

# MIRACLE HALO M

NEWSLETTER OF THE MIRACLE CLASS ASSOCIATION

Issue No.2 April 1976.

## COMMITTEE COMMENTS

In spite of the delay in publication of this our second newsletter we hope that you will find it's contents to your liking. This delay is by no means an indication of inactivity on the part of your committee but in fact just the reverse.

During the past few months much work has been done on such matters as Measurement Rule Interpretations, Portsmouth Yardstick Negotiations, Organising and Manning the recent London Dinghy Exhibition, arranging for the 1976 Champoinships etc., etc.

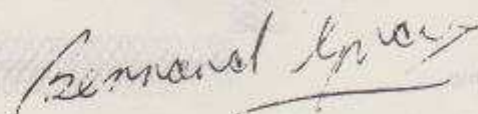
All of this is essential ground work to put our association on a sound basis and reports of progress made in the above and other matters will be found in this newsletter.

In the meantime the Miracle as a boat has continued to justify the early promise of success and the 1000th Miracle was recently ordered.

It is clear now that 1976 will see many more Miracles on the water both racing and pottering all over the U.K. plus an increasing number in other parts of the World.

We shall look forward to comparing notes on Miracle matters as we meet here and there.

In particular we hope to see a great crowd of Miracles at Datchet for the Championships on 17th and 18th July.



Chairman

## WHAT'S IN A NAME

It is now evident that being a Miracle owner is a very virtuous practice as a large majority of owners consider Halo to be synonymous with Miracle ownership.

This is the conclusion drawn from your excellent response to our competition to find a suitable name for our Newsletter as not only was the name Halo selected by the judges but many of the entries used the word Halo in one form or another.

The selection was made on a points system with Halo coming out clear ahead by a wide margin. This name was submitted by a member in the Nottingham area but since the entry did not give his address we would be pleased if he would contact our secretary Peter Funn so that the prize can be posted to him.

In addition the entries placed second and third will also receive a prize. These are:-

2nd - Halo Sailor submitted by Mr. Metcalf from Oxford

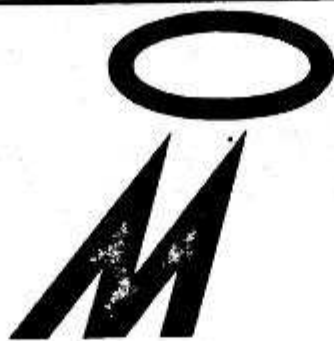
3rd - Miracle Owner submitted by Mr. Batten from Bosham

Finally, many thanks to all who submitted entries.

We have also been very pleased to receive many letters from you with interesting news and views about Miracles plus questions and queries which we are pleased to do our best to answer. A selection of your letters are published on our letters page plus answers to some of the more general queries. However, please note that if you have a query for which you would like a personal reply a stamped addressed envelope will be very much appreciated.

PLEASE - if you have any interesting photographs of Miracle activities suitable for publication send a good enlargement or the negative to the Editor, Miracle Class Association at 79 Camden Road, London NW1 9NT.

These will be returned to you if requested.



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### ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP

The benefits of association membership are manifold as you will see from the examples listed here:-

1. Newsletter with details of Activities, Racing, New Equipment etc.,
2. Measurement facilities and information on Class Rules.
3. Backing on claims for faulty equipment.
4. Opportunities to meet fellow owners.
5. An active and popular Association keeps resale values higher.

\*For information regarding Association membership contact:

The Treasurer, Miracle Class Association,  
58 Seeleys Road, Beaconsfield, Bucks.

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## Tuning a Miracle - Get a race winning finish

The finish on a race winning boat is very important and once achieved should be carefully looked after.

When you decide it is time to paint your boat, look at the hull and decide whether the finish you had last year can be improved - you will find it can. A perfectly smooth surface is what you should aim at. Before rubbing down the hull check whether the glass tape on the chines and keel line are easily visible. If so these will require filling and blending. The best type of filler is a chemical reaction type such as Isapon. Before filling the tape, sand carefully with 320 wet and dry paper. Use a plastic applicator and smooth the filler evenly. Do not try to apply too much at once. Once filled use a large pad with 380 wet and dry.

Now all joins have been blended in, elbow grease comes into its own. Mechanical sanders, such as Black & Decker can be used but do not, repeat, do not use a disc sander. The best method is to use a piece of wood 14" x 2" - wrap a sheet of 380 wet and dry and using it like a plane, work systematically over the hull. The best method of seeing whether there are any ridges or lumps is to run your finger tips over the hull.

As most of you know, when you rub down a surface which is shiny it goes dull which makes it easy to see if there are any high spots.

Once all the high spots have been removed to your satisfaction and you have completed this process for the whole hull then it is ready for painting.

Most garages and sheds are adaptable to a set of conditions which are favourable to obtain a good finish. Some useful hints on this are as follows:-

- 1). Hang a large sheet dampened with water over the whole of the painting area.
- 2). Lightly spray the walls and floor as moisture traps dust.
- 3). Stuff rags in any door or window cracks.
- 4). The best position for painting the hull is suspended the right way up where practical; if now, well supported upside down a reasonable working height above the floor (to help the old back).
- 5). Where possible rubbing down should be done outside the painting area.
- 6). When using wet and dry to be followed immediately by painting turps or white spirit instead of water.
- 7). Avoid wearing any woolly or fluffy clothing during painting.
- 8). Always buy good quality brushes and clean well between each use. Do not stand them on their bristles.

On with the painting then.

Any bare patches of wood should be treated with primer or a coat of undercoat. Once this has hardened you are ready to give the complete hull a coat of undercoat. Using a 2 1/2" or 3" brush apply the undercoat in strips (20" wide) working from the gunwale to the centre. This coat should then be lightly rubbed down with 400 wet and dry. The hull should be allowed to dry thoroughly before the next coat of paint is applied. As dust and other gremlins find boat hulls very comfortable you should rub a non-fluffy cloth dampened with turps over the surface you are about to paint. Using a 2 1/2" or 3" brush apply your gloss paint the same way you did the undercoat. It is important that you should apply the paint evenly and quickly avoiding overpainting the consequent runs.

This surface when hardened dry (normally 2 1/2 hours) should be flattened down using 400 wet and dry. Remember again it is important that all brush marks should be removed before the next coat of paint is applied. You should apply two more coats of gloss in exactly the same way but rub the third gloss coat down using either worn out 400 wet and dry or 600 grade. If

any dust particles, flies, etc., settle on the paint before it has dried it is better to leave them and rub them down once the paint has hardened.

You are now ready to apply the fourth and race winning finishing coat of gloss. Ideally leave the paint to harden for 2/3 days and then using Blue Bell, carefully run over the hull using a circular motion.

-Peter Nunn,  
Class Secretary.

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## The Grand Launch (or) I Wish I'd Worn a Wetsuit

After five months of careful work and unpteen flasks of coffee my new Miracle emerged from the depths of a rather dilapidated shed which I had rented from a friend. On to the trailer, a short drive home, then rig the boat to make sure all the relevant bits were there. I'd planned to launch the boat that day but it started to rain so I postponed the grand occasion until the next day.

I woke up at the ridiculous hour of 8.30 a.m. to find Wendy, my very tolerant wife, already up and making coffee and sandwiches. I attached the trailer to the car, checked the trailer lights and off we set only to return within minutes to pick up the sails which I had forgot to put in the car. We finally arrived at the clubhouse at 10.00 a.m. to find the place deserted and the wind blowing about force 4-5 and cold, very cold, actually it was bloody freezing. "It's a bit windy, isn't it?" Wendy asked from inside the car. "No, I lied, "perfect conditions". Anyway, Wendy donned her wetsuit, I rigged the boat and we dropped her in. Fabulous! It floats. We both scrambled in and off we went, nice and steady with all sheets eased.

A few minutes to settle down then haul everything in and off like a mad thing in the general direction of the far bank. The boat seemed to be flying and yet felt very stable. On reaching the windward end of the lake we gybed and screamed off on a run really enjoying every minute. Thirty seconds of a beautiful plane, then it happened, wind changed and I had that sudden wet and floating feeling that comes from being thrown violently into a lake on a cold September morning. Rather alarmingly, the boat turned turtle almost instantly, leaving us covered in rope and clinging to opposite sides of the gunwale. I hauled myself up, grabbed the centreboard and very quickly the boat came into the position it should be. I held the boat in this position while Wendy scrambled back aboard, muttering something that sounded most naughty. I climbed aboard and we limped back to the clubhouse for something warm (to drink).

After a couple of cups of coffee I was told we had had enough for today so the boat was dried off and put in the compound ready for its next experience. It was a most memorable launch.

- Gary Angell,  
Miracle 305.

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## WEDDING BELLS AGAIN

There must be something very specially romantic about Miracles as we are pleased to tell you that our Class Secretary Peter Nunn has recently announced his engagement to Margret Wegrzyn and the wedding day will be Saturday 24th April.

CONGRATULATIONS AND BEST WISHES TO PETER AND MARGRET.

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MORE ABOUT THE MIRACLE ONE DESIGN DINGHY

In our first newsletter there was an article outlining how we in the Miracle Class were going to try and maintain the one design concept of our dinghy.

Our aim has been to try and find some simple way of interpreting the rules of measurement to achieve this. We are aware that it is so easy to think up some jolly good idea and then scan the rules and measurement forms only to find that nothing specific covers your idea. You may be tempted to proceed only to run foul of the measurer. The result at best is a lengthy discussion through committee and then reference to the copyright holders for a final decision, at worst, animosity between the owner and the measurer.

We think we have found a simple interpretation which we hope will avoid this problem. It is as follows:-

UNLESS IT SAYS YOU CAN - YOU CAN'T

To elaborate a little unless what you propose to do is either in the building instructions, rules of measurement and construction, or has been to the committee for a ruling, and agreed, then it is not allowed.

This does not preclude any member putting forward a proposal for consideration at the A.G.M. which if agreed would then be passed to the copyright holders for their decision. We think it appropriate to remind members at this point that the copyright holders do have the right to overrule any amendment to the rules made by members at the A.G.M. if in their opinion it is not in the best interest of the class.

We do realise that with a new class there are bound to be some things that are not already written in which are desirable, all that is asked is that you do not anticipate acceptance of your own idea, but route it through the proper channels.

The 1976 season will soon be with us and we would ask all members who will be taking part in the various open meetings to make sure that their boat complies with the rules of measurement. It is not a very pleasant task to have to tell a member who has probably travelled a long way that she/he is either not allowed to sail or is disqualified. So please do not put us in this position. If you have already done something to your boat which you are doubtful about contact your nearest committee member who will either give you an immediate answer or find out for you.

At the last committee meeting the following items were submitted for clarification

- 1). Optional running rigging. Rules that wire halliards are permitted. (But that no additional fittings such as hook up racks or highfield levers are permitted).
- 2). Clew outhaul arrangements. Ruled that the controls and line must be fitted externally. It is not permitted to cut holes in the boom in order to fit sheaves and run the control inside the boom.
- 3). Fairlead positioning. Ruled that the fairlead can be positioned anywhere in the fairlead pad, part no. 31 in the building instructions. Or in that part of the deck carling which is rebated into the fairlead pad. No part of the fairlead must project over the inside of the side deck edge.

WHAT ABOUT A SPINNAKER?

Many Miracle owners and prospective owners are asking if or when a spinnaker will be allowed.

The current position is that a spinnaker is definitely not allowable but in view of the obvious interest your committee, in conjunction with the copyright holders have asked the Miracle designer, Jack Holt, to produce a suitable spinnaker design for trials to be conducted. On this basis additional measurement rules can be prepared if required.

However, before a spinnaker can be adopted a formal proposal to this effect must be put to a General Meeting of the Association to enable all members to state their case for or against such a proposal.

If, at such a meeting, the members indicate a wish to change the class rules in order to allow a spinnaker a formal request will be made by your committee to the copyright holders for the rule changes to be approved as the final decision in such matters rests with them.

PORTSMOUTH YARDSTICK

Last October the RYA circulated forms to all RYA affiliated clubs for their assessment of Portsmouth Yardstick numbers. Only two clubs completed their assessment of the Miracle. Based on these results the RYA indicated that a Portsmouth Yardstick of 102 would be appropriate but after discussions with our chairman and secretary the RYA agreed not to publish any figures for 1976 as the statistics available were inadequate.

When the original figure of 104 was recommended this was only done after many trials in various wind conditions and locations and since subsequent checks on this at various clubs indicate that 104 is about right we recommend that this should continue to be used until full statistical returns are available to enable the RYA to confirm or modify this figure.

With this in mind we ask all members to encourage their club to complete their Portsmouth Yardstick assessment forms when they are distributed by the RYA in the Autumn.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

The 1976 Annual General Meeting of the Miracle Class Association will probably be held immediately after sailing on Saturday 17th July at the National Championships at Datchet Sailing Club.

A formal notice to this effect will be sent to all members as soon as this is confirmed.

# WHERE MIRACLES COME FIRST

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## WHERE TO SAIL MIRACLES.

### Clubs List.

In addition to the list in our first Newsletter the following clubs will accept Miracle members and whilst they do not all have Miracle class racing yet, in most cases this will be done when they have sufficient numbers of Miracles racing regularly so it's up to you to generate enthusiasm together.

<u>Club</u>	<u>Contact.</u>
Rutland Sailing Club.	Derek Roberts, 22, Richmond Drive, Nottingham.
King George S.C., Chingford.	Publicity Officer, Phone:- 01 366 3764
Sou-West S.C. (Thames).	Dr. Stewart Harrison, "Gaywood", Yew Tree Bottom Rd., Epsom Downs, Surrey. Tel: Borough Heath 54906
Hertford County Y.C.	Mr. A.R. George, 91, Fordwich Rise, Hertford.
Grafham Water S.C.	Secretary, Grafham Water S.C., West Perry, Huntingdon.
Shropshire S.C.	Mrs. C. Anthony, 16, Whitehouse Close, Solihull.
Queensferry Boat Club.	Mr. G. Dunthorne, 5, Cherry Tree Park, Balerno, Nr. Edinburgh. Tel: 031 449 4120.
Newhaven & Seaford S.C.	
Dovestone S.C. Holmfirth.	
Durham S.C.	
Sovereign S.C. Eastbourne. (Miracle Class Racing)	Sailing Secretary, Sovereign S.C., Royal Parade, Eastbourne. Tel Eastbourne 20715.

There are obviously many more clubs where Miracles are welcome but for which we do not have details. In view of this it will be appreciated if members will send us details of any other clubs so that we can pass this information on to the many owners who ask for this information.

### REGISTERED MIRACLE FLEETS.

Clubs can Register Miracle Fleets when 5 or more members sail Miracles. To register all that is needed is a letter from one of your club officers to our class secretary requesting the registration of a Miracle Fleet and including the names and boat numbers of miracle owners plus the name and address of the nominated Miracle Fleet Captain.

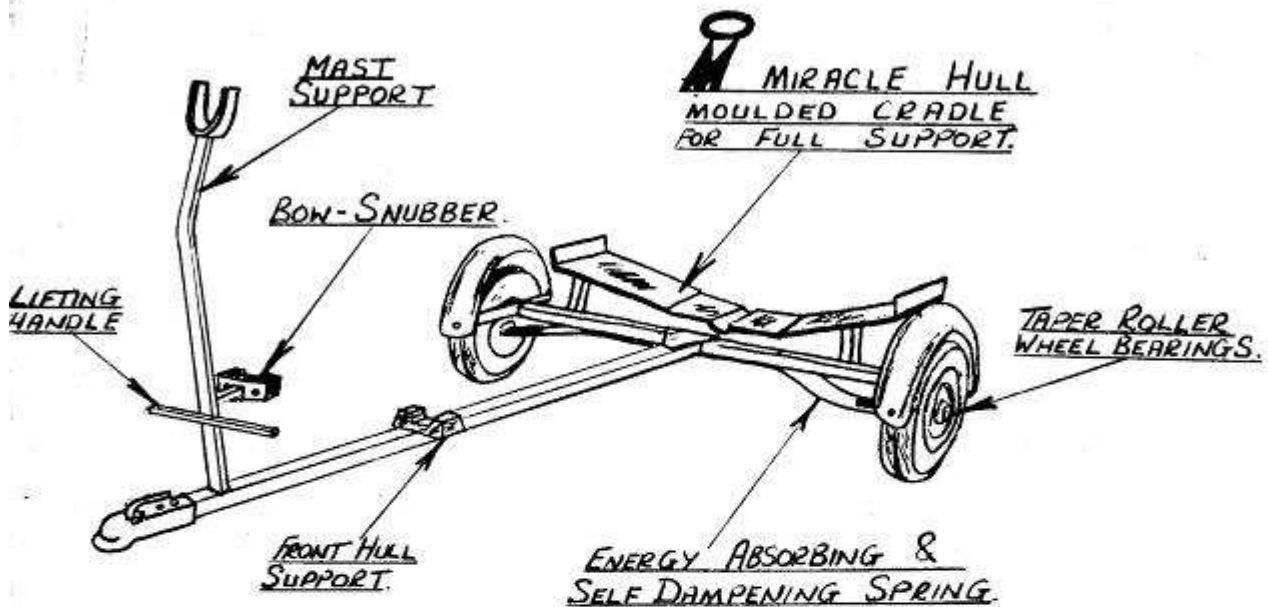
The following Miracle Fleets have already been registered.

<u>Fleet No.</u>	<u>Club &amp; Location.</u>	<u>Fleet Captain.</u>
1	I.P.C.Y.C. Iver, Bucks	Len Lumley, 39 Hewens Road, Hillingdon, Uxbridge, Middlesex
2	Redoubt Sailing Club	Mr. W. Hills, 7 Castle Bay, Folkestone, Kent
3	Wilsonian Sailing Club	Sam Brookes, 9 Cross Lane, Bexley, Kent
4	Sovereign Sailing Club Eastbourne	Eric Kay, 21 The Rising, Langney, Eastbourne
5	I.C.I. (Slough) Sailing Club (Taplow)	Bernard Gray, 58 Seeleys Road, Beaconsfield, Bucks

STOP PRESS    ++++    STOP PRESS    ++++    STOP PRESS    ++++    STOP PRESS    ++++

The recent LONDON DINGHY EXHIBITION at Picketts Lock, Edmonton, was a great success with a large number of visitors showing interest in the Miracle. We were also delighted to meet many Miracle owners and to compare notes. This success was largely due to the efforts of a small group of our Committee and members and we sincerely thank each one for their hard work which was well worth while.

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## THE LOVE-HATE AFFAIR ( or Confessions of John Batten ).

Building Miracle Number 571

Building my Miracle is a bit of a love-hate affair, especially when I've had an hour's session with that disgusting resin and tape. It might not be so bad if I could see properly, but my boat is being built in my rented garage, once the village fire station, a lofty but gloomy affair without artificial light and not too much natural light. Some of that taping is jolly difficult, I can tell you, and as the outside temperature now doesn't get much above 52 or 53 F (11 or 12 C) it is even harder.

Of course, the handbook says the stuff should be used at now lower than 60 F, which is all very well; in fact the resin will set and the tape go hard at quite a lot less than this, but it takes longer.

So far, some fifty hours worked on about thirty days since early October, I have done two-thirds of the resin and tape procedure inside the hull, following each step in the handbook as it comes, of course. I have had the kit since May, but wanting to get in my regular sailing and racing in my Leader or Laser with Bosham Sailing Club during summer and autumn I avoided the temptation to start work ages ago. Just as well, though I lost fine, dry, warm, high weather, because I'd have had time for nothing else once I'd started.

Now I've run into early darkness - you cannot really use natural light after 4 p.m. now (I am writing at the end of November) and this will not improve for months yet - and so progress must be slow, as weekends require other things as well as boat-building to be done, and there's little time during the week.

Having built a Mirror Dinghy some years ago, and assembled the timber parts for my composite Leader on its GRP hull a couple of winters ago I have some experience, but by no means enough, I can assure you. For all its clever workings out, the Miracle is not all that easy, and the woodwork part up to now has been very much simpler to do than this messy fibre-glass resin and tape business.

I am finding that it is best to mix only about a quarter of a pound jar of resin and catalyst at one time, use it, and mix fresh. I cut the tape to the lengths needed for each joint before applying it, and am careful to see there are no long threads at either end of each piece. If there are I can be sure to drag the tape off its joints once the brush gets hold of it.

The barrier cream I put on my hands helps to keep the resin off, and remove it later - I find that hot water and soap will remove surplus resin from hands and brush very well. Ideally, it wouldn't get on your hands, of course - but, try avoiding that.

I am looking forward to the day when all the interior seams are taped and I can turn the hull over and get the tape along the outside, able to see what I am doing, and with comparatively flat joints. Has anyone else but me experienced the difficulties of making the tape lie flat in the joins between, say, the inside of the fore tank and the chine?

So for me there's little miraculous about that particular job. I do the resin and tape thing in short takes, not more than an hour at a time, to avoid going mad, and that way I seem to get fair results.

Little doubt about it, the kit is ingenious, and the slot-and-tab idea very useful. It's what Peter Milne, the Fireball designer, uses in his Bullet dinghy, I believe, so perhaps it isn't as original as the blurb about the Miracle claims. It certainly means everything is square enough, I must say, though I found a lot of the tabs in my kit needed rasping round to make them fit up close.

I feel the book is over-helpful on some minor things and not helpful enough on others. The writer(s) go out of their way to emphasize simple things, yet are not specific about some. Did others find, with me, that the illustration of the mast step packings in no way resembled what was supplied in the kit, which were two wedged-shaped pieces needing shaping to the

angle of the spine? This was not made clear in the book, and believing the packings were missing from my kit I asked Bells for the right pieces - to receive exactly the same as I already had. Ah well, we live and learn, but Bell Woodworking would not admit there was this misleading picture in the book which in no way marries up with the material supplied.

Then, I've been sent thwarts which bear white marks across them, on the upper, visible sides, made by the sticky tape with which they were packed, and I have failed to remove the marks. Sandpaper, rasp, Citriline "sander," none did the trick; I tried several coats of varnish, but the marks still show. Planing might do it, I suppose, but unless this is skilfully done it would only make matters worse, so I am hoping they'll be sympathetic in Leicester and replace them. I think the thwarts had stood for a long time in strong light.

If you wonder why I've been messing about with the thwarts before completing the resin and tape work, well, I have done some finishing off and varnishing off tiller and rudder units while waiting for better conditions for using resin, and decided to get some varnish on the thwarts as well, too, as the varnishing and rubbing down, and taking off a finer chamfer, are quite lengthy jobs.

Be careful when you make up the king-plank unit, or you may do what I did (though I doubt it). The pieces of softwood at either side of the ply pieces need carefully positioning, the wide side uppermost, the narrow side glued and pinned to the ply. Also be sure that the angle at each end of each softwood piece is the same angle as the bow transom. I think the handbook says something about this, but it wasn't clear enough for me and I only realised it was incorrectly assembled, with the softwood wrong way round, when I came to fit it. Did a bit of botching here, only I'll know, as it will be under the deck.

Also, watch out when you come to fit the bow transom, and don't do as I did, not spending enough thought on it, and saw off the over-lapping pieces of the gunwale. I had to do a bit more botching there, too, because you need those overhanging pieces to take the screw that goes into the fore gunwale through the upper chine, even though they make the bow transom appear to be a bad fit.

Somewhere the designers tell you in the handbook not to worry about pieces fitting to a thousandth of an inch. They didn't allow for some of the poor fitting chines I got, only noticeable when you've put the hull together. There's lots of daylight at the forward end of my hull, never mind those, probably 32nds of an inch or more, beneath the stowage bulkhead.

The tabs and slots are a close fit, too, and the reason must be that you needed to do a bit of chamfering of the chine at this point to get a good fit. I shall fill in the gaps with a waterproof (polyester) filler when I turn the hull over, pressing it onto the resin and tape cover beneath before taping over. What the designers would say of this I don't know, but it seems good sense to me.

There was the same problem at the stern, but I managed to get over this by hauling the whole lot tighter together using a Spanish windlass - rope with wood twisted through it to get it taut, and this really did the trick.

My boat is to be called Aggie Weston, after the famous (to sailors, anyway) lady who started the Seamen's Homes. I'd hoped she would be ready for a Christmas Day launch at the bottom of the road here, but that's unlikely now the weather is so much against me applying the resin and tape, and I may have to settle for a month or two later. Shouldn't be any special hardship, as I have a wet-suit, and sail on decent days through winter, anyway.

There have been one or two Miracles down here. One chap chose Bosham for his maiden voyage, and my wife and I were impressed with the light weight of the boat which we helped him carry down some steps to the water. I'll tell you more, if the Editor will let me, when I've tried her out.

John Batten,  
Riverside,  
Bosham Lane,  
Old Bosham,  
Sussex.  
Telephone: Bosham 572718



# Don't Forget the Miracle Open Meetings

at

**Blue Circle Sailing Club**

**Sat. 15th. Sun. 16th May**

**Wilsonian Sailing Club,**

**Hoo, Kent**

**Sun. 23rd May**

**Redoubt Sailing Club,**

**West Hythe Lakes,**

**Sun. 25th July**

and the

# National Championship

at

# Datchet Reservoir S.C.

# 17th / 18th July.

Dear Peter,

It is good to know that Miracles have become so well established in one season and I must say I am really delighted with mine. I first had my boat on the water for Easter 1975 and many people at the Club where I sail have shown a keen interest - the clean lines and uncluttered interior have been much admired. So far 5 other Club Members have bought Miracles and should be on the water very soon and I must say that I am looking forward to competing against them although I have already managed to perform quite well against the G.P.14s in our handicap series being placed 3rd in the pursuit handicap series.

Our Club Committee (Shropshire Sailing Club) have stated that although there are not yet enough Miracles to warrant adoption this will certainly be considered if the fleet gets larger and with this in mind will view favourably any new Miracle owners who apply for membership. Our Club Secretary is Mrs C. Anthony, 16 Whitehouse Close, Solihull, West Midlands.

We are also interested in laying on a Miracle Open Meeting on a Saturday later in the 1976 season to give us time to develop our numbers a little.

On the subject of rigging the Miracle I have had difficulty in getting the Jib Luff tight enough to avoid this falling away in a blow and would really like to fit a highfield lever but presume that this would put me out of class.

Incidentally, my number 3 crew is threatening to defect unless I can promise a Spinnaker in the near future.

Graham L. Miller MM 63.

Comment - Your presumption that the highfield lever would put you out of class is quite correct but don't despair there are alternatives which may help such as using a wire halyard with a rope tail which is allowable and when hauling up the Jib get your crew to apply extra tension on the forestay by holding this with both hands spaced about a foot apart and pushing with one hand and pulling with the other whilst you haul up the Jib halyard hard and cleat off. Finally apply tension to the Jib Luff directly by using a short length of cord through the tack eye of the sail and down to the forestay shackle and tying off when required tension has been applied. Ref. Spinnakers see comments on another page.

Dear Peter,

I am pleased to confirm that a Miracle Open Meeting will be held at Sovereign S.C. Eastbourne on Sunday 12th September - First Race 11 a.m. (See Open Meeting Programme Page for details).

Any Miracle owners wishing to enjoy class racing will find a warm welcome at Sovereign where the club is situated on the seafront at Eastbourne and racing can be viewed from the Clubhouse on Saturdays and Sundays.

For non-sailors safe bathing may be enjoyed from the beaches and for the younger children the Clubhouse is conveniently adjacent to the Treasure Island Childrens Playground - with Crazy Golf and Model Village Nearby.

Mid-day meals, snacks and bar facilities are also available in the Clubhouse.

Cliff Harvey - Sailing Secretary Sovereign S.C.

Dear Peter,

May I first justify the use of R.Y.A. notepaper by saying that when I saw the Miracle at the Boat Show I was immediately impressed by her potential as a reasonably priced, and easy to build training boat. I lost no time in becoming the owner of 143 (Duette) and was delighted with her. Two of my friends, also R.Y.A. Coaches, have followed suit.

The only small drawback is the lack of provision for reefing which is an essential part of the R.Y.A. Method for teaching.

The highlight of the past season for me was a week at Bassenthwaite Lake. The Club was most hospitable with a permanent force 4 - 5 wind and in the august company of Flying Fifteens and G.P. Fourteens the spray from the transom of the Miracle caused a few stiff eyebrows to unbend.

Many thanks for Newsletter No. 1. I hope the Association will go on from strength to strength.

Rob Baldwin - MM 143 - Duette.

Comment - It is in fact quite practicable to reef a Miracle by rolling the foot of the main around the boom and using the sailbag rolled in with the sail as a location for the kicking strap. The only difficulty with the standard boat is the lack of a swivel attachment for the mainsheet but I am sure that this could easily be modified if required.

However, if the Miracle is to be used regularly for R.Y.A. Method Training it would probably be well worth while arranging with your local sailmaker to fit two rows of traditional style reefing points in the mainsail. B.G.

Dear Peter,

I have just finished perusing the first issue of the Newsletter and must congratulate you on a very fine effort.

Under section 2 of "News in Brief from the North", you comment on a Miracle causing some interest in the Lake District: In all probability this was my Miracle No. 218 as my wife and I have been sailing on Ullswater many times during the past year and each time considerable interest has been directed towards our boat from others in the sailing fraternity. We have been questioned on the lake and off and in fact sometimes it was difficult to get into the water because of the interest shown - several people left Ullswater convinced that their next dinghy would be a Miracle.

I received my Kit just after Easter 1975 and had her sailing 6 weeks later for the Spring Bank Holiday. It is my first boat and my wife and I have had little trouble learning to sail as the boat is so predictable and stable.

We are now both firm Miracle sailors and look forward to the next issue of the Newsletter.

P.D. Tervit MM218.

# 'CLOUDS' MOVES A CRUISER

Southsea girl helmsman Gillian Chester proved she was a sailor in a million — when the 12,500 ton helicopter cruiser H.M.S. Blake made way for her 13ft. dinghy.

The giant 565ft. warship had been blocking the passage from Kings Stairs, in Portsmouth Naval Base, where Gillian's new dinghy, Clouds, was due to make its maiden voyage.

But this was no ordinary launching — and no ordinary helmsman.

For 20-year-old Gillian, a Civil Service Executive Officer on the staff of the Commander-in-Chief, Naval Home Command, built the dinghy herself.

## EXHIBITION

She completed the 6650 Miracle class craft in four-and-a-half months, with a minimum of help and advice, and her handiwork was of a high enough standard to feature in last week's London Dinghy Exhibition.

So unusual was Gillian's achievement that the news reached the ears of the Commander-in-Chief, Admiral Sir Terence Lewin. He was so impressed that he agreed to launch the dinghy himself.

As the big day approached, only one obstacle seemed to stand in the way — the Blake. "It became a bit of a joke in the office," confessed Gillian. "Would Blake stop the launching or not?"



Admiral Sir Terence Lewin launching the dinghy.

Then, just in time, she was moved. "I suppose we should have known that with the Commander-in-Chief being involved, you can get things like that done."

## GALLANTRY

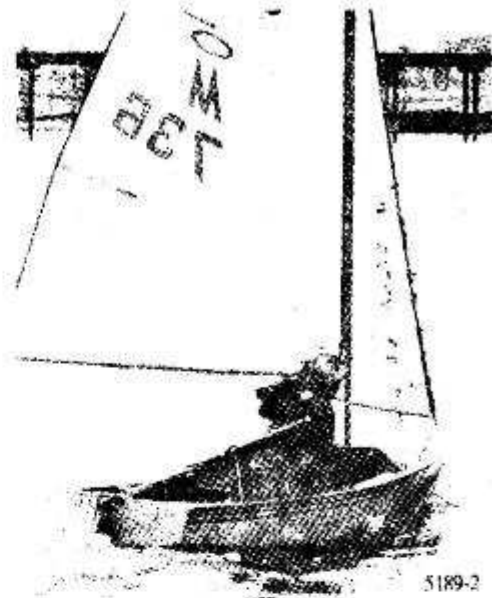
A Royal Navy spokesman was a little less optimistic, and denied that Blake had moved either out of gallantry, or out of deference to the Admiral.

"She just happened to be

going at the right time," he said. "They would hardly move the Blake just to make way for a dinghy."

Whatever the real reason, Clouds had a clear passage, and a sparkling racial send-off, although, of course, two of the traditional roles were reversed.

Instead of showering the new vessel with bubbly herself, Gillian took the helm,



Miss Chester celebrates on the maiden voyage.

while Admiral Lewin performed the launching ceremony.

Her crew for the day was Lt-Commander Peter Baseby, who joined her for a brief trial trip around Portsmouth Harbour. But Gillian has yet to find a permanent sailing companion.

"I have the dinghy and a trailer," she said, "and ideally I would like to find another sailor with a car to help with

the towing — preferably a girl."

The crew she chooses will have to be prepared to work hard to keep up with Gillian, who is already a proficient helmsman, and who hopes to enter the National Miracle class championships.

As Admiral Lewin put it after watching her first circuit of the harbour: "She is certainly every inch a sailor, and quite a remarkable girl."

# Gill finds shipmate for life

Miss Gillian Chester, the Southsea girl helmsman whose home-made dinghy was launched by an admiral, has found herself a shipmate . . . for life.

For a delightful surprise awaited 20-year-old Gillian (right) soon after the launching — a proposal of marriage from the young man who had helped her to build her new Miracle class dinghy.

So the couple became engaged, the perfect ending to a romance with a strong nautical flavour.

Their decision also provided Gillian with a part-time sailing companion, enabling her to race her 13ft. craft.

Her first meeting with her fiancé, Mr. Paul Barrett, was a far less friendly occasion. In fact the two were deadly rivals in a sailing race, and there was certainly no hint of love at first sight.

"I was crewing for a girl friend of mine in the Mirror dinghy championships at Helensburgh," she explained. "We were doing very badly. In fact we were racing Paul for second to last place! I hated him instantly."

Back on shore, the two met and talked, but then lost contact when they returned to their separate homes. Paul, who is a computer programmer, lives at Chatham, Kent.

Months later, Gillian decided to build her own boat, and started work on her new 13ft. craft, Clouds. "I had some problems with the construction," she said, "and I knew Paul was a committee member of the Miracle Association. So I wrote to him for advice."

He visited her at Southsea, helped her to complete the boat, and this week returned to Portsmouth to see it launched from Kings Stairs, at the city's Naval Base, by the Commander-in-Chief, Naval Home Command, Admiral Sir Terence Lewin.

This special honour came because Gillian is a Civil Service executive officer on the Commander-in-Chief's staff. The Admiral was so impressed when he heard that a young woman on his staff had built her own boat — with a minimum of help from Paul — that he agreed to launch it himself.

## RACE

Now life should be all plain sailing for Gillian, apart from one small problem. "Because Paul lives at Putney," she explained, "we shall not be able to go sailing together as often as we should like. We are not planning to marry for about 18 months."

"Ideally, I should like to find another girl sailor to race with me at other times." The girl she chooses to make up the crew will have to work hard to keep up with Gillian, who hopes to enter the next Miracle class championships.

With any luck, she will be able to prove that her boat is a winner, as well as a passport to romance.

I am sure that all members would wish to join in sending Paul and Gillian their congratulations and every good wish for the future.

Also many thanks to John Batten for submitting these cuttings which are reproduced by courtesy of THE NEWS, PORTSMOUTH.

**CLUB REPORTS.**

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**Thamesmead Sailing Club,  
Southmere.**

Our quite young and very active club, situated within fifteen minutes drive from the southern entrance to Blackwall Tunnel would welcome Miracle sailors. At the moment we have one Miracle sailing and another one due on the water some time in January. New members would be welcome and we would like to see enough boats to form a class for our summer series racing which starts on March 28th.

In spite of Southmere being a public lake and the lake of a club house (temporary) we manage a full racing programme from March 7th to late January and are well enough organised to be hosting a National Championship this year.

Thamesmead Sailing Club has a mainstay of keen racing people of all ages, racing four classes of boats within the club and racing other clubs on a regular basis. Never the less, the club has a strong family background and we have more than a few members who come to sail for relaxation and perhaps to work off the odd surplus calorie. Our numerous social activities are always a great success.

During the warmer months Southmere can be a pleasant place for the family, with well laid out grassy banks and nearby, adventure playgrounds and supervised paddling pools for the younger children.

Your contact is Harry Jacobs at 10a Garnett Way, Walthamstow, London E17. Telephone: 01-527-0725 or most Sundays at the lakeside except during February (no club fixtures). Our membership secretary is:-

Richard Scales,  
40 Granville Road,  
Welling,  
Kent.

Should you come to the lakeside and find I am not about, ask around, about membership, most of the people with boats are club members and will be happy to assist.

To get to Southmere, take the south side of Woolwich Ferry as a starting point and travel along the A206 towards Plumstead, soon you will see the sign Thamesmead. Follow the signposted, winding and I am afraid rather depressing road until you come to a circular fly-over, take the exit to the right and proceed down the slope and completely circuit the roundabout at the bottom. You should now be travelling in the direction from which you have just come but on the other side of the carriage-way. In two or three hundred yards you will see a sign "Crossness Sewage Treatment Works" (worse and worse). Take this road, turn right at the "T" junction and then 500 yards on your right the imposing vista of Thamesmead, Southmere will appear, with the launching ramp, racing box and a variety of boats "there before your very eyes".

See you there!

**Thames Sailing Club**

Since hosting the first Miracle Open Meeting last August, the Thames Sailing Club at Surbiton, Surrey, have officially adopted the Miracle class alongside the Raters, Merlin Rockets, Solos and Cadets which have been raced on the Thames here for many years.

New members especially Miracle owners are very welcome at this superb club. There is ample car parking, a riverside hard and excellent catering and bar facilities. Miracle racing is scheduled for Tuesday evenings, Saturdays and Sundays through the season. The second Miracle open meeting will be held here on Sunday 22nd August 1976.

Any enquiries should be addressed to the class captain Roger L. Mansbridge, 48 Church Meadow, Long Ditton, Surrey, Telephone: 01-398-3935.

**Redoubt Sailing Club,  
Folkestone, Kent**

The Redoubt Sailing Club is a member of the East Kent Yachting Association and was formed in 1967 by five dinghy sailors one of which has since gone on to international fame.

We sail all the year round on West Hythe lakes which are ballast pits. Have handicap races, Mirror Class racing and doing our best to get Miracle Class racing.

On average, we miss less than one race a year due to weather conditions. We have twelve permanent buoys laid so get very varied courses with hardly any trees to deflect the wind and very open to the South-West.

The Miracle fleet is well placed having two Miracle men on the committee.

Our water can be sailed on any day at anytime so you seldom go to the lakes without someone being out sailing, with the exception of three days a year reserved for fishing contests.

We hold training sessions each Wednesday and Saturday afternoon from May 5th to October 2nd. The conditions are ideal for games.

Next years programme has our first Miracle open meeting on July 25th. Our 5th Mirror open meeting on 16th May. Fleetwind open on June 6th and Solo open on October 3rd. A pursuit race on May 31st and a novelty race on August 30th - always a popular event. An Easter series. Morning and afternoon Sunday series and a Wednesday evening series.

There is a slip of 30ft launching getty designed and built by the members. Our Club House is very apartan, all emphasise is on sailing.

Membership at present open but fast approaching where a limit will have to be set. (If all members decided to sail at once it would be very over-crowded)

It is a friendly club and at open meetings friends come back year after year.

Wilfred Hills,  
Miracle Fleet Captain,  
7 Castle Bay,  
Folkestone,  
Kent.

**The Esso (Fawley) Sailing Club**

The Esso (Fawley) Sailing Club to which my son and I belong has a mixed but enthusiastic racing fleet and most races are on handicap using Portsmouth numbers. The general standard is high, (last year we won the Southampton Water Sailing Association Team Trophy), so this should give an opportunity to see how the Miracle compares with the other classes we race. There are three Graduates which race regularly in the Club and BWSA events and which, of course, differ by only 1 FN from the Miracle. We had a tune-up on 29th February and seemed to be able to hold our own against the Grad which was out then.

The Class Newsletter, number one, requested information on good sites for sailing. I would recommend Calshot Spit, at the South-West entrance to Southampton Water. OS map reference 488 020 on sheet 196. By road turn south off the A35 just west of Southampton onto the A326 and then B5053; go through the car park at Calshot, turn left for half a mile, then there is a car park and concrete launching slip on the right. The gravel and sand banks begin to dry out at half tide but there is still just enough water to get a dinghy off at low water neaps, and two hours each side of low water springs. The beach is exposed to South-East so it is usually easy to get off. At high water one can launch on the North side of the Spit off a shallow beach. The main beach is clean gravel and good for bathing. Afloat, you can potter about near the beach or get out for Cowen (best landing at West Cowen between Egypt Point and the Castle) or Hill Head. (gravel and sand beach)

Question - Many owners have raised the question of how to prevent the jib luff sagging in strong winds, including requests for advice on the use of wire halyards, hook up racks and highfield tension levers.

Answer - First it is confirmed that highfield tension levers and hook up racks are not allowed by the class rules but don't despair, there is a simple answer to the problem of tensioning the jib luff. Wire halyards are allowed but these must have a rope tail to provide for this to be cleated off with conventional fixed cleats as originally fitted or of the clamcleat type.

This in itself is only a partial answer in that it reduces the stretch in the halyard to a minimum.

The real answer is to haul up the jib halyard very tightly which can easily be done as follows.

First, rig the jib normally and haul up loosely then get your crew to take hold of the forestay with both hands placed about a foot apart and push hard with one hand and pull with the other to apply extra tension to the forestay.

Whilst this tension is held, quickly haul up hard on the jib halyard and cleat off firmly. If the crew now releases the forestay the full tension will be taken up by the jib luff wire.

Finally, pull the jib tack down firmly by attaching a cord to the jib luff shackle, up through the eye in the jib tack and back again to tie off securely

Question - What size of outboard motor is suitable for use on the Miracle?

Answer - This depends largely upon the location in which it is to be used. For instance, in still water on an inland lake a 1½ h.p. motor would prove to be quite satisfactory and indeed even in protected tidal or river waters this would still be sufficient for steady progress. However, a larger safety margin of power is essential if the boat is to be used in more exposed tidal waters and up to 4 or 5 h.p. is recommended. A more powerful motor than this would not normally be advisable as the full power would not be effective and the additional weight on the transom could damage the boat and also upset the fore and aft trim making the boat directionally unstable.

Question - What is the most suitable length for a jib stick?

Answer - The measurement rules allow for a jib stick maximum length of 5ft but at this length the foot of the jib would be stretched out very tightly spoiling the shape of the sail. In view of this, a maximum length of about 4'6" is recommended.

Question - Is a window allowed in the jib as view forwards is limited and this is a hazard when sailing in restricted water?

Answer - The rules do not allow a jib window at present but it is possible that this will be the subject of a proposition at the next Annual General Meeting so watch out for future reports.

Question - Is a cunningham hole or mainsail tack downhaul allowed on the Miracle?

Answer - Again, this is definitely not allowed at present but this will be the subject of a proposition at the Annual General Meeting so watch for future reports.

**DRAYCOTE WATER 4 OF A KIND PURSUIT RACE**

It was some weeks before the actual race that it was suggested that I should sail our Miracle at Draycote. Having been to Draycote before during my Mirror Ditchby days I conjured up a picture of what this spectacle would be like. If I had known what I do now perhaps I'd have had second thoughts. Saturday 6th March dawned windy and sunny but very, very cold. It was a day of wet suits, frozen sheets and hot soup in the clubhouse - and the race was due to last three hours.

Determined to represent the Miracle Class well we had prepared the boat and ventured to Draycote with a full supporting team including the Association Chairman and a couple of "where's the 18 foot skiffs" observers. Later these proved invaluable to de-rig the boat when we were too cold to help!

When we rigged the boat all was smiles and chat, after all there were many old friends from Draycote to meet, but I couldn't help noticing that there were black punts on the lake and my hands were numb! We chatted to Peter Sowden and the other Miracle sailors until it was time to venture forth to the start of the practice race.

It was a long, cold wait for the start was put to good use by Draycotes' own Mike Robinson (Miracle 486) who practised his capsize drill! The rest got off to a somewhat ragged start. We had some trouble with a 6714 and a Mirror who insisted in getting off first - by bouncing off us! Going well up the heat were the other two Miracles, Tony Prior (Miracle 521) and Peter Sowden (Miracle 529). By the time we had reached the 1st mark I was so cold I could barely sail, let alone race so we retired (with the grateful consent of my crew Peter Davies). This set a trend which was followed until nobody was left out!

We recovered after a warm dinner in the clubhouse but it wasn't long before the Cadets and Mirrors were sailing out to the start of the big race. We started thirty-nine minutes behind the Cadets so we had to go too. Once out on the water vague hopes that the wind had died and temperature risen were dashed as we felt the icy blast and watched Olympic silver medalist Keith Musto sailing his Flying Dutchman under flogging mainsail and half a genoa!

By the time we started, the Cadets and Mirrors had done a lap so we were pleased to get going. On the off Mike Robinson and myself were beat off and pretty even up to the 1st mark at the other end of the lake. However, once around the mark I managed to catch a gust and get one of those "super force six Miracle planes" with both Peter and I sitting right out at the back. We were wondering when this would end as we flashed passed Mike - but it didn't. The course consisted of a series of reaches across the reservoir and a long, long beat the length of the lake. The amazing thing was the speed we went downwind. All cold and tiredness was forgotten as we planned passed Racers, Otters, Minimals, Signets, Fleetwinds and the like. What also pleased us was that despite the fact that the Graduates and Solos dozed up on our 2nd lap, by the end we had pulled away again. It was on our 4th lap that the faster stuff started coming through - first a Snipe then Mike Nimmer's Interprise (who we held on to for a lap) and the 470's, Fireballs, Flying Dutchman and the like.

It was a big boats day, the adventure lying in the ability to plane both upwind and down - a spinnaker being an added bonus. Despite standing up well to the conditions the Miracle couldn't perform either but we held on to take 3rd place in our group. (10+ handicap minus minimal) and 39th overall out of 71 finishers and well over 100 starters. Tony Prior managed 66th and Mike Robinson 69th. In all, despite it not being a Miracle's day as far as conditions were concerned I think between us we performed reasonably creditably.

A few memories remain - the fantastic downwind ride - aching legs from sitting out and aching hands from the cold plus a picture of Peter, my crew, sprawling in the bottom of the boat after he had clipped on one of the faster, wetter riders! I've got no complaints about the boat - nothing broke and although she didn't point too high she more than made up for it in performance downwind - stable on the gybe too. There were three gybes per lap and seven laps - making a total of 21 and it didn't even rock! Altogether, a cold but worthwhile day. A cold, tired but happy Miracle crew returned to Bensonfield to fight another day (just about!)

Good sailing to you all!

- Stephen Gray (Miracle 123 - Melita)

Ranelagh Sailing Club Open Meeting

There were ten entries for the Ranelagh Sailing Club Open Meeting held on Saturday 27th March, and competitors represented at least six different clubs. Due to the tide only one four lap race was sailed. Wind strength was estimated at a fresh force 4, and was at its strongest at the up stream mark where some exciting planing reaches took place.

Brian Southgate crewed by his wife of the home club was first away at the gun and soon opened up a substantial lead, he was followed by Peter Sowden, Ken Price, "Peanuts" (apologies for not knowing your name) and Len Lusley. Brian maintained his first position throughout the race but places behind constantly changed depending if one chose the course out of the tide which unfortunately was also sometimes out of the wind.

Turning the clubhouse mark for the final round, Brian was still in front followed by "Peanuts" and Len Lusley. At this stage "Peanuts" outhaul came undone allowing Len Lusley into second place and he was also passed by Ken Price and Peter Sowden before he managed to secure the sail. By this time the wind at the clubhouse end had dropped a little and the fleet having had a puff from behind closed with the leader. Brian Southgate of Ranelagh Sailing Club was justifiably first over the finishing line followed by Len Lusley and Ken Price both of I.P.C.Y.C.

-Len Lusley,  
Committee Member,  
Miracle Number 177.

Next issue of HALO newsletter

Our next HALO is planned for publication in June so if you have any items for publication please send them as soon as possible, but not later than 1st June to:-

The Editor,  
Miracle Class Association,  
79 Camden Road,  
London, NW1 9NT.

We shall be particularly pleased to have any items on cruising and pottering matters plus cartoons, photographs, etc., etc.

Photo Feature.



CLASS RACING AT IVER, BUCKS ( I.P.C.Y.C. )

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\*\*\*\*      \*\*\*\*      SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT      \*\*\*\*      \*\*\*\*

1976 MIRACLE NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

Saturday and Sunday 17th/18th July.

Provisional arrangements are in hand for this event to be held at the new DATCHET RESERVOIR SAILING CLUB.

This is a brand new club on a new 500 acre reservoir with a magnificent clubhouse at one end of the water and Windsor Castle at the other end with views of the castle across the water.

Sailing has just commenced at the club which is being organised by some very experienced sailors and will be part of a large leisure development under the auspices of the Thames Water Authority.

This event, the First Miracle Championship, will also be the first major open event to be held at Datchet and should prove to be a memorable occasion.

Book the date in your diary now and watch out for full details which will shortly be sent to all members together with entry forms.

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1976 MIRACLE OPEN MEETING PROGRAMME

The following are confirmed dates of known Miracle Class Open Meetings. If your club is proposing holding a Miracle event or a General Handicap Regatta please send us full details for circulation to members.

If not, why not discuss this with your sailing secretary with a view to arranging a Miracle event either late this year or in 1977.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Club.</u>	<u>Contact.</u>
Sat.15th and Sun.16th May	Blue Circle S.C. (Cliff,Nr.Rochester)	Paul Barrett,19 Thistlebank,Walderslade, Chatham,Kent.
Sun.23rd May	Wilsonian S.C. Hoo,Kent.	Mr.Sam Brookes, 9,Cross Lane Bexley,Kent.Tel:Crayford 526475
Sat.17th Sun18th July	<u>NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP</u> Datchet Sailing Club.	Mr.Len Lumley, 39,Hewens Rd., Hillingdon, Uxbridge,Middsx. Tel: 01 561 6124.
Sun.25th July	Redoubt S.C. West Hythe Lakes.	Mr. W.Hills, 7, Castle Bay, Folkestone.
Sun.22nd Aug	Thames S.C.	Mr.R.L.Mansbridge, 48,Church Meadow, Long Ditton, Surrey.
Sun.12th Sept.	Sovereign S.C. Eastbourne.	Mr. Cliff Harley, 21,Horam Pk.Close, Horam,Sussex.
Sat.18th Sept	I.P.C.Y.C. Iver,Bucks.	Mr.Len Lumley, 39,Hewens Rd. Hillingdon, Uxbridge, Middsx.
Sat. 9th Oct.	I.C.I.(Slough) S.C. Taplow, Bucks.	Mr.Bernard Gray,58,Seeleys Rd., Beaconsfield, Bucks.