in the New Year by the team that headed down to Oz for the world championships. Keen to show the others what was in mind for the year the social committee arranged a pre-season party at the now famous Bedford in South London. The evening certainly found a few of use a little out of practice. It's a big town London and there are a hell of a lot of front doors but as Jason and I have found in life, if you bang on enough you will eventually find one that opens. The big talk of all night clubbing was bashed by Aid's Bullshit night club directions due to the fact that he could no longer speak.

The main European trip of the year saw us down at our old favourite Largo di Garda. I myself was suffering from altitude sickness and a damaged gyroscope on the first night. Luckily the people I had to apologise to in the morning formed an orderly queue. In addition my brand new girlfriend back in the UK was somewhat concerned to hear that I had been thrown out of a car. You have to watch that T9.

The social, however, was swamped by the expectant fathers. Realising that this could possibly be the last drink they would ever be allowed, they were in no mood to be making polite chat at the bar. Jason (the leader of the expectant fathers) had a 2 in 6 strike rate at making it home at the end of the evening and seemed to prefer to stay with the nice Italian family Mr and Mrs Soprano down the road. The 2 times that he did make it home a mattress died and we needed a shovel to clean the bathroom. Pleasant!!

The Young Scamp was out on tour with us again which is always good to see. Now that the boys are all pretty much married away it was down to the Scamp to go and get the cherries for the house. With an intensive 24 hour training program from the chaps it was not long before The Scamp appeared home one morning with a battle torn G-string in his pocket and head full of dirty stories to recount to his eager house mates. Well done Cat Rix for supplying the fodder. This year???

The return drive went pretty smoothly other than when Jason woke up and caught me doing 55 mph. I was informed that if this happen again I would be left at the mercy of the SS in Germany, a threat that I took very seriously.

A really great year was had by all, no one got hurt and everyone got paid.

PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT

By Tim Fells

Most races are won and lost before any of the competitors reach the racecourse. Why is this? Well, in the immortal words of Jim Saltonstall, it's all down to the 6 P's: Proper Preparation Prevents Piss Poor Performance. Yes, it's true, the biggest improvement we can all make to our performance is down to the stuff we do before the event.

So, what are we talking about here? It is all about removing any weaknesses from our ability to perform to our full potential. It is about having 'no excuse to lose'. Winning is about minimising the number of mistakes we make. Failing to do any part of the preparation described in this article is making a mistake. The more we fail to do, the more mistakes we are making and the greater the advantage we are handing to our competitors before we reach the track.

Winning is also about having a winning mind. Proper preparation builds our confidence, removes nagging doubts and gremlins, puts us at a psychological advantage over our competitors.

Having said that, time is the one commodity most of us have in short supply. Even full time Olympic sailors lack all the time they could use to test and develop all the variables they need to control. For us weekend amateurs it is much harder. We therefore need to prioritise our preparation to the areas where we can make the most impact. Analyse your weaknesses and put the most effort into getting them sorted.

Boat Preparation

Rarely once the season is underway do we have the time to do some serious boat bimbbling. The cold pre-season months are an excellent time to get the ship fully sorted. Elsewhere in this issue, Mark Barnes has described all the tweaks you can do to your B. The bottom line in this activity is to ensure that when you do hit the racecourse everything works, nothing breaks, you have complete precision control in all conditions and you are not carrying any unnecessary weight.

Set Up

The starting point is to know what your settings are and the effect of making adjustments to the primary rig positions. Take some time with a tape measure and a Loos gauge to get your rig close to the recommended settings. Write the settings and adjustments for different breeze conditions in marker pen on duct tape on the front tank bulkhead. Make sure you include jib tack as well as uppers, shrouds and forestay.

Mark the jib sheets and if possible the vang so that you can reproduce settings. Take note of what works and what doesn't. If you can reproduce fast settings more than 50% of the time you will be doing well, 75% and you will be at the front of the fleet.

Boat Handling

Most results are determined by a few critical moments when a tactical opportunity presents itself and you have to take it there and then. More often than not this requires a quick and effective tack or jibe. Having confidence in your boat handling in all conditions has a huge effect on your result. Don and Kate were good examples last year. They spent many hours practicing their jybing and made a notable jump up the fleet. Look at your strengths and weaknesses in those critical moments - the start, tack, jibes, hoists and drops - and take time outside the race course to practice them.

Physical Preparation

The B14 is a physical boat and fitness is very important. Garda is likely to be breezy and will find out any physical weakness. Finding the time to do 3 1-hour sessions a week for 3 months beforehand will dramatically improve performance. One of the best tips I had was from Richard Dowsett - simply buy 3 metres of 8mm bungy and you can create your own gym around your house. e.g. double it up around your banisters and create a whole range of resistance exercises.

Venue Preparation

It is important to have a good idea of what the tactics will be at the venue well beforehand. Understanding the major wind and tide effects will allow you to think through various strategies. There is an increasing amount of data available to help with this. The web can provide venue guides, there are old reports of previous events, there are maps and charts to study and, of course, people's brains to pick. With all of this, you can think through different scenarios and visualise your decisions and tactics. This means that on arriving at a venue, you have much less to do. You can go out and test your theories and your decision making will be much sharper.

Mind Preparation

Confidence is the most important factor. For me, confidence comes from knowing I have prepared well. Do all the above preparation and you will naturally gain confidence.

BOAT BIMBLING

By Mark Barnes

The B14 is a wonderful, uncomplicated, seat of the pants, all out true racing skiff. The boat's layout has moved forward during the last 2 years. This has primarily been driven by both the requirement for a cleaner layout in the cockpit and for ease of adjustment.

The number and age of your boat does not need to dictate your pride and joy's competitive life. The way you maintain it and look after the kit will go a long way to getting you to the front of the fleet. Team work and time on the water are also very important. This article goes a little to covering one issue, boat preparation.

Location of Controls: The ease of adjustment of both Cunningham and kicker which control the powerhouse of the boat, has resulted in both controls being moved to the front wing strut as seen on most front of the fleet boats. This has been complimented with the increase in wall thickness of the front wing strut. The downside of this is that the boat's competitiveness becomes more crew and less helm orientated [Ed: some may say this an upside]. The Crews Union may revolt but this makes the experienced ones amongst them more valuable commodities than before.

Prior to moving these controls, they were located on the outboard kick-bars of the hull and proved difficult to adjust. Also see photographs.

Control Lines: In parallel to this crews have been changing over to continuous control systems, mainly driven by the Whitstable fleet. This has resulted in 4 mm. dynema or spectra being used for the control lines. Once in place the ease with which the controls work more than make up for the cost and time involved in changing over to the new system.

Boat Ropes: The mainsheet need only be 8mm low stretch rope, jib and kite sheets 6mm rope that is again low stretch but can be tapered, main halyard 4mm dynema or spectra but if tapered at the top use 5mm (You can also cover the wear point of the halyard with a sacrificial cover so as to keep a check on wear) and jib Halyard 5mm dynema or spectra so as to make tying off the halyard when tensioning the rig more easy to undo.

Mainsheet Horse: The old wire horse at the back of the boat has been surpassed. This has been replaced by the use of 4mm blue Hertsog.

This will allow crews to adjust the length of the horse to suit the wind conditions. We have been known to adjust ours by up to 60mm. This does not sound a lot but is critical if you wish to keep your mainsail on the centreline in all conditions.

Kicking Strap/Mainsheet Ratchet Boom Mounting: Many of the old booms (pre 2001) were breaking so we have increased the gauge of the tube wall and lengthened the tube sleeve as well as modifying the rules to allow for change of fittings location. Due to the compression and tension stresses on the boom under load, you can now have the location eyes on the top of the boom instead of the bottom using straps to locate both. The point of leverage for the kicker shall pass through the same imaginary point as per the old style, any other setup will not be allowed. As a result of this change, Ovington Boats will now supply booms in this format if specified. To date none of the new booms have broken due to sailing fatigue.

Tramp Nets: We are seeing a move away from the traditional wing nets towards open joint netting



supplied by Ovington Boats and the open weave style as supplied by Octopus and Ovington Boats. The main reason behind both developments is to reduce windage of the wings. The latter also allows for sponsorship logos to be printed on them, presenting a most favourable location for photographic shoots.

Kite Bag: The kite bag has now been modified to the extent that it is now much more user friendly. Any of the boat builder supplied bags can be modified to the new style. The kicking strap now passes up through the head panel with the bag closing in front of the kicking strap. The forward face of the bag head on many boats now has a flexible batten across it's length with a securing mechanism, either the old rope and cleat style or as on our old boat (695) a trapeze hook cleating onto a hook on the back of the mast approximately 30 mm. below the gate support.