

The 'Phantom'



50th Anniversary year round up

With 2021 coming to a close it seems fitting that we reflect back on an unforgettable year of Phantom'ing and the class's celebration of fifty wonderful years of the Phantom.

It all began in the late 1960's when good friends Brian Taylor and Paul Wright, co-designers, got together through their love of boats and sailing..... and hence the birth of the Phantom

Betty Taylor (class secretary for the first 10 years) reflects back to the days when it all began.....

"Many times Brian and Paul had discussed their ideal singlehander; In 1969, they started making cardboard models and adjusted them until they got one that looked right. During the winter of 1970/ 71, Brian took the plunge and started to build. He spent hours in the garage; there were SOSs to Paul to come over when snags arose and there were nights when all our electric fires were rushed into the garage to heat up the boat, which was under sheets of plastic, to make resin 'go off'. Brian bought a secondhand sail when on a caravanning holiday and also bought a length of mast extrusion; when we tried to load it on to the top of the car it hit the caravan so he had to hack a piece off so that we could get it home without damaging the van. Thankfully it was long enough when he made the mast.

Finally, in May 1971, the great day came and what was to be the Phantom prototype was launched at Buckenham Ferry. Brian had intended it as a 'one-off' for himself, but when Paul saw it sailing he realised it could have good commercial possibilities. He made the second boat and slightly modified the deck layout to make it easier to build from a kit or plans.

*Choosing a name proved difficult. One Sunday both families gathered at Paul's house, armed with lists of names and dictionaries. Several ideas were tried, but it was not until '**Phantom**' was suggested that we could all agree. During the summer of 1971 the two boats were taken to several sailing venues and were enthusiastically received by all who tried them.*

(pic. right) Paul Wright – Buckenham Ferry



It was first shown at the Crystal Palace in 1972 and by the September enough boats had been built to hold the first championships at Oulton Broad.

Our first National Champion was Peter Shanks - No.11 from Reading Sailing Club. During the same weekend the inaugural meeting of the Phantom Class Association was held on 19th September. Brian was in the Chair and read the proposed Constitution and Rules; after some discussion the one- design class rules were adopted."



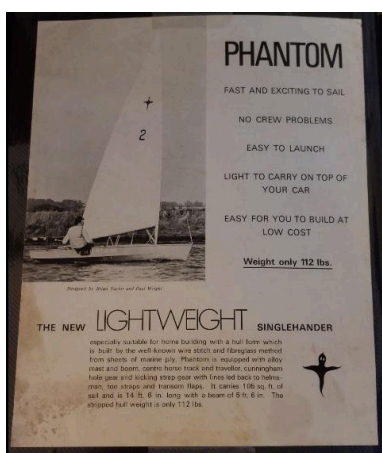
The families of Brian and Paul still have reassuringly close links with the class and help provide the heart warming continuity from its birthplace to current times. In 2009 an agreement was made to share the mandate to approve any changes to the external dimensions of the hull or sail plan, with the

Association having sole rights for other class design changes.

Moiria Nash daughter of Brian Taylor says.....

"I felt it was a milestone in the boat and Association coming of age, as it ensures that those who sail the boat have a key say in the key decisions."

Since its original wood 'stitch and glue' build process the class has had several builders involved over the years. Vandercraft being the early GRP builders and now with the Epoxy design, Ovington Boats provide the all epoxy solution with James Jarvey Boats developing the epoxy/wood combination. The advancement from metal to carbon rig has also made significant changes to the performance of the boat, enabling a broader range of crew weights using the ever advancing flexible carbon masts and super stiff booms together with a range of high quality sail design from many of the leading sail lofts.



In 2021....

The Phantom Class wanted to make 2021 a special year to commemorate the 50th Anniversary with regional traveller series in the North, Midlands, Southern and South East, together with a National Regattas series and our National Championships in September.

The crazy Covid year did have a negative impact on some of the early season when the country was in lockdown and restrictions on travel.

The Regional Series were inevitably disrupted, particularly in the North and Southern regions with only two out of the five planned events taking place. In the slightly reduced Eastern region, Bob Portway from Royal Harwich Y.C. won the series. The South East Series completed five out of the planned six events with Chris Shelton from Downs S.C. topping the table and the Midland Series also managed to complete four out of the five planned events with Charlie Chandler from Bowmoor S.C. taking home the chocolates.

The Regatta Series provided the opportunity for sailors to travel further afield where one event was held in each region. Ian Stone from Maidenhead S.C. was crowned regatta champion.

The Inland Championships hosted by Northampton Sailing Club in June were sailed in very light wind conditions with a great turnout of 34 boats. The popular winner of this years championship was Simon Hawkes from Castle Cove S.C



The National Championships held in September at Stone Sailing Club in the south east of England was sailed over a glorious Indian summer long weekend of sun and breeze ending in a huge thunderstorm during the prize giving !

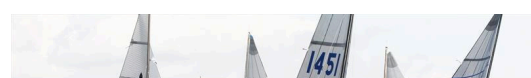
A near record entry of seventy-six boats provided a spectacular sight and was keenly competed over seven races, across three days.

The depth of talent within the fleet ranging from some of the more experienced sailors to a growing number of younger sailors provided an exciting and challenging event. Probably one of the closest results in recent years, with only three points separating the top four places. It was also great to see that you don't necessarily need a new boat to be at the front of the fleet !

Congratulations to Ian Stone from Maidenhead S.C. for winning his first Phantom Nationals.

1st Place 1280 - Ian Stone Maidenhead S.C.

23pts



2 nd Place	1456 - Andy Couch Blithfield S.C.	24pts
3 rd Place	1270 - Charlie Chandler Bowmoors S.C.	24pts
4 th Place	1312 - Lawrence Crispin Stone S.C.	25pts



(pic.left) Ian Stone 2021 National Champion

The Team Trophy for the National was won by the home club – Stone Sailing Club.

A huge part of the enjoyment of Phantom sailing is the friendly social side of the fleet, the enjoyment of meeting friends from across the country, having fun and talking about sailing. The 70's themed night at the National Championships with some interesting dress code !



There is a natural cross fertilization of knowledge by sailors, always wanting to improve their boat speed and sailing . However the class initiated a number of popular training days, which were tagged onto open events this year. Where the more experienced sailors were able to impart their knowledge and pass on valuable boat tuning and on water skills and techniques.

Despite the obvious down sides to 2021... there have been a number of positives; Our realization of getting back to basics, the enjoyment of being outdoors and the physical and mental benefits of exercise. Sailing has been one of the winners in sport with the joy of being in the fresh air and away from the restrictions of everyday life. Phantom sailing has certainly gained in popularity, with an increase in sailors from a wider age range. This was partly due to the restrictions of double handed sailing in the early part of the year, but once you've sailed a Phantom it's difficult to change. So much so that the second hand market went crazy in the summer months with buyers being gazumped !! The Phantom boats sales market remains extremely buoyant and points to a bright future for the class.



Class Association Chairman Phil Longley comments.....

"With a difficult 2020 and having to cancel the nationals that year, the committee was hoping for a better 2021, as we all know lockdowns hampered early events, but a brilliant turn out for the inlands and a truly unexpected 76 boats at the nationals, at my home club, new boats being made and second hand boats not hanging about for long it really shows the class is thriving and building on the last 50 years, with a full calendar and an nationals at another class favorite of Lyme Regis 2022 is lining up to be another epic year."

Looking forward to 2022.

Plans are well underway within the regions to finalize their traveller series and with popular multi class regattas, the Inland Championships at Draycote Water S.C. over the weekend of the 9th/10th July and the National Championships fixed for the 16th-18th September at Lyme Regis, 2022 is looking to be another great year to sail the Phantom.

Happy New Year and here's to a Phantastic 2022

