

**Frensham Pond Sailing Club**  
**The First Fifty Years**  
**1953 - 2003**



Edited and Compiled by  
Donald Videlo

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Graham Howlett

**F.P.S.C. The First Fifty Years**

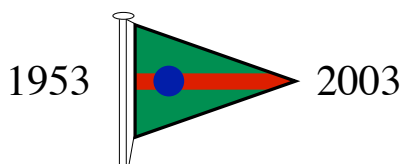
# The First Fifty years

## The History of the Frensham Pond Sailing Club

1953-2003

Edited and compiled by

Donald Videlo



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A0

Clubhouse

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## Acknowledgements

Many members past and present have contributed to this story, and where possible these are recognised in the chapters. However, others have related experiences and particularly loaned photographs. In listing these their contributions are greatly appreciated.

It is inevitable that some names may have been inadvertently missed off and for this we do apologise.

Special thanks goes to Charles and Sheila Smith who worked on the very rough draft and made many valuable suggestions. With their expertise in publishing they also saw the final material into print.

### **The members who contributed directly included:**

Ted Bonner; Colin Boys; Mike Brewster; Bob Castle; Nick Clibborn; Martin Cooper; Nick Craig; Simon Curwen; John Davenport; Peter Dyer; Colin Gilbert; Brian Grimwood; Peter Guyett; Julian & Ann Hereward; Graham Howlett; George & Inga Kaack; Simon Millar; Tim Mitchell; Jim Morley; Sylvia Rhodes; Nick Royse; Dan & Jenny Shaw; Keith Videlo; Viv Ward; Laurie Weeden; Philip Whitney.

### **Others contributors include:**

Jason Gray, Bailiff of the Farnham Angling Club

Jeremy Horton-Ray

Shaun Peters of the Surrey Bird Society

Steve Webster, Countryside Ranger for Frensham and Bealeswood Commons

### **Others to whom we are grateful:**

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The Librarian of Charterhouse School for permission to reproduce excerpts from a log book of the School Sailing Club.

## Introduction

This is the story of FPSC written for the 50th Anniversary of its founding in 1953. The beauty and amenities of Frensham Pond have made an excellent setting for a Sailing Club and have resulted in a friendly racing club for the whole family. However, it is the members who have made the Club so happy and successful over the years and in writing this history we hope to pay tribute to them.

We have not set out to write an historical record, but rather a story about the Club which we hope the reader will find of interest. It is inevitable that some moments of note will have been missed and sadly many members will not get the mention they deserve. However, even the most long serving members are likely to find something new.

This story is the result of contributions from many members to whom we owe a debt of gratitude and whom we acknowledge on page iv. We have had a chance to refer to some Club records, notably committee minutes, and where that was not possible, the minutes of the A.G.M.s. Just as important has been individual memories which have added colour to the bare facts.

It is inevitable that with the passing of time memories fade and some details may be incorrect. Collating the reports has been rather like sitting on a protest meeting, having to make a judgement between differences in the evidence. Also, whilst we have tried to include many notable deeds and memorable characters in the Club, it is recognised that some omissions will have arisen inadvertently. For all these, we do ask for your forbearance and hope they do not mar the pleasure of reading about these fifty glorious years.

Donald Videlo  
2004

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A1

Frensham Pond Sailing Club from a painting by Sheila  
Smith completed in 2003.

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# CHAPTER 1 The Club is Born

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A2

A mixed fleet just off!

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## **Sailing before the club began**

The sport of sailing had increased enormously in the years following the second World War, largely as a result of the technology developed in marine plywood and waterproof glues. The design of boats changed to take advantage of the plywood construction, which meant that boats could be produced much more cheaply. It is remarkable that most of these designs came from the board of one man - Jack Holt. Unlike those of today, they were capable of being built by do-it-yourself enthusiasts and that set the basis for the growth in dinghy sailing.

The old established clubs were to be found on the coast and along rivers. However, with the growth of boating, there was a need to find new waters on which sailing could take place, particularly inland. Suitable places were few and far between, but Frensham Pond, in its lovely Surrey surroundings, attracted boats of all kinds, being a place where the owners could enjoy stimulating recreation in peaceful surroundings.

The Pond was used by individuals for boating in the 1930s and again after the war, all with the agreement of the owner of Frensham Pond Hotel. There were no real facilities for those taking part, and some boats were kept afloat on moorings. The use of the Pond by local schools for sailing was the significant part of the Pond's activity. Most notable of these was Charterhouse School, whose Sailing Club log-book for the period 1949 - 1955 makes interesting reading. It records that the school's sailing club had used Frensham for several years before 1949 and extracts from it appear in a later chapter.

One of the individuals who sailed on the Pond before the club was established in 1953 was the Rt. Hon. Lord John Wakeham who lived at Milford and as a boy regularly cycled over to Frensham. He recounts

“I sailed there regularly from 1946 until well into the 50s. My first boat was a 10ft clinker built dinghy and then I had one of the first Yachting World Cadets - No. 54 - which my father built from a kit with a little help from the village carpenter. I laid my own mooring for my Cadet about 25 yards from the bank and we would paddle out to get my boat.



In those days there were never more than about 10 boats at Frensham and if more than 2 or 3 were out on any day it was 'crowded'. After sailing, a tea - a large one at that - could be had for one shilling and sixpence in old money at the Pond Hotel. Only a few boats took part in the racing, which I expect is why I won the Open race - I think in 1947. At this time, my old school, Charterhouse, sailed at Frensham during the summer term on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday afternoons."

There was more to the Pond than sailing, however. Sylvia Rhodes relates how she met a local retired farm worker who pointed to a low red wall at the right-hand end of the Hotel car park and said "I bet you don't know what that is - it is where we used to dip the sheep!" He went on to say "On Boxing Day we always had a Coot shoot. We'd gather in the Hotel for a few drinks, then take a boat out to see who could nab the most Coots. We would then take the birds home to roast! However, I remember one year two friends of mine had too much to drink and they both lost their guns overboard. Never recovered them!"

### **The club is born**

Being already in use by local schools, sailing on the Pond had become a significant activity. The number of privately owned dinghies sailing on the Pond increased until in 1952 the idea of forming a sailing club at Frensham was conceived by three people who had a common interest in boats - Mr Abbott-Anderson, Commander Morley and his brother-in-law Lt-Commander Mayne. Since they were all keen sailors and all were living in the area, they could see the potential for creating an inland club which would save them the long trek to the coast each weekend. Other active members included Mr Trevor Lloyd, Col Abbott- Anderson and Mr John Lawson Russell.

Jim Morley started sailing at Frensham when he was 14 years old. He says it was mostly rowing boats at first, but these were joined by a handful of sailing craft including their family lugsail dinghy 'Dragonfly' and later his Cadet 'Flying Saucer'. By the 1950's there were a dozen boats including some heavier types that lived on offshore moorings. One September afternoon in 1952 four sailors had just completed an impromptu race. While on the shore de-rigging the boats somebody said,

"That was fun; we should start a proper sailing club."

Local resident Marjorie Price recounts

"One day, when I went down to sail I noticed a piece of paper pinned to a tree. It said: 'Don't you think it would be a good idea if we formed ourselves into a sailing club? If you think so write your name below'. It was signed 'M J Hook'. He had set the ball rolling and soon afterwards a meeting was held at the Hotel for anyone interested."

Subsequently Marjorie became the first lady member.

## **Press Statement**

An article appeared in the Farnham Herald on Friday 6th Feb 1953, recording the formation of Frensham Pond S.C. on Sunday 1st Feb 1953:

“A decision has been reached to form at Frensham, a club, to be known as Frensham Pond Sailing Club. Twenty three people were present at the club’s inaugural meeting on Sunday at which Mr John Webster represented his mother’s interests as owner of the Pond Hotel and leaseholder of the pond’s fishing, shooting and boating rights. Mr M.J.Hook of 2, Haines Cottages, Marlborough Lines, Aldershot was appointed secretary and a committee of six - Mr AbbottAnderson, Mr Trevor Lloyd, Cdr Morley, Mr Breeze and Mr Derek Carter and the secretary - was elected. The subscription for the first year is fixed at £5.5s (which includes mooring fee and club subscription). Non boat owners will pay 7/6d and family non owners’ membership subscription is 10/6d. Asked whether the weed which was a great problem following the war period - had been successfully and permanently treated, Mr Webster said that the Office of Works, who accepted responsibility for returning the pond to its original state, had used a special dredger cutter and last year the greater part of the water was weed free. The pond was due for de-requisitioning most probably this year. Mr Webster also said that the banking near the hotel landing stage would need to be extended and there was a sheet iron building which could be put at the disposal of the club for changing purposes. Crews from Frensham Heights and Charterhouse Schools used the pond for regattas, said Mr Webster, and the club would have to arrange with these sailing clubs to avoid clashing of fixtures.”

John Russell had spent a lifetime sailing boats and before the Club started had ‘Goldfinch’, a 10ft long clinker-built lugsail dinghy with red sails, moored at Frensham. He went on to sail a GP14 and later became Commodore, playing a significant role in the negotiation of the Club’s first lease. He was also renowned as the Club’s expert on the Racing Rules and was always in demand to chair a protest committee at important events.

### **Julian Hereward, an early junior member, writes:**

“They approached Mrs Webster, who at that time had the rights to Frensham Pond as the Manager of the Frensham Pond Hotel. She was a very helpful lady and agreed to them forming a club. The annual rent was also agreed at 60 guineas but she did not require payment until enough members had been found to help pay for it. This all happened in the autumn of 1952 and a very small band of early members commenced work building a jetty and forming a timber ramp from which to launch boats.”

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A3

Preparing to launch in an early race. Note the total lack of sailing clothing as we know it today.

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A4

The race team prepares the starting signals and gets the rescue boat ready.

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“My father had been building a Graduate from a kit at our home in Camberley and someone told him about this new Club so he went over there at the weekend to enquire about sailing. He was grabbed by all those there desperate to build up the membership in order to pay for the rent. He was the eighth member.

As the early part of 1953 progressed, a small building with a tin roof already on site was converted into a very crude clubhouse and a few members started to bring along their boats. The very first race was arranged for the weekend before Easter in 1953.

The membership had gone well and although I cannot recall the exact number of boats which took part, I think it was about fifteen. It was a real motley mob of dinghies. Commander Morley had a National 12, there was a home built/designed 14ft boat called ‘Betinna’, an ordinary sailing dinghy with a red lugsail, there was our new Graduate (G11), a green boat with wooden sides and a canvas bottom called ‘Jane’, an old Sharpie called ‘Moonbeam’, and a wooden single handed Moth sailed by a lady called Biddy Bargrave-Deane.

I remember she had a big black and white dog called Blossom. At the Easter holiday race she was just about to launch her boat when the ten minute gun was fired (a real pistol with blanks). Blossom dived into her boat, scrambled up under the foredeck and wouldn’t come out.”

“I cannot recall the other boats in the first race but for the first few months there was only a Handicap Class and apart from Commander Morley, who won almost every race, none of the rest had much, if any, racing experience.

There was one starting line where the school boats are now located and we always sailed a star shaped course around five buoys. We went round this leaving all the marks either to port or starboard. Thus only two courses existed.

As 1953 progressed a rapid expansion of the membership occurred. The National 12 Class soon became by far the largest and by the end of that year more than half the club fleet consisted of them. That autumn the programme was altered to having a

National 12 Class race on Sunday mornings and a handicap race for the rest in the afternoons.”

### **More and more members joined**

During 1954 more and more members joined to the extent that the Committee actually considered restricting it. Julian went on to say:

“Only a small proportion of the ground we have today had been cleared and only one jetty and launching ramp built. Although the National 12s were the main class, a pattern was beginning to evolve. Some Fireflies came in and joined the National 12s. The Graduates increased in number and eventually a separate class race was held for them. The same thing happened with the General Purpose 14 (GP14) which quickly became popular and by 1955 the club was becoming quite well known in the South of England.

By today’s standards things were very unsophisticated. No motors whatsoever were allowed on the water and the rescue boat was powered by people rowing. I remember rowing once for over ten minutes into a biting north easterly to rescue some poor unfortunate floundering in the water with a broken mast.

It took about three months before electricity was laid into the small club house and I don’t think water was ever installed. I wouldn’t even begin to describe what passed for the outside toilets. As the 1950s went by more land was cleared, more jetties and ramps built and the enthusiasm for racing was tremendous.

As one of the band of happy teenagers at the club we had a great time and the club shaped many of our lives. Those who started and progressed the club in the early days would never in their wildest dreams have realised that by the 1960s and 70s Frensham Pond Sailing Club would have produced so many successful dinghy racers that, at one period, almost dominated Open Meetings in the South and boasted so many National Championship winners in a variety of different classes.”

### **Sailing after the war**

Another early member was Mr Horton-Ray and his son Jeremy gives a résumé of his memories of Frensham Pond Sailing Club:

“I was probably the first person to sail on the Pond after the war. When refilling was completed the water became covered in flannel weed. This resulted in a cover like pie crust. I sailed down the various channels opened by the wind which probably gave me about a third of the area to use. Swimming was not encouraged with various notices saying ‘Danger risk of drowning!’ Polio was then the big scare and I was not allowed to swim in the Pond or go to the cinema. I therefore concentrated on sailing, as I lived within one mile of the Pond.

We, as a family, knew the Webster family who then owned the hotel, together with George Nelson and Peggy Tylee who subsequently owned the hotel, and I was given permission to sail and shoot over the Pond whenever I liked.

The sailing club was formed in 1953. I was at boarding school and came back on holiday to find my sole use of the Pond had been usurped. You can imagine my horror! However, I soon joined.

At the beginning, the boats were a hotpotch of all and sundry. Rule observance may not have been perfect, but with the difference in speed, if the fleet arrived at a buoy together there were several boats that could not alter course quickly. Races were sailed on a Sunday, and then Wednesday pm races were introduced. We also held a regatta, of sorts, which included a jib and paddle race. Teaspoons with the 'Club Burgee' were presented as prizes and then cups were presented for the classes of boats coming into the Club.

The Clubhouse was a tin shed which housed a sailing locker to the left and a small room where we congregated before and after races to discuss tactics etc. I don't remember facilities as showers or toilets then! The boat parking was the area immediately in front of the Clubhouse. It soon went sideways down the area to the east.

Sunday sailing involved races which were then dissected in the bar of the Pond Hotel. I remember using a pint glass as a mark on a table to make a point re tactics that had either resulted in a protest or some other dubious manoeuvre. How we must have bored the pants off any people having an innocent drink in the bar!

There was pre-war sharpie in the ownership of Kay Webster. Mr Bellchamber bought it and it became a very dangerous obstacle as it was a fast boat, very heavy, which probably inflicted much damage in collisions. Biddy Dean had a Moth, a dinghy named 'Mouette' was owned by Captain Cavendish and N688 by David Morgan."

Jim Morley writes:

"A major influence in the early days of the Club was Cdr Norman Morley who had a distinguished service in the Navy, becoming the most highly decorated reserve officer in a career spanning both wars. He had raced dinghies in the nineteen thirties from Hayling Island SC, and had been a pioneer of the early National Twelve class. Post war found him trailing his "Twelve" to open meetings, but living far from the sea he had no home base. Building the new sailing club was an opportunity waiting and one he embraced with a zeal and enthusiasm that was both infectious and all consuming.

At that time clubs were springing up on every available piece of water. Many sailed a menagerie of odd craft racing to their own local rules. Norman was determined that recognised racing classes be adopted, with his own beloved National 12s to the fore. From day one he insisted that the international racing rules would be enforced.

He used his contacts in the wider world of sailing to invite guest appearances by top sailors.”

### **Much work had to be done ashore**

Forming a new Club required a great deal of work, particularly ashore, which in the early days was done by the members themselves. This helped to create a spirit and camaraderie among members which stood the club in good stead. Jim Morley continues:

“In the weeks since the club had been formed the thirty members had not been idle. The old goat shed, (on the site of the present workshop), had been cleaned, given a cement floor, insulated, and fitted with windows overlooking the single jetty and starting position. One end of the hut was partitioned and fitted with a paraffin stove; it made a snug men’s changing room. Ladies, that was the term in those days, changed in a draughty unheated garden shed at the back. Remember this was the nineteen fifties and things were ordered differently. Equality came with the chemical toilets in open topped tin surrounds.

A flagstaff was erected and the Bosun constructed a ‘minute board’; a wooden rectangle with five cut out circles painted white. Each circle represented one minute, a black plywood slide eliminated each minute of the start count-down until a single half moon meant thirty seconds to the gun, the latter being the Rear Commodore’s twelve bore shot-gun.

All awaited the holding of the race on Easter Monday 1953. By that time we had assembled a colourful menagerie of sailing craft. My father who later became secretary had struggled to devise a handicap system for this strangely mixed fleet. These included half a dozen pre-war non-planing wooden boats between twelve to eighteen feet length. All had elderly cotton sails and leaked.”

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A5

Five laps, all marks to port - we are in the last half minute as you can see from the board

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Jim Morley talks about ‘Moonbeam’:

“Then there was ‘Moonbeam’, a Sharpie built from commercial hardboard of incredible weight and the only survivor of the pre-war club. She was one of six boats too heavy to land and lived on offshore moorings. One had a lugsail rig with a bamboo pole mast and gaff holding a sail made from bed sheets.”

Other early members included Frank and Pearl Millar with their two sons Ian and Simon. Also Dr Hugh and Mrs Tim Lankester, who had a Fairey Duckling which they

sailed on the Thames near their home in Weybridge, with occasional day trips to Frensham Pond before the inception of the Club. In 1953 they bought a Firefly 'Bolo', which they also sailed on Frensham Pond, joining the Club the following year in 1954. In 1957 'Bolo' was sold, and was replaced by a brand new GP14 number 1586 which Hugh built himself and christened 'Dandy'. This dinghy was raced continuously for 32 years.

Another early member, Mr Wines, reports that: "When the Club was trying to decide where to build the first stage of the present clubhouse, there were problems with the instability of the subsoil due to marshiness of the area." He was a first-class dowser and so got out his dowsing twigs and walked the length of the foreshore available to the club, and identified the driest, most stable area.

That was where the clubhouse was subsequently built.

### **A summary of the minutes of the first year makes interesting reading:**

On Sunday 1st February 1953 a general discussion was held under the chairmanship of Mr John Webster of the Frensham Pond Hotel. Mrs Webster agreed to allow the club a reduction in the sailing rights i.e. £3.3.0 provided she could be guaranteed 60gns as a minimum. 23 members were present and they elected a working committee of Mrs Price, Cdr Morley, Messrs Abbott-Anderson, Lloyd, Breeze, Carter and Penrose. Mr Hook was elected secretary.

At the 2nd meeting on the 15th Feb they elected a Treasurer, Cdr Mayne and Secretary Mr M Hook and five committee members: A Breeze, Cdr Morley, Mr Abbot-Anderson, Mrs Price and Mr Lloyd. Capt Cavendish and Mr J Prangnell proposed that the club should have a burgee.

At 3rd meeting on 18th February a Sailing Committee was elected comprising Cdr Morley, Mr A Breeze, Mr D Carter. Part owners subscription was fixed at £4.4.0 plus associate membership and Cadet membership was £3.3.0

Meeting 9th April: Mr Hook resigns as secretary as he was going to work in Kenya. Cdr Morley elected to take over as secretary, with Mr Carter taking his place on the committee. Mr G E Morris was elected as Vice-Commodore.

Meeting 5th June: Agreed to complete construction of a ladies' lavatory and install an Elsan. Expenditure on a building should be deferred until the possibility of improving the jetties, landing stage and car park had been considered.

Meeting 1st July: Mr Abbot-Anderson elected Commodore. It was agreed to endeavour to start races at the advertised times, with a maximum of 15 mins. postponement for late corners. Sunday morning races discontinued due to poor attendance, afternoon race to start at 3 pm. Regatta was arranged for 2nd August, entry fee of 1/- per race.

Meeting 16th September: Winter sailing programme to the end of December drawn up.

Extraordinary General Meeting 10th October: 50 members present. Members advised that due to the rapid growth of the Club, some restriction on membership might have to be introduced in the near future.

Meeting 17th December: It was decided the Graduate would race as a class under reduced rig. Decided to extend the all-in handicap races until the end of Jan. February should be a close season. Open races for Nationals, Fireflies and Graduates would be arranged for Sundays in March.

The club used 5 buoys initially, each identified by name: Vixen was between 2/3, Brighton Beach near 4, Burma Bay between 5/8, Coot near 8 and Home near 9. These names remained until 1960 by when the Club decided to number the buoys.

So FPSC was born and had seen an encouraging growth in membership in its first year.



## CHAPTER 2 The Early Years

The 1950s saw the sailing scene evolve quite considerably, both at club and national level. The National one-design classes had gradually tightened the allowable measurement tolerances, reducing the variation between the fast and not so fast boats. The boat interiors of several of the classes sailed at Frensham developed and fittings improved considerably. Then, and most significantly, at the end of the 50s and start of the 60s cotton sails, many with reefing ties, started to be replaced by Terylene. This, coupled with the increasing use of metal masts, enabled much better control of sail shape in all conditions, and boats became easier to handle. Consequently, the optimum crew weight for each class reduced slightly.

The Club's supported classes went through the evolution from wood to glassfibre. In each case the glassfibre boats were believed, probably correctly, not to be as fast as the wooden versions. In time the construction of the glassfibre versions improved and they are now generally accepted as being equally competitive. It did mean, however, that fewer boats were built at home.

A major development was the availability of better protective clothing - and the introduction of wet-suits - making the long winter season far more enjoyable. Attitudes have also evolved. Safety has always been regarded as important, but not being allowed motorised rescue boats all competitors were expected to go automatically to the assistance of anyone who had capsized or was in difficulty. In those circumstances, to minimise the penalty to the rescuer, the helm would be given race points as the better of where they were lying, or their average points.

The general standard of racing by the average club sailor has improved since the fifties, with more emphasis on training and instruction. Also the standards expected in race management have improved, adding to the requirements on training.

The racing rules have gradually changed for the better, penalties becoming less severe. Gone are the days when anyone sailing on the Pond was required to fly a flag, either a racing flag or a cruising flag. Failure to do so would bring a disqualification or the wrath of a Club Officer. No longer do we come down for our one sail of the week only to find ourselves sitting out most of the race for having infringed another boat, or worse still, for having grazed a buoy!

The pattern of racing has also changed in that team racing, which was a common practice in the fifties and right up to the seventies, has faded away, primarily because the escalating cost of boats and their repairs meant that owners became reluctant to lend their boats lest they be damaged.

## **Frensham in context**

With this changing background in the sport of sailing, it is interesting to see how Frensham Pond SC evolved to become the club we have today. A feature of the early years was the negotiations over the lease, the rent, and the terms which covered the use of the water, including the times of racing, the use of safety boats and the number of open meetings. The long story of the negotiations of the lease is found in a later chapter.

Reports in the Charterhouse School Sailing Club logbook for this period make interesting reading. They show us how sailing developed between the school and Club, and how arrangements were made for the two to work together, which are reflected in our arrangements today. The story of Charterhouse and Frensham is found in the next Chapter.

## **Looking at the 1950s through the minutes**

Extracts from the minutes of the club in the 1950s give us a clear picture of how the club was developing. Further details of the racing for the period are to be found in a later chapter - Racing Through the Years.

1954 brought the consolidation of the management of the Club with the election of a new committee comprising Commodore C D Carter; Vice Commodore Dr G Prunty; Treasurer Lt Cdr Mayne; Sec Cdr Morley. Committee members Miss Bargrave-Deane, A W Park, S Longman, John Lawson Russell. Several of these names are familiar with members today by virtue of their gifts of the major trophies for the Club.

This year also saw the introduction of Class Secretaries; National 12s & Cadets N Morley; Fireflies Dr Prunty; GPs Mr Russell; Graduates Mr Park. The racing programme also saw the introduction of mid-week racing.

## **1955 and a new racing programme**

On the water: By 1955 the format of the racing programme was modified so that Cadet races would take place on Saturday afternoons, but only those during school holidays would count for season's points.

On Sundays National 12s and Firefly classes were to race together, with the Graduates racing at the same period of the day. These races would then alternate between morning and afternoon with the Handicap Class and the GPs, already setting a pattern familiar today.

Racing matters: The big sailing event of the year was the Graduate National Class Championship held at Frensham in June, an event won by Jimmy Prangnell. In the same year the club began to see more single handed sailing. Two informal Open meetings for the Finn class were held in the Autumn and some remained throughout the winter to race on Sundays.

An early Graduate about to launch from the Eastern jetty.

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### **1956 and the Cadets ask to run their own affairs**

About the club: The general committee comprised Commodore C D Carter; Vice Dr F T G Prunty; Rear Cdr N E Morley; Treasurer Lt Cdr Mayne; Sec J L Russell. Committee: Miss Bargrave-Deane; Messrs Caesar, Martin, Park. Development of the Club grounds continued with the completion of the concrete approach to the jetties. There was a pressing need for repairs to the existing jetties. Mr Jimmy Prangnell made three framed half models for the Winter Points series, which are still in use today.

On the water: It was decided that the General Committee would undertake the duties of a sailing committee for the time being.

A general meeting for Cadets was held on 1st April, with the objective that they should run their own affairs with the guidance of a member of the General Committee. Cdr Morley was appointed to act as liaison with the Cadet Committee.

It was decided that winter racing would continue to the end January, except for Cadets who would still stop at the end of December. There would be no sailing in February, but sweepstake races would be held in March.

Racing matters: Team racing against other clubs continued to expand with a team race by National 12 sailors against Portsmouth Command. The Club team raced against Portsmouth Command and Stokes Bay. Also against Charterhouse using Fireflies from the school and National 12s from the club. The GPs had their first team race against Hamble River Sailing Club, the only inter-club competition which has survived the years.

Open meetings were held for Nat 12s, Fireflies, GPs, Graduates and Cadets.

### **1957**

About the club: Commodore C Carter having served four years, retired and his place was taken by Mr G D Carter. The other General Committee members were Vice Commodore G D Prunty, Rear Commodore Cdr N Morley, Treasurer D Ware, Sec J Russell. It was decided that in future the Hon Secretary's position would be split into three, covering General, Sailing and Membership.

The Hotel asked club members to stop using their rowing boat as a tender for members' boats moored on the pond. However, the discussions with the Hotel over the lease

continued with the Hotel wanting rights for 4 boats both for their own use and for hiring. In return they offered the club a 7 year lease as is described in more detail later.

Because of the Suez crisis, there was concern about the introduction of petrol rationing having an adverse effect on membership.

#### Racing matters

The Regatta continues to be run annually. Summer points prizes, gift vouchers were according to the number of qualifiers and 1 sts prizes were valued as:

Nat 12 & Fireflies	£3.0.0
GP 14s	£2.10.0
Graduates	£2.0.0
Handicap	£1.10.0
Cadets	£1.0.0

The GP 14 South of England Championships was held at Frensham, with an entry fee of 10/-.

#### 1958

About the club: The Flag Officers were Commodore N Morley; Vice-Commodore J Russell; Rear-Commodore C D Carter; Treasurer C R Packard; Hon Sec C C Wright; members: Miss B Bargrave-Deane, C J Caesar, P Martin, D H Morgan, Dr M Ware. C R (Tim) Packard took over as treasurer from Dr M Ware. The Secretaries and Flag Officers of Minima, Desborough and Henley were elected to Honorary Membership.

The three secretaries started to function. The venue for committee meetings changed from the Pond Hotel to the Mariners in view of the delicate relationship over the lease of the Pond.

Until expenditure enabled more berths to be provided, membership would have to be restricted and awaiting list started. The Club income rose from £783 in 56/57 to £1,018 with an annual subscription of £3.3.0d for the full family together with a berthing fee of £ 1.1.0d.

#### The club decides on its classes

On the water: There was some discussion about the classes being sailed on the Pond and it was decided to restrict additional boats in future to the following classes: National 12s, Fireflies, GP14, Graduates, Cadets, Herons and Enterprises. It was agreed to have a start for Enterprises 10 minutes after the Cadets for a trial period. The Club had 16 Heron dinghies but few raced.

The Class Captains for this year were: GP14s, G Hulse.

National 12s & Fireflies, Charles Hicks. Graduates, Jimmy Prangnell.

The club now had a register of 33 members prepared to serve on protest committees.

At the request of Mr Vernon Stratton races were arranged for the Finn Class at the Pond during November.

Peter Martin asked that some thought be given to encouraging a single-handed class, but this was turned down. It was felt by some that there were too many GPs in the club and the Enterprise was suggested as a possible alternative, although considered by some to be 'wet and unstable'.

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## A7

### Skaters in the 1950s

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At the instigation of Eyot S.C. the Club wrote to the R.Y.A. seeking clarification about the legality of the Cadet Class Association being an entirely self-elected body and instituting a rule which states that any Cadet owner not incorporated in the hierarchy of Fleets and Squadrons could not enter his boat at Cadet meetings.

Charles Currey and Austin Farrar gave talks on Tactics and Rules, held at the Bush Hotel.

A Graduate was given permission to try out Terylene sails in races.

Racing matters: More team racing including against Imperial College and Staines, both at Frensham.

The club sent a 3 boat team of National 12s to compete in the Yachting World Team trophy at Hayling Island; the entry fee was £1.0.0.

### **1959 Schools Championships are held at Frensham**

About the club: Cdr Hawker took over as General Secretary, whilst Julian Hereward was co-opted on to the Committee as Sailing Secretary.

The proposal to form a separate Sailing Committee involving Class Captains was turned down.

It was agreed that Class Captains should be elected at the A.G.M. and that the 3 from the main classes should become ex-officio members of the Committee.

An Entertainment and Social sub-committee was appointed for the first time.

The toilets continue to require maintenance and two new Elsans were purchased for the Ladies!

On the water: The Committee decided to delay introduction of terylene sails for GP 14s until 1961. It was agreed to purchase a whistle for informal races held mid-week without the need for an OOD on shore. A ship's bell for starting races was purchased for £5.

A Cadet Squadron was inaugurated and Squadron Captain appointed.

Racing matters: Graduates numbered 35 boats. The British Schools Championship were held at Frensham for the first time and club member Malcolm Hollick from Reigate School won in his father's Graduate ULA.

National 12s and Fireflies had a combined series which was won by Chris Wright in F 101 with Julian Hereward 2nd in his Nat 12 1271 Muscovy Duck and John Tucker was 3rd in N 1531. The National 12s attended the Yachting World Team Trophy held at the Hamble and Class Captain Charles Hicks reported "we have an enormous amount to learn about team tactics before we can hope to give Clubs specialising in National 12s a run for their money."

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A8

Simon Millar receiving his prize in front of the clubhouse

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### **The Enterprises start winter racing**

Races for Enterprises were initiated in the winter 59/60. First mention was made that heats for Open meetings may sometimes be necessary, in which case the first would be held on the Saturday morning.

GPs had about 50 boats and nine boats qualified for the summer series by sailing in 10 or more races. This was won by Tim Packard in Topsy 613, 2nd was Jack Caesar in HiJack, with John Russell 3rd in Loon. The leading two occupied the same places in the winter points but with D Graves 3rd in Windsong. Terylene sails were to be permitted from now on.

### **The end of the first decade**

So the decade ended with the Club having become truly established as an active sailing club. This was brought about by the enthusiasm and hard work of the members and an environment was created which has lasted ever since.

## CHAPTER 3 Charterhouse & other Schools

Over the years several schools have used the Pond to establish their own sailing activity. Initially these were Charterhouse followed by Frensham Heights who sailed there before the Club was formed. They were joined by Cranleigh who started in 1958 and subsequently Pierrepont. They all operated during the week and some on Saturday afternoons. The co-operation between the various groups has always gone smoothly and they have been mutually supportive.

They all became schools members of the Club but of these only Charterhouse remains today. It is believed that the tightened regulations placed on Schools as a result of government legislation makes it increasingly difficult for teachers to undertake such sports tasks. Nevertheless three other schools have joined over the years, namely St Edmunds, Edgeborough and Aldro. Nowadays we also welcome schools sailing to our Sailability section on a regular basis throughout the summer.

### **School Sailing before the club was started**

However, the principal school by far has been Charterhouse School who has always been closely associated with sailing at Frensham Pond, in the early days through its Cadet and Firefly boats and in modern times through its fleet of 420s. We have traced some of the early history of Charterhouse's involvement and it is interesting to note that the School was sailing at Frensham before 1949, several years before the Club was launched. What follows is taken mostly from the Charterhouse logbooks and a little from the Minutes of Frensham Pond Sailing Club.

The 1949 - 1955 log-book of the Sailing Club of Charterhouse records that the school's sailing club had used Frensham for several years before 1949. Mr Stewart Morris, who formally opened the new Clubhouse in April 1965, achieved much renown in sailing including one Olympic Gold medal and winning the International 14 Prince of Wales Cup on 12 occasions. He attended Charterhouse school until 1928 but there is no record of the school using Frensham during his time. The school's log-book relates:

“During the summer holidays of 1949 Mr Reith, the Sailing Master, succeeded in selling the school's 5 old dinghies and ordered 5 Yachting World Cadets. This number was increased to 11 owing to the presentation of 3 boats by individual O.C.s (Old Carthusians) and 3 by the O.C.Y.C. as a whole. Over 100 boys wished to join the club but with only three sailing days a week the maximum membership was 66.

The Yachting World magazine (which sponsored Jack Holt's design for the Cadet) were very pleased to hear of the club with 11 Cadets and allotted the sail numbers from 358 - 368. However it was decided that each house should suggest a name for their boat beginning with the initial letter of their house. This letter then appeared on the sail rather than the official number."

The first three boats arrived on Thursday 28th April 49 and the others during May. A cutting from The Times of Saturday 28th May 1949 reports "Charterhouse, which has a fleet of 11 Yachting World Cadet dinghies, will sail a match with Wellington at Frensham Pond, Churt, Surrey, to-day. Matches will be sailed against Winchester on May 31 and against Eton on June 7. Charterhouse Regatta will be held on June 18." The Log describes the details of all the school's races starting with one against Wellington which Charterhouse won.

### **Regattas and matches**

A photo of the 1949 match with Eton appeared next day in The Times and as a result over 300 spectators came for the Annual Regatta held on the 18th June. Included on this day was a handicap race in which J Wakeham finished 3rd in his Cadet 212. His name appears again in winning the handicap race in the 1951 Regatta. A report in the Yachting World said, "The boats generally sailed quite well, although by this time next year we imagine that we shall see great advancement in helmsmanship."

The Pond Hotel was clearly supportive to the school during this period, tea being taken there after sailing and especially after racing.

Inter-school team racing was a major part of the club's programme, but it extended to forays further afield during the summer holidays. Teams were sent to the Clyde, to race in Dragons, and to Burnham, and were invited by the R.T.Y.C. to Ramsgate for the Public Schools Cup which they duly won, sailing Essex O.D.s. This latter feat was repeated in the following year.

### **Arrangements in the early fifties**

At the House Representative meeting at the start of the 1950 season it was reported that "there would be a new arrangement at Frensham Pond where they are making a proper landing stage". This stage was in use by 9th May. The report for Thursday 11th May stated "There was a strong and squally NE wind and one reef was compulsory. Sailing was hazardous in the extreme at times and there were two capsizes." In June the school



drew an away match against Eton sailed at Bourne End. Eton had 2 Fireflies and 2 Cadets, so the match comprised one of each in a team.

In 1951 Charterhouse had a match at Frensham against the Minima Y.C. Cadets, which the latter won. 1952 was another year of active team racing. Once again the school didn't seem to be able to beat Minima Y.C. but otherwise Charterhouse helms won considerably more than they lost. Photographs of the Cadets at this time show the sails made of cotton with narrow panels and reefing ties.

The 1953 season was the most successful since the Cadets were purchased in 1949. The school came third in the Public Schools Firefly Championships held at Itchenor. One boat was entered in Cadet Week, held by the Royal Corinthian at Burnham on Crouch. This attracted 67 boats, Brian Ellis and Jeremy Vines being consistently at the front.

### **Matches against the new Frensham club**

The Charterhouse School log book reported two team races sailed against Frensham Pond Sailing Club in 1954:

“For the first time the school had two matches against Frensham Pond, losing both. The first race was held on 15th May and each team had 6 boats. The match comprised two races with the helms and crews being swapped between races. The Frensham Club won the first race but just lost the second to give them a narrow victory overall. The Frensham team for the first match included S Ware & Martin; Ware & Morley; Kilgour & Longden; Russell & Carter; Harte & Deane; and Hereward & Russell. It was reported that ‘both teams had a very good tea at the back of the hotel.’ The second match against Frensham Club was held on 27th June with similar results, and afterwards the Club gave the competitors an excellent tea in their Clubhouse.”

For the school's Annual Regatta, the fleet included 16 Cadets, 2 Fireflies, 3 Nationals and one Wildcat. The school won the Royal Temple Yacht Club Public School Challenge Trophy for the fourth time - raced in East Coast one-designs.

In the National Firefly Championships, held at Stokes Bay, two boys finished 16th in the Sir Richard Fairey points cup out of 120 boats, and also 11th out of 127 starters for the Ralph Gore trophy, which was won by the Jardines. Furthermore, they were second for the under 19 prize.

In the Charterhouse Sailing Club's end of season report for 1957, the secretary wrote:

“Frensham Pond Sailing Club has now grown into a large and flourishing Club. We are very pleased we were able to sail against them.”

Again, the report from the Charterhouse School log book read:

“A very successful year winning all 8 school matches. Lost the match to Minima YC but won one and lost one against FPSC.”

## **Charterhouse joins with Frensham Pond Sailing Club**

The report went on: "The Frensham Pond Hotel had been dissatisfied with the arrangements for payment of sailing, and under a new scheme, sold, or rather, leased all sailing rights to the Frensham Pond SC for one year.

As a result of this, we had to pay the Frensham Pond SC an amount proportional to the number of our boats. The main advantage of this was that we might use the jetties and other launching gear belonging to that club. Our own inefficient jetties were not fit for use. We were requested by the Frensham club to use our own starting line; but we were to use their racing marks, five can buoys in the positions indicated on the plan."

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### **A10**

A Race against Eton gets under way.

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The school season started with all their boats being judged for the state of their paintwork and general upkeep. The report for the Summer Quarter (term) stated "It had been decided to ask Charles Currey to judge the boats, but as a result of changes at Frensham, it was considered 'a good act of diplomacy' to invite the secretary of the FPSC to take his place." As a result Norman Morley undertook this task at the school.

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### **A11**

The school Cadets berthed in front of the Frensham clubhouse.

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## **Matches against Frensham**

Next year the first match against FPSC was held on 22nd May and the school won convincingly, although it was reported that most of the best Frensham sailors were away fighting it out with Minima at Kingston. However, the report then went on:

"We were provided with an excellent tea which was eaten by the boats." - some boats!

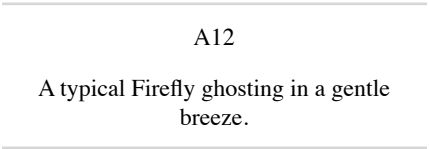
The Annual Regatta was held on Saturday 4th June and Frensham entered 3 more Cadets, 3 Fireflies, 2 Nationals and the Wimpy. These included the Frensham Secretary Mr Morley in N 545, but the winning Cadet 250 was sailed by Hankin and Walker from Frensham.

In the return match against Frensham, the sailing club was cunning and offered to race in the Club's Nationals, with which the school was not familiar; and as a result won

comfortably. The Frensham team comprised: Tucker, Ray, Hart, Miss B Deane, Park and Morgan. Again the helm and crew exchanged roles between races.

**Four new Fireflies arrive**

The Old Carthusian YC. donated 4 new Fireflies to the school during the year. Charterhouse sent a team to race in the Public Schools and Universities Races on the Gareloch in August. The races were sailed in Dragons and the team came 11th out of a total of 34 schools, which was the highest place achieved since Stewart Morris won the cup for the school before the war.



**Setting the pattern for later years**

Perhaps surprisingly, in the last 40 years there have been no team matches between the school and the Club; probably the result of the school's activity being mainly mid-week when Club members would not be able to attend and compounded by the difficulty of borrowing boats.

So much for the early history of Charterhouse and the sailing club. Clearly the ability to race against additional opposition brought up the standards of both sides and the Charterhouse decision to join with Frensham and use its facilities, to which they still contribute, was to set the pattern for the future. Hotel teas and Frensham teas figured largely in the reports, never far from the minds of youngish boys. School sailing continues at Frensham, contributing an important element to the life of the club as it always has.

## Chapter 4 The Club Consolidates

The 1960s saw the consolidation of the Club; the facilities, its organisation, the whole sailing programme. The major features of this period were the expansion of the Club facilities, the evolution of the committee structure and the continued development of the social life. Club policy on which dinghies were raced on the Pond are described in the Chapter on racing.

The racing activities of the Club form the backbone of the Sailing Club. By virtue of having specific classes racing in two groups of three each Sunday, the camaraderie between members tends to be primarily between those members whom you meet most often, which means those in your group. As with any small inland water, there is limited attraction for any member who just wishes to potter on the water taking in the lovely surroundings in which the Pond nestles.

### Club Facilities

In 1962 a small starting box was erected beside the most westerly jetty, opposite the existing Club House where the schools accommodation now stands. The position of this box meant the start and finish line was shielded by the trees and with the prevailing wind frequently involved a running start, which was far from ideal, especially with the larger number of boats at Open meetings.

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A13

The original OOD Box at the western end of the  
present club site.

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By 1964 it became clear that the Club would be able to negotiate a lease for the ground and sailing rights and preparation for the new clubhouse commenced. The concrete platform was laid and at the start of 1965 the prefabricated building appeared, totally transforming the facilities of the Club. Discussions had taken place on who should be invited to open the new clubhouse. Mr Richard Dimbleby of TV fame and who had been a member of the Club some ten years previously, was first approached to open the Clubhouse, but he was not available. Instead it was opened by Mr Stewart Morris, whose great sailing renown was coupled with his connection with Charterhouse School. A new Clubhouse trophy was presented by Bernard Crysell, the builder, and attracted a good entry in the afternoon race which was won by Julian and Ann Hereward.

In 1966 the old buildings and sheds were pulled down and a new hut erected to act as a changing room for schools and mid-week sailors. The landlords, after our agreement to

comply with their wishes as to the design, made a very generous grant towards the cost. Charterhouse School also made a large contribution towards the initial cost in respect of the sole use of their section.

To complete the year's building, Basil Crosby erected a shelter for the rescue boat by the second jetty to the west of the new clubhouse.

Recognising the disadvantages of the position of the starting box, a new much larger one was built in 1967 at the eastern end of the ground, which enabled windward starts to be used more often. To go with it, Basil Crosby donated the signalling system based upon the RYA alternative starting procedure, thereby doing away with the use of the flag system.

In 1970 Derek Mills laid the electric cable eastwards from the Clubhouse to provide electric power to the starting box.

The new signalling system, combined with electric power, facilitated the conversion in 1971 to a fully automatic starting system designed and produced by Derek Mills. This was a tremendous help to race officers and worked beautifully for about 15 years, when an enhanced version was produced by Brian Cushing.

Also in 1970 several improvements were made to the facilities for sailing. These included a new ramp, widening the most easterly jetty and creating a new one on its easterly side.

It had been intended to install showers in the men's changing room but this had to be deferred for a year.

### **A library is created**

In 1971 a club library was created with Miss Pam Reddie as librarian and Alister Thomson as her assistant. At the same time Pam donated two trophies, one for the helmsman and one for the crew. Mrs Nina Hill used her time as a Cadet mum to paint a fine picture of the Cadets on the Pond and which she kindly donated to the Club.

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A14

OK Dinghies duelling in the 1960s

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### **A sad year for the club**

1973 was a sad year for the Club in that we lost several prominent members. Basil Crosby who owned Crosby Doors in Farnham had done so much for the OKs and the Club. Sadly he was killed in an aeroplane crash while in America on business. John Beecher who had served several years as Membership secretary died of a heart attack.

Pearl Nailor who had looked after the prizes for some years left with her husband John to settle in Southern Spain. Alan and Ann Hayworth left for Brussels although they returned several years later.

The clubhouse was enlarged in 1975 to provide a committee/storeroom and a larger men's changing room facilities at a cost of £3,000. At the same time a children's sand pit and climbing frame was provided.

### **Safety Facilities**

The Club had purchased a rowing boat for rescue duties from Peter Martin shortly after the club was formed. Then in 1965 the solid wooden clinker built rowing boat was purchased. It lived in the shelter to the west of the Clubhouse and gave noble service over many years until replaced by the alloy boat in 1973.

Through the sixties and seventies members were continually concerned about safety and in particular, the club's inability to use a power boat. The use of wet-suits was becoming more common and the committee recommended their use in winter.

The task of rescuing a dinghy in trouble was no mean feat, especially when there was a wind. In a moderate blow it would take two men over ten minutes of hard rowing to traverse the length of the pond out to number 4 buoy. Invariably the wind would be opposing the rowers on one leg of the journey. The wooden rescue boat was occasionally used to start races but it was rather unstable for this to be done in comfort.

As a result, and in expectation of one day being allowed to use a motor, a new 13ft Dell Quay Dory was purchased in 1970 for use as a committee boat for racing. Together with its trolley the cost was £302. This proved a great improvement except for the difficulty of rowing it across the pond to the starting line. However, as soon as motors were allowed in 1975, the Dory came into its own and is still used as a committee boat for racing. Several better rescue boats followed, culminating in 2000 with the RIB presented by the Farnham Lions.

### **The development of Club Committees**

Until the 60s the Club had been run by one committee comprising three Flag Officers, a secretary, treasurer, and four committee members. Then in 1960 two additional secretaries were appointed for Sailing and Membership. A Sailing Committee was formed with Julian Hereward as Sailing Secretary. Ian McLaren was appointed to the committee and subsequently became Membership Secretary.

In 1962 C (Tim) Packard held the position of both Rear Commodore and Treasurer. The following year it was decided that the committee should comprise two Rear Commodores and R S Hawker was appointed alongside Tim. The General Secretary was John Comerford with Peter Herbert taking over as Sailing Secretary and John Beecher becoming Membership Secretary.

By 1963 and at the instigation of Julian Hereward, the Club introduced a rule that all Club Officers, including Flag Officers, be required to resign after three years in post. The courtesy of Flag Officers and secretary being offered Honorary Membership by other clubs on a reciprocal basis continued, and Bognor Regis and Staines was now added to the list.

In 1964, John Russell's position as Commodore was taken over by Jack Caesar and Tim Packard became Vice-Commodore. The two Rear-Commodores were now R S Hawker and Ian McLaren. This was the last time the Club had two Rear-Commodores.

Ian McLaren became Commodore in 1967 and laid great emphasis on improving the standard of the racing in the Club. He firmly believed this was best served by support being given to the Club's nominated classes within the restraint of the terms of the Club's lease. Ian was very involved in the formation of the Lark Class, and became the Association's first Chairman.

He was followed by Derek Mills in 1970. Derek had worked hard. To assist the race officers he established a set of preferred courses which have only been added to in 2003. Derek personally laid the cable to supply the starting box with electric power. The alternative starting procedure which used discs instead of flags and these were changed to the system of lights which have been the basis of the system used since. This gave the opportunity to use an electronic box to automatically control the starting procedure - of great value to members - and it served the club well for some 15 years, after which Brian Cushing designed and installed the one currently in use.

These two innovations greatly improved the standard of race management and have remained in use ever since. The same year, several other improvements were made to the facilities for sailing. These included a new ramp, the most easterly jetty was widened and a new one created on its easterly side.

Under the guidance of the treasurer Laurie Weeden, in 1973 the Club reformed the finances into two accounts. This was to split off the berthing plus social activities from the membership income to keep the turnover of each below the £5,000 and so avoid the introduction of liability for VAT.

Hugh Lankester became Commodore in 1973 after several years on the Committee, including occupying the post of Treasurer. He and his wife Tim worked indefatigably, never hesitating to undertake anything themselves. As Commodore, Hugh would be often be found doing anything that was necessary. Being a retired GP he believed that we should all have a ten minute period of active exercise each day!

An example of his efforts came when he identified that to reach the new starting box required walking the gangplank which could be rather slippery in the rain. As result he had a lorry load of rubble delivered and he set about shifting it all to build the solid walk way out to the box. This was a major effort and the path became known colloquially as Lankester Way.

Tim was equally devoted to the Club. By virtue of living nearby in Churt, working along with Hugh, she would often be found at the Club doing all sorts of things behind the scenes. Tim will be remembered for many things but her regular supply of flapjacks was much appreciated and a fine example of her support.

## **The Kitchen**

The Committee has always grappled with the problem of manning the kitchen, especially on Sundays. Throughout the 60s the kitchen was manned by a willing group of ladies taking turns and many enjoyed the companionship which ensued. At the beginning of the 70s the system changed and Mr & Mrs Brough, a charming retired couple, were employed to serve in the kitchen on Sundays and undoubtedly gave excellent service. However, in 1974 they left after 3 years and after several abortive attempts to replace them, the Club reverted to asking members to take their turn in the kitchen.

This is still the practice at Frensham, and occasional problems possibly reflect the change in the character of the Club which has taken place over the years. Through the sixties and seventies it was normal for wives and girlfriends to come to watch the family sailing and chat among themselves. With the popularity of the single-handed classes fewer and fewer wives came to the Club on a Sunday, and increasingly modern woman has her own hobbies! Also significant was the great reduction in the number of Cadet parents on Sundays since the proportion of parents who themselves race at Frensham has fallen away considerably since the mid seventies. This was exacerbated by the increased travelling required by the RYA coaches for the more experienced Cadet helms and so many Cadets have found it too time consuming to race both days of the week-end.

When Hugh Lankester retired as Commodore, Roy Eggleston took over, but decided to hold office for two years only. This trend was followed by Don Videlo and subsequently by all the following Commodores except Chris Ellis.

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A15

HM the King of Thailand talking to Ian McLaren

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## **The visit of the King of Thailand**

On Tuesday the 2nd August 1966 the club was honoured by an informal visit from their Majesties King Bhumibol and Queen Sirikit of Thailand, their son Prince Vajiralongkorn and the eldest of the three young princesses, 15-year old Princess Ubol Ratana. With them were Prince Abhas the Thai ambassador, the Admiral of the Thai



Navy and other members of the Thai Court. The Royal party comprised 27 members and was on a visit to arrange for the Prince to continue his education in England.

They were received by Mr Jack Caesar, the Commodore and his wife, and also Mr & Mrs John Comerford and Basil Crosby. The King was the current champion of the Thai OK class and wanted to take the opportunity to match his skill against some British OK sailors. Three Frensham OKs were placed at the disposal of the Royal family and were helmed by the King, the Prince and the Princess. The King returned to sail on the pond during the week preceding 6th September and again the following week.

H.M. the King of Thailand and his A.D.C Admiral Diskul were appointed honorary life members of the Club. The King was keenly interested in the younger members and presented the club with a cheque for £100 for the encouragement of the younger members in sailing.

### **The expansion of the social programme**

The social activities within the Club prospered through the 60s and 70s. An Entertainment & Social sub-committee was first appointed in 1959, although a Laying-up Supper had been run since the year before.

The major social activity over many years was the Annual Dinner & Dance. The first was held at the Frensham Pond Hotel in 1955, but subsequently was held at several of

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A16

Tim Packard, Gill Caesar, Peggy Packard, Jack Caesar and  
Ian & Margaret McLaren, at the Guildford Dinner & Dance

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the hotels in the general area. The Huts Hotel by the Hindhead traffic lights (since demolished) was a popular venue where in 1960 it was attended by 117 members and guests.

The Dinner & Dance was also the occasion for the Annual Prize giving and through this period proved very popular. So much so that a larger venue had to be found, and in 1963 it was held at Harvey's in Guildford.

Ian McLaren became Commodore in 1967 and this year saw the biggest Dinner & Dance with over 200 attending the Guildford Civic Hall. This coincided with the introduction of the Lark into the Club and to mark this, the balcony in the hall was adorned with a fully rigged Lark and the mainsails of the principal classes at Frensham!

For 1968 & 69 the Annual Dinner & Dance was held at the slightly more modest yet pleasant surroundings of the Queen's Hotel in Farnborough, and for several years thereafter the event was held at the Manor Hotel in Farncombe.

In 1975 attendance showed the first sign of dropping, going from 200 down to 150; which was attributed to an increase in the price.

### **The children's party becomes very popular**

The children's Christmas party was a very popular event for the 5 to 12 year olds. These started in the 1960s with typically 45 - 50 youngsters attending. Apart from the usual 'bun fight' and organised games there would be a conjurer to entertain children and parents alike. Of course, Father Christmas, alias Laurie Weeden, would appear being rowed across the Pond complete with his sack of presents.

Mrs Gwen Wills, using her skills as a schoolteacher, organised these parties admirably and everyone, children and parents alike, left having thoroughly enjoyed it. Subsequently her role was taken over by Hilary and Felicity Hunt, but many other mothers helped.

The barbecue, which was very popular, was generally held in June or July. To assist these events, in 1970 the Club purchased an awning which would fit over the scaffolding and whose shelter proved a great success at all social events. A variety of fare would be available, augmented on most occasions by a small band and on at least two occasions by an exhibition of Morris dancing.

One year in the 1970s the Paras accepted an invitation to 'drop-in' using the excuse that dropping into the water was useful training. For obvious reasons the rescuing boats were not allowed to have masts and so Lasers complete with a paddle proved the most satisfactory alternative. This strategy succeeded largely because the parachutists were capable of landing in the water only yards from the clubhouse.

In 1979 Dick & Valerie Sizer with Mona Videlo were adventurous enough to organise an 'ox-roast'. This required teams of people, mainly cadets, to keep turning the spit handle over many hours; but it all proved a great success. This was repeated a few years later under the control of Eric Evans and his team.

### **The Weed Problem**

The Pond having been drained during the 39 - 45 war, it was probably not surprising that once it was re-filled there should be signs of weed, and some clearance was required at that time. However, in subsequent years signs of weed could often be seen by late summer growing up from the bottom. Odd strands would sometimes appear around rudders and so affect the performance of the boat - well, that was the excuse! In 1960 the committee discussed the problem and with the assistance of Tony Townsend-Rose approached the Royal Engineers, who agreed to dredge some of the pond.

At the beginning of the 70s the weed became more apparent and by the summer of 72 it became a major hindrance. The Council had studied the problem and consulted Thames Conservancy, Surrey University and the Nature Conservancy. They proposed dropping the level of the pond by 6ins for a period of 9 weeks, during which time they would apply a selective weedkiller to an area of 10 acres of the Pond; then allowing the level to recover naturally. There were two constraints to treating a larger area - the cost and de-oxygenation caused by the decaying vegetation.

### **By the summer of 73 the weed covered half the pond**

By summer of 1973 the weed covered roughly half the area of the pond and greatly restricted other areas. It was decided to cut and remove the weed. The Council commissioned a man who is believed to have come from the Norfolk Broads and who worked on his own. He brought two barges, one of which was towed behind the other. The leading barge was motorised and drove a large band saw which was fixed over the bow of the boat and whose height could be adjusted to vary the depth of cut. As the boat moved forward so it cut a swathe of weed nearly as wide as the boat.

By motoring up and down, the weed would be cut along lanes on the pond. However, progress was slow as the cutting had to keep stopping for the man to pitch the cut weed into the second barge being towed behind. When this barge filled, it had to be taken over to 'Brighton beach' (now the National Trust side of the pond) to be off-loaded to await final disposal by lorry.

Work commenced on July 10th and continued for 12 hours daily for 8 weeks. About 1,000 tons of waterlogged weed were cut, dumped on the beach and then removed by lorry. By the end of September the club became functional again, much to the relief of the members!

## Chapter 5 The Lease and its effects

### Securing the Lease

The negotiations for the lease both of the property and the use of the water which we enjoy was a crucial part of the development of the Club. The lease was a significant factor in the early days of the Club and the terms of the lease continued to make an impact for many years.

Our lease is the result of many hours of work over the years by patient committee members and by the various Authorities with whom the lease was negotiated. What follows is a snapshot of those negotiations which extend from the early 1950s through to the late 1970s.

### At the beginning

The clearest picture of the establishment of the lease for Frensham Pond Sailing Club is given in an article which appeared in the Farnham Herald on Friday 6th Feb 1953, describing a meeting held on Sunday 1st Feb 1953 to record the formation of Frensham Pond SC:

“A decision has been reached to form at Frensham, a club, to be known as Frensham Pond Sailing Club. Twenty three people were present at the club’s inaugural meeting on Sunday at which Mr John Webster represented his mother’s interests as owner of the Pond Hotel and leaseholder of the pond’s fishing, shooting and boating rights. .... The subscription for the first year is fixed at £5.5s (which includes mooring fee and club subscription). Non boat owners will pay 7/6 and family non owners’ membership subscription is 10/6d. (Note: at the end of February the Club set up a Part Owner’s subscription of £4.4.0 plus associate membership and a Cadet membership of £3.3.0)

Asked whether the weed - which was a great problem following the war period - had been successfully and permanently treated, Mr Webster said that the Office of Works, who accepted responsibility for returning the pond to its original state, had used a special dredger cutter and last year the greater part of the water was weed free. The pond was due for de-requisitioning most probably this year. Mr Webster also said that the banking near the hotel landing stage would need to be extended and there was a sheet iron building which could be put at the disposal of the club for changing purposes.”

At the beginning of 1954 the rent was increased to £75 p.a. By the middle of the year the Hotel changed hands and the new owner, Commander Nelson, was asking for the rent to be increased to £300 pa. The hotel held the rights, in perpetuity over the Hampshire area of the Pond and until 1960 only, over the Surrey area. Discussions with

the Hotel continued but with the possibility of getting notice to quit, the club made enquiries to the War Department Land Agent about the use of Fleet Pond as a sailing water. After much discussion it was agreed the club had little alternative other than to accept the terms of the lease which would be renewable annually. However, the club were given sole sailing rights.

### **The Lease 1957**

The following is a brief account written in 1964 of the next stage of negotiations for a lease on the ground the Club occupies and the rights on the Pond:

“In 1957 a draft lease was drawn up and discussed with various solicitors acting for the hotel owners on the basis of an agreement for 7 years with a renewal at a new rent for a further 7 years. Discussions on this same lease were reopened with yet another solicitor in 1958. This time the hotel offered a three year agreement with a three year extension, but the negotiations came to nothing.

In 1959 and again 1960 direct approaches to the hotel owners were made. Early in 1961 a meeting was held with the hotel owners and solicitors at which agreement on the terms of a lease were reached. This agreement was never ratified and later we were asked to make an offer for purchase outright. Our final offer, made in 1962, was for £10,000.

At this stage the National Trust became interested and offered us a long lease if we would withdraw our offer, leaving them to arrange a purchase. This we did, and the terms of a 50 year lease were agreed. The purchase by the National Trust was delayed and last July (i.e. 1963) the Hambledon Rural District Council made a compulsory purchase order to prevent the Pond falling into private hands. It is understood that a large deposit was in fact offered by a purchaser who intended to ‘develop’ the Pond. We have had a narrow escape thanks to the H.R.D.C.

The Council has now completed its purchase, unfortunately at a price considerably in excess of the Club offer of £10,000 and they therefore require an income of £1,000 a year to cover the capital charges and the cost of maintaining the dam. The Council is willing to give us a lease for 60 years at this rental provided we make satisfactory arrangements to sub-lease the fishing rights to the Farnham Angling Club. Consequently the membership fee for full family membership was raised to £8.8.0d. and berths £2.2.0d. Subsequently the Angling Club took a lease direct from HRDC. Also the details of our lease required considerable negotiation with the Council.”

However, the whole process was not as smooth as it might appear from the above. At one stage the National Trust decided they might not be able to fund the complete purchase and said they would like the club to purchase the Surrey rights.

John and Ann McLaren in their National 12. The year is 1961.

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Until the lease was signed the Club could not move forward with any major capital investment, particularly with regard to the erection of a clubhouse. So many of the developments had to be put on hold until the matter was resolved. However, this did spur the Club into starting to save some money each year to fund such developments once permission could be obtained.

### **Restrictions in the Lease**

The Council insisted the Club give priority to local residents and to protect the environment by disallowing motorised craft (which of course meant no motorised rescue boats).

The lease specifically included the following clauses:

- No boat to be greater than 16 ft long; no catamarans
- Proportion of local residents set to be not less than 50%
- A handicap class had to be maintained to allow local residents who owned non class boats to be able to join in

These clauses affected the operation of the Club. The length restriction was readily acceptable, but the ban on motorised craft was to prove a problem for many years. The residential clause was a problem although it generally happened naturally; but it did mean the Club had to monitor it closely. However, it did make some difficulties when in the sixties and early seventies the club wished to encourage high quality sailors to come and race. For example, in 1964 as membership was nearly full, only 'local' residents were able to be admitted.

Plans for the new clubhouse went ahead and the construction started in 1965. The building estimate was £9,722 and the club received a grant of £4,861 from the Dept of Education and Science. Five members each made an interest free loan to the Club of £300. At the same time the Club was formed into a company limited by guarantee.

### **The early 1970s, weed and inflation**

With the new lease settled, the Club could look forward and plan for further major developments. In 1970 several improvements were made to the facilities for sailing.

In the seventies the UK entered a period of astronomic inflation and, in hind-sight and with such a long term lease, the Council wanted to increase the rent. This the Club

resisted, but it meant the council would not accede to our repeated requests to allow the use of motorised rescue craft.

The weed problem arose in the early 70s and by the summer of 1973 had caused racing to cease. By the terms of our lease the Council were obliged to keep a defined area of the Pond suitable for sailing and as described in the previous chapter arranged for the weed to be cut. The total cost of doing this was £7,600 of which the Club was asked to contribute £2,600. However this problem of the weed, gave rise indirectly to a relaxation by the Council of the ban on motorised rescue craft.

### **1975 - draft amendments are proposed**

Waverley Borough Council had taken over the lease from the Hambledon Rural Council and by 1975 were concerned about their liability to clear the Pond should weed re-occur. After three years of negotiations between the Council and our sub-committee of Roy Eggleston, John Russell, Barney Bischoff, Laurie Weeden and John McLaren, a draft amendment to our lease prepared by Barney Bischoff was agreed.

This gave permission for:

- the use of a motor rescue boat
- no limitations to hours of Sunday racing
- no limitations on dates of open meetings (but not more than 10 in a year)
- not less than 50% of membership to be resident in the area of Waverley.
- no change in the rent for the period.

In return, should weed clearance again become necessary, the Club would pay 50% of the cost of suitable treatment up to a maximum of £5,000 in a 10 year period.

The amendment of the Deed of Amendment to our lease with Waverley Council was finally signed in January 1977, following the recognition of the cost associated with clearing the pond of weed.

## Chapter 6 The 80s and 90s

The start of the eighties saw the Club in a healthy state looking to expand in several ways and through the next two decades the administrative load on the committee became more substantial from a variety of causes. Firstly the organised activities expanded and the clubhouse was enlarged to great effect. As a result of the drive of a few members, training at the Club became much more formalised resulting in the establishment of an RYA Recognised Training Centre. Sailing for persons with handicaps had been provided for a number of years by a small and devoted group of members. This initiative developed into a full-scale Sailability project with specialised facilities, accommodating more sailors.

Another significant change has been the gradual increase in Health & Safety legislation and the requirements of the Child Protection Act which, although for all the best of intent, brought more rules and bureaucracy which impinged on the members. For example, this affected the cadets whose parents were required to be ever present, a load which many found difficult to fit in with other family commitments. This has contributed to a virtual absence of Cadets on Sundays, much to the disadvantage of most of the sailors themselves.

### **The RYA and the national picture**

The general influence of the RYA on typical club classes has increased considerably from the 1970s onwards. The RYA set up a nation-wide training program for all standards of sailor, and this has become the corner stone of training courses at all levels. Also the RYA has encouraged the development of new classes to take advantage of modern designs and maintain evolution within the sport. At the same time there is commercial drive for new designs, generally of faster boats with bigger sails requiring more athleticism. This does mean the watering down in the size of the fleets in all classes which is an on-going problem for Clubs into the 21st century.

The membership has continued to remain healthy but class turn-outs have gradually reduced with even fewer sailors in the age range of the 20s and 30s. However, the Laser continued to grow in numbers and dominated the Handicap class, such that it was decided in 1980 to make it a recognised class and for the Larks to race in the Z class. Also on the sailing front, the windsurfer issue continued but the ferocity of the discussion had abated and after a few years went away.

### **From 1981 to 1990**

The Commodore in 1981 was Philip Whitney, with Vice Peter Newbery, Rear Colin Draper, Treasurer Ken Reed and Secretaries Sailing Tim Mitchell, Membership S P (Kay) Kernahan, General Sylvia Rhodes. The committee members were Ted Bonner, Peter Jenkins, Simon Millar, Don McCarthy, Ron Milton and Chris Rhodes.



Encouragement was given to members to train for the RYA Youth Training Scheme to become trainers for the younger members of the Club.

1982 saw Peter Newbery take over the helm with Dennis Foster becoming Rear-Commodore and significantly Pat Cushing starting her long reign as Membership secretary. The following year Brian Cushing took over the position of Sailing Secretary, Pam Wood became General Secretary and Eddie Lougher the Treasurer.

By 1983 the number of boats was down significantly, being 271.

In 1984 Colin Draper became Commodore, with Eric Evans as Vice and Laurie Weeden as Rear. The running of training courses continued to expand under the control of Peter Dyer and it was planned to seek to become an RYA approved training establishment. The following year Peter, assisted by Ian Craig and John Davenport had enrolled 50 juniors and 21 adults in courses.

1986 saw Eric Evans taking over as Commodore and Laurie Weeden became the Vice, with Dick Sizer as Rear. The General Secretary was Felicity Price (née Hunt), Sailing Bob Hammond, Membership Pat Cushing.

The membership was down about 11%. Group membership numbers of boats were down to 14 and schools down to 21. Numbers of individual classes were: Cadet 23, Enterprise 48, GP14 46, Graduate 25, Laser 45, OK 17, Z 46 giving a total of 250.

In 1988 Julian Hereward became Commodore, the Vice was Peter Slimming and Rear Paddy Mitchell, Treasurer John Parratt, General Bob Castle, Sailing Brian Cushing (again), and Membership Pat Cushing.

1989 Bob Castle became Vice Commodore with Ian Swaddling the Rear. The committee set up a sub-committee to try to improve the low turn-outs in some classes; and to find a suitable double hander that would attract the 18 - 35 year olds. Alas no ready solution was offered to solve the problem which has challenged the Club almost from its inception.

1990 Commodore Ian Swaddling, Vice Peter Noble, Rear Graham Gunter, Treasurer John Parratt, Sailing Brian Cushing, General Dan Shaw, Committee I Craig, C Rhodes, Di Thomas, Ted Bonner, Gerard Mitchell, Jim Steventon

The nineties saw a continuing high level of activity in the RYA Training program, with many members, young and not so young, benefiting from it.

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## A18

Celebrating Tim Lankester's 80th birthday. From the left: Ian Craig, Ted Bonner, Hugh Lankester (standing) Carol Craig with Alan Dance behind, Dennis Foster, Tim Lankester (also standing), John Davenport behind, and other members of the club.

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The other great success was the Sailability programme for persons with a handicap. This was started by Ted and June Bonner and much credit must go to them and the several people who assisted them for getting this on to a sound footing. As the scale of the activity expanded, so more people became heavily involved and much later Brian Grimwood became Chairman of Sailability.

1991 Commodore Ian Swaddling, Vice Graham Gunter, Rear Dan Shaw, Treasurer John Parratt, General Jenny Shaw, Membership Pat Cushing, Sailing Graham Howlett Committee Ted Bonner, Ian Craig, Chris Rhodes, Jim Steventon, Diane Thomas, Richard Hodson

### **East Hampshire hands over to Waverley**

Also that year, the District Council changes involved the moving of the Waverley/East Hants border so that the administration of the pond moved from East Hampshire District Council, to join the clubhouse and boat park under Waverley.

In August 1992, an Open Day was held to raise the profile of the club particularly with council members. The next Open Day was in June 1997 when over 200 people attended and the Commodore was interviewed on local radio.

Many parts of the club feature a variety of things made by the club's bosuns: Bill Griffiths has made cupboards, shelves and beautifully finished wooden boxes for the key press. Colin Boys became Assistant Bosun and they have been working away at a wide variety of tasks to great effect. Not least has been the vital maintenance of the engines for the rescue boats.

1993 Commodore Graham Gunter, Vice Dan Shaw, Rear Alan Wylam, Treasurer John Parratt, General Jenny Shaw, Membership Pat Cushing, Sailing Graham Howlett, Committee Alan Dance, Colin Gilbert, Richard Hodson, Alistair Smedley, Mike Redpath, Nick Royse.

Dan Shaw became Commodore in 1994 with Chris Ellis as Vice; Colin Gilbert as Rear and Stephanie Walker became General secretary. This team remained the same for two years when Chris Ellis took over as Commodore with Steve Hill becoming Vice Commodore and Keith Videlo the Rear.

In 1998 Brian Grimwood became Vice Commodore while Ray Baker became General Secretary and George Stratford took over as Treasurer. Brian took over as Commodore the following year with Keith Videlo as Vice and Steve Hill as Rear.

### **The club achieves Champion Club Status**

In October 1999 the club achieved Champion Club status and introduced the Youth Championship supported by Volvo, which aimed at encouraging youth racing any boat in addition to our normal squadron of Cadets. This involved Toppers, Lasers and Laser Radials and was sailed over two days during half-term in October. This proved to be a

great success and has been repeated each year since. As part of the continuing their encouragement, youth prizes have been awarded at every Club Open Meeting since.

Kilgour Team Racing event had been poorly supported for quite a number of years so it was decided in to replace it with the Frensham Frenzy. It was to be an Open event held on a Saturday and took the format of two pursuit races. Unfortunately, the first in 2001 was cancelled due to restrictions from the outbreak of Foot & Mouth disease, but both the 2002 and 2003 events have been very successful. They have become renowned for the windy conditions and attracted several entries from visitors as well as club members.

Valerie Sizer retired from prize sourcing and preparation after 25 years in September 2000. The prizegiving for all Winter and Summer series as well as Open Meetings and special events required hundreds of prizes every year - Valerie chose, purchased and wrapped these prizes tirelessly for 25 years.

Chris Ellis became the Vice Commodore again in 2000 and Brendan Chaplin the Rear. The following year Chris became the first Commodore to hold the position for a second spell after already having completed a three year term.

In 2002 Charles Smith became Commodore with John Marriot as Vice and in 2003 with Graham Howlett as Rear having given up being Sailing Secretary, a post he had held for eleven years. Bob Castle became the new Sailing Secretary.

### **New Club Facilities for Sailability and Youth**

In August 2000, a major fundraising project was initiated under the leadership of Brian Grimwood. Construction work started in May 2001 and was completed on schedule in September - and to budget! Details of this major development will be found together with a description of the work of Sailability, on pages 77-80.

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#### **A19**

##### **The single-sail Access dinghy handicap racing**

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Over the years the flow of the stream into the pond caused silting along its Southern edge so that in addition, there had to be considerable dredging around jetties 6 & 7 to provide the additional water depth required by the deeper draft Access dinghies and 2.4mR mini keelboats used by Sailability.

### **Personalities**

Laurie Weeden retired from his position of Vice-Commodore in 1987. He had served the Club over many years as Class Captain of the Cadets and OKs, Committee member,

Treasurer, Flag Officer and long standing Secretary of Frensham Pond Sailing Club. Laurie is part of the back-bone of the OK Class and is still races virtually every weekend whatever the weather; as befits a wartime glider pilot who dropped into Normandy and Arnhem.

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## A20

The BBQ feast. Eddie Lougher, Rosemary and Dennis Foster, Paddy Barrow, Pam and Ted Grimes, Tim Lankester and Taffy Barrow

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Brian and Patricia Cushing have done outstanding service for the Club. They joined in 1968 with their sons Adrian and Martin and at that time had a Miracle dinghy which was soon to be seen racing in the handicap races. Seeing the advantage of class racing Brian bought the first of several OKs and subsequently a Lark. Whilst most of us are content, or rather can only cope with one dinghy at a time, Brian races his OK every Sunday and usually Pat joins him in the Lark for the other period of the day.

However, it is the work put into the Club which makes their contribution outstanding. Being Membership Secretary is one of the most onerous positions in the Club, ranking not far behind the Commodore. Patricia took over this position from Kay Kernahan 21 years ago in 1982 and to have held this position for so long is quite remarkable.

At the same time Brian has been contributing a great deal as Class Captain, Sailing Secretary, and quiet originator of many technological improvements in the Club. Among other things he introduced the lighting sequence for starting of races, and the second generation automatic starting system.

Hugh Lankester and his wife Tim served the club exceedingly well and became a couple upon whom the club came to rely for so many things. They joined the club with their family shortly after it was formed, planning to leave general medical practice and move from Weybridge to retire in Churt. They were a gentle couple who would undertake anything asked of them - not that they usually needed asking.

They supervised the gardener and cleaner and Tim chaired the ladies committee and ran the kitchen for many years. Even when she handed over this duty she would still appear on a Sunday with her home cooked flap-jacks for which she became renowned. Hugh believed everyone should take sufficient exercise each day to get out of breath and he often achieved this by toiling away on his own at the Club during the week. Among his many projects was the solid walkway to the starters hut which became known as Lankester Way. This was followed by the shed for the Club's Dory. Hugh served on the General Committee becoming Treasurer in 1968 and finally as Commodore from 1973 to 1975. In recognition of all that he and Tim had contributed Hugh was made President of the Club in 1975.

The McLaren family of Ian, Margaret, John and Ann have been a major influence, and they all had a tremendous feeling for the Club. Ian served in several posts from 1960 when he became Membership Secretary, until finally becoming Commodore in 1967. Many years later he would still be racing his Enterprise and beloved Lark 31 and as the years went by he could often be seen watching the racing from the end of the easterly jetty. During this time Ann, like many a good crew, married her helm Julian Hereward. Julian joined at the very beginning, his father being member number eight.

Over the years he has probably been the most capable sailor on the Pond, and has been a tremendous guide and inspiration to many young sailors, several of whom went on to achieve National and World titles. He was remarkable, among other things, for tolerating less able sailors with such calmness, never pushing his way through the fleet shouting for his rights. Julian first served on the committee in 1959 as Sailing Secretary; the first of his three spells in this position.

Julian served in many capacities thereafter, finally as Commodore from 1988 to 1989. Following this he was made a Hon Life member and now spends much of the year on his barge cruising on the rivers and canals of the continent.

### **Blue/Green Algae**

The problem of blue/green algae became evident for the first time during the summer months of 1990. With much debate, sailing was suspended on 27th July at the instruction of Waverley Borough Council. One side of the debate seemed to recognise that harm would only come from toxins produced under certain conditions at certain times and if huge amounts of surface froth were consumed - i.e. about as harmful as nettles. The other side of the debate was concerned with legal liability and the unknown possibility of consequences. Sailing was restarted on 19th August but 'Blue Green Algae Notices' and waivers are now required before sailing.

To reduce algae growth, it was found that the enzymes contained in bales of barley and placed in 6 or so places around the pond helped keep the water clear. Later, it was found that clarity of water in the warm summer months allowed Canadian Pondweed to grow more quickly.

### **Frensham in the Community**

The Club has always been pleased to help any groups, especially those for youngsters, who wish to experience the thrill and enjoyment of sailing. One such regular activity has been to entertain a group of youths from London as part of Raleigh International.

## **Raleigh International**

The Youth Development Charity for Conservation and the Community.

Sylvia Rhodes explains:

“Our association with Raleigh began in the early 80s when a bearded man turned up at the Club and asked Peter Dyer if he would take a few children out on the water. They had come from London Boroughs, many in Council Homes, and were camping at Mellow Farm, Dockenfield, enjoying a week-end of outdoor activities. They were supervised by Raleigh Venturers who had been on expeditions and were fulfilling their promise to help in the community on returning to England. Thereafter we gave groups of 30 children the experience of sailing on several Saturday mornings each summer.”

Soon after in 1993, Sylvia Rhodes took over the organisation of these groups from John Davenport, the numbers were reduced to 12, the rest being taken horse-riding and dry-slope ski-ing. This arrangement continues and the youngsters are brought over from Mellow Farm on one Saturday morning each month from May to September. Many Frensham sailors have helped over the years, particularly from the GP14 class, a rewarding experience because these children have not experienced anything like this and many have said the sailing has been the highlight of their adventure week-end.

In February 1993 the Club welcomed 10 children from Chernobyl for a sailing experience and Pie & Beans. Similarly Scouts and Guides camping nearby have also visited the Club from time to time. An example was the Girl Guides Activity Day in June 1994.

### **In the Media**

In 1994, BBC TV's Tomorrows World filmed an inflatable jetty. Clickstop Photography used it for commercial photos of cars.

In 1996, Portabello pictures filmed a children's TV series that required the rescue boat to motor up and down to simulate waves at sea. Some commercial use provided useful extra donations to Club funds - 'The Mummy' filmed in July - August 1998 netted £1630 and was followed by a further £1750 from London Weekend TV to show Amanda Burton being dragged out from near a specially constructed jetty in the autumn.

In September 1999, an article in the RYA Magazine led to Lord Wakeham contacting the club highlighting his connection to Frensham in 1946, in the formative days of sailing at the pond. This led to Wakeham becoming patron to the Frensham Sailability project.

## **New club facilities arrive**

In 1983 Brian Cushing designed, built and installed a new automatic starting system, and the Dory boathouse was completed, built by Hugh Lankester

Under the leadership of Julian Hereward, in 1989 the Club decided to expand the clubhouse by erecting new changing rooms to the west of the existing building, at an initial estimate of £60,000 / £70,000. This was erected by Wessex Frame buildings and has proved a great asset to the Club, being formally opened by the President Hugh Lankester.

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### **A21**

Hugh and Tim Lankester being attended by the Commodore Julian Hereward on the occasion of the opening of the new extension on 10th April 1988.

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The nineties started with the demolition of the old changing rooms in order to use their space for a new committee room and to extend the bar area with an associated store room. Plans were presented to an A. G. M. with a cost of £15,000. Planning permission was granted in August 1990. Much of the demolition and refurbishment work was done by volunteers under the leadership of Graham Gunter. The fine new bar was built by member Alan Skeens in December 1991.

Several jetties had been showing signs of wear and tear with many broken and deteriorating parts, so a major renovation task took place in Autumn of 1993. Tough new environmental controls meant that options for treating the wood against rot were and remain very restricted. The project was managed by Colin Gilbert using contractors.

In 1994, the children's play area was fenced off. Health & Safety awareness was growing and the climbing frame was installed over a layer of bark, and In 1995, an extra rescue boat was purchased to enable better supervision of races and training, and a new rescue boat house was built to the east of the jetties at the Race Hut end of the grounds.

## **The great Summer Barbecue**

One of the most popular events in the calendar is the Summer Barbecue. With the merging of the 12 Hour Race and the Barbecue, new opportunities for sponsorship and fund raising were discovered. Initially funds were raised for outside charities but in

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A22

Mona Videlo turns the spit under the watchful eye of the Commodore

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A23

Three prime chefs! Graham Hoy with Paddy and Jeanne Mitchell

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1995 it was decided to support the Farnham and District Sports Association for Disabled who were existing Frensham members. Enough money was raised to install a hoist to help people in and out of the FDSAD Wayfarer.

In early 1997, the idea of making Frensham properly equipped throughout for the needs of disabled people was developed.

In 1998, the Summer BBQ and 10 Hour Race was enhanced to a family fun day organised by Stephanie Walker and Jenny Shaw, in aid of MacMillan Cancer Relief. Sponsorship money, profits from the day and raffle takings together with extra sponsorship from United Biscuits organised by Dan Shaw, meant that over £2000 was presented to Macmillan.

### **Volvo Youth Champion Site**

In January 1999, work started on attaining Volvo Youth Champion Site status for the Club. Sponsorship via Lancaster Volvo began in April 1999 and has provided good support since.

The initial sponsorship consisted of £2000 from Volvo which was matched by £2000 from the Institute of Sports Sponsorship under the SportsMatch scheme. The idea was to invest the money in development of youth sailing - something in which Frensham is clearly a centre of excellence!

In October 1999, Volvo awarded a plaque commemorating the Club's attainment of Volvo RYA Champion Club status. Building upon this, a special sub committee was set up to organise further events for '2000 - Year of Youth'.

Further support was gained from BAE Systems when the Club was awarded second prize for voluntary support to youth in their 'BAE Youth Support Award'.

Viv Ward was appointed Youth Captain and has done a great deal to encourage the young sailors, especially those in their first years after leaving Cadets.



## **Social Events**

The 1983 Annual Dinner & Dance was held at Lythe Hill Hotel was deemed a success although the numbers were much lower than the 200 reached years ago. The Barbecue went off well with a special event of the Red Devils dropping into the Pond just in front of the Clubhouse.

In 1991 the Dinner Dance was held in the Lismoyne Hotel after which Di Thomas took over from Ann Slimming as Social Secretary. Some of the events evolved - the Fitting Out Supper incorporated a Pub Games evening with everything from dominoes to a full size skittle alley in the clubhouse. The autumn event was a barn dance followed by the Bonfire and Fireworks and the New Years Eve Party.

1992 saw the Dinner Dance being held at the Bush Hotel in Farnham. For the first time, the Summer BBQ was merged with the 12 Hour Race and £200 was raised for charity. The Laying Up Supper was held on 3rd October and was followed by a Fireworks and dance.

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A24

Morris Dancers at the BBQ provide a splendid splash of colour

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## **The 40th anniversary of the club**

In 1993, Di Corbett took over from Di Thomas as Social Secretary and Ted Jefferies took over from Roger Palethorpe as bar manager. The Dinner Dance was held in University of Surrey in Guildford. The Fitting Out Supper took the form of a Family Quiz Night with Eric Evans as the quiz master. This was the 40th anniversary of the club and a grand birthday meal was held in the clubhouse on 31st May with food brought by each of the sailing classes.

The June BBQ and 12 Hour Race started as usual with coffee and bacon butties and finished with £341 raised for The Lord Mayor Treloar's Rescue Fund. The Laying Up Supper was followed by the Redpath Fireworks Display when Mike and his Dad, David, could be seen running on the jetties, defying the odds of falling in the Pond in the dark.

The Laying Up supper was dropped due to lack of interest but the Fireworks (Redpaths) went ahead and the year finished with a bustling New Years Eve party.

The following year the Dinner Dance was again held at the Frensham Pond Hotel but The Fitting Out and Laying Up Suppers were not held due to apparently decreasing demand. The Fireworks was dropped due to intense competition from an increasing

number of competitive events. The autumn event was a skittles evening in The Golden Pot in Alton and once again a well subscribed New Years Eve event closed the year.

In 1996, the first event was the Dinner Dance held at the Oak Park Golf Club in Crondall. After this, Carolynne Winchester took over as Social Sec from Di Corbett. The 12 Hour race was given a rest for a year in order to ensure that social events remained a little fresher and more 'spontaneous'.

However, support for the Dinner & Dance continued to decline until in 1997 it had to be cancelled and hasn't been held since.

## Chapter 7 Racing through the years

The racing activities of the Club form the backbone of the Sailing Club. By virtue of having specific classes racing in two groups of three each Sunday, the camaraderie between members tends to be primarily between those members whom you meet most often which means those in your group. As with any small inland water, there is limited attraction for any member who just wishes to potter on the water taking in the lovely surroundings in which the Pond nestles.

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A25

A handicap race in the 1950s about to start

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### How the courses evolved

The courses evolved significantly over the early years but with relatively minor improvements in the last forty years. Originally the Club line stretched across the Pond from a mast just to the west of the jetty nearest the Hotel. The courses were based on five fixed buoys, each named. Home was near the current number 9; Vixen between 2 and 3; Brighton Beach near 4; Burma Bay near 7; and Coot near 8. The number of buoys were increased to eight by the early 60s and the names were dropped at that time.

The building of a starting box was dependent upon reaching a satisfactory agreement over the lease. Plans for the first box were drawn up in 1960. Previously the races had been run by the OODs standing out in the open. The second and much larger box was built in 1967 to the eastern end of the land and was a great improvement. Meanwhile, this first box continued to be used by the schools for some time. The new box enabled windward starts to be used when the wind was in the west, which was very well received. To make the task of race officer easier, it was decided to adopt the RYA alternative starting procedure, using discs rather than flags. The mechanism was donated by Basil Crosby, and although initially raised by hand they had the advantage of being operated from within the starting box.

It also facilitated the change to a computer controlled fully automatic system which Derek Mills designed and commissioned in 1971, following the installation of electricity to the box in 1970. This also enabled the discs to become power operated. This was a great help and after Derek gave up sailing, the control box was taken over by Brian Cushing who subsequently built a later version in 1983 which we still use today.

The race officer was responsible for course setting, but this was often far from ideal, producing mumbles on occasions. In 1964 Derek Mills produced a set of recommended courses which he updated in 1968 to provide 13 set courses which proved a great success, fixing the course once the race officer had decided which way the wind might blow.

Not until 2002/03 have these been modified by the addition of another easterly line and the addition of a ninth buoy located between the previous number 5 and 6 buoys.

### **The Racing programme**

From the outset it was recognised that the programme would be based on Class racing which would not be possible if all classes were on the water together. Things started off rather more gentlemanly way. In July 1953, it was agreed to endeavour to start races at the advertised times, with a maximum of 15 mins postponement for late corners. Sunday morning races were to be discontinued due to poor attendance and the afternoon race would start at 3 pm.

Two years later, as the classes grew, the National 12 and Firefly classes raced together, with the Graduates racing at the same period of the day. They would alternate morning and afternoon with the GPs and Handicap Class. Cadet races would take place on Saturday afternoons, but only those during school holidays would count for points.

To these were added the OK and Enterprise classes in 1960. Throughout the existence of the Club the details of this class racing programme, together with Handicaps and Pursuits, have been modified several times; primarily to make it attractive to get more members out racing.

Through the 60s and 70s the format of the summer racing programme was modified several times, sometimes reverting back to previous arrangements. Initially there would be only one class race for each group of starts with a handicap race at the end of the day. However, this had the disadvantage of requiring a long wait for those who raced in the morning and so did not prove to be universally popular. This format was changed by moving the handicap race to lunchtime and this did achieve an improvement although the numbers were not as large as was hoped.

In the 70s it was decided to have no handicap race and instead have two class races for each group; a format which has persisted to the present.

The Winter series races stopped at the end of January with handicap races taking place in February and March. However, by the late 70s the class races were extended through the whole winter, except for the Cadets whose racing season finished at the end of January.

## **Open Meetings**

From the beginning the Club has held Open meetings which play such an important part of the structure of the national dinghy racing scene. As early as July 1953 it was decided to hold Open meetings for National 12s, Fireflies and Graduates to be held on Sundays in March 1954. Then in 1955 the Graduate Class Championship was held at Frensham in June, and was won by W Hollick.

In 1956 Open meetings were held for National 12s, Fireflies, GP14s, Graduates and Cadets. The OKs held their first Open in 1960 and the Enterprise followed in 1961.

Until powered rescue boats were allowed, the racing was often hindered by having to use fixed lines from the then existing starting box. With the prevailing SW wind this entailed a running start, boats stretched across the Pond. Then to finish you would often sail nicely towards the finish to be nearly becalmed as you approached the line!

Because of the congestion arising from the fixed line, it was decided that heats would sometimes be necessary, in which case the first race would be held on Saturday morning. Heats were adopted if there were more than 25 entries, although this number was soon increased. This was clearly needed as entries in several classes were usually in the region of 60 boats. Some of our classes continued to hold a two-day meeting for many years, whilst others adopted a one-day meeting. In either case the entries would be split into groups from which the leading 20 or so would sail together in the final.

Until the early 60s the Cadet Opens comprised two events; two man racing on one day and single-handed on another, often not being held on the same week-end.

## **Trophies**

The Club acquired a fine set of trophies, thanks to the generosity of members, especially the founders. The trophies for the Helmsman of the Year series were presented by Mr Hook, Peter Martin and Hambledon R.D.C. Among the many trophies, the Club's first Flag Officers each presented a trophy. Mr Abbot Anderson presented the Commodore's Cup for handicap races; Norman Morley, the first Vice-Commodore, presented a cup which was awarded for the National 12s and on their demise for the crews' pursuit race. Its name was changed in 1966 to commemorate the opening of the new clubhouse by Stewart Morris. In 1962 club members subscribed to a trophy in memory of Dr Peter Martin, and it was appropriate that the first winners were his sons, Nicholas and Robert, in their Cadet.

A group of very attractive trophies was made by Jimmy Prangnell in the form of half models of the class dinghies.

In 1954 Mr Horton-Ray presented a trophy, named the Ray Trophy which is still presented to the winner of Graduate Series.

## Safety

This has always been a serious consideration, initially the sailing programmes was limited to the months of March to December. Cadets were not allowed to race beyond November and only then if the race officer was satisfied that it was safe to do so. However, in 1956 the winter programme allowed racing to continue to the end January with no sailing in February, and to re-start with sweepstake racing in March.

A gap in racing in February allowed members a chance to carry out repairs and to paint their wooden boats, albeit not an ideal time of year. Partly because of the introduction of GRP construction, plus better clothing, the winter series was extended to February in 1975. At the beginning of 1966 the Cadet season was extended to Christmas, and then in the early 70s to January.

Today we would think it hazardous if no powered craft was available for rescue. Through the 50s, 60s and 70s the rule that those boats nearest to a capsize were obliged to go to the rescue of anyone in difficulties was strictly enforced and would be disqualified if they failed to do so. Racing points would be allocated to the rescuer in some fair and reasonable manner. Furthermore racing would frequently be cancelled if conditions became too severe.

Of course to make matters worse, wet suits hardly existed and certainly not widely used until the late sixties. Then such wet suits were quite thick, probably more than 4mm thick neoprene being used, which certainly restricted your movements. They probably made it more likely that you would capsize, but that once you had done so you wouldn't suffer from hypothermia so rapidly. Through the 60s and 70s there was a large tendency to produce do-it-yourself wet suits. As for dry suits these were not even heard of, coming about in the late eighties.

The big issue with regard to safety was the ban on the use of powered craft, which worried the committee for many years, until the ban was overcome in 1977. The rescue boat in the 50s was wooden and was replaced in 1965 by a heavy clinker built rowing boat which took a good ten minutes to row to the length of the Pond against the wind.

Furthermore it could hardly be described as being very stable. It was replaced early in 1972 by the aluminium boat at a cost of £300 and it is still in use today. This was very much more maintenance free, but still suffered from being not too stable.

In 1970 the Dell Quay dory was purchased at a cost of £302 including its trolley, its specification being that it should be more suitable as a committee boat and be more appropriate when the awaited permission to use a motor was finally given. Despite having two rescue boats, only one at a time would normally be on the water, except for Open meetings,.

The problem of having no motorised rescue boats is well illustrated by this tale from George Kaack: "In 1975 I took over as bosun from Jimmy Prangnell. Things were rather different in those far off days. The club had an aluminium rescue boat which had

to be rowed. In strong winds the boat required four hefty rowers and it took ages to get across the pond up wind. Thus the oars took a lot of punishment and had to be repaired or replaced constantly. The jetties had to be kept in good shape and especially the fender ropes.

The marks, old oil drums were obtained from the drum laundry near North Camp station for 10 shillings apiece. They had to be painted with a special orange fluorescent paint. Weights to anchor them down were cast from concrete. Sometimes old engine blocks were used and galvanised chains were obtained to hold them down. In spite of all that, marks frequently disappeared and had to be replaced before races. All this had to be done with the rowing boat!

It was really quite a job at times but gave some fun as well.”

In the last 20 years additional motorised rescue boats have been purchased, adding considerably to the safety of sailing at Frensham.

## **Boat Developments**

Each class of boat has undergone developments from the 1950s. The most significant change was probably the adoption of terylene sails in the early 60s. This made a significant improvement to both the stability and control of sail shape, and despite the cost, the keen racing members soon adopted the change.

When several of the classes first appeared they was cautious about sail area, but over the years this was increased to the sail sizes in use today. For example, the GP14s added the spinnaker in 1961 and increased the size of the jib significantly in 1967. The Enterprise started life with the option of a cruising sail but that was rarely used and disappeared in the mid 60s. The Graduate increased the size of its jib in 1967, while the Cadet introduced a larger spinnaker in the mid 60s.

Each of these improvements definitely improved boat speed and taxed the committee in deciding on their handicap rating and when they would be first permitted on the Pond. To make it fairer for members, it was generally attempted to defer their introduction at Frensham by a year or two. However, such decisions were usually overturned by circumstances, particularly that of the Open meeting circuit as other clubs permitted their use straight away.

The next major change was introduction of metal masts. However, unlike the sails, there would be much debate as to whether or not they were faster than the wooden ones. Perhaps they were not initially, but the metal masts developed over the years so that it soon became necessary to have one to keep up with the other boats. The Enterprise allowed this change in the late 70s and with it went the need to control the sideways bend of the mast by use of diamond spreaders.

The Cadet allowed metal masts in 1974, and their smaller diameter and lighter weight made them necessary to compete successfully. Perhaps the change was most significant

for the OKs with their bendy un-stayed mast. The mast bend of wooden masts would frequently need to be adjusted to suit the sails. A good example was witnessed in our 1972 OK Open when Jeremy Bickerton from Oxford, having finished only fifth in the first race, spent his lunch break with a plane shaving off wood to modify the bending characteristics of his new mast. This done he duly won the next race and went on to win the meeting.

### **The sixties bring innovation in fittings**

The early sixties brought self draining bailers. The initial model consisted of a tube which would be pushed down to project below the hull. It worked but if you forgot to pull it up when coming ashore it could cause significant damage to the bottom of the boat. This model soon was superseded by the superior Elvstrom flap design. Transom flaps were generally introduced in the early 70s, so making a capsized boat less calamitous.

Through all this time and especially in 1968 there was a continuing discussion about the handicaps used by the club, particularly between the GP14s and Graduates, much arising from the introduction of larger sails. The problem was made difficult to resolve due to the few members in these two classes who took part in handicap racing.

So it went on, with the improvement in fittings, but these were introduced gradually and smoothly. The next major change came with the introduction of GRP construction which each class in turn permitted. There has been great debate as to whether or not the fibreglass version was competitive, and it probably took until the late 80s for the builders to produce a suitable construction and for the sailors to believe that they were. However, slight doubts do still remain particularly in the one class, namely Cadet, which by virtue of its small size should suffer least by turning to fibre-glass.

The adoption of fibre-glass has facilitated the improvements in the lay-out of the boat. This is particularly so with the GP14, with its double bottom greatly improving draining as well as providing greater stiffness.

### **The Club Classes**

The classes raced at the Club have proved to be very successful, covering the range which most inland club sailors desire. Inevitably there have been changes, firstly with the demise of the Firefly when in 1963 the Committee decided to phase out the class and not permit any new applicants; then in 1966 it was decided that the National 12 would no longer have their own starts; permitting the introduction of the Lark and later the Laser. The Solo has been very active in the Club for the last thirty years, although not yet given a class start of its own.

The growing popularity of the Laser class was a national phenomenon and a further 13 boats were allowed into the Z class in 1980. The two arch advocates for creating a new Laser class were Alan Hayworth and Geoff Margason. With the Lark turn-outs having fallen considerably the committee had to face the problem of what to do about the



Lasers which dominated the Handicap class, and had more starters than any of the other classes. The committee was willing to promote the Laser to have its own Class but was concerned about having a mechanism for any class to be re-instated if its support warranted it.

There was also concern that expanding the single-handed class memberships might change the nature of the Club, so that it would consist mainly of male helmsmen. After much discussion it was decided to amalgamate the Larks with the Z class and create a new Laser class. The Committee was always cautious about giving encouragement to the Z class since it was feared it would diminish the racing of our recognised classes. However, it was recognised the Z-class did provide a window for new designs of dinghy, and is a precaution against the retention of a Class which is becoming old-fashioned or unpopular.

However nationally, with the encouragement and even pressure from both the RYA and commercial interests, many new classes, some may say too many, have been produced over the last 25 years. These are generally faster, larger and with greater sail area. Of course many are over the 16ft restriction placed on the Club, but nationally all the older classes are finding their numbers gradually falling, which gives the Club a headache for the future.

## **Windsurfers**

The 1970s was the period when the windsurfers took off nationally and this caused considerable rumblings in the Club. In the late 1970s there was great pressure both from a few of our own members but particularly from non-members to permit windsurfers and establish racing. In 1979, led by Ken Reed, this issue became very contentious. Basically the few who had them wanted to sail them and then generally open it to anyone. Others were fearful of the effect of a different type of sailing and were against allowing them on the Pond.

It became a bit of a battle with numerous windsurfers looking for water at the weekends. Some of our members turned up with windsurfers and initially were given limited permission to sail but only when the dinghies were not racing. Clearly this did not satisfy the few and arguments ensued, especially as to whether or not they could take part in Handicap racing. To make matters worse many non-members came looking for water and most would launch from Brighton beach, although some would come to the Club to try and launch. The sight of Club members windsurfing made it very difficult to tell the visitors that they could not sail.

The windsurfer discussion continued and the policy was adopted of permitting them only as mid-week members, except for existing members with a dinghy who would be permitted to sail at week-ends outside racing hours.

The problem went away in the mid eighties, largely because the enthusiasm for windsurfers diminished and non-members found other waters where they could sail.

## **Class Turn-outs**

Every few years, right from the Club's early days, there has been concern about the small proportion of members who took part in races. The loss of a few keen or regular racers may start a temporary fall off in any class. Conversely, the appearance of an outstanding sailor seems sometimes to cause the others to lose hope of winning, and may cause loss of interest. Either way it is a problem which tends to go in cycles and often requires special effort, particularly by the Class Captain, to remedy the situation. To illustrate the frequent discussions on this problem, the minutes for 1958 quotes:

“It was reported that there were well over 30 Nationals and Fireflies in the Club, but in the Summer series comprising 24 races only six owners raced 10 times or more’. Again in 1960 ‘The committee has discussed how to get more of the members to race; 46% of owners did not race. Cadets failed to thrive with 22 boats but only 2 or 3 racing.”

Then in 1965: “there was continuing concern that while all classes except OKs and National 12s were full, only 25% took part in racing”.

In 1977 the Graduate membership was reported to be at the highest it has been but this was not paralleled in the racing sphere.

In 1988 the committee set up a sub-committee to try to improve the low turn-outs in some classes, and to find a suitable double hander that would attract the 18 - 35 year olds.

## **Spoon races**

To try and encourage members to race, the format of the points series for the longer summer programme would vary according to the wish of the class. Probably the most frequently adopted system was having one long summer series with 40% of races to count. In more recent years some classes have tried splitting the series in two with separate prizes for each.

In the 60s and early 70s a number of spoon races were inserted into the programme. They would generally take the form of personal handicap pursuits with the objective of trying to encourage the less experienced; each winner receiving a prize of an engraved club spoon. The reaction did differ slightly among the classes but generally they were slowly cut out of the programme.

Two class races held every Sunday provided the opportunity, which most classes adopted, to have the series round lunchtime as the major series and the other as the minor series. The latter would then have some form of personal handicap to encourage the less experienced sailors. Sometimes a personal pursuit race would be introduced into the series.

## **Class Sizes**

In 1960 Club had 203 boats in the racing classes plus 40 others. The Lease defined the proportion of handicap class boats together with the maximum number of classes which could have their own start. By the early sixties pressure on berthing meant the Club had to restrict the membership in each of these classes to 50 boats. Through the sixties there was a waiting list for most of the classes. To achieve membership in the 1960s and 70s was a much more formal affair than it is today. Initially members were taken on for a trial period during which time they had to demonstrate their intention to be an active racer not that this seemed to improve their turn-outs once they were fully approved. Furthermore the Club had to achieve the required proportion of members who were residents in the Hambledon Rural District, later Waverley, so occasionally such persons would leap over those, perhaps better sailors, who were already on the waiting list.

With the successful renegotiation of the Lease, these restrictions were eased. About the same time the Club was permitted to extend its use of the land eastwards and so increase the number of berths available. As a result Club gradually raised the maximum number of boats in the most popular classes, notably GP14s, Enterprises and Lasers to first 55 each, then to 60 and subsequently to even more for Lasers.

For example in 1978 the class numbers were: Cadet 52, Enterprise 61, GP14 60, Graduate 49, Lark 53, OK 38, Z 62 giving a total of 375

## **Team Racing**

The one big change that has occurred since the birth of the Club has been the virtual end of the Club's involvement in team racing. From its inception the Club had matches against other clubs and these formed a prominent part of the programme. Most of the classes had team matches against the class members of other clubs. Then the Club would enter teams in the match race tournaments at other clubs, and especially the RYA competitions.

The first recorded team competition was two matches against Charterhouse school in 1954. In 1956 the GP14s started a long series of matches against Hamble while the Club had matches against Portsmouth Command and Stokes Bay as well as Charterhouse. In 1959 the Nat 12s attended the Yachting World Team Trophy held at the Hamble after which Class Captain Charles Hicks reported, "we have an enormous amount to learn about team tactics before we can hope to give Clubs specialising in National 12s a run for their money".

The Club's prowess improved and it gained quite a reputation in this field. In 1968 the Graduates carried off the Graduate Association Team Trophy. In the 70s the Enterprise class regularly arranged team matches against Wraybury and Hayling Island. Frensham won the renowned London Pirates Team trophy on the first occasion that they were invited to participate.

The number of team racing events was many and by different hosts. For example in 72 the Enterprises were runners up in the Thames Valley Area team championships, and in 1974 the team racing at Barnt Green in Larks was won by Frensham for the 5th time in seven years. The team helms comprised David Barrow, David Smith-White and Steve McQueen

### **Strong Frensham teams**

However, the same year the Club's B team comprising David Barrow, Nigel Barrow and Mike Eggleston sailed right through to the final stage of the RYA competition held at Southport, putting up a remarkably professional performance.

The team racing event at Royal St Georges in 1975 was sailed in Fireflies and comprised John McLaren, Mike Eggleston, David Barrow, Wendy Hilder, Dougie Winton, & Paul Barrow. They got through to the quarter finals but were knocked out by London University and West Kirby, both of whom got through to the finals which was won by the latter.

The Frensham team comprising Julian Hereward, Dougie Winton, Steve McQueen, David Edmund-Jones, David Barrow and Wendy Hilder distinguished themselves by winning the Area finals of the RYA / Dunhill Team Racing Championship in 1975 but were knocked out in the Finals. The Frensham team again won the Area Finals in 1976 and although knocked out in the Finals did put up a very good performance.

In 1977 our 'B' team comprising John McLaren, Cathy Foster, Nigel Barrow, Wendy Hilder, Dougie Winter and Paul Barrow won the Area Finals so gaining entry into the National Finals of the RYA Team Racing Championship but were let down by the weather - on this occasion thick fog, which prevented the second leg of their heat against Cambridge University Sailing Club being sailed. Cambridge went on to win the championship, and it is some consolation to know that the Cambridge team included two members of F.P.S.C. - Mark Struckett and David Black.

Despite all the team racing activity, by the end of the 70s., sailors generally were increasingly reluctant to lend their boats for team racing and organising matches became more difficult. Even the large RYA competitions effectively ceased, and since this time we have not held any more three boat team racing against other Clubs.

The last three boat team race at the Club was for the annual inter-class Kilgour Team trophy. This competition started in 1962 and comprised 3 boats from each class who would race against each other class. This was a great day's competition. This involved each adult two-man class having to provide six boats, with no-one racing their own class of boat. In 1973 this was changed when the Lark Class members kindly offered to lend all the boats. The winning team gives an indication of the strength of the class at the time with the Graduates being victorious once in 1965 and the Enterprise in 1980. The Cadets won twice, the first time in 1973 and on the last occasion this format was

raced in 1981. The GP14s won in 1970 and again in '77 and '78. The rest were all won by the National 12s in the early days, and eight times thereafter by the Lark Class.

Again due to the difficulty of borrowing boats, this competition was put in abeyance. After three years of not being held, the format of the competition was changed completely whereby anyone could take part and they would be allocated to one of three teams led by each of the Flag Officers.

### **The Southport 24 Hour race**

Since the mid-1960s the Club has entered a team in this major annual event held by the West Lancs YC in Southport. The format of the race has changed little over the years with a combined entry limit of 100 GP14s and Enterprises. Initially the club entered an Enterprise each year but this switched to a GP14 on a number of occasions according

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A26

Racing at Southport in exciting weather!

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to the wishes of the team. The races were held on the Marine Lake which is only yards from the sea and so is well placed to pick up a good breeze which usually made for exciting racing for both sailors and spectators alike. The format of the race is such that the race starts in manageable sized flights with trophies for the leading boat in each class with an overall winner decided on handicap. Each crew changed over as and when they wished, usually controlled by a shore management party.

The Club team has always done well, and the only exception has been the rare occasion when a major breakage has taken some time to repair. However, several times the different teams have won one of the minor prizes, but the ultimate success was achieved in 2001 when they won overall!

### **RYA/Dunhill Finals before the Duke of Edinburgh**

In 1969 the RYA adopted a Team Racing Competition based on the London Pirates scheme but with preliminary knock-out matches between the Clubs. With the numbers thereby reduced the teams took part in a one-day Area Final. From there the successful clubs raced in the two-day National Final.

The following year the Club was invited to hold these RYA Team Racing Finals at Frensham, to be raced in Larks loaned by members. These were held on the week-end of October 31st and November 1st 1970 and were attended on the Sunday by H.R.H. Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, and senior members of the RYA.

Prince Philip arrived in his Daimler, complete with a picnic box on the back seat, and was introduced to the Club's Committee and other dignitaries. He was then taken to watch the racing from a marquee erected on a special platform projecting out into the Pond from the most easterly jetty. He stayed for the day to present the prizes at the end.

### **The Endeavour Trophy**

Several club members as National champions have taken part in the Endeavour trophy raced at Burnham. An early success came in 1973 when ex-members Nick Martin and Caroline Lougher (later Martin) were first, with Julian Hereward and Cathy Foster fifth, Nigel Barrow and Tim Weeden sixth.

In 1975 Ken Black, for Larks, together with Ian and Keith Videlo, Cadets, raced in the Endeavour trophy sailed in Larks, but in strong winds and difficult conditions were not placed. One year later it was Keith's turn to race a Lark there.

Several other members, as National Champions have been invited to take part in this prestigious event for the Champion of Champions.

In the more recent years, Roger Gilbert and Nick Craig have acquitted themselves very well in this competition, culminating in an outstanding performance with Roger racing his RS400 to win in 2003, and with Nick coming second. What a remarkable achievement in the Club's Jubilee year!

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#### A27

The Duke of Edinburgh is introduced to the officers. From the left; Roy Eggleston, Audrey & Peter Herbert, Gill & Jack Caesar, Mrs & John Russell, Theresa Mills.

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#### A28

The Commodore Derek Mills and HRH Prince Philip by the specially erected marquee.

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### **The 10/24 Hour Race**

In the early 1980s it was decided to run a 12 hour race as a handicap race for all classes. The format was that the team for each boat, be it a single-hander or two person, comprised three sets of crews each sailing for approximately one hour at a time. This format proved quite successful with great interest in the racing, and camaraderie

amongst the crews who were waiting their turn. The event finished off with the Summer BBQ which added to the interest in the event.

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A29

Crews watching as the dawn breaks. From left to right: Caroline Gilbert, Alan Skeens, David Foster, Roger Gilbert, James Leeming, Katrina Gilbert and Karen Videlo.

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The race has been held almost every year since although the format was experimented with in its early days. It wasn't long before it was decided to make it a 24 hour race, but the extra effort and time that need to be committed meant it was generally felt members preferred the shorter race. As a result the race was shortened to 10 hours so finishing earlier as the wind tended to die away. So it has remained ever since.

**The race was governed by local thermals**

Nevertheless the 24 hour race was a very interesting experience. The day was blessed with fine sunny weather and a wind of force 2 - 3. However, as night approached so the wind did its customary disappearing act and the wind pattern was governed by the very local thermals from the effect of the pond and its surroundings.

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A30

Ted Bonner emerging from the morning mist ready to exchange crews.

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The warmer water caused the thermal to rise in the centre of the Pond sucking air in radially from the edges. As dawn broke the early morning mist became very apparent and boats would appear out of the dark like ghost ships. Certainly racing through the night under those summer conditions was somewhat frustrating, yet very pleasantly memorable.

## Chapter 8 Olympians and others

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### B1

Cathy Foster and her crew on their way to taking 7th place in the 84 Olympics.

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### **Olympians and Others**

The range of classes raced in the Club is inevitably related to the type of sailing area and is restricted to maximise the quality and pleasure of racing for the maximum number of members. However, it is natural that some will feel the urge to race in newer, faster or bigger boats, and achieving this desire generally entails joining another club. This means for many, their success came when they were no longer members of the Club, although it is typical of the spirit of the Club that many do retain their links with Frensham. Of course, the ultimate achievement in dinghy racing is taking part in the Olympic Games, and several members have dipped their toes into these waters.

### **Olympic Class Sailing**

The Club has had two members who attended the Olympic Games, both in their 470 class dinghies, and full credit to both of them. Pride of place goes to Cathy Foster who raced in the Los Angeles games in 1984. Cathy was brought up by a sailing family and achieved renown, firstly as a crew for father Dennis and then for Julian Hereward in a Lark. Then off to Sussex University where Cathy became a prominent member of the University team and raced a 420 with Wendy Hilder as crew, in which they achieved phenomenal success. Cathy turned to racing a 470 and trained with the Olympic Squad through 1982. In those days the women did not have their own classes in the Olympic Games and so Cathy had to compete on equal terms with the men. She did very well indeed, more than holding her own against top male helms. Winning the Olympic Selection trials, she was selected as the United Kingdom representative in the 470 Class for the Los Angeles Games. With Peter Newman as her crew, they were highly competitive, winning one of the races in the series and finishing 7th overall.

Previously, Nigel Barrow, upon leaving the Cadets in 1973, immediately took up racing a 470. Indeed in the same year as Nigel won the Cadet Worlds, he was racing with brother David as crew in the 470 trials at Grafham where they had two firsts and a second. Nigel did well in his 470, adding the Burnham Icicle to his trophies. He continued to do very well in a number of Open meetings including winning the 1976 Grafham Open, and was runner-up that year in the British Olympic Selection Trials. He



went with the Olympic Team to the 1976 Games in Montreal, as the reserve and official tune-up helmsman for the 470 class.

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B2

Nigel was also first in the U.K. Youth Championship in a Laser, and was sixth in the Youth Worlds.

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Nigel Barrow racing his 470 in the late 70s

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There have been several other members who have done extremely well racing Olympic Class boats, which over the years have included the International Finn, the International 470 and the Europe, the Flying Dutchman and more recently the Yngling keelboat

### **The Olympic Finn at Frensham**

The Finns seen on the Pond have been few and far between, but in 1955 informal Open meetings for the Finn class were held on 5/6th November and 4/5th December and some remained to race throughout the winter on Sundays. However, they did not return.

The first club member actively to race an Olympic Finn was Richard Hart. Richard's job as a Merchant Navy Officer restricted his sailing for a few years but he raced a Finn with great success over many years, being at his height in the 1960s, coming 5th in the Olympic trials of 1964. Subsequently he joined the staff of the Hamble Merchant Navy College.

In 1965 Richard won the Sunday Times Finn Gold Cup and so became British Champion. As a result the committee asked him to accept a wet-suit or other item of sailing equipment and that he should be sent two complimentary tickets for the dance being held in July! Richard also won the German Open Championships.

### **Richard wins the Gold Medal**

In 1974 Richard had 3 firsts and the trophy in the Finn indicator trials at Grafham. In the same year he was 1st in the Open British Championship and won the Gold Medal. He also competed in both the European and World Finn Championships, the latter being held at Long Beach, California.

In 1979 Richard was included with his Finn in the Training Squads of the Olympic classes.

In the 70s and 80s Arthur Hunt would race his Finn in the handicap races, and from time to time his son-in-law Ken Reed would take the opportunity to race it.

In the 80s, Steve McQueen, by now no longer a member, would be seen racing a Firefly at Itchenor with his wife. Shortly afterwards he joined the Finn circuit for a couple of

years but presumably found combining a home and career was incompatible with the time needed to undertake a serious Olympic campaign.

In the 2000s Nick Clibborn produced his beautifully turned out Finn and has been enjoying sailing it by way of a recreation.

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### B3

Richard Hart sailing his original Olympic Finn on the day of the Golden Jubilee.

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## **The 470s**

Nicholas Martin & Caroline Lougher: University team racing provided a good broadening of experience and in 1971 Nicholas Martin and Caroline Lougher, by then no longer current members, headed the Universities Team which won the RYA Team Championships. On leaving the University in the early 70s, Nicholas and brother Robert teamed up to race a 470 at Queen Mary, in which they did very well, also competing in the Olympic Trials.

Ian & Keith Videlo: The next to follow the Olympic trail was Ian Videlo, who having raced a Lark for a year on leaving Cadets, took up the 470 while at Southampton University. Initially he had brother Keith as crew, and they soon did well at Open meetings, gaining selection for the Olympic Squad. In 1978 Ian & Keith made a promising start winning the Queen Mary 470 Open meeting and achieving a second and two thirds at other Open meetings.

Ian came second in the Nationals of 1980 behind his cousin Jeremy Bickerton. However, after going to the Mediterranean in February for the Ski-Yachting event and about to return again for Easter, he decided that racing an Olympic Class boat seriously conflicted with his career and so suddenly gave it up.

Just after this time Keith also raced a 470 but after a year reverted to racing in his Laser.

Simon & Bruce Hill and David Smithwhite: About this time, Simon and Bruce Hill also campaigned a 470, as did David Smithwhite, all with some success but after a couple of years switched to racing other classes.

Amanda Best started to race a 470 in the mid 80s which she did for a couple of years.

## **The Europe**

Two members have tried the Europe, the first, Karen Videlo, obtained one on leaving Cadets. She attended a few Opens managing to get placed, but decided it was not for her.

Recently Andrea Brewster, after doing very well in a Laser Radial, has been campaigning the Europe. She has gone on to win the Europe National Championships in 2002 and achieve the Gold fleet in the Worlds of the same year. She was part of the Olympic Development Squad training in Cadiz and through 2003 did very well at the major Olympic class events throughout Europe, and only narrowly missed selection for the 2004 Olympics in Athens.

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B4

Andrea Brewster having an exciting race in her Europe

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## **The Yngling – ‘The Little One’**

### **Cathy Foster and Sarah Ayton**

Cathy Foster returned to Olympic competition in 2002/2003 making a major effort to obtain selection at the Athens Olympics of 2004. With her two crew members, Cathy travelled to major European and North American events and did extremely well in the relatively short time but in the end had to give way to her main rival Shirley Robinson, a gold winner in the 2000 Olympics in Sydney.

However, Frensham also has an interest in Shirley’s success, as one of her crew is Sarah Ayton, who in the mid 90’s briefly sailed a Cadet at Frensham, before crewing for Catherine Rix in a 420 in the Youth Squads. Sarah went on to win silver at the Youth Worlds in a Laser Radial, but is now full-time crewing in the Yngling.

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B5

Cathy Foster and crew revelling in their Yngling

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## **Flying Dutchman**

At the beginning of the 90s Keith Videlo and his friend Nick Harrison teamed up in a Flying Dutchman. They gradually achieved some successes but after almost two years they decided it would need too big a commitment to continue.

Although not racing one regularly, Cathy Foster did very well and won the Flying Dutchman Nationals in 1994.

## **The 49er**

Roger Gilbert, following his outstanding success in the RS 400, has recently started to campaign a 49er.

## **The 2.4s**

In recent years the club has seen a number of 2.4mR mini-keelboats sailing at the club, and Peter Cook is the 2003 National Champion. These boats are also the chosen Paralympic single hander and provide a great asset for Sailability.

## **Racing successes in other classes**

In the 70s and with the availability of Queen Mary S.C. the McLaren family ventured into new boats, although they did not lose contact with Frensham. Julian Hereward raced a 505 with some success for several years, before returning with a Laser at Frensham. John McLaren raced a Fireball, attending World Championships and doing well for many years. In 1976 he qualified for the Fireball World Championships at Halifax, Nova Scotia where he finished 18th.

## **Cathy and Wendy in the 420s**

In 1975 Cathy Foster and Wendy Hilder won the European Women's Championship sailed in 420s in Barcelona. Cathy Foster was also selected in 1976 for the British Universities keel-boat team at Munich and also, with Wendy Hilder, for the European Ladies Championship where they finished 6th. In 1977 Cathy Foster and Wendy Hilder won the ladies National Championship and came 2nd in the World's.

In 1978 pride of place went to Cathy Foster and Wendy Hilder who won the Women's World Championship and the U.S. Womens Invitation event, and came second in the 420 World Championship. In 1979 Cathy and Wendy repeated their win of the Women's World Championship in their 420, while in 1980 they won the 420 National Championships.

Ken Haynes left Frensham in 1973 to sail a succession of dinghies, mainly from Queen Mary S.C. He started in a Laser and sailed in the 1976 Laser international team racing squad under the leadership of Eric Twiname (just prior to his unfortunate death). Ken

had a spell in a Tasar, coming 2nd in a fleet of 250 in Thames Estuary Nore Race in 1980.

Ken continued to do well in a Laser, competing in the Masters Championships in which he came 4th in National Masters in 1982 followed by 3rd in the year after. In the early 90s he raced a Flying Fifteen and in 1992 he won his class in the Chichester Harbour Federation week. Then back to Frensham with his Laser and in 1997 came 2nd in the Inland Masters Championships, following this with some success at Open meetings for Solos.

In the last decade or so the RYA has encouraged young sailors to race the 420 or Laser, which many of our ex-Cadets have done. This includes Sam Barron-Fox who has done well including taking part in the Youth Worlds in Perth and Catherine Rix has also done well in a 420. The Rawlinson sisters also went on to gain a Gold medal in a 420 in the World Youth Championships.

The two stars of the turn of the century have been Roger Gilbert and Nick Craig, who have both been racing a RS400 with great skill and have achieved great success. Roger has been National Champion from 1999 to 2003 and won the Endeavour Trophy in 2003; while Nick, apart from dominating the OK class in the UK, has done well in his RS400. Then in 2003 he won the Enterprise Nationals.

## **Big Boat Racing**

From time to time several Frensham members have acquired a big boat in which to go cruising and often racing. These include John Ferguson-Smith, Peter and Cassie Newbery, Tim and Liz Mitchell, Mike Wright-Anderson, Peter Slimming, and more recently Ian Swaddling and Ken Haynes.

However, a few have taken part in real competitive racing and most notable among the early days was Rob James and Geoff Bush who were members of the OK fleet circa 1971/3. They both left together to do the first round-the-world yacht race on board 'Second Life'. Rob subsequently became well known in several more round-the-world races and speed attempts. He married Naomi who became Dame Naomi after her own sailing exploits. Rob was tragically lost one cold winter's evening when he fell off his multi-hull whilst waiting outside Salcombe for the tide. In 1979 David Barrow distinguished himself in his J24 and came 4th in their World Championship.

Several of the cruising members progressed to the challenges of big boat racing including Tim and Liz Mitchell who took part in the Fastnet Race.

The major achievements in big boat racing has come from two ex-Cadets, Matthew Humphries and Gerard Mitchell. In 1995 they sailed the yacht Dolphin & Youth in the Whitbread Round the World race. Matthew was skipper of the boat and Gerard was watch leader, which is quite an achievement at their young age. As Tim Mitchell writes:

“Both Matthew and Gerard passed quickly out of dinghies and into keel boats; they have already completed 7 Whitbread/Volvo Round the World Races between them as well as countless other off shore events. Both are full-time professional yacht racers now.”

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B6

Simon Curwen almost at the finish

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### **Success in the 2002 Transat 6.50**

Simon Curwen produced a remarkable result in the 2002 Transat 6.50 - the figures refer to the length of the boat - coming second to Yanick Bestavan. This is the best ever result by a British sailor and is remarkable because that race contained more experienced professionals than ever before.

The race started at La Rochelle, France and finished some 30 days later at Salvador de Bahia in Brazil. Simon reports that he rarely slept for more than fifteen minutes at a time throughout the race and he trained by doing this for two weeks before the start. With such an amazing feat Simon was shortlisted for the Yachtsman of the Year, but came behind Ellen MacArthur.

## Chapter 9 Youth Racing

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B7

Dan Ward at speed leading a group of Lasers on a fine blustery day in a qualifier at Shoreham in 2003.

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Viv Ward recounts the programme to encourage the youth members of the Club:

It started with a letter that Chris Ellis, our then Commodore, received in April 1998 from Peter Slight about Youth Sailing. Peter, an former Cadet class captain whose son Ollie had recently outgrown Cadets, had realised that the step from a Cadet into one of the other classes sailed at Frensham was a step of gigantic proportions which did not prove to be very attractive to teenagers and often resulted in their leaving sailing altogether.

In response to the letter Chris gathered a team together to see what could be done. The first committee meeting was in April 1999 and its enthusiastic members left the meeting with many tasks complete. One firm idea was to hold a Youth Regatta in the Autumn half term holiday and also to approach the General Committee with a request to allow a Youth membership discounted to £15. This was subsequently approved.

Peter Slight in his letter recognised the difficulty of retaining the older youths and was by no means the first to ask these questions. They have probably been asked by every parent whose child left Cadets. Indeed the King of Thailand, who enjoyed his time sailing at Frensham, donated a sum of money for an annual award to a Frensham sailor under 19 years. It is for the person who has shown the greatest improvement in skill and ability with their sailing. The award, which is currently a cheque for £50, has to be used for the purchase of boat chandlery; and is presented on Boxing Day. The King, as did very many parents, recognised the importance to the club of keeping the young people in order to lead them into a lifetime's membership and enjoyment of sailing.

When the members of the Youth Committee looked around for help and guidance they were surprised to find that much of the work had already been done following the lead taken by the RYA and their Youth project 'The Youth Sailing Initiative'. This initiative heralded a new and exciting era for junior and youth sailing in the UK. The RYA introduced a nationwide programme designed to identify young sailors and prepare them for the highest levels of competition. Volvo UK and Sport England were funding the programme. The initiative introduced a clear, step by step path for young sailors to follow, allowing them to go as far as they aspire, on the road to success, through talent squads to National Youth Squads and ultimately the Great Britain Youth Team.

## **The RYA helps to establish ‘grass roots’ programmes**

At grass roots level the RYA is assisting sailing clubs to establish junior race training programmes that will encourage more young people to participate in sailing and to start racing. At this level their vision is to provide young people, whatever their age or ability, with high standards of coaching, competition, social activities and environmental awareness. The clubs who took part in the Champion Club programme benefited from advice, encouragement and support from newly appointed High Performance managers as well as free training.

Well, it was all there ready for Frensham to enjoy. The committee raced into gaining this recognition and addressed the 53 requirements to become a Champion club. These included increasing membership, developing training, running regattas, increasing Youth prizes and many more. Luckily for those involved, they found that Frensham already had many of the requirements in place and as a result, in September 1999, the club was advised that its application was successful. A presentation was made on 30 October when Mike McNamara, the Cadet Class coach and multi-champion, was in attendance.

Peter Slight organised the first Youth Regatta in October 1999. This was a two day event held on a Thursday and Friday during the Autumn half term. Graham Howlett was race officer. 33 boats from 8 clubs took part and the evening event was enjoyed by everyone.

Youth regattas have been held each year since then, all but one as a two day event, but as half terms in different areas clashed with each other one event had to take place on a Saturday. There has been good support and there have been visitors from East Anglia and the Isle of Wight.

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B8

Andrea Brewster in her Laser at Abersoch.

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The link that the RYA had with Volvo gave the obvious target to the local Volvo garage in Churt, who, when approached, were encouraging and helpful. They donated a hefty £2,000 in sponsorship in the first year and then similar amounts in subsequent years. It was due to their generosity that we were able to purchase the boats and equipment. It was pleasing, therefore that Frensham provided the premises to host the launch of a new Volvo model from where Lancaster Volvo Farnham based their test drives for customers.

On the back of the Lancaster Volvo sponsorship the Club were able to make an application to Sportmatch for a similar amount. This was also successful and there was



no hesitation in purchasing Cadets and Lasers, a video camera and indoor games equipment. Other boats and equipment were also generously donated by Keith Videlo and Ian Vial leaving the Youth with a stock of boats to sail and taste without the need to buy a boat. These boats are available for a modest fee and are used regularly by the Youth.

During the brief time the Youth has been up and running there have been some highlights. Mark Littlejohn, the Laser Master World Champion, visited the club on a number of occasions to provide training at various levels. His unique style provided memorable times particularly when he had his charges walking around the Laser and then climbing the mast. Yes, it did result in capsizes, but those assembled were told it was all to do with learning about the boat's balance. A popular event was that of team racing, this being an interest that could be continued for those who went on to University.

On a few occasions there were visits made to Stokes Bay Sailing Club to gain experience of sea sailing. These were well supported and Mike Brewster kindly brought along his rib for coaching and rescue - when the wind got up it was mainly for the latter. During the winter of 2001/2 there was a memorable visit by Steve Cockerill, the Laser Radial National and World champion. He gave a captivating talk and his depth of knowledge made those present realise why he holds such prestigious titles.

### **Youth carries the Frensham name into the wider world**

Though many have enjoyed the sailing, some of the Youth have notably carried the Club name into the outside World, these to join the illustrious names on the boards of achievements displayed in the clubhouse:

Andrea Brewster was chosen for the Laser Radial National Youth Squad and achieved third place in the selections for the Youth Worlds. She has gone on to win the Europe National Championships in 2002 and achieve the Gold fleet in the Worlds of the same year. In 2003 she was part of the Olympic Development Squad with training in Cadiz and narrowly missed selection for the Athens Olympics.

David Royse and Dan Ward were chosen for the Laser Youth Squad and Dan was part of the British team that visited European regattas to gain experience. Mark Brewster and Dan Ward were invited, along with fellow Frensham sailor Paul Hilliar to the European Championships in 2002. Ross Howell was in the transitional youth squad in 2002.

There is now a structure in place for Youth and people to run it. All is set for an interesting future!

# Chapter 10 Sailing for People with Disabilities

B9

The launch of Sailability by Lord Wakeham, with Virginia Bottomley MP

**Brian Grimwood, Chairman Frensham Pond Sailability, writes:**

Sailing for people with a disability started at Frensham Pond in 1982, run by Farnham & District Sports Association for the Disabled (FDSAD). FDSAD had been founded the previous year, with swimming as its primary activity, by Peter Hooper, a very energetic double amputee. Peter felt strongly that disabled people were not being given the sporting opportunities they rightly deserved.

Over all these years Ted Bonner has been the main support from FPSC, encouraging other sailing club members to help. Ted is currently FDSAD’s Vice Chairman and is an ex member of the Club’s General Committee and former Enterprise Class Captain. 2003 was Ted’s 21st year as Sailing Captain for disabled sailing at Frensham, a magnificent personal commitment and achievement.

Initially FDSAD had just one trusty Wayfarer dinghy, used to introduce disabled people to the delights of sailing. In 1997, a successful lottery application funded the purchase of a further Wayfarer (The ‘Peter Hooper’), and a much needed personal lifting hoist which enabled the more seriously disabled to gain access to the boats.

B10

Challenger Trimaran

B11

Two sail Access Dinghy

Over the next 3 years FDSAD acquired two Challenger trimarans, one very old and one very new, funded by the Diana Campbell Trust, and two single seater Access dinghies. The Access dinghies were designed in Australia, especially for independent sailing by disabled people and are now made in the UK. During this period, membership had risen from the initial 4 - 6 to around 20.

In 1999 the Club, in partnership with FDSAD, initiated a major project with the primary aims of making the whole Club site accessible to disabled sailors, significantly

increasing the scope of sailing offered, and maximising the integration of disabled sailors into Club activities.

In August 2000 a major fundraising project was initiated. The stated project aims were:

- a) to create a centre of excellence for sailing at all levels by disabled people
- b) to integrate disabled sailors into the Club's activities by making all parts of the land site accessible to disabled people and by the involvement of disabled sailors within the full range of Club racing, training and social activities
- c) to support the continued development of the Club's junior and youth sailing.

A total of £262,000 was raised within a twelve month period. Funding sources in excess of £10,000 were Sport England Lottery Fund (£117,680), Waverley Borough Council (£30,000), RYA Sailability (£20,000), Foundation for Sport & the Arts (£10,500), Farnham Lions (£10,143), The John & Freda Coleman Charitable Trust (£10,000). The balance came from over 40 National and local organisations, plus a contribution from Club reserves of £20,000 and personal donations from Club members.

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## B12

June Bonner launching the "Peter Hooper".

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## B13

Ted Bonner officiating at the launch of a new Access dinghy.

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Construction work started in May 2001 and was completed on schedule in September and to budget! New facilities included a Club house access ramp and accessible toilet/shower, completely reconstructed kitchen and fittings, new and wider jetty No.7 with integrated concrete pad for a personal hoist, new launching ramps adjacent to jetties 6 & 7, RIB safety boat and 45hp engine (donated by Farnham Lions), safety boat storage shed, new Starting hut, new workshop, and a Sailability equipment store. Boat purchases included 2 Access dinghies, 3 2.4mR mini keelboats and 2 Cadet dinghies.

In addition, there was considerable dredging around jetties 6 & 7 to provide the additional water depth required by the deeper draft Access dinghies and 2.4mR mini keelboats used by Sailability

## **Frensham Pond Sailability is launched**

On 22 September 2001, Frensham Pond Sailability, a partnership between the Club and FDSAD, was officially launched by the Rt. Hon. Lord Wakeham. This marked the successful completion of this £262,000 project funded by grants from Sport England Lottery Fund, Waverley Borough Council, RYA Sailability and over 40 other organisations, together with Club funds and member donations.

Sailability now provides disabled sailors with the full range of small boat sailing, from cruising around Frensham Pond, to fully competitive racing in Paralympic Class boats. Winter 2002/03 saw, for the first time, the 2.4s being successfully sailed by disabled sailors in the Saturday afternoon handicap race - an excellent example of integration!

By the end of 2002, the first year of operation of Frensham Pond Sailability and the new facilities, disabled sailor membership had trebled to over 60, including young sailors from local special schools. Boat numbers had increased to 11 (2 Wayfarers, 2 Challenger Trimarans, 7 Access dinghies and 3 2.4mRs). In addition two Sailability members bought their own 2.4s.

The sailing club and likewise the disabled club organise various activities during the year. This includes Skittle evenings, Talks - racing knowledge, or how to sail a Challenger for instance, visits to the theatre, Canal trips, summer BBQs and social evenings.

## **A long and valued partnership with FSAD**

The Club particularly values its long association with Farnham & District Sports Association for the Disabled, now formally recognised in its partnership in Frensham Pond Sailability. Sailability undoubtedly benefits from the partnership, with the FPSC contributing the club facilities and assisting with its knowledge of sailing, while FDSAD contributes its members and an understanding of their special needs.

# Chapter 11 Sailing training

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B14

Steve Hill, David Hawkins and Peter Slight with the Toppers

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## **RYA Sail Training**

Training of new and less experienced members has been an important activity since the start of the Club. However, apart from the Cadets, generally it was done in an informal way and most of the improvement in racing skills came ‘on the job’. Each class held their own sessions under the initiative of the class captain of the time, but however valuable these were no-one would claim they were comprehensive or thorough.

The exception was with the Cadets where Class captains such as Tony Townsend-Rose and Laurie Weeden did organise training on Saturday mornings with great effect, and this has continued through to the present day.

However, through the 70s the RYA put a lot of effort into developing a range of courses suitable for the very beginner through to advanced racing. With this went a national structure to provide these courses.

The first champion for these courses was Peter Newbery who, in the mid 70s, exhorted the committee to have one or two Club owned GPs to be put aside for the purpose of training. Whilst the value of this was recognised, it took some time for the hard work associated with it to be accepted.

Peter became Commodore in 1982 and the proposal took a further step when Peter Dyer came forward and volunteered to organise a range of courses.

### **Peter Dyer takes up the Story**

The wind was Force three to four, the sun was quite strong for February, and the sails of my Bosun hit the water of Hawley Lake with a smack. I was demonstrating my ability to recover from a capsize, or more properly, a knock-down. It was 1983 and I was just short of 63 years of age and I had received an offer of ‘voluntary severance’ from my employers which gave me the opportunity to occupy my time by putting something back into the sport which had given me so much pleasure over many years - SAILING! - A colleague had suggested that I might usefully take an RYA Dinghy Sailing Instructor’s Course at Hawley Lake where I arranged to be assessed and thus found myself under the eagle, but kindly, eye of a lady RYA Coach by the name of Val Bransby, for practical and written assessments. I had not

prepared myself properly and I was lucky in that she allowed me to develop the skills required to demonstrate that I could do things the RYA way. In due course I attended and passed the Instructor's examination.

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B15

Charles Smith with a group of instructors and a flock of young Optimist sailors

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B16

David Hawkins with youngsters about to launch Toppers.

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Val was such a help in all ways as my new 'career' developed through Senior Instructor (SI), Principal of the Recognised Training Establishment (RTE) at Frensham, Tidal Endorsement, Power Boat Instructor, Racing Instructor and so on. However, I have reason to be grateful to so very many members of Frensham Pond Sailing Club (FPSC) who helped me set up and run courses, loaned boats, helped with the kitchen, and did many other jobs.

I was required to have extensive experience as an instructor (as much as two years) before being allowed by the RYA to take the Senior Instructor course. I needed to have this qualification before being able to establish an RTE at Frensham. So during this period I took the opportunity to ask Peter Newbery, the then Commodore, if the Club wanted such a training facility. His response was that I should run a course and if it was successful he would put the proposal to the committee. There was just one other Instructor in the Club, no training boats, no RTE; and unfortunately some opposition by a few members which took many years to die away.

Val arranged for a fellow coach to be nominally in charge of the course (to be held in the Summer holidays of 1983) and who would come to Frensham on the last day to carry out assessments and issue certificates. The course consisted of twenty youngsters and one adult.

I can imagine some readers wondering why an RYA course is desirable or necessary. My reply would be that it teaches people to sail in a seamanlike manner and to understand why the boat behaves in certain ways in changing conditions. The teaching is carried out by professionally qualified Instructors using 'The RYA Method', which is really a fixed sequence of teaching modules so that one Instructor can be substituted by a different one who can readily establish the trainee's point in the Method and then carry on. I am still amazed that many people who have never

been in a dinghy previously can be helming safely on their own after a day and a half's tuition using 'The Method'!

Back to my first course! At that time I was involved with the Cadets on Saturday mornings and there was enough support from parents and youngsters to provide a course of 20 youngsters and one adult, with various Club members bravely loaning their boats.

The remaining problem was that there were only two Instructors, so I taught some willing Club members the rudiments of 'The Method' and crossed my fingers! Then I got down to organising the course for the school holidays at a nominal cost. We had a week of glorious weather with winds picking up through the week causing some unscheduled but happy capsizing on the Thursday and Friday. There were a few tantrums, no major breakages, an award of some sort for all and everyone was happy - My reward was that it had obviously been a success and I had learned a lot.

Val allowed me to hold my next course at Hawley in September using her boats and other resources and again it was supported by 20 youngsters and very well received.

### **The green light is given for formal courses**

I was the given the green light to go ahead with more formal courses, although understandably there was still some unease expressed by two or three members of the committee. For 1984 I expanded into adult courses and racing courses, and began charging more so that we could buy our own training boats which I had decided should be GP14s, with Cadets and hired-in Toppers for junior courses.

I particularly wished it to be self supporting and to make a positive contribution to Club funds. Also Club members were coming forward and expressing an interest in helping which gave me the opportunity of encouraging them to practise for the Instructor assessment and the course. Later, with Val's help I held Instructor courses at Frensham.

We decided the GP14 would be ideal to carry out the training, especially if the genoa was replaced by a smaller jib. Some members offered to sell their boats cheaply for training; one was donated and many offered to loan theirs. So, over the years, we slowly built up a pool of boats which we could call on. However there was no on-site storage accommodation for loose items and these were kept in my garage and taken by me to the club as required. Later I bought a tall metal cabinet from auction and placed it in the old Committee room (which was behind the kitchen) and the cabinet is still there! Later still I was allowed to convert one of the midweek changing rooms for storage.

The following year in 1984 it was planned to become a RYA approved Training Establishment. In 1985, assisted by Ian Craig and John Davenport, we progressed to having over 50 juniors and 21 adults participating in courses. That year we successfully applied for Frensham to become a Recognised Training Establishment. Instructors were volunteered to help - they had to be experienced, particularly to

cope safely in strong winds - they had to be able to give their time over five weekdays. Retired people, students on vacation or those ready to give up holiday entitlement if still working made a most valuable contribution.

A course of twelve people required six instructors, but luckily there were experienced racing helms ready to help. At one time there were over 80 qualified member Instructors available. It is very rewarding to see some of our younger members taking the Instructor's course and feeding their experiences back to the Cadets in particular.

Jill Royse has done particularly well, and at the age of 22 became the youngest RYA National Coach Assessor and International Centre Inspector. She is also qualified to teach power boating and Senior Sailing Instructors. This demonstrates what can be achieved as a direct result of sailing with the Frensham Cadets!"

Despite the low activity in the start-up years, by 1987 we had trained some 200 youngsters/adults in sailing and some of them also in racing.

### **John Davenport takes over**

In 1988 John Davenport took over as Chief Instructor and 8 courses were run for a total of 87 participants.

John recalls

"I learned a lot from Peter Dyer who started all this - encouraged by him to qualify as a Senior Instructor. I was able to take over in later years as Chief Instructor with wonderful support from Charles Watkins, Sylvia Rhodes, the late Dennis Foster, Hiley Jones, Peter Slight, Jim Steventon, David Hawkins and many others.

I remember with pride checking out Matthew Humphries aged 12 on his triangular course - he has gone on to fame in the Whitbread Round the World races. Nick Craig was in Peter Dyer's first course at the age of 9 - now he has been OK National Champion amongst other successes. We had another National Champion in Jake Sutton in Comets, Steve Hill was a pupil once, so also was Stephanie Videlo, recently GP14 Summer Points winner."

John Davenport retired in 1994 and Peter Dyer ensured a smooth transition as he also tried to reduce the number of hours that training demanded.

### **Steve Hill becomes the Centre Principal**

In February 1996, Peter Dyer was succeeded as Training Principal by Steve Hill and received a presentation to thank him for his many years of service.

Over many years Steve Hill has done a lot of work with Junior Training but is now the Centre Principal and is responsible for all training, both junior and senior alike. The administrative work-load is significant and is undertaken by David Hawkins. Colin



Boys has continued to do a great job and along with Charles Smith works mainly with the Optimist sailors.

The whole training programme of the Recognised Training Centre is on a sound basis for a rewarding future and is well set to continue to produce sailors who are both competent and enthusiastic for the sport.

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B17

The GP14 makes an ideal training boat for adults.

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## Chapter 12

# The Golden Jubilee Celebrations

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B18

Jack Lawrence with Charles Smith. Getting ready to cut Wendy Hill's jubilee cake.

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### **Jubilee Celebrations for the 50th Anniversary**

The Club celebrated its 50th birthday by holding a special week-end on 12th and 13th July 2003. The weather throughout the two days was perfect, warm with unending sunshine and a gentle breeze for the vintage sailors. On Saturday the 12th the club held a buffet luncheon attended by former and present members and their families, and we were happy to welcome the Mayor of Waverley (Richard Terry), Mayor of Godalming (Andy Rayner) and the Deputy Mayor of Farnham (Sheila Scrivens). The principal events took place on the Saturday but the whole week-end was organised by a group including Charles and Sheila Smith, Jackie Truscott, Nick Clibborn and Chris Ellis, with teams of talented helpers.

It was an occasion to look back at what had been achieved and many of the original members were invited to join in the celebrations. Personal invitations were extended to those thirty or so former members from forty and fifty years ago who could be traced and of these the great majority accepted with their families.

These were the members who had done so much of the hard work in the early years. As Jim Morley said, these were the members who had "cut back the brambles". Amongst them were winners of nationally important events including for example the Burton Cup for National 12s. Many were also to stay for dinner in the evening and several asked to be invited to the club's sixtieth celebrations!

### **Vintage dinghies - to remind us of the fifties.**

Efforts were made to trace original boats from those early racing fleets of the fifties. The original membership book lists them all, and includes not only the National 12s and Fireflies which were popular at the time, but also a miscellany of gaff rigged and clinker craft typical of pre-war boat-building.

To remind us all of what the racing looked like in those days we invited the Classic and Vintage Dinghy Racing Association (CVDRA) who agreed to participate in the celebrations on the Saturday and with them we organised a display of boats on the

Commodore's lawn, followed by close racing in the afternoon and again on the Sunday with an informal prize-giving on the Sunday afternoon.

### **Richard Hart comes home first**

It was a pleasure for all of us that Richard Hart in his vintage Finn came home in first place after four closely fought races. The concours prize was won by Nick Clibborn who had organised the event, with his beautifully restored Finn.

The addition of the vintage dinghies pleased everyone, both the new members who had little contact with boats of this kind and of course early members who had campaigned them. The CVDRA has agreed to come back to Frensham for what may prove to be an annual event.

### **Marjorie Price and Jack Lawrence**

You will see from Chapter 1 of this book that Marjorie Price was a our first lady member and how she recalls seeing that famous notice pinned to a tree which read, "Is any one interested in forming a club?" Marjorie celebrated her ninety sixth birthday on the day before the Jubilee event and we were delighted to see her on the day, and to present her with flowers to mark her birthday.

The photograph opposite catches a moment between Marjorie and our newest lady member - Charlotte Videlo, who was then just twenty six days old!

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B19

Marjorie Price with Charlotte Videlo: earliest and our latest lady members.

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Jack Lawrence, himself ninety-two, cut our birthday cake and then reminisced over the early days of the club. The Saturday was completed by dinner served on the verandah. Some one hundred members gathered on the balcony which was decorated with vine leaves and golden balloons. Live music and gentle conversation in the gently gathering dusk made a fitting end to a memorable day.

### **The club in a garden**

Dinghy Sailing magazine attended the event on the Saturday and kindly printed a full write up in their September 2003 edition. They carried delightful photographs and described Frensham as 'a club in a garden'. Credit for the condition of the lawns and the flower tubs which had just come into full bloom all over the site must go to Graham Headleand who worked with great care to finds plants "which the ducks wouldn't eat" - not something that concerns ordinary gardeners. Coupled with the efforts of the

working party on the previous weekend, the club was looking at its absolute best and was much admired by those members who had “cut back the brambles”, all those years ago.

### **The Jubilee Quilt**

Saturday also saw the Jubilee Quilt unveiled. Organised by Jackie Truscott and Chris Potbury the quilt had taken several months to put together and now had contributions from all parts of the club including several beautifully worked and colourful panels from the young cadets. It hangs in the club for every one to see as a memento of this great day, and will be used as a backdrop for prize giving and other important events for the future. Congratulations to every one who participated.

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B20

The Golden Jubilee Quilt with its thirty two panels contributed by members from all parts of the club.

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### **The clubhouse**

The Jubilee had provided the committee with a reason to renew the clubhouse furniture, and so the comfortable chairs in the bar area had been replaced with new ones in blonde wood with matching tables.

Decorated with leafy table centres they looked charming and much credit must go to Roger Carter, who had invited committee members to sit on examples of new furniture for months beforehand.

At the same time the opportunity was taken to renew the club awning which in view of the very hot summer which followed, was left up until September to provide much needed shade.

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B21

A beautifully restored National 12, typical of the boats sailed in the early days of the club.

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### **Old and new compete on the Sunday**

Sunday brought the normal club racing but supplemented by two more handicap races for the ‘vintage’ dinghies. The warm, sunny weather helped recreate the atmosphere of the post war dinghy boom, and young sailors were able to see how real boats were

constructed, and how well they went. And how well they did go? An elderly Merlin Rocket battled it out with Richard Hart's Olympic Finn, and the National 12s had a private battle to determine which design was superior as they had done fifty years ago.

### **The Morley presentation**

At a lunchtime presentation Jim Morley handed over for the club a photograph of his father Cdr Morley who was influential in the earliest days. It is a humorous photograph showing Cdr Morley capsized from his National 12 dinghy on one of those blustery days for which Frensham is famous. The picture now hangs alongside the race start boards in the hallway as a constant reminder that conditions on the water have changed little in the last fifty years.

# Chapter 13

## The Origins and Natural History of Frensham Pond

Frensham Pond Sailing Club is fortunate to be situated in such a lovely National Trust area. The sailors might, and frequently do, curse the encroachment of the trees making wind patterns even more tricky, but for most of the time all members enjoy the beautiful and relaxing atmosphere which surrounds the Pond.

### **From the Bronze Age to Medieval Times**

The Warden's information Office explains that flint tools dating some 7000 years ago in the Stone Age have been found on the Common indicating that the Stone Age hunters were there.

The first large scale activity on the Common arose in the Bronze Age indicated by the burial mounds which have been found including four on the King's Ridge overlooking the Pond. These would be about 3,500 years old and may have been associated with a Bronze age settlement in the grounds of Frensham Manor 1.5 km away. These barrows were restored in 1996 by Waverley Borough Council and the National Trust, supported by English Nature and Surrey Archeological Society. The farming people of that time would have cleared much of the woodland in the area to create farmland. Frensham Heath dates from this period.

However, no evidence exists for Iron Age activity on the Common during the Iron Age, but there is little doubt that the rough grazing which continued to recent times, would have been long established on what we now know as Frensham Common. The name Frensham first appears in Anglo-Saxon records as 'Fermesham' in c965 AD, possibly meaning a holding ('ham') 'farmed out' or 'rented out'. By the mid-Saxon period the land around Frensham formed part of the Hundred of Farnham which was held by the Bishops of Winchester.

### **The Great and Little Ponds, then and now**

In medieval times the Common continued to be held by the Bishops of Winchester. During the late 12th or early 13th centuries they had the Great and Little Ponds constructed as fish ponds for rearing fish for food. The ponds were drained and cleaned regularly and continued as a commercial fishery into the 1900s.

Visitors have used the Frensham Common for recreation for generations. Nowadays about 200,000 people visit the Common each year, many coming to sunbathe on the beaches alongside the Great Pond.

The 400-hectare common is owned by the National Trust and 333 hectares are leased to Waverley Borough Council who manage it for nature conservation and recreation.

### **Evolution of Frensham Pond**

Mr Atherton bought the Little Pond and its surroundings in 1949 and his wife Olive, in her book 'The Life of a Pond', explains that the Great Pond was known to be in existence in 1208 and was made by building a dam across the valley near the Pond Hotel (formerly the White Horse Inn), thus greatly enlarging a small natural pond. This pond is fed by two streams, one rising in the grounds of Silverbeck, Churt, the other near Hindhead. The overflow is at the West end of the pond where the dam was built and where there is said to have been a mill, long since demolished, but traces of old brickwork have been found. The Great Pond has varied in size during the course of its history, at one time being eighty-four acres in area and nearly two miles in circumference. The present area of water is about 77 acres. The Little Pond was constructed in 1246 by order of William de Raleigh, Bishop of Winchester and covered thirty-seven acres.

### **The Bishop of Winchester**

Both Frensham Ponds belonged to the Bishops of Winchester and were the main source of supply of fish to Farnham Castle when the Bishop was in residence there. When the Bishop visited Farnham Castle, many preparations had to be made beforehand. Fuel was needed for making charcoal and stocks of food had to be laid in, much of it obtained locally. Venison and wild boar from Farnham Park, hares and rabbits from the commons; game birds were caught by the Bishop's Falcons; Herons and Swans were killed for the table; and on some occasions about a dozen fishermen with their nets spent several days working at Frensham Ponds to obtain a good supply of fish.

Both Ponds were fished every fifth year, usually in the Autumn, when hundreds of people from miles around would congregate at the Ponds. Both ponds remained the property of the See of Winchester until taken over by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. In 1888 the Commissioners sold both Ponds to Mr R.H. Combe of Pierrepont House, so they became part of his estate.

### **The Pond in War Time**

In 1914 the area around Frensham was used as camp by Kitchener's Army. However, during 1939 - 1945 war the Pond was drained to prevent it being a prominent landmark by which German aircraft might be better able to navigate. Large numbers of fish were netted by members of Farnham Angling Society and transferred to Badshot Lea Pond. The Pond became a shallow marshy valley filled with bushes, but with peace the bushes were removed and the sluices closed.

Following the end of the war, in 1945 the Pond was re-filled by the Government. The birch trees and bush were cut down by men of the Pioneer Corps helped by Russian

troops. A bulldozer had been tried but that got bogged down in the mud. After the reeds had been cut, the sluice was closed and the pond took several months to refill. Large amounts of floating weed had to be cleared by two army DUKW's dragging chains between them to pull it out on to the banks where it was burnt.

## **Seaplane Trials**

Frensham Pond has seen a variety of non-sailing activities over the years, including the first waterborne flight in 1913 of an aeroplane from the Royal Aircraft Factory - the forerunner of the Royal Aircraft Establishment in Farnborough.

This arose from the proximity of Farnborough where the Army Balloon Factory had been moved in 1905. In 1911 this evolved into the Army Aircraft Factory and the Air Battalion. The former developed into the Royal Aircraft Factory in 1912 and then the Royal Aircraft Establishment in 1918. In parallel with this the Air Battalion became the Royal Flying Corps in 1912 and the Royal Air Force in 1918.

Born in America, Colonel Samuel Cody worked with the Royal Engineers to become heavily involved around the turn of the century in developing the use of balloons and later the airship. He then extended his interest into powered flight and in 1908 achieved the first officially recognised flight of a powered aircraft in the UK when he took off from Farnborough in a plane of his own design.

The first ever waterborne flight was generally considered to have taken place in the French Martinique on 28th March 1910, piloted by Frenchman Henri Fabre, although its main development has been credited to Glenn H Curtis of San Diego in 1911. The first seaplane flight in the UK of the 'Water-Bird' took place on Lake Windermere in November of that same year.

Mr Sydney Foster of the Cody Society reports:

“Cody developed the ‘Waterplane’ as a sea-borne plane in 1913 and had entered it for the 1913 Coastal Circuit Race of Britain from Calshot. Although Cody’s plane underwent water trials on Frensham Great Pond it is believed it could not take off and reverted to a land plane. Sadly Cody met his tragic death when flying the plane in early August of that year. However, also involved at Farnborough as a designer and pilot at that time was Geoffrey de Havilland and he was the pilot of a plane (HRE2) which in the same year underwent flight tests on Frensham Pond.”

The local paper reported

“Transported by road from Farnborough where it was constructed, the British seaplane underwent its first trials at Frensham Great Pond in 1913. It was housed in a temporary hanger at what is now affectionately referred to as Brighton Beach, it aroused considerable interest locally, and hundreds flocked to the Pond to witness the making of aviation history”.



The HRE 2 seaplane at Frensham being piloted by Geoffrey de Havilland in 1913.

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The Farnham & District Museum Society Journal Vol 13 No6 June 2003 has an article by Olive Cotton which describes the early aviation around Frensham:

“The army had become aware of the military possibilities of the balloon, particularly for use as an observation platform. The Royal Engineers’ first balloon unit was formed and in 1880 were camped at Frensham Pond where they carried out their ascents in the area to the east of the Great Pond. In 1911 an air battalion of the Royal Engineers came into being having its headquarters at South Farnborough, followed the next year by the creation of the Royal Flying Corps.

In 1913 the Great Pond became the site of the first sea-plane trials. The R.E.1 reconnaissance tractor bi-plane, a metal fuselage, two-seater, was fitted with floats and known as HRE. This was tested on the Fleet and Frensham ponds by Geoffrey de Havilland.

An eye witness describes how, from a hangar erected by the north bay, the machine, which had been built at Farnborough and brought by road from there, underwent her first tests - with complete success. It was noted that ‘she took to the water like a thing of life, flying round and round and subsiding gently on its surface in a very fair imitation of the downward glide of a swan’.

### **The Importance of Frensham Ponds to Conservation**

Steve Webster - the Countryside Ranger for Frensham and Bealeswood Commons since January 2003 writes:

The heathland that surrounds the Great and Little Ponds at Frensham is of international importance as a habitat for fauna and flora unique to the dry sandy soils. The whole area is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest for 108 different species of animals and plants, it is a Special Protection Area for the fact that it is an area of lowland heath, and it is a candidate Special Area for Conservation under European legislation for the birds that breed on the heath. An area known as the Flashes, over by the Tilford Road, is also a Local Nature Reserve.

So why does this area afford such high protection? The area of lowland heath in southern Britain has declined by 80% in the last 200 years. The remaining heaths of Surrey, Sussex, Hampshire and Dorset, if put together, would only just cover the Isle of Wight. However, that amounts to one fifth of the total area anywhere on the planet. The

sheer size of the Frensham Commons, approximately 1000 acres, existing as a virtually continuous expanse, greatly increases the wildlife value.

Frensham is well known for its rare and endangered species, and is one of just two sites in Surrey to support all 6 species of native reptile. These include the endangered smooth snake and sand lizard. Various attempts to maintain the equally rare natterjack toad have had different levels of success, but the efforts will continue to try and get their numbers up to a viable size for a self-sustaining colony. Three species of bird that nest at Frensham are regarded as nationally endangered. These are the Woodlark, Nightjar and Dartford warbler.

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### B23

Great efforts are being made by the Countryside ranger and his colleagues to establish breeding colonies of the rare Natterjack Toad on Frensham Common.

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These are the larger and more noticeable species of animals but there are many more smaller species that make Frensham their home. These include rare beetles, (one species endangered), spiders, flies (2 species endangered), 20 species of Dragonfly, (including the Hairy and Downy Emerald species - both rare), butterflies (including the rare Silver-studded blue and Grayling), plus other species that rely on the special conditions that heathland provides.

### **A recent arrival - the Bee Wolf**

One in particular is a recent arrival in the UK. The Bee Wolf, as this wasp is commonly called, nests individually down self-built tunnels right outside the Ranger's Office at the Great Pond.

The ground is compacted by most of the Common's 200,000 annual visitors giving the wasps hard sand that does not collapse when they dig, and very low turf, so they can find their burrows again easily once they have been on feeding excursions on the heath. They get their name from their breeding habit of catching honey bees and paralysing them with a sting. The bee then gets carried back to the tunnel where it is buried alive with an egg from the adult female wasp. The egg hatches into a grub under the ground which then has fresh meat, in the form of the poor bee, in order to feed and develop into an adult wasp which emerges in the following summer.

Of course it is not just the creatures that are rare or endangered. Many of the plants and flowers they rely on are also uncommon. A botanical survey in 1999 identified 7 species out of a total of 121 species recorded on just 5 days that were endangered or of particular conservation interest. Add to that the 24 species of moss and lichen, and the

many types of fungi that appear across the Common and you begin to realise just how crucial this area is for wildlife.

A project that assists financially with the management of various Commons across Surrey, including Frensham, uses as its slogan “Heathland - Surrey’s Last Wilderness”, which really does summarise the rarity and importance of this area.

### **Angling at the Pond**

The Pond has been a good source for angling over the last several hundred years. It was primarily stocked with fish, mainly carp, as a food supply for the monastery in Farnham Abbey. However, the pond in those days was much smaller, limited to an area in the vicinity of No. 4 buoy and is recognisable by having a blue clay bottom, unlike the rest of the pond which is sandy.

The pond expanded to its present size over a century ago and in the 1960s was recognised as probably the best perch fishing water in the UK. In the 30s fishing was often carried out from rowing boats. Since then it has been confined to the shore’s edge, sometimes by wading away from the reeds or by using a platform on the Southern edge. However, over the life of the Sailing Club the anglers have clearly been evident as hardy folk often huddled over their rods at any time of day or night and in all sorts of weather. Jason Gray, a member and bailiff of the Farnham Angling Club explains:

“For many years now the angling rights have belonged to the Farnham Angling Club for sport fishing. They manage the fish and their environment in the pond on behalf of their members, the season running from the 16th June to 14th March. The Pond is stocked with the larger Carp and Pike, as well as the smaller and more plentiful Tench and Roach, and a balance between these must be maintained to achieve a stable population.

The fish are always returned unharmed to the water, especially as barb-less hooks are mandatory. So the Carp and Pike need restocking only occasionally. The total number of Carp in the pond is in the region of 250 and so to replenish natural losses restocking involves only a few 10s at a time. On the other hand the Tench and Roach provide a major source of food for the Pike and so they tend to be replenished as young in their thousands.

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B24

Jason Gray with a fine specimen Carp

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As the fish are returned to the water, they tend to live for many years. For example, many of the Carp have been in the pond for more than 50 years reaching a weight of typically 18 lbs but sometimes over 20. Such large fish are individually

recognisable to the fisherman and it is not uncommon for a person to catch the same individual fish after an interval of 12 to 20 years.

To attract the Carp and Tench it is necessary to pre-bait the desired area by applying about 2 kgs of 'boilies' which are 25 mm diameter balls made up of an egg base and typically with fruit flavours - the fisherman often guarding the secret of his own recipe. These need to be applied for two days, or sometimes a week, in advance, and attracts the fish to the area where they might stay for a week or two.

To place this bait in the right area, most fisherman have a small two foot long radio-controlled battery-powered boat propelled by water jets and carrying a torch at night. This is loaded with the bait which is then discharged at the right spot under command from the radio-control.

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B25

Jason Gray with a monster pike.

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The Pike are the largest of the fish in the Pond, reaching weights of 30 lbs or more. They tend to sit in the reeds and feed on other smaller fish passing by, particularly the Roach but will go for small birds and the cygnets. The Tench grow to a weight of 5 - 7 lbs while the Roach reach 1 - 1½ lbs.

The fish are caught by rod, and unless restricted by the sailors, may cast distances of 60 - 100 yds. It is possible to use dead bait up to 10% of the pike's own body weight and, for example, it has been known to use a 2½ lb. mackerel.

As an example of the power of the Pike, on one cold winter's day when the pond was beginning to unfreeze after several weeks of ice, a sad spectacle was to be seen in the vicinity to the west of number 6 buoy (now number 7). There was a patch of water clear from ice and a Moorhen was to be seen swimming for food. After awhile the bird was flapping its wings and looking to be in some difficulty. Then the water became turbulent, and slowly the Moorhen was pulled under not to be seen again, presumably by a Pike.

So take care when you capsize in future for there is more going on beneath the surface than meets the eye!"

### **Those shining fresh water mussels abound**

Philip Whitney explains:

"Lurking on the bottom of the Pond are freshwater Swan mussels. When the water conditions become clear their shells can be seen empty, recognised by the flash of 'mother of pearl' having been eaten by carp.

They are bivalves (have two shells) and are relatives of clams and oysters. They can grow to a considerable size, with shells up to 20 cms long and have an interesting life history. They feed by filtering debris out of the water which they suck through their gills at 2-3 litres per hour and scraping this debris into their gut to digest it. Mussels can move about very slowly on the bottom pushing themselves along with their foot which they can push out from between the two shells when the shells are open. They reproduce sexually releasing thousands of fertilised eggs into the water which develop into tiny bivalves. They probably arrived originally in the gills of fish when the pond was stocked by the monks of Frensham or later by angling clubs. The monks may even have introduced them deliberately as a food source, part of their fish farming practice. They could also have got into the mud or water carried by wild fowl."

"There is even more going on down there than you realised!"

### **Bird Life of Frensham**

Mr Shaun Peters of The Surrey Bird Society reports that:

"A total of 222 species of birds have been recorded at Frensham this century and of these 140 - 150 can be expected to be seen in a single year.

During winter months, the resident wildfowl include Great Crested Grebe, Mallard, Tufted Duck and Coot. These are frequently augmented by many others, often en route during their migratory travels. The Alders and Birches round the pond come alive with Siskins and are sometimes joined by Redpolls and Goldfinches. Although there is plenty of birdlife on and around the ponds, the heath itself is rather devoid of life - the summer visitors are in Africa and many resident birds have moved away - Dartford Warblers and Stonechats to the coast or even further afield.

### **Migrants arrive in early Spring**

Early March sees the start of the Spring migration and the first to arrive is the Chiffchaff, but as a number do over-winter in this country it can be difficult to tell if the first has arrived from Africa or merely a British sewage farm. The first Sand Martin seen dashing over the water has come from Africa.

### **The Osprey is a recent visitor**

Spring migration really gets underway during April, with the arrival of the Cuckoo, House Martin and several Warblers. The Osprey is a recent annual visitor, which usually puts on a breathtaking display as they plunge-dive for fish. The beach at the pond has proved to be an amazing magnet for waders with virtually all the species on the Frensham list there at some time. The commonest species is the Common Sandpiper, while others often recorded in the Spring are Little Ringed and Ringed Plovers, Greenshank and Whimbrel. From mid-April Common Terns pop in to fish. Around the pond Whinchats and Yellow Wagtails also appear.

## **Over seventy different birds breed at Frensham**

A total of over 70 species breed at Frensham annually. On the water there will be broods of Crested Grebe, Mallard, Tufted Duck, Moorhen and Coot. The reed beds of the pond reverberate with the songs of male Reed Warblers. Although Herons and Kingfishers are frequently seen, neither breed here. The Herons come from the heronry at Churt - now the largest in Surrey, while the Kingfishers nest along the nearby river where there is suitable habitat.

## **Nationally important heathland species**

It is the nationally important heathland species that gives Frensham its importance. Following a succession of mild winters in the early nineties, the Dartford Warbler population reached a national high in 1995 with Frensham having 18 pairs. Unfortunately the cold weather the following winter knocked this down to six pairs in 1996. Also to be found on the heath are Cuckoos, Skylarks, Meadow and Tree Pipits, Whitethroats, Willow Warblers and Yellowhammers.

During June and early July, large gatherings of Swifts can be seen frequently.

The return migration really gets going in August when a variety of waders can be expected. By the end of September the first winter visitors may be seen. Early October often results in a marked Thrush movement as hundreds of Fieldfares and Redwings leave Scandinavia.

The family cycle of Swans is very evident from the Club; much more so than the more numerous Mallards and Coot. Through the year we see a pair in their bright white plumage and in spring as they bring their brood sailing past.

Then ensues the weekly check to note how fast they grow and to count if any have succumbed to the Pike or perhaps the fox. So the summer passes as they grow to full size before flying off to make a life of their own. Another fine sight can sometimes be seen from the OOD box as the colourful flash of a Kingfisher flies by to and from the trees just east of the box.

## **The Bats around Frensham Pond**

The mysteries of these night-time creatures are explained by Colin Boys:

“In summer and as night comes to the Pond one can sometimes see a bat flash past over the water without realising the extent of their presence around the Club. In the British Isles there are 16 species of bat. The largest is the Greater Mouse-eared bat, re-discovered in a tunnel to the north of Chichester in 2003 after it had been declared extinct in 1990. It has a wingspan of 450mm and a weight of 45 grams. The smallest is the Pipistrelle with a wingspan of 200mm and a weight of 3-5 grams. On a warm evening when the veranda lights are on the one you are most likely to see on the pond side of the Club House is the Daubenton's bat.

A bat will eat between 2 and 3 thousand insects in a night's feeding. Bats use a combination of sight and ultrasound (20-100kHz) to determine their position relative to their food and to find their way among trees and buildings. Their 'acoustic radar' operates at a frequency above the range of the human ear, but a special bat detecting radio receiver converts the sound they transmit to a much lower one which we can hear. This enables their presence to be detected even if we cannot see them in the dark. Their repetitive click on the bat detector changes to a raspberry sound as the bat zeros in on the insect.

There are many clues for identifying bats, such as where they are flying, how high, fast/slow wing beat, the ratio of the wing width to length and how they feed.

The Brown Long-Eared bat, for example, flies around the middle of a large tree, has broad wings, a very quiet ultra sound and flies up to a vertical stall as it picks insects from leaves.

The Pipistrelles are easy to identify, as their flight is fast and very erratic. They can be anywhere from around lamp posts to around houses and trees.

### **So which bats do we have at the club?**

There are several species of bat to be seen at the dusk, both along the water and amongst the trees.

Daubenton's flying over the reeds in front of the club, *Pipistrelle pipistrellus* (45) and *Pipistrell pygmaeus* (55) around the mid-week changing room jetties. Pipistrelle 45 and 55 are so named because of the constant frequency part of their echo location, which is at 45 and 55 kHz.

The big oaks by the Clubhouse attract the Brown Long Eared bat and the Pipistrelle 45. Both are also found by the powerboat sheds.

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### B26

A Daubenton's water bat works along the reeds in front of the veranda.

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The Daubenton's is also called the Water Bat, as it flies very close to the surface of the water and when it locates an insect on the surface goes lower, dragging its feet in the water. It gaffs and traps the insect with its combined sharp claws and hairy feet. In torchlight it appears quite big and white. Although they find torch light annoying, (do it too much and they go somewhere else) they can switch to mainly echo location.

There are several other types of bat on the pond, but they can only be identified by trapping in a mist net. This activity requires a special permit which would be

difficult to obtain, bearing in mind that Frensham Common is an ISSSI (International Site of Special Scientific Interest) location.”

### **Badgers and mink**

The whole area of Frensham is a natural home for many species of wild life. Some of the less visible ones are the badgers who live in the vicinity of the Pond and can be seen only at night. Also mink are believed to live in the small pond fed by the Pond outlet and are frequently seen in our pond at night.

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An aerial view of the Pond

Same as on back cover – see end

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# The International Cadet

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C1

A group of modern Cadets running fast down-wind from No 4 Buoy

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In 1947 the editor of the revitalised Yachting World magazine, Group Capt. Haylock, sponsored Jack Holt to design a three-sail dinghy suitable for youth and the result was the Cadet. This was one of the first of Jack Holt's post-war designs and it proved an immediate success. The design was specified for it to be suitable to be built by amateur enthusiasts even including youths themselves. The hulls were all framed and difficult to get down to the minimum weight, until the frameless version appeared in the late 1960s.

Of course the sails were made of cotton and the masts and boom had external tracks. The use of fittings was kept to an absolute minimum - full of buoyancy bags, it had no jamming cleats, no inboard sheeting, rope instead of shroud plates, no barber-haulers, no compasses, small spinnaker, and cotton sails. The boat we see today is quite different, despite having retained the same hull shape. In those times there was no other competitive dinghy for youth.

## **Cadets used the pond in 1949**

From the very beginning of the Club the Cadets and their parents have found great reward in the activities of the Club and have contributed a great deal to the Club. The presence of the Cadets at Frensham pre-dated the formation of the Club, primarily those of Charterhouse school, who from as long ago as 1949 had eleven boats, numbers 358 to 368. In addition there were some privately owned Cadets at the school, including No. 212 owned by John Wakeham. Then in the early 50s, Jim and Pam Morley sailed 'Flying Saucer', a Cadet built by their father, which took part in the first race of the Sailing Club, at Easter 1953.

In 1955 the Committee said that consideration should be given to the formation of a Cadet section. Cadet races would take place on Saturday afternoons, but only those during school holidays would count for seasons points. From that date their numbers gradually increased.

## **The Cadets are given great encouragement**

The Cadets were always given great encouragement, the Club recognising that they formed an important part of the future. For a number of years the committee wanted to

have the cadets run their own affairs under the watchful eye of a senior Club member. In 1958, 29 cadet members attended their Cadet meeting appointing James Ware as Cadet Captain; Mary Kilgour as Cadet Secretary; and a committee comprising Alan Winter, Peter Jones, and Tim Willcocks; although only the last named sailed a Cadet. Dr Ware was appointed Cadet liaison officer. For the first ten or so years of the Club's existence a Cadet Open was held which took the form of two up racing on Saturday, but single-handed on Sunday.

## **Developments in the Sixties**

By 1960 the Club had about 22 Cadets, but initially only 2 or 3 were active in racing. However, in 1962 Lt Col Tony Townsend-Rose was appointed Class Captain. He worked hard at making the class prosper. The Squadron had 15 boats of which 8 raced.

The Frensham Open had 6 Frensham and 2 visiting boats. Peter W Jenkins, then a visitor, won for the second year while John Townsend-Rose lead the Club boats. The single-handed Open was held on a separate week-end and had an entry of 12 boats which was won by our own Nicholas Martin. The Wares and Houstons left the Squadron but the Dents, Suters, Dentons, Westcotts and Coles joined the fleet.

1964 saw the number of Cadets racing improve, numbering 25 of which 5 went to Burnham for Cadet week and one came in the first 20. The Squadron also had team races away at Littlehampton, Chatham and Keyhaven.

By 1965 the Cadets had 33 boats and was the largest fleet in the country. Mr Coles agreed to be second in command and the Cadets began to make their mark on the Club trophies, the Helmsman of the Year won by Nicholas Martin, crewed by his brother.

1966 was the year of the Cadet's first UK National Championship and the appointment of Mr Coles as the Club's Cadet Captain. It was very appropriate that Nicholas and Robert won the Peter Martin trophy, being presented in memory of their father.

The era of wet suits had not yet arrived and the Club's Winter. racing program did not extend beyond January. In keeping with this the Cadets had not been allowed to race in December but this year the rule was amended to allow them to sail up to Christmas as long as the OOD considered the conditions were not dangerous.

In 1967 the Cadet class was described as keen but by no means at full strength and was showing fewer numbers. However, they entered the Club's team racing event for the Kilgour Trophy for the first time; which was won by the Larks. David Edmund-Jones and N Reeks were two cadets who were later to make their mark in Club racing, but at this time got a mention as being 'improved cadets'. However, by 1968, the Class had shown a marked downward trend. This decline was discussed by the General Committee and at the A.G.M. and it was decided to continue with the class for a further year.

## **A great resurgence in numbers**

Laurie Weeden took over as Cadet Class Captain in 1969 and his drive and personality brought the Class back to health, and set the pattern for what the cadets have achieved since. He organised tuition and racing every Saturday morning and programmed racing on Sundays. The Commodore reported a great resurgence due almost entirely to Laurie, who had moved heaven and earth to get the boats on the water.

The core of the Squadron centred round Tim Weeden in his Cadet number 528. The other young cadets included Steve McQueen (who was later to win the Laser Nationals) who raced the Pierrepont School Cadet, Simon and Bruce Hill and Ian and Keith Videlo.

The Cadet Open was revived with an entry of 8 boats including one visitor, Ossie Stewart, who went on to National and Olympic glory. It was quite an eye opener to see the local boats left trailing by several legs in each race. Mind you, they did have ancient boats which could hardly be said to be in racing trim.

Laurie twisted a few arms and led a group of four cadets to the Southern Area Championships being held in Poole. There were 30 boats entered and our four Cadets distinguished themselves finishing in the order in 27th, 28th, 29th and 30th. Well 'from little acorns do big oak trees grow'. They subsequently amassed two Cadet National and World Champions and later an OK National Junior Champion plus two Laser, one Lark and one Solo National Champion.

## **Success in the Seventies**

In 1970 Steve McQueen, crewed by Ian Videlo, won three of the four races sailed in Cadets at the RYA trials to gain selection to the International Youth Worlds held in Czechoslovakia. Their opponents in the trials were few but of considerable reputation in other classes. Steve's success convinced the Flag Officers to award him the first King of Thailand Award.

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C2

Nigel Barrow and Geoffrey Grimes. Looking for the wind at  
the World Championships in Belgium.

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Nigel Barrow joined the Cadet Class in 1971. His greater experience taught the others a great deal and did a lot to improve their standard. Still under the very able leadership of Laurie Weeden, the Cadets started to hold their own at Open meetings, and Nigel Barrow came 23rd at the Nationals out of 182 entries. Alister and Anthea Thomson joined the Class, Alister initially crewing for Nigel while Anthea helmed from the start.

Watching the racing at week-ends was Nina Hill who would often spend her time with a sketch pad. Subsequently she produced the fine painting of Cadets which she kindly donated to the Club.

In 1972 Don Videlo took over as Cadet Class Captain assisted by Les Thomson and Ken Hill. Six Cadets attended the Nationals, the outstanding performance was that of Nigel Barrow and Alister Thomson, who were placed 2nd overall in an entry of 180 competitors; and they won the Southern Area Championship at Torquay.

In addition, Simon Hill, Tim Weeden, David Grimes and Ian Videlo all came in the first three at one or more of the meetings held at Lymington, Northampton, Grafham, Littlehampton and Federation week. Other youngsters showing great promise included Anthea Thomson, Neil Hayworth, Matthew Biggs, Keith Videlo and James McGrath.

The following year Nigel Barrow and Geoffrey Grimes won both the National and World Championships. As a result the Club donated a trophy to the Cadet Class Association, to be known as the Frensham Trophy and raced for at their Nationals.

The Cadet Class programme for the following year praised Nigel's achievement in winning the Worlds writing:

“Nigel will be remembered as one of the most liked champions of the Cadet Class. Tactically he had that extra perception to choose without fuss the best starting position, the best course to sail and the quickest way to the finishing line when the race was almost won.”

The writer recounts how

“the week was half-way through, when the Race Officer gave the port end an enormous bias to counteract a swift running ebb tide. Some few minutes before the ‘ten’ a windshift increased the bias to a ridiculous advantage and I was dispatched to move the buoy back some hundred yards or so. When I arrived at the mark, there was Nigel, jib backed, white hat over his eyes, sitting happily about three yards away. As the buoy was picked up he smiled, nudged Geoffrey Grimes, his crew, into action and as he started to sail away he quietly said to me “What a pity - that could have been my best start all week!” And surprisingly enough he was sitting there almost alone!”

### **The seventies go from strength to strength**

In 1974 and using home made sails, Ian Videlo came 2nd at the Nationals at Burnham and 1st at the Barnt Green, Broxbourne, Grafham Water & Poole Opens. Keith Videlo was 2nd in the Junior section of the Nationals. David Grimes was 1st at Torquay, Alister Thomson was 3rd at the Nationals, 1st at Hayling Island Open meeting with sister Anthea 2nd, and also 2nd in the Hayling Federation series which was won by James McGrath. This was the strongest Frensham ‘team’ performance with 8 boats in the first twenty at the Nationals.

The Frensham cadets kept up their fine performance at the 1975 Nationals in which Ian and Karen Videlo were first, Keith Videlo was 10th, David Grimes was 12th. Ian and Karen Videlo went on to win the Worlds in Trieste with a score of zero points, and where David and Geoffrey Grimes finished well up. David was also Northern Area Champion at Bolton. Anthea Thomson was first at Hayling Island and 1st in our own Open.

Frank McQuillin took over the Captaincy of the Cadets in 1976. Keith Videlo had a magnificent season in his Cadet, winning the Midland Area Championship as well as the opens at Barnt Green, Broxbourne, Grafham, South Cemey, Blue Circle, and Middle Nene. With sister Karen they won the Nationals and he went on with David Green as crew to win the World Championships in Bombay.

Two years later Guy Lewington came 2nd in his Cadet at Hayling and Karen Videlo won the Girls trophy at the Cadet Nationals.

Jim Pye took over the cadets following Frank McQuillin. John Brickwood won most of Frensham's Cadet trophies in 1979. Karen Videlo and Martin Cushing came 3rd in Parkstone's Cadet open, where Guy Lewington came 4th.

### **Keith Videlo describes the 1970s as seen through the eyes of a cadet:**

“One Thursday evening in January 1968 my father came home with a Cadet for my brother Ian and myself. The boat, sail number 1697, was bought from John Beasley for £5 ( ... you wouldn't pay much more today). After replacing what was left of the skin and re-decking plus buying new sails (the mainsail had reefing points), and making a grooved mast and boom, we were ready to start sailing. Before this, Ian and I had crewed for my father in his Enterprise (10117).

As I recall, the Cadet squad were all of a similar age and new to the fleet. The three main boats were ourselves, Tim Weeden, Simon and Bruce Hill, with Laurie being our squadron captain. Tim's Cadet, sail no 528, as Laurie will tell you, was formerly owned by Peter De Savery, subsequently of millionaire status and America's Cup fame.

As we started our adventure in Cadets we had no older cadets to guide us. We just went sailing on Saturdays and Sundays, with no idea as to where this could lead us. We were all totally naïve, but very enthusiastic.

After a couple of years of sailing only at Frensham, Laurie Weeden cajoled us to try our first Open meeting in 1970 - the Southern areas at Parkstone SC. This was our first introduction to waves.

Simon and Bruce, who were by far the most experienced of us did well to finish all the races and achieved some commendable results in strong winds. The Videlo boys discovered waves for the first time and they were not to our liking! Without a self-bailer we nearly sank. We were so far behind the fleet that we had to drag our boat back across Poole harbour (we finished a low tide !).

In 1970, Frensham played host to the RYA Team Racing finals. This was a very prestigious event and by far the biggest event the club has ever organised. Clubs all over the UK battled it out throughout the year to make the last 16 and the Final.

The event was held in October with Prince Philip presenting the prizes. Our job, as part of the Cadet fleet, was to post a copy of the results on a notice board specially erected on Brighton Beach.

### **1971 and our first Nationals**

In 1971, Tim and ourselves persuaded parents to upgrade to newer boats. Our first event of the season was a two day Open at Littlehampton. I remember on the Saturday we had to sail out of the river to the sea. The wind was probably force four. The river part was fine. When we got to the sea and saw the three foot waves .... we promptly turned round and sailed straight back home! Simon and Tim battled it out and had great day's sailing. On Sunday the wind dropped and we managed to complete the two races.

Also that year, David Grimes was bought Cadet 6002 which had finished 12th in the Nationals the previous year. I remember we all looked in awe at this boat. We had never seen such a good Cadet before. It looked totally different to our boats.

The GP fleet in the 60s and early 70s was considered to be very strong. One of the best GP helms was Nigel Barrow crewed by his father Taffy. Nigel was only 14 and showing considerable promise in the GP fleet. Occasionally he would borrow the club Cadet and show us how Cadets should really be sailed. There was great speculation in the club as to how well Nigel could do in Cadets if he started sailing them seriously. Eventually in 1971 Nigel made the leap from GP to Cadet.

Team Frensham decided to have a go at the Cadet Nationals at Burnham. My main memory of our first Nationals was being parent free and staying at Burnham Sailing Club. The others who were slightly older than us stayed in digs around Burnham. This meant our accommodation was next to the sailing club (Royal Corinthian YC) and we were tasked with looking after Team Frensham's very smelly sailing gear. By mid week our room smelled terrible! We finished 96th in our first nationals behind Simon & Bruce Hill, Tim Weeden and David Grimes with Nigel Barrow being the best Frensham boat about 20th.

In those days there was only one fleet, no segregation into A,B & C fleets.

### **1972 and another attempt at the Cadet Nationals**

1972 saw our second attempt at the Cadet Nationals. We were joined by two new helms, Steve McQueen, who mainly sailed a Graduate but often borrowed his school Cadet, and David Smithwhite. Nigel now with a year's experience of sailing Cadets, with Alister Thomson as crew, managed to finish an incredible 2nd out of an entry of 185 boats. As a result Nigel was selected for the 1973 Cadet Worlds in Belgium. We managed in one race to finish 5th which was a massive surprise for us.

We ended up 42nd but Steve McQueen came 29th and Simon & Bruce Hill were 39th.

After the Nationals, Ian was bought a brand new Larkman built Cadet and I was given the chance to helm our old one.

### **1973: an incredible year**

In 1973 the Cadet Class association was presented with a dilemma as the size of the Cadet National fleet was becoming too big. It was therefore decided to split the fleet in two, with a Junior fleet (under 15s) and a Senior fleet (over 15s). Nigel being in his last year of Cadets, won most of the Open meetings he attended that year. He went to Belgium and won the Cadet Worlds followed by the Nationals, crewed by Geoffrey Grimes.

This was an incredible feat and left us feeling inspired and awe struck. The Frensham clubhouse was decorated in flags to celebrate his win. Later that year Nigel started sailing 470s and finished second in the Nationals held at Warsash.

As for the rest of team Frensham:

#### **Senior Fleet**

Nigel Barrow & Geoffrey Grimes	1st
Simon and Bruce Hill	14th
Ian Videlo and Steven Green	17th
Alister Thomson	19th
David & Alan Grimes	37th
Tim Weeden	48th
David Smithwhite	71st

#### **Junior Fleet**

Keith Videlo & Steven Kaack	14th
Anthea Thomson & Karen Videlo	23rd

This was Simon Hill's last year of sailing Cadets. Simon & Bruce went on to sail Cherubs and won the Nationals several times. Now Bruce can be seen sailing his Laser and Lark at Frensham with his sons.

This year was memorable for the introduction of a new single-handed boat on the water, the Laser, and Ken Read and Paul Barrow were amongst the first to buy one. By 1974 Queen Mary SC were regularly getting 60 or 70 boats in a club race.

In the same year, the Frensham Lark fleet was presented with a major but welcome problem of how to cope with 60 plus boats at the Open meeting, still forced to use a fixed line. It was eventually decided to split the fleet into 4 groups and hold heats.

The McLaren and Barrow families dominated sailing at Frensham in the 60s and early 70s. A crewing job for Julian Hereward, John McLaren, David or Nigel Barrow was considered a real honour and a great learning experience.

In those days the sailing programme was very different. The summer programme was similar to our current winter programme except the handicap race was held at the end of the day. The winter programme consisted of one group of class racing in the morning and another in the afternoon, but it finished at the end of January. The majority of boats sailed at Frensham were wooden and it was felt by their owners that they would need a couple of months to repaint them before the start of the next season.

The great opportunity for an aspiring Cadet presented itself during the February and March informal Handicap and Pursuit racing. The objective was to secure a crewing job in a Lark while our Cadet boats were being repaired following the rigours of the previous season.

### **1974 Cathy Foster goes on to become a top helm**

In 1974 Cathy Foster, who crewed for Julian Hereward in his Lark, started University. This left Julian without a crew and I was fortunate to be asked to fill in while Cathy was at University. Cadets therefore took a back seat that year whilst I sailed with Julian. Looking back, sailing with Julian turned out to be a fantastic experience and I learnt loads. It was noticeable that even though I didn't sail Cadets that much I still improved considerably mainly thanks to Julian. It is no surprise that Cathy Foster went on to become one of the country's top helms and finished 7th in the 470 class at 1984 Los Angeles Olympics.

In the Cadets Ian had been doing well, winning just about all the Opens he attended and coming second in the Nationals, using a suit of home-made sails!

#### **1974 Cadet National Results**

##### **Senior Fleet**

6801 - Ian & Karen Videlo	2nd
6822 - Alister Thomson	3rd
6789 - Tim Weeden	34th
6680 - Anthea Thomson	78th

##### **Junior Fleet**

4956 - Keith Videlo	2nd
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### **1975 and an unhappy incident at the Pond**

1975 and 1976 Frensham Cadet Opens were marred by two deaths. In 1975 somebody on the far shore committed suicide and in 1976 a young lad drowned by buoy 3 when his rubber dinghy capsized. This occurred between the 2nd and 3rd races. I remember sailing the last race and seeing both club rescue boats being commandeered by the Police. It took the Police 3 days to find the body.

1975 saw Ian and Karen dominate the Cadets. They won nearly all the Opens and then went on to win the Cadet Nationals and Worlds in Trieste, Italy. They won all the races at the Nationals except two (on one occasion being beaten by his brother!)



- and just about every race at the Worlds. A fantastic performance! David Grimes also did well at the Worlds.

The Worlds were livened up by a violent thunderstorm as one race was about to start. Lightning was striking the water very close to the Cadets, and they were hurriedly chased back to the shelter of the harbour.

### 1975 Cadet National Results

#### Senior Fleet

6801 - Ian Karen Videlo	1st
6787 - Keith Videlo	10th
6952 - David Grimes	12th
6680 -Anthea Thomson & John Brickwood	31st

After the Worlds and having reached 17 Ian went into the Lark fleet joining David Smithwhite and company. This year also marked a transition in the Lark class nationally. John Baker, who was the sole Lark builder, had for many years trouble producing hulls that were as stiff and competitive as the early Larks. This meant Julian and company all sailed old Larks (Julian's was 43, John McLaren's 18, Simon Millar's 12 - now Philip Whitney's). But in 1975 John Baker produced hulls that were as competitive as the original Larks. This led to resurgence in the Lark fleet, with Stokes Bay leading the way. The next couple of winters saw the Stokes Bay sailors joining us as winter members (now we go there!).

### 1976 Keith Videlo wins the Nationals and the World Championships

In 1976 I managed to win both Cadet Nationals and Worlds in Bombay, India, but not wishing to be quite as greedy as Ian, I won by a much closer margin.

I was crewed by Karen at the Nationals and David Green in Bombay. To visit Bombay was a memorable experience. The event was run by the Indian Sea Cadets and the competitors stayed aboard what appeared to be a large ship tied up alongside the jetty, but which was a concrete imitation of a ship firmly placed on land beside the water. The wind pattern in Bombay was to experience a light easterly until about 10 am when it would drop to zero and pick up again about 12.30 pm when the sea breeze would give a good moderate westerly. Having a morning race meant the race start was at 7.30 am and launching in the semi-dark just as the sun was about to rise - no time for the Christmas stocking on Christmas day.

We travelled round the city quite safely and in one of the many identical taxis. They were the old Morris Oxfords, made in India, but none of the speedos worked! Most parents stayed in modern hotels on the other side of the city, which proved most convenient because when we were not sailing or wandering round the large Emporia, we would make use of their hotel swimming pools!

The closing ceremony was memorable as my crew David, being the youngest competitor, was chosen to ring the eight bells, it being New Years Eve. This he did with a great glow - we never did find out how he got hold of his rum and cokes!

## 1976 Cadet National Results

### Senior Fleet

6801 - Keith & Karen Videlo 1st  
6680 - Anthea Thomson & John Brickwood 16th

After the Nationals and with a year to spare before I had to leave Cadets, I decided to join Ian and the other ex-Cadets in the Lark fleet. However, the highlight of the year was Nigel Barrow making the Olympic team as reserve helm for the tune up boat in the 470 class."

The Cadets subsequently went through a cyclic downturn until the young Mitchell family came along. Aiden Mitchell won the Cadet Inland National Championships and came 6th in the Nationals.

By 1983 there had been a big transformation in the Cadet fleet largely due to the efforts of Tim Mitchell aided by Ian Craig and Peter Dyer who all helped with the training on Saturday mornings. Aiden Mitchell came 3rd in the Cadet Nationals and Cordelia Eglin won the Girls trophy.

In the 1985 Cadet Nationals, Gerard and Gemma Mitchell came 5th, while Matthew Humphries was 2nds in the B Fleet. Gerard and Gemma came 12th in the Cadet Worlds.

Ian Craig took over the Cadets in 1986. Gerard and Gemma Mitchell were members of the UK team at the Worlds in both Melbourne and later in Spain, finishing the best placed British boat in both. Gerard was also 2nd in the Nationals, in which 4 Frensham boats took 4 of the first 7 places in the B Fleet. Gemma took the top girl's prize and Nick Craig the best U/13.

1989 saw Colin Gilbert taking over as Cadet Class captain. Nick Craig came 4th in his Cadet out of 467 boats in the Bloody Mary. Gemma Mitchell and Ben Hoy have done very well in Cadets. They won the Inland Championships, came 2nd in the Nationals, 4th in the Worlds in Holland, and won the Opens at Queen Mary, Frensham and Aldenham.

Tim Mitchell writes of the Frensham Cadets during his family's time in the class spanning the 1980s to 1989.

"By the time we moved to Farnham in the mid 70s the golden era of the Frensham Cadets was beginning to wane a little. Having had 3 world champions in Nigel Barrow and both Ian and Keith Videlo, things had returned to a more normal level. But the fleet was still strong and it was a happy time.

Karen Videlo had taken over the tiller from her brothers and although she didn't have the same championship success as they, she was still very competitive and good fun. The Cushing brothers, Colin Robertson (later to sail GPs and Enterprises at the Club), John Brickwood (later the Lark National champion), Guy Lewington

(later the Cherub National champion), Andy Hicks, Keith & Neil McQuillan (sons of the class captain) all sailed well and frequently.

And of course there were our own children, Louise, Aidan, Gerard and Gemma, three of whom made the British team though none quite managed to emulate our earlier champions. At the beginning of the 80s, Aidan came 3rd in the Cadet Nationals and Cordelia Eglin won the Girls trophy.

However, Gerard did win the Nationals and make third in the World, while Gemma managed 2nd in the Nationals and 4th in the Worlds. And of course Matthew Humphries was one of our Cadets. (He and Gerard passed quickly out of dinghies and into keel boats and have already completed 7 Whitbread/Volvo Round the World Races between them as well as countless other off shore events. Both are full time professional yacht racers now.)

Following in their wake were other great sailors like Nick Craig (who has won many championships in OKs and other boats), Roger Gilbert (who dominates the RS 400 class and now sails 49ers). However, it is worth noting that on leaving Cadets both Nick and Roger first went into a club class, Enterprises, in which they did (and still do) pretty well.

Sam Barron-Fox and others have also made the British Cadet team since then.

Reverting to the late 70s, at an international level, other countries had caught up and overtaken us. At our National Championships at Burnham in 1979, I think, the first 3 places went to Dutch boats! We at Frensham and a few of the other squadrons decided that it was time we put a stop to this. We instigated training sessions at Frensham in the Autumn, involving Hayling Island, Parkstone and Tamesis Cadets and asking many of our top sailors to help. This proved popular and successful and standards steadily improved. The National Cadet Association then decided we needed a national coach and squad training. Eventually the RYA reluctantly agreed to help, though they have always been a bit ambivalent about the Cadet.

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### C3

A more modern Cadet in glass fibre preparing for the start on a late Autumn day

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One of the major differences between then and now is that the earlier generation of cadets sailed far more races. They would race on Saturday morning then join the afternoon Handicap and as often as not give the adults more than a run for their money. Then they'd be back out for two races on Sunday.

During the Summer Frensham Cadets travelled to most of the Open Meetings and their names are to be found on many of the trophies around the country. Add to this

the regular Easter meeting at the Royal de Kaag Yacht Club in Holland, followed immediately by training and Inland Nationals at Rutland Water plus the Nationals at Burnham on Crouch, several indicator meetings and if lucky the Worlds (we did Spain, Holland, Belgium, Australia and UK) and you can see that the cadet's life and that of their parents was pretty busy!"

In 1992 Cadets did well with Sam Barron-Fox who came 5th in the Worlds and 2nd in the Nationals. Sam also won the Hermes Challenge in a 404. Jonathan Rix crewed by James Day was the under 15 National Champion. Nick Barron-Fox was the East Area Champion.

### **Colin Gilbert tells of the Cadets in the 1990s**

"Frensham was fortunate during the late 80s and early 90s. There was a hard core of cadets who sailed whenever possible and the constant competition honed their racing skills. Out on the circuit we showed a depth of talent that attracted others and we had Frensham Open turnouts of over 60.

Gemma Mitchell, Nick Craig and Katrina Gilbert usually led the way with Annabel Leslie, Michele Marchant and Stephen Stewart not far behind - note the preponderance of girls! We had a regular 3 or 4 boats in the Squad for some years and representation in the World team, of only 5 boats in those days, throughout the period.

This era saw the last traditional Nationals at Burnham-on-Crouch which was a brilliant place for learning about tides, mud (on both sides of the dyke) and campsite camaraderie. No more short-tacking up the bank only yards from bedraggled spectating parents, no more wild rides down the tide in 30 knots of Westerly with soft ooze to struggle ashore on if it all went upside-down. It may not have been fair open racing, but it was very educational!

### **Nick Craig makes the world team**

Nick Craig took on the Frensham mantle, he made the World Team for Pwllheli when still in the "B" Fleet and won all the local pond Opens in 1990, going with John Pickford as crew to Puck in Poland for the Worlds, where creature comforts were scarce but strong winds gave the British and Nick excellent results. Roger Gilbert (also with John Pickford as supercrew) repeated the pond's clean sweep the following year, was 2nd in the Nationals and went on the first visit to Argentina since the Falklands over Christmas 1991.

Sailing on the River Plate, in medium winds and short chop in shallow (less than 2 metres even though a couple of miles offshore) and chocolate coloured water, the event was dominated by the locals who had trained there 5 days a week. Ashore, Buenos Aires was a fascinating experience, huge city, huge steaks and all-night traffic. While the team was there the currency changed by a factor of 10,000 at midnight on New Year's Eve. The team dinner that night, with the Aussies, Indians

and the odd Pole, cost 4.5 million Australs on a variety of parents' credit cards. The following night it would have only been a dull 450 Pesos! The obvious gulf between Argentina's very rich and very poor was an eye-opener to all, but there was clearly a policy of "don't mention the War" for the hosts.

Back at Frensham, Sam Barron-Fox showed blistering speed although often in erratic directions, but later did well and went to Lake Balaton in Hungary while his brother, Nick went to the ultimate World's destination of Tasmania.

During this period of 5 years there was the beginning of the fall-off in all-weekend participation at Frensham. This could have been due to the onset of course work for GCSEs which was now always there on the conscience to be done, or could have been a change in parents' attitude. Many 1980's cadets had parents who sailed actively at the club and were there on Sundays in any case, but this proportion declined after 1990. The RYA squad training also took the top few away for many weekends, which perhaps reduced the numbers keen and able to sail regularly on Sundays below the "critical mass". Whichever of these, it means most Cadets today spend less time on the water than in the 1980s, which is a pity for them."

### **The Cadets roll on through the nineties**

Nick Royse was Squadron Captain from 95 to 99 and writes about the 1990s:

"During the mid 90s the success of the Frensham Cadet Squadron rolled on. Sunday Cadet sailing was now as rare as hen's teeth, but the racing successes and the benefit in the personal development to the young Cadet sailors continued. The long list of Frensham's World Team members was added to every year until 1999. In 1993 Sam Barron-Fox & Nicole Lewis were 7th in the Belgium World Championships and also became Cadet Inland Champions at Rutland. Sam's brother Nick & Paul Lewis were 3rd in the Tasmanian Worlds in 1994, having led the event until the last two (light wind) races.

In 1995 it was Alister Wylam & Jonathan Alwyn who attended the Worlds in Mallorca, but unfortunately Jonathan was taken ill during the event. James Day & Matt Bell did well coming seventh in the Indian Worlds in Bombay in 96 and competed again the following year when they were held in Torbay. In 1999 Andrea Brewster & Charlotte Clay also earned the trip to Australia. Victoria & Emma Rawlinson went to Worlds in both 98 and 99 where they repeated Gemma Mitchell's feat of being 4th, so equalling the highest placing achieved by a girl in a Cadet World Championship. The Rawlinson sisters also went on to gain a Gold medal in a 420 in the World Youth Championships.

Throughout the period Frensham provided strong support to the Cadet Class Committee, but at a terrible cost. In 1994 when travelling to attend his last Cadet Class Association AGM and resign as Vice Chairman, Ian Craig was killed in a motoring accident. The shock to family, friends, the Club and Cadet Class was

enormous and a national fund raising effort led to the purchase of the Ian Craig Trophy in his memory.

The cup is awarded annually for the best Inland Cadet Open Meeting results. We chose the Inland Open Meetings as the basis for this cup in acknowledgement of the countless Open Meetings to which Ian had taken Nick. Since 1995, the Trophy has been won by no fewer than four Frensham sailors: James Day, Mark Brewster, Andrea Brewster and David Royse.

Numbers of active sailors peaked again in the mid 90s and attendance at Frensham's October Training and Open Meetings enjoyed turnouts in excess of 60 boats. This was a reflection on the very active group of parents and sailors travelling the Open Meeting circuit. The friendships they established helped boost the profile of Frensham.

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#### C4

It can be very exciting in heavy weather. Andrea Brewster planing at sea.

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Frensham continued to run the Open Cadet training every October, and the 1990s saw such trainers as Mark Littlejohn (who coached Shirley Robinson to a Gold medal in the Sydney Olympics) and Mike MacNamara (who has won over 50 World and National Championships) training our Cadet sailors.

### **Frensham as a Champion Club**

However the principles of quality training for active Youth sailors were developed a stage further, when in the late 90s the RYA introduced the Championship Club scheme to encourage active structured Youth racing. Frensham became one of the first Championship Clubs, the main change to our activities was to introduce Youth Laser sailing. Representatives of Frensham in the National Laser Youth Squads were Andrea Brewster in the Radial Youth Squad, Dan Ward and David Royse full rig Laser Youth Squad.

By now many other clubs had regular active training and the introduction of Regional Squads and growth of the size of National Youth Squads resulted in greater competition for World team places. Frensham's strength was matched in many other Cadet Squadrons, and our relative success has declined.

There were many other successes by Cadet sailors, some racing but many in personal development. Every year in the mid 90s several Frensham Cadet sailors became RYA Instructors enabling them to put something back into the sport. Who can blame them if many chose to do their instructing in the south of France for the summer?"

## **1999 and into the new millennium**

Martin Cooper writes:

“Four clubs in the Southern Region (Frensham, Parkstone, Highcliffe and Lymington) joined together to provide winter training events for all cadet sailors, of every ability. So successful has this been in developing sailors that it has been introduced within other regions around the UK.

Since 1999 the Junior and Youth Committee has been able to upgrade the old wooden club boats and buy nearly new and new fibre-glass Cadets. The club now owns 6 fibreglass Cadets and a double trailer. This has been made possible by the club's affiliation to the RYA's Champion Club scheme and FPSC's belief in its goals along with generous sponsorship from Lancaster Volvo, Sport England and the Lottery.

The new boats have provided an excellent resource to help new members get on the water without having to buy a boat first, and to provide a fleet of boats for beginner training. Club owned boats have provided prospective new helms who do not have a boat yet to have the chance to enter regional and national events and be competitive.

The travelling fleet has also benefited enormously from having a safety rib (Lionheart) that can travel to major events. This has provided familiar faces on the water when support is needed. This has been especially useful for the novice circuit sailors.

None of this would have been possible without substantial lottery funding and donations from local firms and associations for which we are very grateful.

The Frensham Cadets have maintained their competitiveness over recent years at National and local level. FPSC members have regularly held National Squad and Regional Squad places. 2003/2004 has been another good year with 25% of National and Regional Squad places being filled by our young sailors.

We have many excellent young sailors who enjoy their sailing and racing at Frensham and on the open circuit. The club's sailing and racing future will come from our junior sailors, they have been and will continue to be our champions.”

# The International Enterprise

## **Sylvia Rhodes tells about the Blue Sail Wonders**

“My acquaintance with the Enterprise started in 1970 when a teaching colleague looked across the staff room at break and said “I think you would like sailing, Sylvia”. Her husband was Chris Savage, then Enterprise Class Captain at Frensham. I agreed to meet them the following Saturday at the club, and it must have been very breezy, because the three of us were hiking out on the toe straps, planing from mark 2 to 5 in a cloud of spray. I was hooked! Chris found me a sound boat E4314, wooden mast, no transom flaps, no outhaul, and I paid my one guinea to Eddie Lougher for Winter membership and started trying to race. So it all began for me!

## **The origins of the Enterprise**

Jack Holt was the leading designer of the plywood dinghies of the 1950s. These were able to be home built and brought dinghy racing within reach of many thousands who could not previously have afforded it. Most of his designs are still active today.

Before 1953 he had produced the Cadet, the Heron and the GP14, all single chine dinghies with a substantial number of frames, as anyone who has stripped and varnished an old one will know. The GP was an excellent boat but had a hull weight of 285lb and with no genoa or spinnaker then, was a mite dull. A newer, lighter and more racing orientated design was called for, and in late 1953 the first “News Chronicle” Enterprise was unveiled.

## **The early days and growth of the class**

The new boat was double-chined, had a minimum of frames and had a hull weight of only 198lb. It also had glorious blue sails! Promoted by the paper, which it has outlived by many decades, two boats sailed from Dover to Calais and back, one with Jack as the crew. It was an instant success, being registered at a rate of about 1000/year - that is 3 a day! The blue sails were everywhere, particularly inland, and it probably became the best known dinghy on sail colour alone



### **The original specification**

Early Enterprises had construction and equipment that is now only found in museums. Masts were of spruce with no spreaders, metal fittings were of brass or gunmetal. The boats were held together with brass screws and Aerolite glue (which had to be mixed from powder) and, of course, they had pale blue best Egyptian Cotton sails.

A March 1959 price list (for boat No 3384) was as follows:-

Kit of Parts	£79.4.0d	(incl. Mast and boom @ £11.10.0d.)
Racing Sails	£26.10.0d	

For the idle rich a finished boat with sails and buoyancy was £146.0.0d.

By November 1959 terylene sails were available for an extra £6.0.0d!

### **The class continues to develop**

Throughout the 60s the class grew and became the gold standard small dinghy. Rivals were designed and promoted but fell by the wayside as the numbers surged through 10,000 and towards 15,000. Competition was fierce as top sailors fought to get the best out of such a responsive boat; the roll tack was made for it. The 1960s saw many added features which we all take for granted today. As these became permitted there was a continuing task of doing a bit of DIY to keep it up-to-date and make it easier to sail. Normal spreaders were soon added to the wooden masts, and to control the side bend of some 'soft' masts, diamond spreaders would be added also. Then came self-bailers followed by transom flaps, both now regarded as necessities.

### **Cotton sails are replaced with Terylene**

Sails were made of cotton until the late fifties, and there was the option of putting up your smaller cruising sails, although hardly ever seen when racing. Aluminium masts appeared in the mid-60s, but it was a few years before they were evidently better than the wooden ones. Terylene sails made a big improvement, being able to provide a stable control of sail shape, and give better performance. All these improvements gave the owner a minor speed edge, for a few weeks or months, until the others caught up. However the best sailors normally won regardless as this was a boat which rewarded skill above all else.

A number of trials were made to see if the fitting of a spinnaker would increase the excitement and attraction of the boat to help it compete with newer designs such as the

Lark. These were generally inconclusive, as the Enterprise has, on the whole, more than enough sail and perhaps the increased excitement factor was not sufficient to make up for the increased occurrence of involuntary swimming lessons! In some parts of the world where lighter winds are the rule, such as Hong Kong, a spinnaker has been approved for local use.

The Enterprise was also now being constructed from conventional GRP, though initially with a hull weight penalty. While very successful for institutional use and, of course, requiring much less maintenance commitment, it took many years for sailors to be convinced they were as quick as the wooden boats. Fashions such as stiff or bendy masts, full or flat sails, taut or slack shrouds came and went.

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## C5

Enterprises planing down from No 2 buoy.

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However, around 1970 - 75 a serious attempt at measurement rule manipulation was exposed. Professional builders found that by narrowing the hull unnaturally between two of the forward section measurements, the resulting narrow-bowed shape gave enhanced windward performance at the cost of reduced forward buoyancy, but this latter also led to some loss of stability in a sea.

This distortion, christened the 'Benterprise' or 'Slenderprise', seemed to have a small but significant overall speed advantage. There was an outcry in the Enterprise Association Magazine and a rule was hastily brought in to ensure the bow was built to its intended shape and to ban the 'Benterprises' from major competition.

### **The first Enterprises at Frensham**

The first Enterprises appeared at the Club in the late 50s, and like everyone else at that time, the owners had to prove their intention to race, sometimes being granted conditional membership which would be ratified if they did take part in racing. However, this did not last long, being frowned upon by the Council and absolutely banned for local residents. John Beecher, the Membership Secretary, encouraged Edwin Lougher to join the Club at that time.

The Class grew sufficiently to become a recognised class in the Club and its first Summer points series was held in 1960. This was won by Tim Packard who had an interlude from racing his beloved GP, a feat he repeated the following year, before settling permanently for the GP. The first Open meeting for Enterprises was held in 1961 but it wasn't until 1967 that a Club member won, when Julian Hereward did so sailing a borrowed boat.

## **A look at the early results**

Dick Gill won the summer points series in 1962 and became Class Captain, helping it to expand. It was reported in 1964 that it was doing so successfully. Derek Mills, crewed by his wife Theresa, became the force to be reckoned with winning the Summer points in 1963 and 1964. Thereafter he opted for the OK where he performed equally well and throughout the sixties he would always be to the fore of his class as well as in the Club handicap racing. When the racing season was extended to the end of January, the Winter points series started for Enterprises in 1963/4 and was won by Derek Mills.

Dick Gill relinquished his role as Class Captain in 1966, handing over to Don Videlo and in that year fleet status was achieved in the Thames Valley area. Don won the Summer points series that year and again in 1969 after which time, being faced with painting a Cadet as well as the Enterprise, he opted for the fibre glass Lark.

Like most of the other classes, the Enterprises would have several team matches each year against local clubs. These included Wraysbury Lake, Hayling Island and the Royal Naval Sailing Association, Portsmouth which had strong fleets, but Frensham managed to win as many as it lost.

Active sailors included Derek Mills, John Ferguson-Smith, Ron Atkinson, John Fitchie, Don Videlo, and Dennis Lomer. They were soon joined by Ian McLaren, Bob Saunders, and later Chris Savage and John Beasley.

The Winter Points results gave Richard (Dick) Gill first, Miss J. Ford second and Walter Ulrich third positions. 1967 saw a marked improvement in turn-outs and the Summer Series went to Bob Saunders, a farmer from Odiham.

1968 saw further progress in the numbers racing with John Fitchie winning the Summer points, a remarkable achievement considering he was using sails which he designed and made himself."

### **John Beasley writes about this period:**

"The Enterprise Open of 1968 was memorable for the great flood. With much awareness these days of the effects of global warming, it is easy to forget that extreme weather is nothing new. On 15th September 1968 it rained very heavily all day. The little stream that enters the Pond became a wide river, flooding the car and boat parks to such an extent that boats were floating off their trolleys. Many roads became flooded, including the A3 and A325, and some visitors got stranded. Mike McNamara won the Meeting.

In the early 70s the Enterprises fell upon hard times and there were sometimes only 2 or 3 boats on the start line. Wednesday evening racing was virtually nonexistent, so I encouraged some Enterprise owners to come down to be introduced to racing. We had very short races, started by my blowing a whistle, and I would go from one

boat to another between races. It worked! Several participants became regular racers on Sundays, Peter Newbery being one of them.”

**Sylvia Rhodes continues:**

“In 1970 Chris Savage became Class Captain and did well in Thames Valley Open meetings, but through that period, although the class had its full quota of members, most were not active in racing.

The winter series results were: 1st Chris Savage. 2nd Alec McPherson; 3rd Geoff Margason. Chris went on to win the Summer points series in both 1971 and 1972 after which his job took him off to Holland. Frensham Enterprises were runners up in the Thames Valley Area Team Racing Championships. Geoff Margason won the Civil Service Championships (sailed in Enterprises) from a large fleet. There was a big improvement in the numbers racing at Frensham, with 18 boats starting one race, the best for 5 years.

1973 saw Geoff Margason win the Summer Points series, and the Open meeting which comprised 42 entries. This was the first time the Open had been won by a member of the Frensham Enterprise class! The Club sent a team to the 24 Hour Race at Southport which finished 7th out of the 50 Enterprise teams.

In 1974 John Beasley became the Class Captain and it saw the start of a period of his domination of the class racing. He won the Summer series that year and for the next four years, and again in 1990.

1975 was a good year with 11 qualifying for the Summer Points series. The winners were: John Beasley 2nd Geoff Margason and 3rd Tim Norris. John won our Open with Geoff Margason second. The Winter Series turn-out averaged 13.4.

In 1976 Peter Newbery came into the prizes, and was elected Class Captain.

1977 saw Enterprise 20,000 built, and raffle tickets for her were sold at 25p each. Tim Mitchell finally took to the water in ‘About Time II’, a 1950s boat he had spent a long time renovating, and came third in the Summer Series after John Beasley and Geoff Floyd. There were 12 to 17 boats on the line every Sunday during that winter.

1978. Peter Newbery arranged some team racing between 3 teams of Enterprises, which proved popular and improved boat handling lower down the fleet. That year Ian Videlo won our Open Meeting in a boat borrowed from Norman Symons. Spoon races gave everyone the opportunity of winning because personal handicaps were used. The Summer Series went: 1st John Beasley 2nd Tim Mitchell and 3rd Tim Norris.

1979 The Pond was frozen for the whole month of January. With 8 to 14 boats sailing every Sunday, the Winter Series was won by Tim Mitchell, followed by Peter Newbery and John Beasley. Tim came 2nd in the Thames Valley Winter series and in the summer he also won the Walton-on-Thames Open meeting. Geoff Margason won several Open meetings and the Victory Trophy (Civil Service v Armed Forces) at Littleton.

## **Good turnouts in the 1980s**

1980 was a good year and turn-outs were high from amongst the 75 Enterprise members. Tim and Liz Mitchell won the Parkstone and Walton-on-Thames Opens and Falmouth Week. With the Kaack brothers they won the Walton 4-Hour Relay event, and with Ian McLaren and John Beasley, the Thames Valley Area Team Racing Championship. A team went up to Southport and came 23rd out of 116 entries in the 24 Hour Race.

1981 Graham Hoy was elected Class Captain, and made sure that we were having fun both on and off the water. He will be remembered by his boat name "Och Aye The Noo", and by his generous hospitality.

1982 saw our first success at national level when Nigel Barrow, crewed by Karen Videlo, came 3rd in the Enterprise World Championships at Tynemouth. Nigel also won several Open meetings, including Frensham's. At home Graham won the Summer series, a feat he repeated in 1988.

In 1983 we had an average turn-out of 12 boats in the winter. The series winner was Richard Goss, having a go at the Enterprises following many years in his Graduate. Behind Richard in the series were 2nd Tim Mitchell. and 3rd Daryl Kilner.

Alan Best took over the Class Captaincy in 1984 and the results of the Summer series were 1st Richard Goss 2nd Graham Hoy 3rd Alan Best, and for the Winter series 1st Daryl Kilner 2nd Piers Shallow 3rd Graham Hoy.

In 1985 Karen Videlo took the Summer series, but in 1986 this was won by Peter Barrett, with Ted Bonner second and John Beasley third. Peter repeated his win the following year. Daryl Kilner won our Open meeting in 1987 out of 35 entries.

Early in the season the Walton-on-Thames Relay Race was again won by a Frensham team of Nigel Barrow, Adrian Hanley, Gerard Mitchell, Daryl Kilner, Piers Shallow and Tim Mitchell. Daryl Kilner and brother Mark won several Open meetings.

At home, 12 helms managed to win at least 1 race in the summer, and Graham Hoy, Ted Bonner, Peter Newbery, Dave Webb and John Beasley all had a good chance of finishing first. The Open meeting was well attended, with 34 entries, 16 from Frensham, but Daryl Kilner managed only a 5th place, with stiff competition from top helm visitors.

## **Into the 90s with an unusually fine Winter**

January 1990 was unusually a good month for sailing. Sylvia Rhodes took over from John Beasley as Class Captain. John had done a second stint and was always available to help and advice. 32 entries from 10 clubs made for a good Open, which was won by Geoff Carveth from Littleton with Aidan Mitchell coming 2nd and Daryl 3rd.

In 1991 Karen Videlo, crewed by Alan Skeens, won the Winter Series, and turned out for the last few races of the Summer Series to push Piers Shallow into second place. A good turn-out of Enterprises was sustained throughout the summer with an average of 10 boats on Sundays and 7 on Wednesday evenings.

Daryl Kilner had two 1sts on the Open Circuit and came 16th in the National Championships. Nick Craig went out late in the season and finished 2nd at Cookham and Bowmoor.

1992 saw Frensham re-instated in the National Enterprise league, thanks to Nick Craig and Roger Gilbert. Nick came 6th in the Inland National Championships and won the Junior Nationals at Southport with Sam Barron-Fox crewing. He came 2nd in the Thames Valley Area, the final of which was sailed at Frensham in October. Ted Bonner, Ian Swaddling and Alan Dance had also qualified for this event. Roger Gilbert came 5th in the Junior Nationals and 12th in the Super Series Meeting at Queen Mary SC. Karen Videlo dominated the home fleet, and with Alan Skeens won the Summer Series, with Ted Bonner second and Roger Gilbert third. Wednesday evening races often saw 13 or 14 Enterprises on the water.

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## C6

An Enterprise beating gently on a perfect day.

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1993 brought a great result for Frensham when Nick Craig came 3rd in the World Championships in Zimbabwe - the first British boat. The Winter Points Series saw a change of names, but with Karen Videlo still managing to win all 10 qualifying races. Roger Gilbert was second, and he came 6th in the Thames Winter Series. Ted Bonner was third. In the summer Karen continued to dominate the racing at Frensham. John Beasley tuned up his renovated boat and sailed consistently well to gain a clear second place, and Edward White with Richard Hodson as crew came third. Here was a fine example to follow: find a keen youngster, then helm and crew alternate races. But be prepared for them to do better than you!

The Junior National Championships saw Roger Gilbert and Nick Craig leading a fleet of 37, Roger winning overall by a discard, from Nick. They both competed in the Nationals at Mounts Bay during the windiest week in August. Nick came 16th and Roger 33rd, and Karen Videlo won the Lady Helm Trophy, coming 42nd.

### **Ted Bonner takes over the captaincy**

In 1994 Ted Bonner took over the captaincy and blustery winds gave some exciting winter sailing. Karen Videlo came out a clear winner with Jake Sutton and Edward White a close 2nd and 3rd. Even better was the week-end in April when the Thames

Valley Masters Championship was held over two days, the Sunday including our Open for the Packard Trophy. The first 5 helms were from the top 20 nationally. Roger Gilbert finished 4th. A convivial evening on the Saturday, with excellent food cooked by Peter White, will be remembered by all who took part.

From the 15 qualifiers in the Summer series Karen Videlo was first, John Beasley second, and Edward White just third from Phil Johnston. Jake Sutton came 4th in the Junior Nationals, Karen won the Thames Valley Lady's prize, and Ted and June Bonner won the Grand Masters trophy at the Masters Championship.

1995 produced a good winter season which was not interrupted by ice. Results: 1st Karen Videlo, 2nd Edward White, 3rd Phil Johnston out of 10 qualifiers. Karen won the Thames Valley Area Winter Championship and was 4th overall in the series. The Frensham Open was replaced by a 2 day Thames Valley event, which attracted some of the top helms in the country. Keith Videlo and Alan Skeens came 2nd from 34 entries, 14 from Frensham.

The Summer Series was not quite as well supported, but 12 of the 27 racers qualified. Results: 1st Karen Videlo and Alan Skeens, 2nd Edward White and Joe Knight, 3rd John Beasley and Jenny Derbyshire.

Karen was 2nd overall in the Thames Valley Bowl series. Paul Trubridge won the Junior National Championship, and Keith Videlo with Alan Skeens came 7th in the National Championships.

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## C7

Shortly after the start. Enterprise Open Meeting 1998

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## C8

Alan and Barbara Dance leading the Class race.

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In 1996 Edward White won the Winter Series, with Ted and June Bonner second, and John Beasley and Wizzie Lesley third. Karen Videlo and Alan Skeens won the Thames Valley Winter series. They also came 2nd in our Open at Frensham, with Katrina Gilbert and Jenny Rust 6th out of 34 entries.

The Enterprise Junior National Championships were held at Frensham in September in very light conditions. Jonathan Rix and Simon Blackwell came 2nd and Jake Sutton and John Pickford 3rd. Olly Slight won the under 15 trophy.

Summer Series results: 1st Karen Videlo, 2nd Katrina Gilbert, 3rd Phil Johnston. 10 qualified out of 23.

In 1997 Karen Videlo and Alan Skeens won several Open meetings on the Thames Valley circuit, but did not qualify for the Summer series at Frensham. From the eight who did, Phil and Lesley Johnston came first, Ted and June Bonner second and John Beasley and Wizzie Lesley third.

Our Frensham Open was won by Karen and Alan, and Roger Gilbert, crewed by Katrina, was second.

### **1998 a great year for Frensham Enterprises**

1998 was a great year for Frensham. Roger Gilbert and Alan Skeens won our Open Meeting, came 3rd in the National Championships and 4th in the World Championships and won the Thames Valley and Eastern Area Championships. Nick Craig came 3rd in the Worlds. At home the Winter series went to Ted Bonner, with Colin Robertson second and John Marriott third. Summer series: 1st Katrina Gilbert, 2nd Ted Bonner, 3rd Phil Johnston.

1999 Another good year. Nick Craig was 3rd in the Inland Nationals at Rutland and Roger Gilbert 8th. At home, Tim and Liz Mitchell won most of their races in the Winter series, but failed to qualify, so Colin Robertson was first, Ted Bonner second and John Marriott third. Roger and Katrina Gilbert won our Open meeting in April. Despite the introduction of a short series of races for the middle of the fleet sailors, only 5 qualified for the Summer points. Ted and June Bonner won, Brian Grimwood and John Ford were second, and Alan and Barbara Dance third.

### **Enterprises in the new millennium**

2000 Another great year because Nick Craig won the Inland National Championships, and Roger Gilbert came 7th in the World Championships at Mounts Bay, Cornwall. The Thames Valley Areas were held at Frensham in April, and attracted 22 entries. Ted Bonner won the Veterans' trophy in the first Frensham boat.

The Summer series was won by Katrina Gilbert with father Colin as crew, Ted and June Bonner second, and Brian Grimwood and John Ford third - from 14.

Nick Craig again competed nationally and came 8th in the Inlands. With Roger Gilbert and Paul Hilliar he was also in the winning team at the Southport 24Hour race. Katrina Gilbert came 2nd in our Open meeting. Both the Winter and Summer seasons ended with the same people at the top : 1st Ted and June Bonner, 2nd John Marriott and Lyndsey Edwards, 3rd Brian Grimwood and John Ford.

Both Nick Craig and Roger Gilbert travelled to India to take part in the Enterprise World Championships in Goa, and they finished 4th (Nick) and 5th (Roger) overall. Nick came 3rd in the Nationals at Torbay in July - a great achievement for them.



## **Alan Dance takes the helm**

After 8 years as Class Captain, Ted Bonner passed the duties on to Alan Dance. It was very much appreciated that Ted did such a long stint when he was doing so much for Sailability. The Winter series went to Ted and June Bonner again, with Ian Johnson and David Hay second, and Sylvia Rhodes and Carol Craig third. There were only 14 entries at the Frensham Open in April, when Katrina Gilbert came 2nd after losing a tie-break. The Summer Series saw Katrina and Colin Gilbert come first with Ted and June Bonner second and Alan and Barbara Dance third."

## **Nick Craig writes:**

"I started sailing Cadets at Frensham at the age of 8 which is a great route into sailing and it is good to see it remains so to this day. I was very keen so wanted to do as much sailing as possible, so at the age of 10 started crewing for John Beasley in an Enterprise as well as starting to helm a Cadet. John was the perfect helm for a shy 10 year old (yes I was shy once!). He was extremely patient, didn't mind that I only weighed 5 stone so didn't contribute a lot when it was windy and explained everything he did so was a fantastic teacher. At the time (early 80s), the Enterprise fleet at Frensham was outstanding with 20 boats regularly out and some of the best sailors in the country. John was not agile enough to be among the hotshots, but knew Frensham better than anyone with knowledge of shift and gust patterns for every wind direction. We would often start at the opposite end of the line to everyone else and lead to the 1st mark, much to the frustration of the legends! I remember and use many of his tricks to this day!

After leaving Cadets, my dad had an Enterprise so I did a few open meetings in it and really enjoyed it.

This was the early 90s and competition at the time was red hot, coming in the top 6 at a Thames Valley puddle open meeting was some achievement. Chasing round after these guys was a great way to learn fast. What is amazing about all this is that 10 years later, UK dinghy sailing has changed massively with many classes killed by the launch of 100+ new boats but the Enterprise remains strong and unique. A couple of things for me make the Enterprise stand out as an awesome boat. It is still the best boat to sail in light winds with no boat giving closer tactical racing and light wind responsiveness. And even in different classes, I find myself still racing against the same people who were at the front of the Enterprises 10 years ago - the top 3 at the Endeavour last year have all been Enterprise sailors.

## **The racing is excellent**

After all this time, I still sail Enterprises, so what keeps me at it in what many people knock as an old fashioned boat? Well the racing is still excellent with 70 boats at the Nationals with another boat always within a boat length! Also, the international aspect always keeps it fresh and exciting. I often have RS sailors questioning why I sail an

Enterprise (or OK) - they don't appreciate how much more interesting it is to turn up to a Worlds each year not knowing who is going to be quick, who has come up with something new, trying to guess and get set up for the local conditions versus sailing against the same people every weekend on the national circuit. Besides which, you can't beat sailing in the Indian Ocean or Lake Kariba!

Why still Frensham? Again it's about the racing - the quality & enthusiasm for racing at Frensham remains very high. I can come down on any day and there will be a tough race on. Also one-design class racing is better than handicap racing which Frensham stands by to this day. Long may it continue!"

# The GP 14 Class

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C9

Early GP 14s racing in the 50s

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The members of the GP14 class have contributed significantly to the Club and, taken over the 50 years, the class has probably averaged the largest turnouts for the principal class races. The boat fills a niche which largely has attracted the more mature members, but younger sailors were keen to borrow a boat, such as dad's, in which they have excelled.

The story of the GP14 (General Purpose 14 ft.) has been written in '50 years on the Water' to commemorate the Class's 50th anniversary and it gives an account of how the boat came about:

“As a youngster, Group Capt. Haylock had been brought up with boats and upon his leaving the RAF at the end of World War II he became editor of the Yachting World magazine, a post he held for 16 years.

Before the war he had built a dinghy for his family which was much like the Cadet which followed. After the war he planned to start a racing class for the young. He asked Jack Holt to design a boat which became the Cadet and which was the first of his range of build-her-yourself boats. The Bell Woodworking Company set about producing sets of parts and became the major supplier of boat kits through the fifties and sixties.

Gp. Capt. Haylock then turned his mind to satisfying the family man and specified a 14 ft boat which Dad (or Mum) could use for racing on Saturday; while on Sunday the two adults and two or three children could take it picnicking. He approached three designers before eventually asking Jack Holt to produce a design which has remained basically the same since. In deference to Mum, and to the cost, the dinghy had a smallish jib and no spinnaker.

The boat was adopted by the Aberdovey Sailing Club, after the prototype was first seen at the club in late 1949, and over the 1950/51 period ten clubs adopted the boat. The Bell was chosen for the sail insignia following that of the 'Bells of Aberdovey'.

The cost of a GP14 in those days was £98.19.0d. In 1953 a completed boat ex-sails but including painting, cost £112.”

## **The GP Class Association is formed**

The GP Association was formed in 1951. The class gradually developed over the years, and the introduction of each change had to be addressed by the Club. First came the use of self-bailers in 1956, followed by the introduction of spinnakers in 1961 and metal spars in 1965.

Like the other Jack Holt designs, the GP14 was intended to be capable of being built by amateurs, and several were built by Club members. A notable very early example was that built by Hugh Lankester around 1953. Number 1586 was christened 'Dandy' and appeared in 1954 and was raced continuously for 32 years before finally changing hands in 1989. Others who built their own boats were Frank Millar and only a few years ago Chris Rhodes.

The reports from the 1950s indicate that the GP14 was being sailed on the Pond from the very beginning. The numbers then grew rapidly to reach over 50 by the end of the decade.

The Club appointed their first class captains, or rather class secretaries as they were known, and John L Russell held this position for the GP14s. The following year the Club established the Sunday racing pattern of alternating between morning and afternoons, the GP14s being paired with the Handicap class. The first Summer Points series was won by J Willcocks.

In 1955 John L Russell was co-opted on to the Club Committee to represent the GP14 class and later that year also the Fireflies, while Mr C J Caesar (Jack) was appointed the GP14 measurer. It was in this year that the introduction of self-bailers was actively discussed.

From the earliest days, each class held their own Open meetings and that year the ladies were relieved that the new ladies changing room was ready in October.

## **Inter-club team racing was a feature of the sailing scene**

Inter-club team racing was a feature of the sailing scene and by 1956 the first of many such matches for GP14s was raced, the first against Hamble River S.C. The Winter series started that year and was won by G Edmund-Jones.

Under the captaincy of G Hulse the Club was honoured to hold the 1957 GP14 South of England Championships at Frensham, with an entry fee of 10/- (i.e. 50p). The committee meeting minutes recount that it was felt by some that there were too many GPs in the club and the Enterprise was suggested as a possible alternative, although considered by some to be 'wet and unstable'.

1958 saw Jack Caesar win the Summer Points, a feat which he repeated in 60 and 63.

## **Terylene sails are introduced**

The introduction of improvements to boats was always a potential bone of contention. None less so than the introduction of Terylene sails, which clearly would put boats with cotton sails at a disadvantage. In 1958 the Committee decided to delay introduction of Terylene sails for GP14s until 1961. However, that discussion must have rumbled on presumably because boats from other clubs were beginning to adopt the new material, so that by the following year it was agreed that Terylene sails would be permitted from then on. Spinnakers were allowed in 1961, so adding to the excitement for many and terror for a few.

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### **C10**

Club racing in an active fleet

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### **C11**

Simon and Frank Millar.

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In 1959 J Whines was Class Captain and the GPs had about 50 boats. The summer series being won by Tim Packard in 'Topsy' 613, with Jack Caesar in 'Hi-Jack' 2nd, and John Russell in 'Loon' 3rd. Nine boats qualified by sailing in 10 or more races. The same leading two filled the winter points but with Derek Graves 3rd in 'Windsong'.

Tim Packard was a most consistent and capable sailor. He was always well placed, usually winning the class's summer and winter series. Indeed, between 1957 and 1973, he won the Summer points series on no fewer than eight occasions, in the later years being crewed by Roy Eggleston. It was noticeable how, once he had retired and was able to take a long winter holiday, he would come back to race and instantly raced just as effectively as if he had been active in the intervening months.

## **The class in the sixties**

In the early sixties John Holman took over the Captaincy at a time when the Class was considering adopting the use of spinnakers. The class remained numerically very strong, both generally and within the Club. This year saw the arrival of Roy Eggleston ably crewed by his sons Peter and later Michael - that is until he went the way of most fathers when the younger member proves themselves to be the superior helm! Ken Graves won the Summer Points series in 1961, 62 and again in 67. However, it was

interesting to note that Tim Packard on finishing third in the GP14 open was the best ever placed Frensham boat until that time.

The Class continued to develop, taking advantage of the new materials. 1965 saw the introduction of metal spars. The following year approval for GRP construction was given, and were starting to be built in the following two years. The larger Genoa appeared on the scene in 1967.

In 1965, seeing that no Frensham member had yet won the Hook Trophy for the Open meeting, J Hulse presented a cup for the best placed Frensham helm. Perhaps this spurred Simon Millar to have a go for the next year with 62 entries and sailing a borrowed boat, he triumphed overall convincingly.

David Abbatt's captain's report in 1966 stated that the class averaged 15 boats racing on Sunday. The following year, with 58 entries, Ken Reed romped home as the winner of the Open, a feat he repeated in 1968. These Opens demonstrated how younger members of the Club would be pleased to have the chance to race the GP14s. Needless to say Tim Packard won the Winter points again with Ken Graves 2nd and Roy Eggleston 3rd.

This period saw the emergence of younger members usurping Dad's role as helm. Mike Eggleston finished second behind Tim Packard in the 1969 Winter series, with a 13 year old Nigel Barrow third.

### **Great strides are made in the seventies**

1970 brought Derek Mills to the GP Class for a short spell, but long enough for him to win the Summer Points in that or the following year. In 1971 Dennis Foster encouraged 15 GPs to travel to Llandudno for the GP Nationals. It was fitting that Cathy Foster, aged 15, and brother David, aged 13, won the crews race at this event. For this, together with her crewing activities, Cathy won the King of Thailand award.

The same year the winter points brought further success for the younger members with a victory for Mike Eggleston, followed by Chris Holman, with Nigel Barrow third. Nigel subsequently retired from the GPs to join the Cadet Class!

The report by John Davenport who was Class Captain in 1972 indicated the growing trend for GP14 sailors from Lee-on-the-Solent to join as Winter members. These included Stewart Taylor, Sean McKenna, Philip Owen, Peter Williams, Richard Ham and Mike Riley. Resident leaders were Simon Millar, Chris Rhodes and Eric Evans. However, Alan Hayworth did well to win the Peter Martin Trophy.

An indication of the popularity of the Class nationally was it being the chosen dinghy for the Champion of Champions Endeavour Trophy from 1977 to 1980.

### **Success at Federation Week**

Over the years, Chichester Harbour Federation Week run from Hayling Island S.C. proved a successful and pleasurable holiday week for many Frensham sailors. In 1972 Robert Hammond, with Neil Hayworth crewing, achieved first place in the Medium Handicap class sailing a GP14.

They were followed in by Dennis Foster and Mike Wright-Anderson. Robert also won the Journal Trophy at the Spinnaker S C Open meeting, while Dennis Foster achieved 2nd place in the Chichester S C Open meeting.

### **Taking the challenge further afield**

The following year, Mike Eggleston and Geoff Hunt went further afield, coming third at the Grafham Open and first in the Handicap class at Abersoch, and in 1974 Eric Cross was Class Captain and Dennis Foster won the summer points while Robert Hammond was 1st in the Courage Pursuit race with Mike Wright-Anderson 3rd.

### **1975 and Chris Holman takes over the captaincy**

Chris Holman took over the Class captaincy in 1975. David and Liz Abbatt won the GP summer points with Tim Packard and Roy Eggleston a close second. David and Liz also won the SW Area Championships at Lymptone and were 1st at the Chichester Open. Mike Wright-Anderson was 2nd in the Hayling Island Slow H'cap and Simon Millar was 2nd in our Open.

### **The Fremble Trophy changing hands**

The Fremble trophy was lost to Hamble, but won back again at our own Open. The Winter Points followed a similar pattern with David Abbatt 1st followed by Tim Packard and Dennis Foster 3rd. David and Liz won the Summer Points again two years later. Subsequently, after retiring from work, they settled for big boat sailing from their new home in Dartmouth.

Simon Millar won the first of his ten Summer Points series in 1976. This has been a remarkable feat being successful also in 79 through 94, 96, 98 and there is every likelihood that there will be more to come.

After a gap of ten years, in 1978 Mike Eggleston won the Open meeting and thus the Hook Trophy, breaking Simon's run. Two years later Nigel Barrow won the Open, a feat which he repeated eight years later in 1988.

### **Club racing in GP14s grows through the eighties**

At the beginning of the 1980s it was reported that there was a large growth in the number of GPs taking part in Club racing. Eric Evans took over the Class captaincy in 1983 from John Davenport. Over this period the training activity in the Club was growing and the GP14 was found to be an excellent boat to use for this purpose. As a result the Club purchased five second hand GRP GP14s for use as training boats for the RYA Sailing Courses. At the turn of the 90s the GP14 Class Association introduced a revised form of construction and internal lay-out, being stiffer and with better draining capabilities.

### **The welcome influx of winter members**

The influx of winter members from the coastal clubs has been a welcome addition to the Class and they have proved quite successful. Particularly Mike Riley who won the Winter Points six times between 1990 and 1996.

Stewart Taylor, a winter member from Lee-on-the-Solent, won the 1986 winter series. In the GPs Traveller trophy for 1992, 1st was Mike Riley, 2nd Sean McKenna and 3rd Phil Owen.

A prominent sailor in recent years has been Tim Hemsley who, apart from his enthusiasm at Frensham, has been active in the GP14 Association. He has had several successes on the Open meeting circuit and his absences from the Pond probably accounts for why he has won the Summer Points only once in 1997, whereas he won the Winter series from 1997 through to 2000. Colin Robertson followed on by winning the Winter Points in 2001.

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C13

Battling on the beat in front of the clubhouse

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### **Stephanie Walker takes over the Captaincy**

Stephanie Walker joined the Club in the late 1980s, initially crewing for Chris Rhodes. Subsequently she got her own GP and has done well in the Class and with her husband Keith Videlo as crew she has won the Summer Points series over the last four years and the Winter Points over the last two years.



David Innes catches a faint breeze as he runs down with the  
National Trust Information Centre in the background

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### **And hands over to John Traylor in 2003**

In recent years Stephanie took over the Class Captain's role and has been active in trying to encourage members to race, finally handing over to John Traylor in 2003. However, every class goes through cycles of ups and downs, and it takes only a few members to bring about the change.

# The National Graduate Class

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C15

Graduates beating up to the finish in the 50s

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The Graduates have been ever present in the Club and over the years have attracted a number of keen racing sailors.

## **Inga Kaack writes:**

“We joined Frensham in 1973 with an ancient Grad number 103 which cost us £100 at the time. The class boasted about 40 boats then and there was a waiting list so eventually we became mid-week members until we could become full members. Fairly soon the old Grad was replaced and No 103 came to an ignominious end when it sank during a Regatta day a few years later!”

## **Peter Guyett was the President of the National Graduate Association from 1993 to 2003, and writes:**

“The Guyett family joined the Club in 1973, all of us newcomers to sailing. In those days there was a waiting list for membership, the exception being the Cadet class, with its age limit of 17 ensuring a steady throughput. Taking that opportunity, we bought a Cadet, which Roger helmed, with Jane as crew; and Simon crewed for others in the fleet.

Later in the year I bought a Graduate, my existing Club membership giving me priority for a place in the class. Before taking up the Frensham story, some comments on the boat itself may be helpful.

## **The Wyche and Coppock Graduate**

Dick Wyche and Digby Coppock set up in partnership as boat builders at Nottingham in the 1930s, producing dinghies mainly of the National Twelve development class. One of their designs was sailed by Dick himself in 1938, winning the premier event, the Burton Trophy, and the Yachting World Cup.

With such experience and pedigree to call on, in the winter of 1951-52 Dick Wyche began work on a new dinghy targeted at the rapidly expanding market outside the specialist niche of the development classes. His aim was to achieve a performance close to that of the National Twelve, but with a simpler form of construction, making it

cheaper and suitable for building at home. This was based on a plywood hull with a hard chine and two full bulkheads, without any intermediate cross-sectional reinforcement. Provision of integral buoyancy, utilising the bulkheads to form sealed compartments in front and behind the cockpit, dispensed with the troublesome inflatable bags used on other dinghies of the period.

The prototype, christened 'Undergrad', was fitted with a rig from a National Twelve, and showed a surprising performance, somewhat superior to that of the well-established development class. This presented Dick and Digby with a dilemma, as they did not wish to encroach on the market for the older boat, in which their firm had a considerable stake. A reduced rig, the mast some 18 inches shorter at 19 feet, and with a total sail area of 85 square feet against 90 of the National Twelve, had the desired effect. And with its less lively handling, the revised version was seen to have more appeal to the family sailor. Some of the taller rigs were, however, supplied in the first year or so.

Wyche & Coppock teamed up with a new magazine 'Light Craft' for the debut of the Light Craft Graduate in May 1952. During its first 18 months on the market, up to the end of 1953, more than a hundred Graduates were completed. At least four of these were owned by members of Frensham.

### **National status**

By 1960, the number of boats registered had exceeded 1000, and following the introduction of a new layout for the cockpit by Wyche & Coppock in 1961, a further 1000 had been added by 1967.

It became a National class in 1967, the sail configuration was revised to include a larger jib, taking the total area up to 90 square feet. Consideration of the introduction of a metal mast, and use of glass reinforced plastic in the hull, were controversial issues at the end of the 1960s, strange as this may seem today. In due course, opposition was overcome, and Wyche & Coppock produced the Supergrad grp version in 1970, as well as composite boats with a plastic hull and wooden deck. By that time the metal mast also had been approved, and within a few years had supplanted the stiffer wooden spars.

A new all-wood version of the Graduate appeared in the mid-1970s, the Rebel, produced by Cliff Francis at Outwell, Norfolk. This took advantage of the freedom under the one-design rules to modify the layout of the cockpit and deck. The traditional form of construction was, however, retained, using stringers at the junction of the floor and side panels. A young enthusiast, named Adrian Baker, joined Francis in the development of this series of boats.

### **Stitch and glue**

A year or so before this, the class association had supported the building of a prototype by the stitch and glue method used so effectively on the Mirror. This project, intended to provide a low-cost kit-boat for construction at home, ran into a variety of difficulties. Adrian Baker later took over the development in conjunction with George Robson, a boatbuilder at Windermere. The outcome was the Alpha design, and four of these boats were delivered to Frensham in the spring of 1981, Richard Goss sailing one to win his first national championship.

Shortly afterwards Mike Wakefield, a builder of Graduates in wood, took over to make, with new moulds, the Sprinter version, which gained a good reputation and many successes over several years. When Mike moved out of boatbuilding the Graduate association bought his moulds and production passed to Dave Butler Boats of Brough.

### **Early days of the Graduate at Frensham**

Several Graduates made their appearance at Frensham during 1953. Member number 8 was the Hereward family, complete with their Graduate, newly built at home. In 1954, A W Park, a member of the Club committee, was appointed secretary of the Graduate class, the equivalent of today's class captain.

Amongst the founding members of the club was Jimmy Prangnell, who went on to become an influential figure at Frensham. Originally sailing a boat with a canvas bottom, he switched to a Graduate which he built for £35 in 1953 (G90). The following year he was the first winner of the class summer points series, for which the Ray Trophy was presented by Mr Horton-Ray. Jimmy subsequently attended the inaugural meeting of the Graduate owners' association on 7 January 1955, and was elected to the committee.

### **National Championship at Frensham**

Very shortly afterwards the committee at Frensham agreed to run the first national championship of the Graduate class, to be held on the weekend of 18/19 June 1955. A lengthy account of the event was published by the sponsoring magazine *Light Craft*, which records that nineteen boats participated, from nine clubs, including seven from Frensham. Senior and junior events were held, the seniors racing twice on Saturday and on Sunday, and allowed one discard, and the juniors racing once only, on Sunday.

At the end of a keenly-contested main series, Bill Hollick in 'Ula' (G19) was first, Mac Worley in 'Goblin' (G17) second, and Jimmy Prangnell in 'Witch' (G90) third. The next three boats, in order, were: Charles Hicks in 'Gremlin' (G82); J Horsfall in 'Quaker' (G84); and Peter Burgoine in 'Dizzy Two' (G35). Out of these, the first four were from Frensham, and the others from Tamworth SC in the Midlands. Designer Dick Wyche achieved a third place in 'Poppet' (G60) in the third race.

In the junior race seven boats competed, probably most of the helms, if not all them, having crewed in the senior event. The leading three were from Frensham: first Richard

Hart in 'Ula'; second Richard Lennard in 'Gremlin'; and, third, John Kilgour in 'Witch'.

### **Strength in depth: performances up to the mid 1960s**

Following his third place in the junior nationals in 1955, John Kilgour won the Graduate open at Frensham, and the summer points series, in both 1956 and 1957; an outstanding performance, given the competition. The following year, Charles Hicks triumphed at the open, in his case sailing a boat he borrowed as a diversion from his National Twelve. He subsequently moved on to other boats on other waters, re-appearing in the 1970s with a Merlin-Rocket and a Cadet for his son Andrew.

Then in 1959 the open was won by newcomer James Hawker, before Bill Hollick reasserted his authority in 1960. And in the summer points series the winners were Barrat-Leonard in 1955; Jimmy Prangnell in 1958 and 1959; and James Hawker in 1960.

John Kilgour had two further successes in winning the Frensham open in 1961 and 1962. He was followed by Peter Herbert in 1963 and Ken Reed in 1964. The unbroken run of Frensham first places in the open meetings on the Pond, extending from the beginning of such events, then came to its end, with the trophy passing to Hampton S C sailor J Cunningham in 1965. In a final flourish, Peter Herbert won again in 1966, but it was not until 1979 that a Frensham member regained supremacy.

Simon Millar started sailing at Frensham in the mid 1950s, crewing for Jimmy Prangnell when he was ten. Much earlier than that, Simon's father Frank had been given a Sharpie day-boat which he sailed with his family on the Thames. After they joined Frensham, the Sharpie was sold, and with the proceeds Frank decided to build a Graduate.

As a professional woodworker (senior foreman at Vickers Armstrongs aircraft factory at Weybridge) Frank was well qualified to do so. He constructed 'Hellzapoppin', registered as G577 in 1958, including the wooden mast (for those present sailors who have never seen one, this was made of two strips, later glued together, with matching grooves on the mating faces to house the luff cord of the mainsail and provide a hollow within to reduce weight and accommodate the halyards).

To begin with Simon sailed this boat with his older brother, Ian (who had earlier crewed for John Kilgour). His earliest successes at Frensham, in his late teens, were in the summer points series, winning in 1962, 1963 and 1965. On the open circuit, a meeting at Chipstead is recalled. After the four races, and the discards taken, he had the same number of points as Peter Conway of Ruislip (who later won the national championships four times). Under the rules then observed, the tie break was settled by the spin of a coin, which Simon lost, not unreasonably regarding it ever after as unfair. Elsewhere, in 1965, he had clear-cut wins in open meetings at Kingsmead and Charlton. Other winners of prizes at open meetings over this period, and who are not

mentioned elsewhere, were Chris Holman, Geoffrey Hunt, Frank Reeks and Andrew and Colin Ware. The Graduateess also won the Club's Kilgour Team trophy in that year.

Simon well remembers being asked, the evening before, to crew for James Hawker in the Tideway race on the Thames during 1965. This event was sailed between Putney and Tower Bridge, and then back again. Some 300 boats of all classes competed under handicap. Such was their skill and judgement that James and Simon won, a notable achievement.

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## C16

James Hawker and Simon Millar receiving their first prize in the Tideway race

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Soon afterwards Simon Millar bowed to the inevitable for one who had grown so tall, and moved into the GP14s. There he won the Frensham Open in his first season, in 1966, and innumerable other honours up to the present time.

At national level Richard Hart added to the junior title won at Frensham by taking the trophy again the next year at Aldeburgh. And in the following two nationals, held at Aldeburgh and Stone in 1957 and 1958, James Ware of Frensham repeated Richard's double. Simon Millar added to Frensham's successes by taking the junior title in 1961 at Plymouth.

Amongst the seniors Jimmy Prangnell became national champion in 1957, racing at Aldeburgh.

## **Regrouping up to and through the 1970s**

Over the first years of this period the most consistent Graduate sailor at Frensham was Peter Herbert. He was taken out in a Firefly at Frensham by a neighbour, Chris Wright, around 1960, and soon afterwards, at age 35, joined the club. As he had a young family, Peter decided that the Graduate was the most suitable boat for them. To begin with his wife crewed for him, then his son Martin (and later, Peter Jenkins and David Foster). Peter had a natural aptitude for sailing and racing and was soon competing at the front of the fleet. In his second year he won the summer points series and the Frensham open in 1963.

Unusually for a successful dinghy helmsman, Peter couldn't swim. From the outset he showed remarkable sensitivity and reactions in boat handling and can remember capsizing just twice in his career. With the other leading sailors at the club, Peter used to compete regularly at the open meetings held in the south, including Chipstead, Hampton, Kingsmead, and Ruislip. His second son, Jonathan, was born whilst he was

away at Chipstead with his son Martin, an absence which his wife used to remind him of from time to time. He also sailed at the nationals on several occasions.

In total, Peter won the Frensham open twice, in 1963 and 1966, and the summer series six times over his most active years from 1961 to 1972.

James Hawker, who had won the Frensham open in 1959, was a regular sailor at the club and on the open circuit during the 1960s. He was inclined to experiment with his rig, which may have limited his successes, but in 1969 at Llandudno, in a fleet of 99, he won the nationals, coming close to making a clean sweep with six wins and a second out of seven races, across a full range of conditions. He joined Mountifields sail makers, and later set up a business on Hayling Island to produce his Hawk wind vane: the company - Hawk Mouldings - continues, although James died a few years ago.

At the nationals in 1966, held at Saundersfoot, with a fleet of 143, Ken Reed had the distinction of winning the Lowton Trophy, for the helm with the best results overall without discards. Ken subsequently followed Simon Millar into the GP14s, winning the Frensham open for that class in 1967 and 1968.

### **Frensham boats in the first six places of the British Schools Championships**

Also in 1966 the Graduate British Schools Championship attracted an entry of 22 boats with Frensham boats filling the first six places. The winner was Jonathan Jenkins followed by Valerie Cole with the Ware boys third.

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C17

Hiley Jones winning a race in the Graduate Open.

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One of the best known of the Frensham families - the Barrows - made their mark in the Graduate class in the late 60s. Taffy and Paddy bought 'Canopus' G1514, to help widen the experience of their three sons, David, Paul and Nigel. Paul spent some time in 'Canopus' to such good effect that he won the summer series in 1969, against the strong competition from the established club winners. Paul and David also took the boat to their favourite summer regatta at Fowey, where they had previously sailed a large dayboat, and surprised the locals and themselves by winning two years running.

### **A new breed**

In the 1960s, whilst Peter Herbert, James Hawker, Simon Millar, Ken Reed and Jimmy Prangnell reigned supreme among the Graduates on the Pond, a group of future stalwarts arrived. First was Hiley Jones, in 1963, then Dennis da Roza and Lewis Wills, in 1964, and Dick Sizer and Richard Goss in 1965. Hiley, Dennis, Lewis and Dick were

all married, with young children. Richard was a beginner, sailing an elderly Graduate at his father's club on the coast.

To encourage him, his father bought Richard a newer boat advertised by Dennis, who traded up from 'Pixi Led', G1121, to 'Victoria', G1674. Whilst making the deal, Dennis persuaded Richard to come to Frensham to sail. There were over 40 boats in the fleet at that time.

It was not until the 1970s that any of the new group figured amongst the overall winners. From 1972 to 1975, Dennis took the summer series, with Lewis, Richard, and Hiley in close contention, together with David Childs, Simon Pilcher and George Kaack. Competition intensified in the following year after Hiley bought a new glassfibre Supergrad, and beat all the others in both the summer and winter series.

Another swing occurred in 1977. Young ex-Cadet Mike Fromberg won the summer series before leaving for university. Hiley assumed command again in 1978, with Dennis and Richard behind him.

A significant arrival in 1979 was Bob Griffiths who was an experienced and accomplished sailor. He shortly afterwards won the Frensham open and the following winter and summer points series.

During the early 1970s Dennis da Roza was class captain, his success on the water underlining the leadership he exercised in helping newcomers to improve their skills, and encouraging all members to race, both on the Pond and at other events. He was succeeded as captain by Richard Goss but remained a strong driving force and organiser of social and sailing activities.

With the strong competitive spirit that existed in the class at this time, a sizeable group of members travelled regularly to the open meetings on the southern circuit. In 1979, for example, between three and six Frensham boats sailed at all eight of the events at other clubs, and six were at the nationals. That year Bob Griffiths was the only one to win away from Frensham, with Hiley Jones recording a second, and Dennis da Roza and Peter Guyett, third places. Others who participated were Richard Fuller and Hilary Reed.

### **Frensham in the ascendancy during the early 1980s**

The arrival of four of the new Alpha boats in 1981, bought by Hiley Jones, Richard Goss, Bob Griffiths and Dennis da Roza, gave a boost to the performance and reputation of the class at Frensham. Most marked was the improvement achieved by Richard Goss, who teamed up with Adrian Cushing as his crew and won the nationals at Plymouth.

### **Succes in the nationals**



Thereafter, Richard and Adrian enjoyed a long run of outstanding successes. At the following three nationals their placings were second, third and third; then in 1985, at Saundersfoot, they were first once more. They dominated the Southern circuit: at Frensham they won the open meeting six years in succession, from 1981 to 1986.

Initially, Bob Griffiths continued to challenge Richard at the front of the fleet, but he later moved away. Two young helms then joined the class, Karen Videlo and Amanda Best. Karen had a distinguished record of success in Cadets and made an immediate impact in the Graduates, during 1983 coming fifth at the nationals in Harwich, and second in the southern points series. Amanda was third in the southern series, beating Dennis da Roza.

Amanda then won the winter points series at Frensham in 1984/85, followed by her sister Sue, straight out of the Cadets, in 1985/86. They teamed up to sail in the Bloody Mary in January 1986, coming ninth out of the huge fleet; Richard Goss was third.

Meanwhile, Richard Goss bought an Enterprise to sail in the other flight at Frensham, and with Adrian Cushing, won the summer and winter points series in that class. Karen Videlo later followed his lead with equally quick success.

By 1987, Richard had turned to big boat sailing and left the club. The family of Bests did the same. Hilary Reed and Richard Fuller had also moved away. In consequence the leaders of the class were the remaining veterans, headed by Dennis da Roza and Hiley Jones, with an occasional youngster making a significant, but brief, appearance.

In 1988, after twenty-five attempts, Dennis took the Frensham open, with Valerie Sizer as crew. This was no hollow victory, as the competition included the reigning national champion, Adrian Baker, as well as Richard Goss, making a guest appearance. The success was poignant, as Dennis fell ill during the following year, and died in August, an immeasurable loss in personal and other respects. His was the greatest influence on Graduate sailing at Frensham, all for its good.

### **Into the Z class**

In 1980 the large and growing numbers of Lasers in the Z handicap fleet led to their becoming a class, with the Larks, then in decline, replacing them. Although the Graduates were thriving, and on the point of achieving their greatest success, there was concern in the class that some of the influential elders in the club would have preferred the Graduates to give way.

After the loss of Dennis da Roza in 1988, the leading Graduates were Hiley Jones and Peter Guyett, with Colin Boys, Brian Burgess, Steve Hill, Richard Hodson, Dick Sizer, Geoffrey Sutton, Robert Watson, and Lewis Wills also sailing regularly, out of a fleet that had fallen in size to twenty or so. Over the next few years there was further pressure to give the Larks full class status again, and in 1992 this prevailed with the Graduates joining the Z Handicap class.

Then a shooting star appeared at the club. Jake Sutton, son of Graduate sailor Geoffrey. After a good record as a Cadet sailor, Jake took the helm in a Graduate and sparkled on the open circuit and the Pond. In 1992, his first season, he was second at Emberton Park, second at the Frensham open, and leading Graduate in the Z class. Entering all the events in the south in the next year, he had five second places, two thirds, and won the Frensham open. His successes continued in 1994 when he won fourteen open meetings in four different classes.

Inspirational as Jake's results were, they did little to increase numbers in the Graduate fleet. Notably, Lewis Wills died at the end of 1992, having given strong support to the class despite prolonged spells of illness. Not long afterwards Dick Sizer stopped sailing. In the mid 90s, the Comet became popular at Frensham, with some Graduate sailors who had difficulty finding crews switching to them, within the Z class. When the Comets faded away after five years or so, most of the owners acquired other single-handed boats.

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C18

Dennis de Roza and Valerie Sizer once again in the lead.

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However, Hiley Jones and Peter Guyett continued, with some success, in handicap racing against the Solos. In due course, the number of Solos increased (a national trend) and to accommodate their aspirations, they were given separate class status.

The remainder of the Z class was divided into a slow handicap class, starting at the same time as the Solos; and a fast handicap class, starting with the Larks. Neither of the new handicap classes has flourished, though the opportunity they provide is important, in the wider interests of the club. Coincidentally, Hiley Jones retired from racing, with a distinguished record of achievement.

**Where we stand**

In the Jubilee year, the Graduates have fewer than ten boats in the fleet. Most of the present owners have bought their boats to sail with young sons or daughters, and two of these owners are accomplished helmsmen. Since the parent/child crewing combination is a recognised role for the Graduate, with few, if any, rivals amongst boats providing a good racing performance, there are prospects that the turn-out from the fleet will increase. Moreover, past experience has shown that sailing the boat can lead to a sustained interest. We have some grounds for optimism.

### Acknowledgements

I thank the following for their patience and courtesy in discussions with me: Paul Barrow; Richard Goss; Peter Herbert; Charles Hicks; Hiley Jones; Simon Millar; Daphne da Roza; Valerie and Dick Sizer; and Laurie Weeden. Some of the background information for this piece is drawn from a draft I have seen of the history of the Graduate produced by Keith Lamdin. Another valuable source has been 'Grad Tidings', the magazine of the National Graduate Association.

## Early Larks - 35 Years Apart

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D1

Julian Hereward leading at the windward mark

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D2

Philip Whitney with Lynda in Lark 12 enjoying a joke even when beating

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# Larks, National 12s and Fireflies

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D3

Julian Hereward racing his National 12 in the early 60s

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## The National 12s

The National 12 Class was an established restricted class in the 1930s and so it was natural that several would soon appear at the Club. With the Merlin Rocket it was the main small two-man racing dinghy of the period and was ideal for inland waters. A number of keen, and mainly young members were attracted to the National 12s and reports in the Chapter 7 'Racing through the Years' recall their achievements. They were never a fully independent class at the Club, joining the fewer Fireflies with whom they would enjoy Club racing.

In 1958 it was reported that there were well over thirty National 12s and Fireflies in the Club, but in the Summer series comprising 24 races only six owners raced 10 times or more. However, competition was close as witnessed by the Points series results being: 1st Charles Hicks with 182½ points, 2nd John Tucker 179¼ pts, 3rd equal on 161 pts D Morgan and Chris Wright. It was reported that among the regular National 12s it was most encouraging to see Terylene sails on nearly all the boats. Individual helmsmen continued to do well in Open meetings including Chris Wright's win in the Nelson Trophy and his flying visit to the Firefly Championships to gain a 14th out of 151 in the Sir Ralph Gore Cup, and John Tucker's high placing in the Burton Week series for National 12s, which put him 27th out of 130 competitors.

By 1960, the average turn-out for the club races was 9 National 12s and Fireflies. The Class Captain at the time was Julian Hereward, and it is interesting to read of the nature of a restricted class. He reported:

"In the National 12 Class we have a very varied selection of designs: a Proctor Mark VIII, VI, V, IVa, two Mark II's, also a Droop, a Stone design and four Jack Holt designs, ancient and modern. Despite this amazing variety, at least six of those are almost identical in performance except for the Mark V which is undoubtedly superior in light to moderate winds. This coming year we are getting two Squid designs and a Smuggler, which should make it even more interesting. If someone is thinking of buying a new boat, we should like to see a Proctor Mark X".

The Firefly sailors were still not very numerous with only three racing regularly in the Club races. However 1961 saw many of the National 12 sailors entering Open meetings

and five went to the Nationals. They were placed 17th, 21st, 42nd and 90th. In the Burton Trophy itself, three were 7th, 9th and 13th. Mike and Jean Glannister was 2nd for the Married Couple Trophy, and managed to win it the following year. Meanwhile Pam Morley was 3rd for the Mooney Cup for lady helmsmen. It was reported that National No. 1 (Gypsy ) was coming to race at Frensham.

Julian's report for 1962 indicates the large number of Open meetings to which Frensham members went. He himself sailed in only eight Club points races and competed for 34 trophies that year. There were only three trophies for which he could have competed but didn't - it being a long way to Loch Earn! His victories included the Henley Challenge trophy, the Storey Cup at Hayling and the Aldenham Twelve at Elstree. Ian McLaren was also becoming more nomadic and although Pam Morley won both the early and late series, she competed in more Opens than ever. In keeping with the restricted class scene, Ian McLaren changed his boat to a new MkXI, while Tony Brookes had a new MkVIII, and both were reported to be going very well. A significant part of the National 12 sailing was the taking part in team racing in which our team was among the top clubs.

The Nationals raced for the Frank Carter Trophy and among the winners was Michael Jackson, who later designed the Lark, while the only Frensham member to win was Julian Hereward, who won in 1958 and again in 65 and 67.

Although there has been no National 12s at Frensham since the late 60s, we followed the exploits of Caroline Martin (née Lougher) who continued to race one and had great success in 1980 when she won the National 12 Championship in Burton week.

### **The coming of the Lark Class**

The National 12s held their own Opens at the Club from 1955 until 1966 by which time their numbers had dwindled and they were replaced by the Larks. In 1966 because of the declining numbers the National 12s the committee decided they would no longer have their own starts and a sub-committee lead by I McLaren and J Hereward was formed to recommend an alternative class.

Julian Hereward recalls the start of the Lark class:

“As time went on, the G.P.14s, Graduates, the OKs and Enterprises all became classes in their own right and as the mid-1960s arrived, the Twelves were dwindling in numbers. 12 ft was a little small for many people and being a ‘restricted’ design as opposed to ‘one design’ not everybody wanted to buy a new boat every two years or so to keep up.

A small group of us at that time began to look for a replacement boat and we set out what we considered was ideal. Broadly this comprised the following: a minimum of 14ft, weight less than 200 lbs, should carry a spinnaker and be a fast, responsive, two-person, exciting boat to handle. It was also to be a one-design.

In 1965 we set about looking for such a class and tried out boats such as the 420, Scorpion and Flying Junior. John Ferguson-Smith even brought along an Osprey to try but none were considered as manoeuvrable as we wanted.

In 1967 Mike Jackson, who was a well-known dinghy racer and designer at that time, joined up with the boat builder, John Baker, to produce the Lark. Mike designed it and John Baker built the very first ones. One of our members, Dick Gill, bought Lark No 1 and brought it to the club so many of us tried it out. It seemed to fit the criteria we had set out in every respect but obviously being a brand new design no other clubs had them.

Anyway Ian McLaren took the plunge and ordered a new one and we managed to get two or three demonstration boats brought to the club and within a space of a month or so many of the keen members were buying them. The club soon officially backed it as a new class. It then really took off and by the autumn of 1967 we had nearly thirty Larks with a very high proportion of these actually racing every weekend.

This success triggered interest from other clubs such as Barnt Green and people came down to look and try out the boats. As 1968 progressed at least six other clubs adopted Larks and a Championship was organised that year, in which in excess of forty boats entered. At Frensham we were regularly turning out 25 boats for class races and in addition many of us went to Open Meetings that were springing up all over the place.

From the late 1960s right through the 1970s the class was increasingly adopted by clubs and the standard of helming and crewing was always on the increase. At times we had in excess of 60 entries for the Frensham Lark Open Meeting, and had to run heats and a final.

The advent of the Lark Class brought about a complete reinvigoration of the racing and it also laid a foundation of high standards from which many young members went on to achieve success not only in the Lark Class but in many other classes.”

In those days, the cost of a fully equipped Lark was approximately £250 and the Class attracted most of the young and best sailors in the Club. Lark 43 was raced by Julian Hereward with outstanding success. Lark 18 was raced by John McLaren, and others included Simon Millar(12), David Barrow (28), Mike Eggleston, and Ross Letten. After about a year it became evident to the better helms that those boats with a sail number above about 50 did not go quite as fast as the very first batch. This set up an active comparison between the shape of the first and later batches and it wasn't until Lark numbers had reached the upper hundreds that

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D4

Ian and Margaret McLaren racing one of the early Larks

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people were satisfied that a comparable performance had been achieved. Being in at the beginning, most of the first buyers at the Club had boats with low sail numbers. However, when any of these early boats came up for sale they were very soon snapped up.

In the seventies the manufacture of the Lark was taken over by Parkers, who at that time had considerable experience in building 470s. Subsequently the manufacture passed to the current builders, Rondar. At each step several improvements have been made to the internal structure but the external shape has remained the same.

### **Inga Kaack tells of her involvement**

“During the seventies Surrey University had its sailing club at Frensham. Team racing against other Universities took place in their Larks on Saturday mornings. Betty and Les Thomson opened up the kitchen in support of the Frensham members who attended the University and were part of the team. These included Alister Thomson, Piers Shallow, Roger Clair and Martin Kaack.’

It was in 1967 that Ian McLaren took on the post of Chairman of the Lark Class Association. In the same year the Club’s inter-class team competition for the Kilgour Trophy was first held and was the first of many wins by the Lark class. At that time the GP 14s and Enterprise classes were full and Larks numbered 18. Team racing played a significant role in those days and the Larks did well reaching the finals of the 1972 Team Tournament at Barnt Green. In the same year Frensham dominated the Lark Nationals with Julian Hereward 1st, David Barrow 3rd and John McLaren 4th.

### **The club dominates the Lark Class in the seventies**

The Club’s dominance on the Lark scene continued through 1973 when Julian Hereward won 4 Open meetings as did also John McLaren. To cap it all, Julian again won the Nationals at Hayling with David & Nigel Barrow coming 2nd.

In 1974 Ian McLaren won the summer points and Julian Hereward came 1st at the Nationals with Nigel Barrow 2nd, John McLaren 6th and Ross Letten 7th. The team racing event at Barnt Green in Larks was again won by Frensham for the 5th time in seven years. The team comprised David Barrow, David Smithwhite and Steve McQueen

The team racing event at Royal St Georges sailed in Fireflies, comprised John McLaren, Mike Eggleston, and David Barrow with Wendy Hilder, Dougie Winton, and Paul Barrow crewing. They got through to the quarter finals but were knocked out by London University and West Kirby, both of whom got through to the finals.

In the mid 70s Julian, John McLaren and Ian McLaren joined Queen Mary to race 505, Fireballs and Albacores respectively. However, a supply of young ex-Cadets soon took their places. Also two Larks sailors of some renown joined the Club as winter members. The first was David Potter who raced with his wife and won the Lark winter



series in 1974, with Les Thomson 2nd and John Davies 3rd. The other was Ken Black who won the Nationals in 1975 and who sailed at Frensham for several winters.

### **Philip Whitney takes over as Class Captain**

It was in 1975 that Philip Whitney took over the Class Captaincy for the first time, succeeding John Davies. However, it was reported that Lark turn-outs were down owing to members attending open meetings. David Smithwhite had firsts at Oxford and Wraybury and seconds at Draycote and Minima.

David Barrow was 1st at Rugby and Philip Whitney 4th at Minima. Les Thomson was 1st in the Fast H'cap at Chichester and won the summer points with Philip Whitney 2nd and Martin Kaack 3rd.

Frensham had a large entry in the class national championships, where in addition to Ken Black, David Smithwhite came 3rd and David Barrow 8th. At our Open David Smithwhite was 2nd, Ian Videlo 3rd, Julian Hereward 4th, Philip Whitney came 6th, and Ian McLaren 7th.

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D5

Mark Brewster and Alex Adams enjoying a steady breeze.

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1979 brought more success at the Nationals when Ian Videlo won with David Smithwhite coming 8th. David improved on this position in the Nationals the next year coming 3rd but did very well two years later in 1982 when he won. In the same year he won the Lark Travellers trophy and John Brickwood won the youth trophy at the Nationals.

David Smithwhite retained his Lark National trophy in 1983, and achieved 3rd place in the Bloody Mary. David Hereward started to follow in his father's footsteps winning the under-18 Trophy at the 1985 Nationals.

### **Philip Whitney describes his 30 years of racing Larks:**

“For many years it was the fastest non-trapeze boat under 14 feet long and despite the new asymmetric dinghies and their like, the Lark is still highly competitive. Which says a lot about the original design by Mike Jackson.

I first heard about the Lark class in about 1969 when I was secretary of the RAF Sailing Club in Malta. (Not that I was in the RAF you understand, but that is a different story). Diana and I raced Albacores and Swordfish with them.

The club was invited to team race against the RAF in Cyprus. As I was not in the RAF I couldn't go in an RAF transport so someone else went in my place. We were told that the RAF in Cyprus had just got a fleet of Larks, which no one had ever heard of, and that the racing would be in those. On their return they told me that they had raced in blustery conditions and that the team from Malta had got slaughtered. They kept falling over (the boats that is) which made things rather easy for the hosts. Not an auspicious introduction to the Lark.

On returning to the UK to take up a post at the University of Surrey in 1972 I discovered that the University sailed Larks at Frensham and that as a member of staff I was entitled to join the University Sailing Club and use their boats. Diana and I did this with alacrity and were so taken with the Lark we soon bought one of our own second-hand from a Frensham member. This was Lark 17.

We discovered that the fleet at Frensham was pretty hot, led by the National Champion, Julian Hereward in Lark 43 (whose recollections you have read) crewed by his wife Ann or Cathy Foster. This is not to say the rest of the fleet was slow and turnouts for the class races were in the high teens with the Open Meeting attracting 40 - 60 boats. I can remember one year (or was it more than one) when we had to run heats.

After Julian had won 6 out of 7 Lark National Championships between 1968 and 1974, Frensham continued to do well in Larks. Ian Videlo won the Nationals in 1979 and David Smithwhite in 1982 and 1983. He nearly won it a couple of years earlier when he was robbed because the race officer at Torbay abandoned the race he was leading (and I had just passed Mike McNamara to go into 5th place!). Why was it abandoned? Well the wind was like Frensham and kept changing direction. They didn't think this was fair because the sea sailors weren't used to it and the inland sailors who were successfully working the shifts were doing too well. (Perhaps I am just a little biased, but it was the best place I have ever had.)

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D6

David Barrow.

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Frensham's successes in Larks continued with John Brickwood winning the 1986 Nationals, crewed by Andy Hicks. Although John was not a member of Frensham at the time I think we can claim some credit.

Let me explain; John came up through our Cadet fleet and in 1979-80 it was clear that he, along with some others needed a three sail two man (sorry, two person) boat to move up to when they left the Cadets.

The Lark was the obvious choice. I was Commodore at the time, so when I saw 'Bagheera' (Lark 1473) advertised for sale in Yachts and Yachting I bought it. I knew she was a fast boat that had nearly won the Nationals on a couple of occasions and the top cadets would love to get their hands on her. I owned her privately so that the cadets would look after her and not just hack her about as a bit of club equipment.

As expected John loved sailing a Lark and sailed her very fast. He asked that if I ever sold her, could he have first refusal. I gladly agreed to this. At the end of 1981, because of massive cuts to Universities by Mrs Thatcher, the University of Surrey had to cut staff without any redundancy money. Anyone who wanted to go could have unpaid leave of absence. I was negotiating going to the University of the South Pacific in Fiji to teach for a few months in our summer, their winter (a degree or two cooler than the summer). They wanted me to go for longer and suddenly so did the University of Surrey. So I went, with the family, at short notice for three years. (Some people thought I had fled the country to give up being Commodore at Frensham.)

I sold 'Bagheera' to John and lent him my road trailer for the duration. He did very well with her but did not win the Nationals until a year after we returned. By which time she was quite an old lady and really surprised everyone by showing you don't need a brand new Lark to win. He sold Bagheera to Andy Hicks who sold her on again to Simon Cox who brought her back to Frensham. John went on to win the 1998 and 1999 Lark Nationals also in quite an old boat, and by now a member of Frensham again.

### **Frensham does well in the Lark Nationals**

Other Frensham members to do well in the Lark Nationals fairly recently (even if they weren't Frensham members at the time) were: Andy Shorrock 2nd 1989, 4th in 1990 (and won the Laser 4000 in 96), Ian Videlo 6th in 1996 and Aiden Mitchell 3rd in 1998. Over the years Frensham has had many Open Meeting successes. For example, in 1996 Chris Ellis won Salcombe Week, a hotly contested venue.

Frensham members have contributed significantly to the running of the Lark Class over the years. Ian McLaren was one of the founder members of the Lark Class as well as being a Commodore of Frensham. He was instrumental in bringing the Lark Class to Frensham in the first place. In the mid 1970s both David Smithwhite and I were on the Lark Class National Committee.

Together in a late night session in my lounge we designed the T-shirt to commemorate the 10th Lark National Championship. We then sold every last one of them at the Championships in Torbay. We did have to use some dubious marketing techniques to sell the last of the very small sizes, assuring the parents of babies that they would grow into them. I am sure they did - eventually!

My claim to fame in the Lark Class is the development of the pressure testing of the built-in buoyancy. Which means you can do it anywhere without getting wet. I say 'development' rather than invention because I stole the idea from the Wayfarer Class (who probably got it from somewhere else). The background to this is that the original test was for the boat to support two people for half an hour when full of water without taking more than one litre of water into the tanks (if my memory serves me right). Larks in this situation float in still water with the top of the tanks just clear of the water. (I am talking about the earlier versions, not the latest model.)

So a boat with holes in the top of the tank, however massive would not take water into the tanks and would pass a buoyancy test. There were instances of Larks being difficult to recover because of their tanks being full of water despite have a valid certificate and passing a subsequent buoyancy test. So the test was changed to one with the boat supporting two people lying on each side for 15 minutes with the mast head touching the water. Members of sea clubs found this difficult to achieve under most weather conditions because of the waves. The class wanted an alternative to this latest version of the test system that could be used by sea clubs. As a member of the Lark Class technical committee I was given the task of designing such a test.

### **A pressure test is the obvious solution**

A pressure test seemed to be the obvious solution. I had to get the pressure and times right so that it was the same as the wet test. I was assured by engineers and physicists that it was impossible to get the two tests the same because of the difference in viscosity of air and water. A roundish hole would make the wet test the more difficult to pass and a long thin crack would make the pressure test the more difficult to pass.

I am sure they are right so I took an empirical approach to get a test that in practice was similar if not identical. After all, we just wanted to ensure the boats were safe. I tested several boats that only just passed or failed the wet test and selected times and pressures that would similarly just enable them to pass or fail the pressure test. I then tested all the boats at a National Championship and only a couple of boats failed and their owners admitted the wet test results were a bit suspect. The next year I did a poster display for the AGM of the results at the previous Nationals and the very simple equipment needed.

To my horror they threw out having two alternative tests and insisted on having a vote on the pressure test alone or not at all. I was sure they would not go for the radical change to pressure testing as the only method. To my amazement and delight, after all the work I had put in, the pressure test was adopted almost unanimously.

The Committee have overseen major changes in the class with the builders changing from John Baker to Parker to Rondar and with the deck layout changing from the original Baker version (with or without greater camber on the deck) to the mark two produced by Parker and now the radical changes to both deck and interior

by Rondar. These changes must have involved the National Committee in many hours of deliberation and consultation. Frensham members have been involved over the years in all the many activities of the Committee. More recently Committee members associated with Frensham even if they were not FPSC members at the time include:

Clive Eplett (member 1981), Tim Fells who married Mandy Bonner (Chairman from 1985 to 1989 and member 90 & 91), Nigel Hufton (Treasurer from 1988 to 1995 and Publicity 1998 to 2001), Paul Hammett (Social 1990 to 1995), Andy Hicks (member 1991, 92, Newsletter Editor 1993 to 1996), John Brickwood (Championship Co-ordinator, 1994, 95, Chairman 1995, Championship Co-ordinator and then Chairman 1996), Katie Shorrock (1995 Publicity), Vicky Brickwood (1996 Lark News Editor), Simon Cox (member 1998, fixtures and website 99, 00, and 01. I am sorry if I have missed anyone out or got anything else wrong.

What has happened to the Lark Class at Frensham over the years? From its high point in the early and mid 1970s the numbers of boats racing declined until by about 1980 there were so few entries it was not always possible to have a Class Race on a Sunday. It was therefore decided to combine the Lark Class with the Handicap Class, though a separate set of results were kept for the Larks in addition to their handicap places. From about 1990 the numbers of Larks competing started to increase and in April 1992 (in time for the 25th anniversary of the origin of the class) the number was sufficient for them to become a separate class again at Frensham.

So what have I been doing with Larks over the years? Larks were (and possibly still are) allowed to have wooden decks. In the late 1970s Bakers sold a hull with no deck and a kit of roughly cut out deck parts. I sold Lark 17 and bought one of these and fitted the deck myself. The half constructed boat went to the London dinghy exhibition and caused quite a lot of interest. The new boat looked terrific but I don't think it went any faster than Lark 17. I had to sell her when I went to Fiji. On our return I bought another Lark, second hand. Lark 1608 was a good solid boat i.e. over weight but it served me very well. By this time Lynda was just starting to crew for me although she was still quite little and we therefore took things very gently. When I saw Lark 12 for sale cheaply by Steven Kaack, I went to have a look at her. I could see she needed a lot of work and that over the years there had been many repairs that needed re-doing. As she was not expensive I bought her. I didn't realise just what needed doing. In short - complete reconstruction. I knew she had been originally a Frensham boat and by the time I had rebuilt her over the summer of 1991 I had discovered that she was originally owned by Simon Millar and that she had been through several owners before Steven bought her. So for the last eleven and a half years I have been racing one of the very earliest Larks that first came to Frensham in 1967/8, and having great fun doing so. On a good day she can still give the new boats a run for their money."

Philip initiated the 'Frensham Five' which has been run as a small series of five races on specified Sundays in winter. This has proved successful by attracting visitors and giving encouragement to our own members to turn out to race. It is encouraging that the number of regular racers in the Class appears to be on the increase.

# The International Laser Class

The Laser emanated from Canada in the late 60s, to a design by Bruce Kirby, and it was intended as a simple, competitive dinghy at relatively modest cost, one which relied more on the skill of the helmsman than on the need to have the latest gadgetry.

The great feature of the Laser Class was the control vested in the builder who permitted only a limited number of moulds. Furthermore, every sail was cut identically and every fitting had to be bought from the same supplier: Performance Sailcraft in this country. This meant that was more truly a one-design than has been customary in other classes. In return the builder was able to give significant support to the UK Class Association and to provide publicity to get it off the ground. This was invaluable assistance which enabled its growth to exceed that of any other class of dinghy.

The boat wasn't perfect. Until two years ago it had the most basic controls for the sail and kicker. The mast top section was initially too weak and would often need to be replaced. Despite all this the boat has stood the test of time very successfully. Later, class members were to vote in favour of its adoption as an Olympic class. Because of the very strict one-design concept, it did not experience the rapid decline which all other newly adopted Olympic classes have suffered, and remains a very competitive Olympic Class to this day.

## **The Laser comes to Frensham**

The Laser came to Frensham about the beginning of the 70s. One of the first members to have one was Alan Hayworth on his return from working in the States. Through the 70s the numbers at the Club grew quite rapidly, with Ken Read and Paul Barrow being amongst the early owners. By 1974 Queen Mary S.C was regularly getting 60 or 70 boats in a club race. At this time the Lasers had to race in the Z class, and the first recorded success was that of Paul Barrow winning the 1976 Summer points in his Laser.

## **Early national and international successes**

The Laser was being used increasingly by the RYA as the single-handed class for youth selection trials. Nigel Barrow was outstanding in 1975 coming first in the U.K. Youth Championship in a Laser, and followed this by coming sixth in the Youth Worlds. The following year Anthea Thomson also qualified for the Ladies European Championship where in spite of boat trouble she finished 10th.

There were many other notable performances at away meetings, including that of Ken Haynes who, in 1976, sailed in the Laser international team racing squad under the leadership of Eric Twiname - sadly just prior to Twiname's unfortunate death. Paul Barrow was 1st in his Laser at Chichester Harbour Federation Week.

In 1977 Anthea Thomson was 2nd in the Single-handed U.K. Ladies Championship and in 1978 represented the UK in the Women's Single-handed Worlds in which she came a creditable 12th.

In 1979 Steve McQueen took up sailing his Laser in the Spring and went on to win the Nationals which was a remarkable feat in such a competitive fleet. That year Anthea Thomson followed suit by doing very well to win the Laser Ladies Championship and was 2nd in the Single-handed U.K. Ladies Championship. This meant we had both Laser National Champions in the same year which was an achievement for any Club.

In 1982 Ken Haynes came 4th in the Laser National Masters Championships and 3rd in this event two years later. He came 2nd in the Laser Inland Masters.

### **The class developing at home**

At home the number of Lasers was increasing as several members took advantage of having competitive racing without the need for a crew. In 1977 the positions second to fourth in Z class Summer points were all Lasers, sailed by Alan Hayworth, Mike Wright-Anderson and Andrew Schryver. In 1978 the winner, again in a Laser, was Don Videlo in both the Summer and Winter points. The following year it was Mike Wright-Anderson's turn to win the Summer points.

Membership of the Laser class at the Club had by now grown to 37, a high proportion of whom were active competitors, and so the boat was granted full class status in 1980. The first winner of the Laser Summer points series in that year was Robert Cummings, followed the next year by Mike Eggleston and then Paul Watson.

### **Of these days Keith Videlo recounts:**

“By 1978 most of the ex-cadets who had moved up to Larks were now going to University, which left the Lark class turnout looking somewhat depleted. The Laser fleet had become our largest class, although still racing in the handicap fleet. I would look enviously at the Lasers as they had a large fleet and good close racing. Eventually I decided to join them with the aim of having a go at the youth nationals (which were sailed in Lasers). My main memory of my early Laser sailing days was that once I had worked out how to put on loads of kicker I was fast up wind, but because I never eased it downwind, I was very slow off the wind and struggled in any conditions to gybe the boat.



I recall going to Thorpe Bay Laser Open and badly bending two top sections in one day, because every time I went down the run I let the main out too far and therefore rolled into windward bending the masts. It ended up being a very expensive lesson on how not to sail down a run.”

## **1979 and into the Laser Nationals**

Keith continues the story:

“1979 saw the return to the club of Steve McQueen. Following University he took a job in Australia for a couple of years. On his return and having saved up enough money to take a summer off, he decided to embark on a serious Laser campaign. This culminated in his winning the 1979 Laser Nationals at Whistable. I joined him at the event and we went to the venue a week early to practise spending the whole week sailing in very light winds. These conditions continued until the beginning of the first race when the strong winds set in and continued to blow until the beginning of the last race.

At 10.5 stone I struggled at my first Laser Nationals and also discovered my Laser was part of a faulty batch where the deck and hull were separating. This meant I spent most of the week gluing the two halves of the boat back together. The Laser Nationals in those days was split into two sections. For the first part of the week we were divided into four fleets and raced against other. During the second half of the week the top half of the fleet went into a Gold fleet and the rest into the Silver fleet. I managed to make the Gold fleet, but with my leaky boat didn’t progress much further. I did manage to improve thereafter culminating in winning the Nationals in 1989. I nearly repeated it the next year at Mumbles and would have done so had my rudder not broken in one race when I was well in the lead, so ending up 4th instead.

Sailing has been a marvellous excuse to see parts of the world I might not have seen otherwise. The Cadets took me to India and Holland, while in the Laser there were the Worlds in Canada, and with growing maturity, the World Masters in Melbourne where I managed to finish 4th; then the same event again in Switzerland where I finished in 5th place.”

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D9

Bob Castle hard at work after one of the crowded starts he describes below.

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## **Bob Castle has been a significant influence in the class:**

“I joined the Laser Class at Frensham during the 1984 winter series having previously learnt to sail at Hawley. I remember that first winter well - very windy, very wet and the pond seemed as large as the Atlantic when compared to Hawley!

The class was, as it is today, easily the largest class at Frensham and had excellent turnouts. How many, I cannot recall, it was just that the starting line was extremely crowded and I was relieved when the gun had fired and most of the fleet vanished over the horizon leaving us beginners to do what beginners do best - fall in.

The class has always benefited by having a complete span of ability - the best were national and world standard sailors, through to raw beginners, which meant that everybody had a good race. They tended to be young and predominantly male - though there were some excellent female sailors and a few wily old timers who had little problem in showing us their transoms. The Class was also friendly. I certainly had no problem in becoming part of the Laser scene when I joined, though it was several years before I realised that there were such things as Commodores and General Committees.

If anything characterises the essence of the Laser Class at Frensham, it is good-natured keenness tinged with a strong element of fun. Turnouts have always been good enough to have a good race and even club handicap races often become de facto Laser races because of the number of Lasers that race. A good hard race was followed by a get-together in the clubhouse where the bones of the race were picked over. Arguments have always been extremely rare and maybe there have been just a couple of protests between Lasers in my almost twenty years at the club. Some may shake their heads and criticise, but heck, life is too short to bother about such things!

Whilst Keith Videlo was undoubtedly the best Laser sailor in the club during this period, there have been others who would have challenged his supremacy had they stayed, either in the Club or in the Class. Such names include Nigel Barrow, Roger Gilbert and several others. Now, from the next generation, Paul Hilliar has established himself as a top-ranking sailor, and is being followed by Dan Ward, David Royse and Mark Brewster.”

## **The Mid Eighties**

The Winter series brought several other winners, notably Mike Eggleston in 1982/3, followed by Aidan Mitchell and then Mike Redpath and Adrian Hanley. In 1988/9 Stewart Taylor came first being followed in subsequent years by David Grimes and Nick Craig. For the last two years, first Martin Cushing and then Nick Hudson won the Summer points, while Paul Hilliar, Bob Castle and Clive Eplett triumphed in the Winter.

## **Bob Castle continues the story:**

“Steve Davies was Class Captain in 1984. He continued for a year when Duncan Sclare, Adrian Hanley and then I took over responsibility. In 1984, Steve bemoaned the low turnouts but mentioned they increased in proportion to wind strength. Nothing ever changes! However, they improved considerably in 1985 when he said, “A new spirit of rule observance has emerged in the class”. Well!

Keith Videlo won Langstone and the Laser section at Fed week, which was attended by 13 Frensham Laser sailors, with three boats in the first six positions. Many people went to open meetings at Walton, Poole and other places, and two went to the Nationals.

In 1986 the Laser Open became part of the Thames Valley Travellers series. It was also the year of Laser training. Several days in the spring and summer were taken - training in the morning, racing in the afternoon and videos in the evening together with a little liquid refreshment. The race committee minutes mentions race training days at sea, but senility prevents me from remembering anything about it. This training, carried out entirely by the more experienced people at Frensham, energised the class and led to the great days of the late eighties.”

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D10

George Stratford beats up to the new No 9 Buoy

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## **The Late Eighties**

In 1988 Karen Videlo became the first woman to win an adult open meeting at the Club, a feat which she repeated later twice in an Enterprise.

Graham Howlett became Class Captain. The period of the late eighties and early nineties are one of the high points of the Laser Class at Frensham. Keith Videlo became National Champion in 1989 and there was a period when we had countless successes. Nigel Barrow won several Opens - including Bough Beech and Lancing. Adrian Hanley won at Chichester and Frensham also took the team prize, and countless others. Frensham became extremely boring by continually winning the Chichester Team prize, until Chichester Sailing Club decided to stop running the event.

In the eighties Julian Hereward was a regular sailor in his Laser but slightly less frequently thereafter when his job took him to work in the Midlands. From 1984 to 1992 he won the Summer points series six times, only being pipped by Bob Castle and once by Adrian Hanley.

The Laser members have done well in many away meetings, most notably Keith Videlo who in 1989 won the Laser National Championships held at Parkstone. He was unlucky not to repeat the performance in the Nationals the following year at the Mumbles when he finished 4th, only a rudder breakage when he had a large lead in one race preventing him from becoming Champion again.

Keith also won the Frensham Open in 1989, an event which was mostly remarkable for the extensive breakages - one mast, two kicker systems and three booms. It certainly was a windy day!

Training continued throughout the season, but the race committee minutes record a drop in turnouts to an average of 12 people per race - probably due to people travelling to Open events.

## **The Nineties**

Club racing in the first half of the 1990s continued in a similar vein with good turnouts of 15 -20 boats, although this was a fraction of the total membership. The winner of the Summer points alternated between Julian Hereward and Bob Castle. However in the Winter series Keith Videlo turned out enough from 93 to 97 to have his name engraved on the winner's trophy. For the second half of the decade, Clive Eplett won both the Summer and Winter series on two occasions each, while Ian Gregory became difficult to beat and won the Summer points three times on the trot. Bob Castle took over the Laser Class Captaincy and did well in 1992 winning the UK Masters Inland Championship.

### **Bob Castle goes on to say:**

“James Leeming took over class captaincy and was very active in promoting the class. It was during his time that average fleet sizes were in excess of twenty boats and sometimes surpassed 25 boats. This was a huge achievement which was partly due to his energy, and also to the previous and continuing work in race training.

We continued to prosper on the Open circuit and, for example, Julian Hereward and I won the UK Masters Inland Championship in 1990 and 1992 respectively.

It was during this period that the Laser became an Olympic boat. There is no doubt that this has had a real positive effect on the quality of racing in the class, but also unfortunately meant that achieving national success required single minded dedication to the sport sometimes to the detriment of career and family. This may have done the class a disservice.

In the mid nineties, David Grimes and then Ken Haynes took over the class captaincy. Keith Videlo won the UK Laser Masters in 1996. The average attendance at races stayed well above ten, while members continued to attend opens and the class remained the largest in the club.”

The class also contributed to sailing generally at Frensham. In 1991, James, Mike Redpath and Karen Videlo organised our first 12/24 hr hour race which has now become an accepted part of the Frensham Calendar, even if we do restrict it to 10 hours in daylight.

### **From the Late Nineties to the present**

Ian Gregory and Tom Flintham (the current incumbent of the position) were class captains over this period.

Paul Hilliar won his first Open Meeting in 1998 at South Cerney followed by many others, and is now included alongside Mark Brewster in the British Team. Mike Redpath and Nick Hudson won Federation Week and Dorchester respectively in 1999. Andrea Brewster and Rebecca Marriott were first ladies at Stokes Bay Radial Qualifier and Club Class Championship respectively.

Members of Frensham in the National Laser Youth Squads were Andrea Brewster in the Radial Youth Squad, Dan Ward and David Royse full rig Laser Youth Squad. This is a tremendous achievement for the young individual sailors, but it brings a scarcity of young home grown talent as they make their base elsewhere.

Although fleet sizes have never recovered to those of the early nineties, the class has had a resurgence of new blood and fresh talent. For this Viv Ward has played a really important role by establishing a bridge between the Cadet Squadron and the Lasers.

### **Opportunities for youngsters to sail Lasers**

Now, if a boy or girl wishes to sail a single hander after their Cadet days are finished, they can go straight to the Lasers, and are able to sail club boats - with radial or standard sails. Because of this, the Laser Class draws in new and young people and it is something we should be very thankful for.

Tom is also organising class training which promises to be exceptionally exciting and will by itself lead to the resurgence that we experienced in the early nineties."

The strength of the Laser class at the Club is witnessed by the list of winners of our Open meeting since its inception in 1979. Over the 24 years since, only on 4 occasions has it been won by a visitor.

### **Again Bob Castle writes of the Future:**

"The Laser continues to be the most popular boat in the world and at Frensham. Turnouts are good. However, the input of fresh blood from the Cadets and the class training that is being planned will surely mean we are in for an exciting time over the next few years. If the class continues to apply energy as it is doing at the moment, then the future looks better than ever."

# The International OK Dinghy

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D11

The earliest OKs at Frensham

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## **The first of the single handers at Frensham**

Although the club was later to be used by the Olympic Finn squad for winter practice, single handed dinghies were a rarity when FPSC was founded in 1953. The only example at the club in those early days was a British Moth, soon exchanged by its owner for a Firefly! However as the fifties progressed, shortage of willing crews was beginning to cause problems, even for some of our top racing helms, and there was an increasing need of a single hander.

It is recorded that as early as 1956 Peter Martin asked that some thought be given to encouraging a single-handed class. Then early in 1960 Frensham stalwart, Dr Martin Ware learnt of a new Swedish single-handed design. He liked what he saw and bought one of the very first to be seen in the UK. The boat was of course the OK Dinghy. In March 1960 an OK dinghy was demonstrated at the club by J Rogers, and by Christmas of that year Frensham had a membership of fifteen OKs. In the class bulletin for the UK, the club was described as providing a focus and meeting point for all interested people in the central south. Dr Martin Ware, the first Frensham owner, later donated the Frensham Porringer trophy for the winner of the Frensham Open, a trophy which is still raced for today.

## **Getting to know the OK**

Jim Morley writes:

“The OK dinghy owes its designation or name to the Danish yacht designer Knud Olsen (initials reversed to OK) who in 1958 prepared drawings on the basis of conventional plywood construction, with a wooden “Finn” style unstayed mast, which was to cause Frensham sailors much heartache initially, as we shall see. Knud Olsen intended the design as a trainer for the Finn. Certainly the OK required less body weight to be competitive, but the boat proved tricky to sail. Early British examples were equipped with wooden masts that lacked flexibility. Six members pioneered the OK at Frensham in the 1950s, namely Martin and James Ware, father and son, Roger Stiles who presented the Stiles trophy for the winner of the OK Summer Points, John Hollingworth, James Cuscaden and Jim Morley. Soon each

was to find that the boat became famous for its death rolls on a dead run. Their first weekends were spent in multiple capsize, baffling for helms, but highly entertaining for the spectators ashore.

Their problems were to be solved by the timely arrival of class mentor, Richard Creagh-Osborne who brought with him a wood plane. Ten minutes work slimming the leading edge of each mast transformed the matter almost beyond belief. The masts now flexed as they were always meant to do and windward performance improved out of all recognition. Those early pioneers learned to anticipate the death rolls and began to revel in a dinghy that could at that time out-plane all other classes on the lake.

At the start of the 1960s, the OK was in serious competition with the Solo. There was a plan for Richard Creagh-Osborne in the OK to have series of one-to-one races on the Pond against Jack Holt in the Solo. Sadly this amusing shoot-out never took place. Frensham members then opted for the OK as we have seen.”

The low boom continued to cause casualties amongst the sailors as it does today. One Frensham helm who, on two occasions has been whisked off to hospital with a split head, has fond memories of an attractive nursing sister who cradled his bloodstained head in her bosom in order to steady it as she sewed it up. Some clouds obviously have silver linings! Nevertheless caution prevailed and the wearing of a crash helmet became the fashion accessory for some!

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D12

Tim Weeden. A shot clearly showing that low boom

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Since that time there have been a number of hull variations including composites (plywood and glass fibre) and all glassfibre moulded hulls. Masts and booms, originally wooden, have been replaced by all metal rigs, and carbon masts are now permitted for some events. In the nineteen fifties a new OK could be purchased for under £200, but in 2003 the price could be closer to a figure of £6,000.

### **Frensham sailors are important to the Class**

The pioneers were soon to be joined by many more including Richard Hart who had been sailing Graduates and National Twelves with some success. Richard was a merchant navy officer and was soon to establish himself amongst the top single-handers in the UK. He went on to race a Finn as told in the chapter Olympians and Others.

Others to buy OKs were Alan Winton, a future class champion, Jonathan Bradbeer (a future Commodore of the Royal Ocean Racing Club), David Threlfall, and Robin Jenkins, captured from his success with Fireflies. Another early member was Rob

James who later turned to ocean racing with great success. He married Naomi, who subsequently became a Dame, but tragically he lost his life in the 90s after falling overboard from his boat outside Salcombe.

Whilst Richard Creagh-Osborne played an important part in the promotion of the OK, Basil Crosby and Roger Stiles were very much involved in the development of the class. They became Secretary and Chairman respectively of the OK National Association. However, they still found time to keep racing actively, and in 1961 Roger came second at Veerse Meer in Belgium. Appropriately that year saw him win the Summer points series for his own Stiles trophy, which he repeated in the following year. Subsequently, at Verse Meer in Belgium, Basil negotiated the formation of the OK International Association and became its Secretary in 1964 and later its Chairman.

By 1962 the OK class had seen spectacular growth with 300 in the UK and 3,000 in the world. In keeping with this national expansion Frensham had the largest OK fleet in the country.

### **First rate competition**

The Porringer, presented to the winner of the Frensham Open, was first competed for in September 1960. That weekend the Frensham weather was at its most exasperating, the sun shone on a windless lake! The previous day the Race Officer had been approached by a young Swiss chef at a local restaurant, with the request that he borrow a boat for the meeting. His name was Freddy Lanz. What followed was not in the script.

OK dinghies had travelled to Frensham from far and wide and helms included Richard Creagh-Osborne and a host of invited star sailors. Freddy Lanz went on to win three of the four races and only then did it emerge that he was a well known helm on the Swiss lakes, and for him Frensham was home from home!

For the 1961 open meeting at Frensham there were forty entries including seven from France and one from Switzerland, and the event was won by Richard Hart.

One of the Frensham OKs claims to fame is that in 1966 the King of Thailand, a keen OK sailor himself, visited the club for several days mid-week, together with an entourage of twenty-seven. The King participated in some specially arranged OK races, and subsequently made a donation of £100 to the club to provide a prize to be awarded to the youth who had shown the most improvement, which is still presented annually.

Laurie Weeden writes:

“The arrival of the Laser on the sailing scene with its enormous commercial support from Performance Sailcraft provided fierce competition. For the last three decades the club’s OK membership has not matched that achieved by some other classes at Frensham, but a significant feature of the class has been the larger than average proportion of members qualifying in the various series of races each year. OK



sailors would modestly claim that is due to the sheer excellence of the craft because the OK speaks for itself, particularly in blowing weather.”

### **Notable Successes**

Since the boat was introduced at Frensham, OK helmsmen have achieved notable successes at the club, at away open meetings, and at national level. Top competitors include Geoff Bush, Derek Mills, Geoff Hunt, Tim Weeden, Simon Deeks, Martin Gee and Brian Cushing.

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D13

It's not always blowing hard! Beating up to No 2.

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Club members have been well represented at the Nationals. In 1961 Richard Hart became the OK National Champion with a total of 5 Frensham boats in the first six places. Alan Winton won the Nationals in 1963, while Tim Weeden had an outstanding year in 1979 winning the National Youth Championship at Draycote with David Smithwhite coming second in a borrowed boat.

The most successful sailor has been Nick Craig, formerly a Frensham Cadet of some note, who emerged rapidly on the OK scene to win the Nationals in 1998,1999 and 2001. Furthermore, he has achieved first place in the German OK National championships on three occasions, once in each of the Belgian and Swedish Nationals.

Also in the OK World Championships he was second in the year 2000, and third in 2003 in Goa.

### **Class captains**

Any account of events in the class would indeed be incomplete without mention of class captains over the years. Possibly the longest serving was David Kernahan. Others include Roger Stiles, James Morley, Derek Mills, Ted Payne, Tim Weeden, Simon Deeks, Rob Dixon, Graham Ellis, Laurie Weeden and Nick Craig.”

### **The OK across the years**

In 1966 the OKs boasted 60 entries for their Open meeting. Derek Mills won the Summer points series and also the Winter points in which John McLaren was second and Basil Crosby third.

Derek repeated his win in the Summer series but in the winter several members won, including Geoff Hunt in 1967 and Laurie Weeden in 1969.

By 1967 the OK class was described as keen but by no means at full strength. John McLaren won the Open with Derek Mills doing so the following year. We were then without a home winner for the next ten years when Tim Weeden came home triumphant.

By 1972 the OKs were well on the way to establishing themselves at the level of keenness of former times. Several boats went to the Nationals at Hayling Island, and Geoff Hunt was chosen to sail in the World Championships at Marstrand in Sweden.

1974 Peter Jenkins won the summer points and was 4th in the Indicator trials at Oxford, and 10th in Northern Championships.

1975 It was reported in 1975 that the OK class was a keen fleet, and much credit must go to David Kernahan, the Class captain. Tim won both the Summer and Winter points series and in the latter David Kernahan came second, with Alister Thomson third.

In 1976 Tim Weeden was selected for the British team for the OK World Championship in Denmark, but had the misfortune to break his mast before the first race. However, he did very well to win the OK Thames Valley Area Championship series.

1978-1983

The Summer points series was won by one of David Kernahan, Peter Jenkins, Steve Bullmore and Tim Weeden. In 1979, six members went to the OK Nationals with Tim Weeden coming 8th and Peter Jenkins 12th. Also during this period Dan Green won the 1982 Youth Trophy at the OK Nationals.

1984-1993

These years saw the first of many wins by Brian Cushing in the points series and he was to take a leading role over the next 20 years. However Simon Deeks reigned supreme from 1985 to 1993 winning all the Summer points series and most of the Winter points. In 1985 he was chosen for the OK Worlds in Holland. There was a brief period in 1992 to 1995 when Martin Gee had taken up sailing again and joined the Club. He won the Open meeting in 1995, being the first Frensham member to do so for sixteen years.

1994-2003

1994 saw the start of a magnificent unbroken run of wins for the Summer and Winter points series by Brian Cushing. During this period the Class had not been plentiful in numbers but was well supported by its members. To the fore in this regard have been Laurie Weeden, Charles Watkins and C Marshall. Rarely put off by the weather, replacement hips etc, they are marvellous examples to the whole of the Club.

### **And finally an OK miscellany**

“If you have not broken a (wooden) mast you have not arrived.” Derek Mills - Commodore in the early seventies.

“When you step out of a wetsuit even your best friends won't know you.” Ted Payne  
- OK Skipper in 1968.

“Members approaching retirement should not necessarily assume that they are old  
enough to enlist in the OKs.” Laurie Weeden.

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D14

Nick Craig leading on the beat in an OK Open Meeting at Frensham

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# The Z Class and the National Solos

For many years the club maintained a Z Class which was not representative of a single boat but provided a home for different craft, some of which might emerge as a Class in the future. In fact, several of today's classes, including the Larks and the Lasers, began their racing in the Z Class, utilising the appropriate Portsmouth Yardstick.

By the late eighties and early nineties regular participants in the Z Class included Solos, Comets, Graduates and the occasional Firefly, particularly Peter Slimming's beautifully restored example which tended to sweep the board in the Winter series.

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D15

Colin Boys in his Comet.

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Comets had flourished at Frensham for a number of years lead by Geoff Sutton whose son Jake was National Champion during that period. Geoff was for several years Z Class captain and during his tenure the Comet National Championships were held at Frensham. However in the late nineties and the early part of the new century, the Comets and Graduates declined until only one or two were sailing on a regular basis, and the Solos became the dominant class, with ten or more of the twenty strong fleet racing every week-end.

In 2003 Graduate numbers began to grow again. Because the boat is ideal for a combination of helm and lighter crew, several families have adopted them with the intention of sailing a 'grown-up' and a youngster in regular racing. This made them particularly attractive to families who had attended Frensham training with their children during the Summer. Peter Guyett writes about the Graduates in a separate chapter, telling us that they were for a long time a popular class at Frensham.

## **Solo & Slow Handicap Class**

In 2000, when Charles Smith was Z Class Captain, the decision was made that the Solos should race as a separate class, starting at the same time as other boats in the Z Class, but recording their results separately, and competing for their own trophies.

The name of the Z Class was changed to Solo & Slow Handicap - something of a misnomer because many of the boats were anything but slow - but a name chosen to represent a group of boats with Portsmouth Numbers between 1240 and 1110 and to distinguish this group from the faster boats which joined the Larks as the Lark & Fast Handicap Class. Thus the Slow Handicap group provided a home, initially, mainly for the Solos and Graduates, while the Fast Handicap group provided racing for the RS

400s and RS 200s which in the new century are emerging as popular asymmetric boats suitable for racing inland.

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## D16

Keith Videlo. Solo National Champion in 2002 at Paignton.

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### **The Solo**

The Solo was designed by Jack Holt in 1955. In common with most of his boats, the Solos were designed initially to be within the scope of the home builder, using the 8ft x 4ft sheets of plywood which became available after the war. Frensham still has one or two of these early wooden boats built by Jack Holt himself. The class is a one design but allows the helm to choose a mast and sail which best suits his or her weight, and so the boat responds to individual tuning. Class rules now permit boats in wood, grp, composite boats with grp hulls and wooden decks, and boats with stiffened hulls in modern fibres. Several builders produce Solos and there is a choice of mast maker and sail maker. The Solo carries substantial sail area at 90 sq feet, much the same as a National 12 or Firefly, balanced by sensible beam and is sailed by helms from a wide range of weights.

### **George Kaack, twice Solo Class Captain, writes:**

“The Club had very few Solos until the early 70s and by 1973 their number had reached 13. Among those who had raced them were Norman Letten, Taffy Barrow, Ted Grimes, Peter Dyer and Roger Grainger. With a brand new Solo and lots of enthusiasm Norman inspired the class and became Solo Captain in 1974.

In 1975 Roger Grainger came third in the Z class points behind Charles Hicks in his Merlin and P Newman in an Albacore. However, in the following year the Solos were more successful with Paul Barrow leading the way with Norman Letten in second place.

I joined the Solos in 1976 and have seen the number of active sailors grow gradually since. Over this period the proportion of those who raced seemed to be quite a lot higher than is the case in some other classes. I must mention Charles Watkins, who started sailing a Solo back in 1972 and has continued to sail Solos, and OKs, very competitively ever since. Problems with hips have been taken in his stride and he is an inspiration to us all.

At the time the Z class was dominated by the up and coming Lasers, a state of affairs which lasted until 1980 when they got their own class status and the Larks joined the Z class instead.

I took over the captaincy in 1987, when we had 16 Solos and 26 Larks in the Z class. The Solo numbers gradually increased over the years. Our success has extended beyond our Sunday class races when in 1992 Richard Lowe won the Wednesday evening series in his Solo.

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D17

Charles Watkins ready to sail but hoping for a better breeze.

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Through the 90s Nick Clibborn, John Townsley and Ken Haynes have been the leading Solo sailors in the Club and have helped to raise the standard of the racing. Through this period they have had quite a number of successes outside the Club. Nick has won Open meetings at Papercourt and Spinnaker and has been placed at several others. Ken has also done well at open meetings and in 2001 came second in the Thames Valley series. Alan Dance has also done well and has had to manage fitting in the racing of his Solo with that of his Enterprise and has been a welcome member.

In 2000 the Solos got their own class status and by the year 2003 the numbers had increased to 22. Quite significantly the enthusiasm in the Class is demonstrated by the succession of our members who over the last five years have replaced their boats for new ones. Competition is getting stronger than ever. Keith Videlo joined the Class in 2001, not that we saw much of his boat that year. Following delivery of his boat in mid-summer he promptly entered the Nationals only to damage badly a muscle through capsizing beforehand. This stopped all sailing for several weeks! However, the next year he raced his Solo along with the GP14 and lately the RS200. He did well in winning the Solo Opens at Marconi S.C. and at Hayling Island and then went on to win the Nationals at Paignton. Although not sailing his Solo very often, he managed to come 5th in 2003 at the Nationals in Llandudno.

In the last two years we have lost Ken Haynes who has ventured into big boat sailing. However, we have gained several new members, notably Tim Deacon, who in his 'floral' Solo often leads the way.

The Solo class continues to be popular at Frensham maintaining its strength on the water. Our annual open meeting attracts between twenty and thirty boats, some from as far afield as Bristol, and Frensham helms are always well placed."

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D18

Nick Clibborn ghosting in the lightest of airs

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## **Frensham Pond Sailing Club Commodores**

1952-53	D Abbot-Anderson
1953-58	C D Carter
1958-60	N E Morley
1960-64	J L Russell
1964-67	C J Caesar
1967-70	I McLaren
1970-73	D J Mills
1973-76	A H Lankester
1976-78	R M Eggleston
1978-80	D A Videlo
1980-82	P J Whitney
1982-84	P J Newbery
1984-86	C N Draper
1986-88	E E Evans
1988-90	J Hereward
1990-92	I R Swaddling
1992-94	G C Gunter
1994-96	D F Shaw
1996-99	C R Ellis
1999-01	B D Grimwood
2001-02	C R Ellis
2002-04	C P Smith
2004-	G S Howlett

# Frensham Pond Sailing Club Honours

## 1955 -1979

1955	W Hollick	Graduate Nationals
1957	J Prangnell	Graduate Nationals
1961	R Hart	OK Nationals
1963	A Winton	OK Nationals
1965	R Hart	Finn Nationals
1968	J Hereward	Lark Nationals
1969	J Hawker	Graduate Nationals
1969	J Hereward	Lark Nationals
1969	R Hart	W German Finn Open
1970	J Hereward	Lark Nationals
1972	J Hereward	Lark Nationals
1973	N Barrow	Cadet Nationals
1973	N Barrow	Cadet Worlds
1973	J Hereward	Lark Nationals
1974	R Hart	Finn Nationals
1974	J Hereward	Lark Nationals
1975	I Videlo	Cadet Nationals
1975	I Videlo	Cadet Worlds
1975	N Barrow	National Youth
1975	C Foster	European Women's 420s
1976	K M Videlo	Cadet Nationals
1976	K M Videlo	Cadet Worlds
1977	C Foster	UK Ladies 420s
1978	C Foster	Women's World 420s
1979	I Videlo	Lark Nationals



## Frensham Pond Sailing Club Honours

### 1979- 1989

1979	K S McQueen	Laser Nationals
1979	C Foster	Women's World
1979	A Thomson	UK Ladies Laser
1980	C Foster	420 Nationals
1981	A Thomson	UK Ladies (S/H)
1981	C Foster	470 Nationals
1981	C Foster	UK Ladies (Two/H)
1981	G Lewington	Cherub Nationals
1981	R Goss	Graduate Nationals
1982	D Smithwhite	Lark Nationals
1983	D Smithwhite	Lark Nationals
1984	C Foster	470 Olympic Team
1985	R Goss	Graduate Nationals
1985	G Lewington	Cherub Nationals
1986	G Lewington	Cherub Nationals
1987	G Mitchell	Cadet Nationals
1987	G Lewington	Cherub Nationals
1988	G Lewington	Cherub Nationals
1989	K M Videlo	Laser Nationals
1994	C Foster	Flying Dutchman Nationals
1995	K M Videlo	Laser Masters
1996	A & K Shorrock	Laser 4000
1997	A Brewster	UK Ladies Cadet Nationals
1998	J Sutton	Comet Nationals
1998	J & V Brickwood	Lark Nationals

## Frensham Pond Sailing Club Honours

### 1998 -2003

1998	S Bullmore	2.4m Nationals
1999	J & V Brickwood	Lark Nationals
1999	K Bannister & J Winchester	Comet Trio Nationals
1999	N Craig	OK UK, German and Belgium Nationals
2000	R Gilbert	RS 400 Nationals
2000	N Craig	OK German Nationals
2001	K Bannister & J Winchester	Comet Trio Nationals
2001	A Brewster	RYA Ladies Nationals (S/H)
2001	N Craig	OK UK, German & Swedish Nationals
2001	R Gilbert	RS 400 Nationals
2002	A Brewster	Europe Nationals
2002	N Craig	OK Nationals & Europeans
2002	R Gilbert	RS 400 Nationals
2002	K M Videlo	SoloNationals
2003	N Craig	OK Nationals
2003	N Craig	Enterprise Nationals
2003	R Morris	USA Access 303 Nationals



An Aerial View of Frensham Pond