

HALO

Autumn 2022

The magazine for the
Miracle Dinghy Association



Pictures by Belinda Marfleet ©



Chairman's Report

October 2022

Hello fellow sailors,

Wow! what a sailing season we have enjoyed this year. Nine open meetings on the circuit have been well supported. The end of season open was hosted at Shustoke SC where eleven boats competed at the beginning of October. It was a good social occasion including a Saturday evening pub meal and some competitors staying in local B & B accommodation.



The nationals at Dabchicks SC, West Mersea, near Colchester in August was a very successful joint event, again with our partners in the Signet fleet. The new venue proved to be a jewel in the Essex coastline providing character and charm in an estuary setting with seaside facilities. The tidal channels into the Blackwater estuary required careful navigation under the watchful eye of the rib safety crews. At low tide boats were instructed to stay close to the moored boats in the centre of the channels. This was quite an experience and added a unique aspect sailing to and from the racing area, sometimes even requiring a tow when the tide proved too strong!



Dabchicks SC looked after us very well during the week. Special thanks to Paul Jackson (Commodore) and Rachel Ramsey (Club Manager) who worked hard on our behalf to ensure our event was successful. It is worth noting that a total of 27 volunteers including the committee boat team, rib safety crews and clubhouse staff were involved in facilitating our nationals event. Well done Dabchicks SC and a big thank you from the Miracle and Signet sailors.

Congratulations to Ian Fryett and daughter Ella who were crowned our national champions this year. The fleets enjoyed some close racing each day. Full race reports are available in Yachts and Yachting and this Halo edition. Thank you to Hannah Metcalfe Smith for your time and writing skills. [Miracle National Championship 2022 at Dabchicks Sailing Club - Overall \(yachtsandyachting.com\)](https://www.yachtsandyachting.com)

I was particularly encouraged that Ian Fryett volunteered to take on the role of treasurer replacing Ken Gibson who retired from his duties at the AGM this year. Thank you, Ian, welcome to the Miracle Committee and our Zoom meetings!

Following the AGM this year there will be the opportunity for members to participate and vote in an on-line electronic ballot concerning proposed changes to the Miracle Association rules and also the rules of measurement (Foresail - Jib dimensions). Details will be issued by email.

Ken and Gillian have now been made honorary members of the Association in recognition of their service to the life of our Association over a number of years. I have spoken to Ken Gibson recently. Gillian continues to have speech therapy with steady progress. They are both looking forward to reading this autumn edition of the Halo.



The sailing calendar for 2023 will include coaching, training and boat tuning sessions for Miracle boat owners. These are planned at Staunton Harold as part of the open meeting weekend on Saturday 22nd April and also on Sunday 13th August at the nationals in Brixham YC. Your committee are keen to encourage additional Miracle sailors to participate in open meetings and nationals events next season. More details to follow from Wayne Atherton later in this Halo. It would be great to see a good number of Miracle sailors take up this opportunity next year, particularly if you are new to sailing a Miracle, looking for guidance and build-up confidence to participate in events or consider yourself to be a member of the bronze fleet looking to progress your sailing skills.

Hannah and I visited Brixham YC at the end of September as part of our preparation for next year's nationals. It is a great sailing venue. The local pasties are good too! Dates for your diary are Sunday 13th to Friday 18th August 2023. The championship racing will take place Monday to Friday. Sunday will be a boat tuning and coaching opportunity followed by a practice race. Brixham YC have advised competitors to book accommodation early. Camping is also available a short distance from the YC. There will be an on-line event entry system live in January 2023. Further details are available in his Halo.

Facebook news can be located at: [\(2\) Miracle Dinghy Class Association | Facebook](#)

The Dinghy Show 2023 is scheduled for the end of February and will again be held in Farnborough. Graham Watts and Helen Jacks will be co-ordinating the event for us. Please let Graham know if you can assist on the stand on either the Saturday or Sunday.

Regards,

Paul

Paul Robinson

Miracle Dinghy Class Association - Chairman

<http://www.miracledinghy.org/>

Miracle 4110

27th October 2022

Editor's Corner by Hannah Metcalfe-Smith

Welcome to the Autumn Halo! We've had a jam-packed year of events in the Miracle this year. My crew and I have been lucky to travel the breadth of the country for multiple events this year, to Staunton Harold, Whitefriars, Dabchicks and Shustoke and were even lucky enough to host a Miracle event alongside our Thornbury Sailing Club Regatta.

This newsletter includes race reports from the events throughout the season, some retrospectives and a useful article on how to get your youngsters into sailing from top Miracle sailor Jon Willars.

Settling into the different rhythms of winter will mean less sailing for us as the daylight, tide and weekend coincide on a less regular basis. I will be looking to do some minor repair work on the boat, whilst we can't sail as much at our local club.

In addition, this winter, I am going to be doing my Day Skipper course to learn more about sailing bigger boats for a bit of variety and to keep me out of mischief.



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The Miracles at Port Dinorwic's 75th Anniversary Weekend

Adapted from Paul Green's article by Hannah Metcalfe-Smith



On Saturday, a light shifty northerly wind with the ebb tide provided challenges for race team and competitors alike. Local knowledge proved valuable for the first start and the conditions provided plenty of opportunities for gains and losses with big wind shifts, holes and tidal eddies to negotiate. The tide turned after lunch which brought a new set of challenges, particularly judging lay lines and the reach across the strait to a gybe mark strategically positioned in front of the club house.

With three races completed and the hog-roast beckoning the fourth race was cancelled. To end the day for the Miracles Dave Turtle and Zara Frankton were first with Wayne Atherton and Angela Sweeny in second.

Sunday morning started with a downwind and down tide start, providing a fitting spectacle. As the starting hooter sounded 30 spinnakers blossomed into a cloud of colour.

Light winds meant that the fleet spread out rather more slowly than normal. This made for a bit of extra as the fleet, running down the channel to keep a shallow sandbank well to port, met a couple of yachts from the Three Peaks Race tacking towards them up the same narrow channel. There was also a bit of amusement later in the race when the fleet spotted a third Three Peaks competitor stuck hard and fast on the same sandbank which, in mitigation, is currently a couple of meters shallower than charted.

The wind held up for the beat home, with some boats opting to search for a stronger tide on the mainland side, others opted for possibly cleaner wind and fewer tacks on the Anglesey shore.

Though not qualifying for a prize, the fastest completion of the course deserves a special mention. An RAF Typhoon paid a special visit to make a flypast in memory of Hywel Poole, former youth member, whose life was tragically cut short in a mid-air collision between two RAF Tornados in July 2012. Crossing the start line after most of the boats had reached the leeward mark, it made a low-level pass over the fleet. Turning over the mark it buzzed the fleet again crossing the line in a time more suitably measured in seconds rather than minutes. However, because it crossed the finish line beyond the outer distance mark it was scored DNF and did not get a time recorded!

The final act of the weekend was to award the overall 75th anniversary trophy: a magnificent cut glass bowl. It went to the class winner from Saturday who was best placed in the Hywel Poole race on Sunday. Visitors Dave Turtle and Zara Frankton (Miracle) took home the trophy.

Well done and happy birthday Port Dinorwic Sailing Club.



Thornbury Regatta and Miracle Open Meeting

By Hannah Metcalfe-Smith

The Miracle Open at Thornbury Sailing Club started off on the Saturday morning with a light breeze and sunshine.

Race 1: The first of four races in with the slow fleet of the TSC Regatta started with the shore-side as the favoured end of the start line. Lynn and Nick Smith got off to a good start, with Graham Watts and Helen Jack's giving chase. Keeping out of the melee at the pin end, Hannah Metcalfe-Smith, sailing with her niece Ruby, aged 8, got off to a slower start. Snacks were required halfway down the first leg to the Cowhill mark sailing towards the Severn Bridge to ensure a happy crew.



A run towards East with the incoming tide made for a quick leg with the spinnaker with the first two boats pulling away from Hannah and Ruby in third place. In towards the shore and around Plantation and through the limit to complete the first lap with the Smiths first, Graham and Helen second and Hannah and Ruby in third. It was to be the same on the second, and third lap with no change to the order, but more snacks and juice consumed for Ruby.

Race 2:

A quick change of crew for Hannah Metcalfe-Smith, swapping out niece for sister, Indigo Smith between races. Another busy start line and Lynn and Nick got away once more, with Graham and Helen in hot pursuit. A lack of spinnaker hampered progress for Hannah and Indigo. Graham and Helen missed the gate on the second lap meant they only completed two laps, giving Indigo and Hannah a 2nd place, with Nick and Lynn taking another first place.

Sunday at Thornbury sailing club start of cloudy, with a strong and lumpy breeze from the south-east.

Race 3:

A woeful start from the Metcalfe-Smith's let the Smith's and Graham and Helen get away. However, due to a mis-rigged spinnaker, the Metcalfe-Smith's were able to catch up and overhaul Graham and Helen eventually, but the Smith's were too far ahead to catch.

Race 4:

Graham and Helen had fixed their kite rigging and were back in action for the second start of the day. Sadly though, during their forestay wire had come loose and got muddled up with the spinnaker. They sorted that out, only for their jib to come away and made an early retirement from the race into the waiting arms of a handy boat catcher on the slipway.

A much better start from the Metcalfe-Smith's for the second race, but they stayed too far out from the shore and didn't keep pace with the Smith's who took the inside track amongst the rest of the slow fleet. Despite the best efforts of the Metcalfe-Smith's, they were unable to catch the Smith's. A whitewash from the Smith's saw them taking home the TSC Miracle trophy.

Helm	Crew	Boat No.	1	2	3	4	Overall
Carolynn Smith	Nick Smith	2551	1	1	1	1	1
Graham Watts	Helen Jacks	4114	2	3	3	DNF	2
Hannah Metcalfe-Smith	Various	3805	3	2	2	2	3



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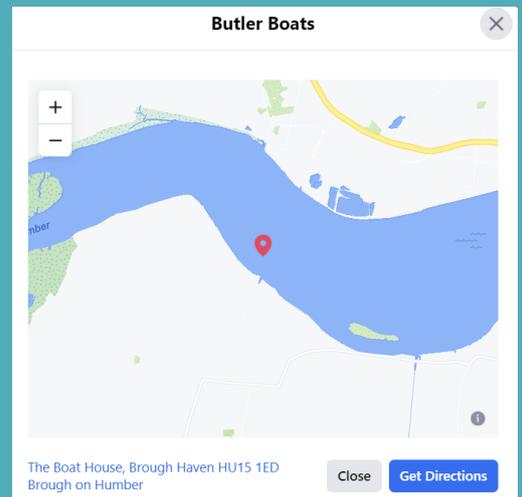
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Brixham Yacht Club – Nationals Venue Visit

By Hannah Metcalfe-Smith

Chairman Paul Robinson and Halo Editor Hannah Metcalfe-Smith went to visit our 2023 Nationals venue Brixham Yacht Club on 24th September 2022.

A smooth drive down there with minimal traffic on a dry day made for a good start. After arriving a little early, we went for a short walk along and around the Yacht Club, down the stairs to the Oxen Cove Car Park, and then back up to the clubhouse to meet two members of the Brixham Yacht Club team; Race Officer Peter Lytton and Event Director Adrian Morrall.

The conversation covered a wide range of topics, from arriving at the venue, dinghy parking, trailer storage, catering, launch and recovery, registration and signing on, and, of course, the sailing.

Due to Brixham being a popular holiday destination, please do not delay in booking your accommodation. To help you with your search, please have a look at the links below for a variety of accommodation types.

Holiday Chalets and Static Caravans

- [South Devon Holiday Park](#)
- [Landscope Holiday Park](#)
- [South Bay Holiday Park](#)
- [Riviera Bay Holiday Park](#)

Camping and Touring Caravans

- [Wall Park, Century Road](#)

Cottages:

- [Brixham Cottages](#)
- [Holiday Cottages](#)

Whilst there is plenty of action out on the water for the sailors in the bay, there are also lots of activities for accompanying family and friends. The Brixham Yacht Club Restaurant and Bar area is disabled accessible and has fantastic views over the harbour and Torbay, including the sailing area.

Beaches (distances from Brixham's Harbour Office)

- St. Mary's Bay, 1.4 miles
- Broadsands Beach, 4.3 miles
- Paignton Beach, 6.5 miles
- Babbcombe Beach, 11.2 miles

Activities

- [Splashdown Waterpark, Paignton](#)
- [Golden Hind, Brixham Harbour](#)
- [Shoalstone Pool, Brixham's sea water pool](#)
- [Dartmouth Castle, Dartmouth](#)
- [Paignton Zoo and Environmental Park, Paignton](#)
- [Pirates Bay Adventure Golf, Paignton](#)



Walks

Brixham is based on the South West Coast Path which starts in Minehead on the Somerset coast and finishes in Bournemouth in Dorset, with notable landmarks such as Berry Head and Sharkham Point. Berry Head National Nature reserve has many trails and a café. [This website](#) provides circular walks of varying distances to select from depending on your energy levels.

Having sailed at the Miracle Nationals in 2005 and 2008, I have wonderful memories of my time out on the water there with both my mum and dad, as well as the pasties we were served

when we came ashore. It was wonderful to visit Brixham again after such a long interval, with a true British seaside feel, blue skies and sunshine, we had a great preview of what will hopefully be another fantastic week away with the Miracles and Signets in 2023.



View from the back: Miracle Nationals 2022 at Dabchicks SC, Mersea Island

By Andrew Clarke M3461

Mersea Island is home to red squirrels and (possibly) the smallest cottage in Essex. It is also home to Dabchicks Sailing Club, Olympian Saskia Clark, Mersea Week and the venue for the Miracle National Championship 2022.

Volunteers rolled out the red carpet for visiting Miracle sailors, guiding us to our boat spaces and piloting cars and road trailers away from the busy boating and seafood corner of the island. On the water, patrol boats guided visiting sailors through the narrow channels (Bessom, Thorn and Mersea Fleets), pointing out where you can cross from one to the other (the Gut, near the Hammerhead if you want to know). Two sailors were missing however, shopping for a broken shackle. Fortunately, one of them (crew Nik) is an old hand at Dabchicks having just completed Mersea week in a Laser 2K, so guided us through the narrow channels, between the withies (sticks placed in the mud to guide boaters) and into open waters in time to join in one practice start.

The formal welcome came later at the Commodores reception with a glass of sparkling, a generous buffet, and a fabulous sunset to look at across the water and the marshes beyond; this came after the necessary race briefing from our race officer and commodore, PJ, now on his fourth week of RO duties including Cowes week. This was the chance to meet fellow competitors, some familiar from past events and from all over the country (Thornbury, Delph, Downs) and abroad (Holland, but no Maltese contingent this year). A Dabchicks instructor very gamely helmed for an 11-year-old Miracle family member, making a total of 18 boats: so up on last year's numbers, but not up to pre-pandemic averages.

Races began Monday morning with two back-to-back. The wind was not strong but more than enough to get us round the usual championship course, being a triangular followed by a sausage shaped course with a committee boat start. This can be done once or repeated according to the conditions. With the backdrop of the colourful beach huts and sunshine playing on the clear blue waters, this was champagne sailing. Race one was some 50-55 minutes with a break to heave-to, enjoy the view and coffee and biscuits on board before gathering again at the committee boat for race 2.



This is the pattern for the week with extra races afterwards for youth and juniors, non-Spinnaker sailors and a chance for crews to show what they can do in the crews race on Friday afternoon.

Our highlight has been a 14th place, assisted by two boats being over the start line and two retiring! However, we have beaten a couple of boats in a fair fight over the course of the week and overcome adversity at times, notably when a spinnaker sheet got hooked round the end of the boom on a run. My strategy of tacking to release it was the wrong one since although we avoided a capsized, we filled the boat almost up to the gunwales. This slowed us down somewhat, but there is something impressive and satisfying about the way that eventually two small self-balers can, given time and speed, empty an entire boat!

By careful use of discards it is possible to have a day off. You can also be away by 2:30-3 pm and sometimes earlier for some sightseeing or other activities each day or linger at the club. We have a very skilfully crafted quiz night. A team of Wisonian retirees now resident on Mersey, joined myself and Nik, coming an impressive second. The locals seem to be sailing every night, with 100+ juniors gathering on a Wednesday! The Dabchicks website boasts "we like to party" and certainly the bar always seems to be open. There are footprints evidencing where the club members indulge in dancing on the ceiling, presumably supported by their friends. I think the helm and crew of M3614 would be dancing on the ceiling if we go get in the top 10 boats. However instead we are be solid finishers in the lower reaches of bronze fleet. We thought we might pick up a minor prize for having a combined age in excess of 100, but it was the Endeavour trophy again (like in 2010 and 2021 making it a hat-trick for trying hard)!

Every class has its Nationals, plus open meetings and area Championships which are all a fantastic weekend or week away opening up a whole new world of additional enjoyment from your boat and hanging out with other like-minded sailors. Look at your Class Association website, www.miracledinghy.org for some great action pictures and details of how to join your Association at only £26 per annum (£15 under 21), plus details of the amazing venue we have secured for next year Brixham YC, in Devon, from Sunday 13th- Friday 18th August 2023.





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Introducing a young crew to sailing

By Jon Willars, M3834

For those looking to introduce a young crew to sailing, I write my view on what has worked so far for me and my daughter who is now super keen and confident in her role of crew in the Miracle.

The Miracle is the ideal boat to get the kids into sailing being stable with enough room for 2 adults and a child to start with yet also providing some really close exciting racing at the other end of the scale.

We started sitting Jess in the boat from 3 years old in very light wind on a flat pond for possibly only 5 minutes at a time. This gradually progressed to longer sessions and more wind.

We did go through a tough patch as I'm sure all parents will be familiar with where Jess would change her mind last minute or want to go back in as soon as we set off out but I always tried to stick to a target of say 1 lap of the course or a particular amount of time which I thought might just stretch the concentration levels enough.



I'm always conscious that sailing could be seen from the outside to be quite boring when there is no understanding of what, how or why we do what we do especially when racing, so with our kids I want to use a mixture of play and education to keep an interest.

With that thought in mind from the beginning, I used the really light days for a mess around preferably involving at least one other child/friend - that changes everything when it comes to confidence.

It was actually a little bit of kayaking which really helped Jessica get on and in the water. Capsize play early on with 2 in a boat like a Topper or Tera with a masthead float is an important experience so it's not a massive shock if it happens unexpectedly whilst sailing.

From the age of 5, it seemed to become normal for us to race rather than cruising just because that was happening at the club and a good reason to be on the water.



Racing we did as laidback as possible to start with and I'd always try to explain what was happening and the things we do in the boat in an attempt to maintain some sort of interest. That's happens all the way round from pre-start to finish.

If could give any advice for sailing with a youngster, it would be to ensure they stay warm. Be over prepared with layers, avoid getting gloves wet if possible and most of all keep them busy in the boat. Hiking hard is a great way to keep warm!!



At the next stage, I suppose it is important to have a realistic understanding of your own capabilities and comfort zone as a helm not only for safety but to ensure there is no element of fear introduced.

Jess started at 7 years old sailing in the Tera on her own which she was very nervous about at first. Sailing alone with full responsibility of what the boat will do is a very different experience. At this point, sailing with other kids was absolutely essential for us.

After only a few months of learning the basics, I've seen a massive transformation in Jess now when she gets back in the Miracle to crew. In fact, she's already started swapping places with me!

We are thankful to members of the Miracle fleet who have been fantastic with support and encouragement to Jess both on and off the water which has undoubtedly kept that smile on her face and created a desire in her to keep coming back for more!



Notes on a Fly Away Pole System

By Jon Willars M3834

I will try to describe my system although there are many variations to what I've ended up with. I find this is the most simple and minimises the effort and time it takes for the crew.

Pole:

Starting from the pole itself, the end that attaches to the pole can be of preference but I have rigged a simple push in system from 2 x R Clips clipped into the bare pole end. This allows the sheet to drop out when the pole is dropped which is a big plus.

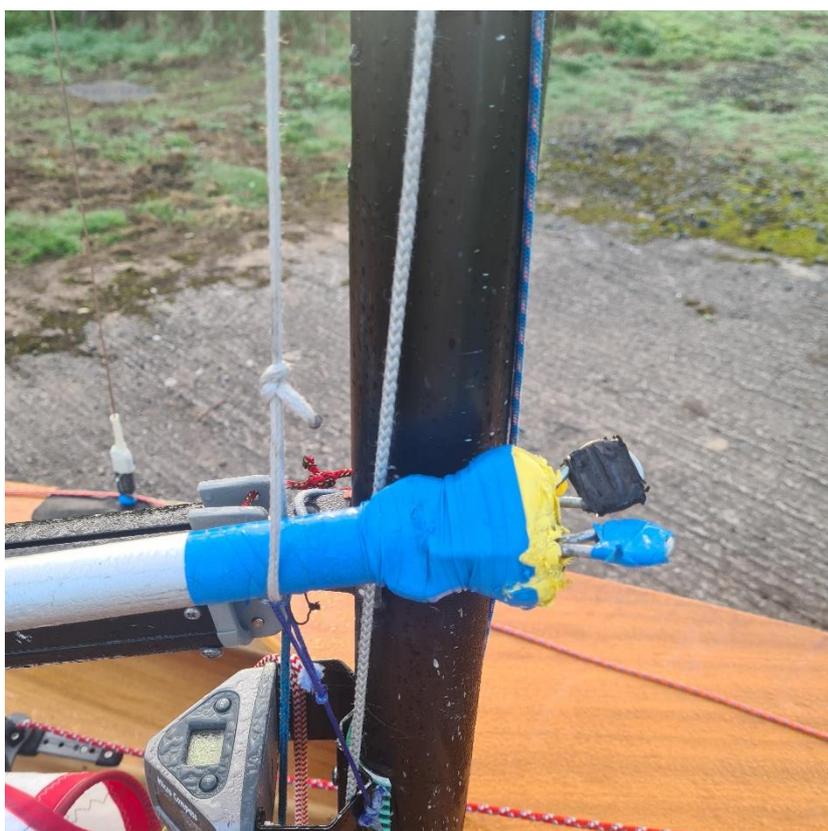
We did find at the nationals that when the wind is light but there is a slight sea, that it had a tendency to jump out whilst sailing. I think we've sorted that with technique but it's worth noting.

At the inboard end of the pole is the pole outhaul (4mm) and the bungee (4mm) fed through a flat end cap with a knot inside.

Bungee:

The bungee goes from the inboard end of the pole through a fair lead on the side of the boom (which is effectively a stop point for the pole to come into) and through a block on the back of the boom back then into the boom forward to a block inside the front of the boom. This block is just tied with 2mm cord and floating. The bungee finally runs to the back of the boom and fixed.

It is important to have that much bungee to make the pole easy to launch with little resistance.



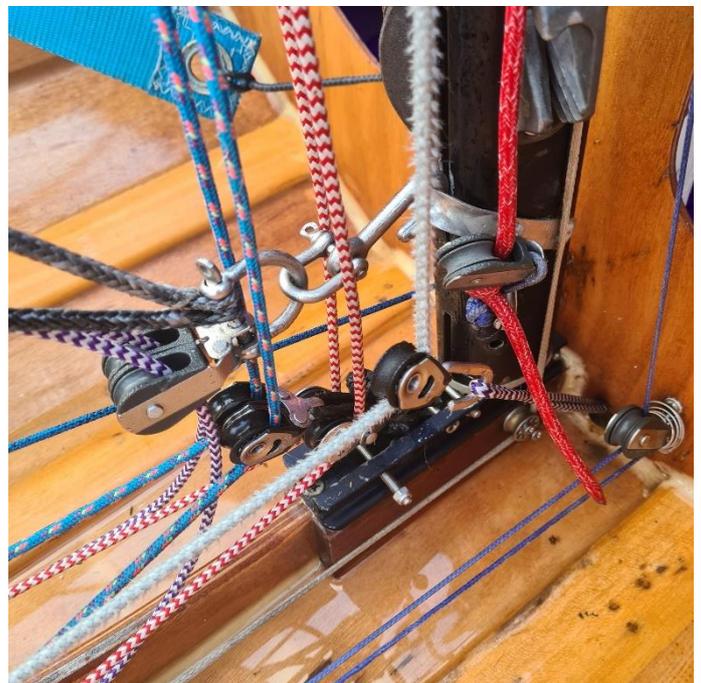
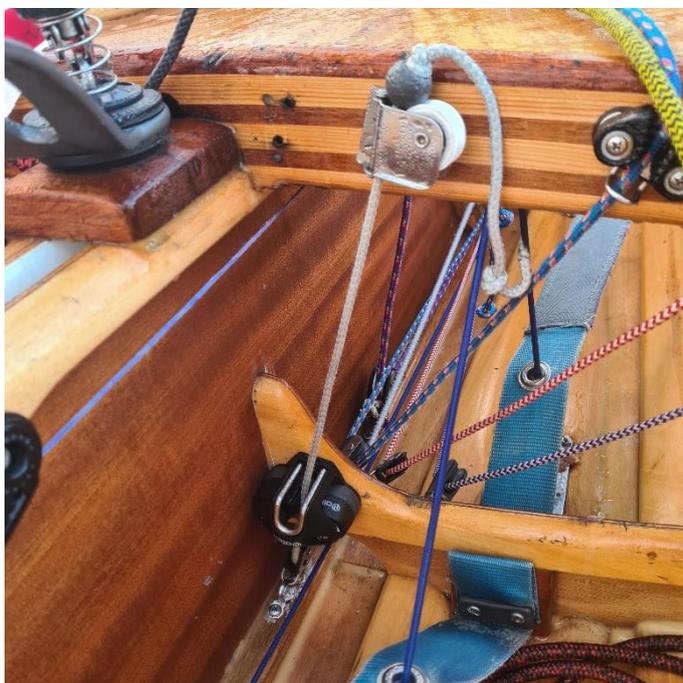
Pole Outhaul:

From the inboard end of the pole it's a good idea to have the entrance point into the pole one side to stop it twisting on launch.

Then forward to a block on the mast at the pole hoop connection. I prefer a soft shackle here to allow it to sit around the mast and let the block twist with the changing angle as its launched or retracted.

Down to another block fixed at the mast foot area, back under the thwart to a block then up to a cleat and pulley positioned in a place that doesn't fowl the main jammer.

This part you could move forward to the side of the centre board case to allow both helm and crew access or even right forward to the mast for crew only.



Upcoming events



The Miracle Association will once again be taking a stand at the [RYA Dinghy Show](#) which was held for the first time at Farnborough International this year will great success for its 70th anniversary. Many thanks to Graham Watts for taking his boat to be shown on the stand, ably assisted by his crew and Miracle Class Secretary Helen Jacks. The event covers all things sailing and water sports, with talks, exhibits, chandlers, builders and much more.

Graham and Helen have offered to support this event once again and would love to hear from willing volunteers to support the stand for the 2023 Dinghy Show which will be held on 25th and 26th February.

Staunton Harold Midland Area Championships: 22 – 23rd April 2023

By Wayne Atherton, Class Association Race Officer

Hi Everyone,

On the back of the success of some tuning conversations at the Nationals this year, the Miracle Association will be holding a training day at Staunton Harold Sailing Club alongside the Midland Area Championships on Saturday 22nd April 2023. Timings will be confirmed and published in the next Halo.

After the training session, there will be a race later in the afternoon to put into practice what we've learnt. There will be the usual racing on the Sunday. We would love to see a good turnout for this session to prepare for the season and get ready for the National Championships at Brixham.

Results from the 2022 Nationals held at Dabchicks Sailing Club

Pos	Division	Boat Name	Sail No	Helm	Crew	Club	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	Pts
1st	Gold	Hocus Pocus	4011	Ian Fryett	Ella Fryett		1	1	1	1	(OCS)	3	2	1	10
2nd	Gold	Little Hootie	3834	Jon Willars	Jessica Willars		2	2	2	2	-4	1	1	3	13
3rd	Gold	Blackmagic	4121	Wayne Atherton	Angela Sweeney	Delph sc	4	3	-9	3	3	5	8	5	31
4th	Gold	Plons	2007	Marcel Neuteboom	Bella Neuteboom	ARZV	5	6	-15	5	8	6	10	2	42
5th	Gold	Pamela	3805	Hannah Metcalfe-Smith	Tom Metcalfe-Smith	Thornbury SC	-13	5	5	8	2	2	9	13	44
6th	Silver	Bad Medicine	4099	Yvonne Mumford	Brian Mumford	Downs SC	10	9	6	4	(OCS)	4	6	7	46
7th	Silver	ATT	4114	Graham Watts	Helen Jacks	Staunton Harold	3	-15	10	11	6	8	5	8	51
8th	Silver	Blue line 3	4040	Abbey Mumford	Tom Hirst	Downs SC	11	12	3	7	5	11	4	-14	53
9th	Silver	Crusoe	4123	Andrew Robinson	Hannah Mumford	Whitefriars SC / Downs SC	6	8	11	-15	1	12	11	6	55
10th	Silver	Puff	4021	Brian Jones	Jago Wightman Smith	Maidenhead	9	14	4	9	9	-15	7	4	56
11th	Gold	Not Late	2551	Carolynn Smith	Nick Smith	Thornbury Sailing Club	8	4	12	12	(OCS)	7	3	15	61
12th	Gold	Fighting Lady	4020	John Tippet	Kathy Boulton	Draycote Water	12	-13	7	6	10	13	12	11	71

13th	Silver	Splitting The Wind	4110	Paul Robinson	Nathan Robinson	Whitefriars SC	-14	7	13	10	7	10	13	12	72
14th	Silver	tba	4120	Gerald copsey	Tanya copsey		7	10	14	13	12	(RET)	14	9	79
15th	Bronze		4009	William Powell	William Marfleet	Dabchicks sc	-16	16	8	14	11	9	16	10	84
16th	Bronze	Lily Grace	4100	Louis Moulden	Lucas / Ryan Skehan	Delph SC	15	11	16	17	(RET)	DNC	15	17	110
17th	Bronze	Lilly Ann	4098	Ian Brown	Lilly Brown	Delph Sailing Club	17	17	-18	16	13	14	17	16	110
18th	Bronze	Tip Top	3461	Andrew Clarke	Nik Antoniadis	Wilsonian SC	-18	18	17	18	14	16	18	18	119



Miracle Nationals at Dabchicks prize giving © Andrew Robinson

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