

MCA AREA REPORTS



Dan Hartnett

SOUTH EAST

By Dan Hartnett

A resurgence of Mirror training and sailing activities at Whitstable Yacht Club has found me sailing this year in the boat, 59149, which I built with my father, many years ago. We have since upgraded during the year.

There will be those that recognise the Harnett Mirror Team when we roll up to Mirror events with three Mirrors. All four of my children – Meia, Elin, Mali and Drystan – helm and crew Mirrors, with the three girls currently in the RYA Zone Squads.

Whitstable Yacht Club saw an active Mirror fleet which has grown further in 2007 with the introduction of the Mirror Armada scheme. In 2008 we will be building on this year's success with the help and support of a hardcore of dedicated and experienced parents.

Boats from the South East have attended Selden Nationwide regattas run during 2007, with Whitstable's John and Claire Peterson attending all the regattas. Six Mirrors from the South East participated in the Brightlingsea Mirror Nationals. Whitstable Yacht Club is represented, with five boats securing places in 2008's RYA Zone Squad. Any under-14 Mirror sailors who would like to receive formal race coaching should consider applying for the next zone squad selection in Autumn 2008.

The South East Traveller series was on the whole well supported, with my daughters Meia and Elin winning the series overall, myself and son Drystan coming 2nd, Guy and Joe Wilkins came 3rd. We are looking to hold the Traveller series again in 2008.

A date for your diaries is the Mirror Southern Championships as part of the Nationwide Series, being hosted by Whitstable Yacht Club on 3-4 May. We look forward to welcoming all Mirror sailors to this event.



Ian Escritt



Trevor Lloyd

SOUTH WEST

By Rob Bellfield

Greetings from the West Country. My name is Rob Bellfield and some of you may have seen me squeezed into a yellow Mirror called *Starship*,

crewed by my daughters Eleanor and Imogen. I started Mirror sailing in 1978 but after a long gap (20 years) came back into the fleet at the Poole Nationals in 2005 with a 36 year-old Mirror and managed to achieve 3rd in the bronze fleet! Eleanor has now started to helm herself at club level but you will see us at local events and some of the national series. Please do not hesitate to catch me for a chat at local events as I am delighted to talk Mirrors at any time – day or night!

2007 has been a transition year for the South West. Natalie & Grace Roach (four straight firsts) have been the dominant force in the South West Travellers series, but they have been hard pushed by James Brant & Daniel Peek, and Will Searle & James Wilkinson. Recent articles in the yachting press have commented on the problems many dinghy sailors based in the South East and Northern England have travelling to the West Country, but it should be remembered that those in the deep South West have the same problem in reverse. The SW squad who have travelled to all the major meetings, with significant success, should be congratulated for their endeavours and the support they have given to the Class. Sailing at a national level involves considerable dedication of time and effort from parents – well done for keeping the SW flag flying all over the country.

I mention that 2007 has been a transition year because the SW circuit has unfortunately suffered from disappointing turnouts. There is, however, plenty of good news as several club fleets are starting to emerge as the next source of talent for the South West. Restronguet SC has benefited from Martin Egan's enthusiasm and dedication and we are seeing the fruits of the Association's Armada training scheme producing some good young sailors. Mounts Bay SC has always been a stalwart supporter of the Mirror and continues to produce promising sailors. Looe SC deserves the greatest accolade, the club have developed a very keen fleet and we look forward to Joe Palfrey and the rest of the Looe Mirrors start to make their mark in the region. Sutton Bingham hosted it's first Mirror Open

for many years in October and it has re-kindled interest in the Mirror and hopefully 2008 will see some boats from the eastern part of the region contribute to the travellers series. It is also great to see interest coming from the northern part of the region, with Tewkesbury SC and Frampton-on-Severn SC hosting opens this year – I encourage everyone to support these clubs that are new to the circuit.

The future of the South West region lies in the club fleets. I hope that the Armada training scheme can be extended to other clubs in the region this year and we can achieve some strength in depth. Open meetings can be rather daunting for those attending for the first time but I remember attending my first open (many years ago) and the feeling that I was graduating to the next level. The experience of sailing at a different venue is always so valuable in developing skills but it is also great fun meeting other Mirror sailors. Despite the lack of Zone Squad this winter, the RYA has agreed to arrange some open coaching in the spring in preparation for the new season. I do ask the South West Mirror Fleet captains to keep in close touch with me and I hope 2008 will see a resurgent Mirror scene in the South West.

2008 SW TRAVELLER EVENTS

17-18 May	Looe SC
7 Jun	Penzance SC
22 Jun	Mounts Bay SC
19 Jul	Castle Cove SC
12 Oct	Sutton Bingham SC
18 Oct	Frampton-on-Severn SC
tbc	Tewkesbury SC

EAST

By Trevor Lloyd

Hello, my name is Trevor Lloyd. I represent the East Zone for 2008.

Following last year's launch of our new Mirror at the Dinghy Show, which was its first public appearance, you'll see us once again at the Dinghy Show in 2008. This time we'll be displaying our now almost 14 year-old Mirror, as representative of the typical updated and still competitive older racing Mirror, not sailed since the Worlds in South Africa 2007.

Currently we're affiliated with Brightlingsea, where the Mirror fleet is still strongest in East Anglia. The club is steeped in Mirror history with former World,

National and Ladies World Champions. Last year saw significant success for the Club when the Nationals were held there. Congratulations go to Milly Newman and Sarah Bines for winning the Junior National Championships 2007 and Chris Rust and Oliver Newman who won the Inlands 2007. Sadly there isn't an open meeting for Mirrors at Brightlingsea in 2008, but we hope they will hold one again in 2009.

A new Mirror club is being created in the southern half of Essex in 2008 with the re-emergence of Marconi Sailing Club on the Blackwater. This is under the stewardship of Bryan Spencer. Marconi is the Armada club for the East in 2008, please join in if you can as the training is intended for all levels of sailing. Do support Bryan and Marconi in making the relaunch of the Mirror fleet a success there. The first open meeting for many years is to be held on the 18th May.

The focus of 2008 will be trying to re-energise the many Mirrors that race in the East and endeavouring to build on the excellent Zone training support from the RYA into 2009. There will be a small East Anglia Travellers Trophy (EATT) this year focusing on three or four small events, still to be confirmed. The focus will be on getting to some clubs with small active fleets that of recent times haven't been seen on the circuit. The first qualifier for the EATT will be the Nationwide event at Burnham on 19-20 April.

NORTH EAST

By Ian Escritt

My name is Ian Escritt and I am the new North East Representative for 2007.

I (like many others) started my sailing career in Mirrors and have now come back to the class with my children. We have just bought a new MK3 Winder and hope to attend some national events.

The area has been well represented in 2007 at World, National and area levels. We had six people at the Worlds in South Africa – the best of whom were Lilly Carlisle & Becky Wallbank – from too many clubs to mention!

At the Nationals the Hanson team of Inge-Lisa & Eloise were a creditable 13th, Lilly & Becky 14th and Oliver Townsend 15th, perhaps this year they will separate from each other long enough to finish higher up the fleet? Our Area Travellers circuit was a very close affair with any one of three potential winners going into the last weekend, the eventual victor was Inge-Lisa this time crewed by Oliver, followed by Angus Carlisle, Lilly & Becky, and Ray Baskerville.

A major success in our region has been the

Armada scheme run at Ripon SC, organised by Angus, and coached by Richard Benson. The effect of running these training sessions can be seen by the number of young people who qualified for the North Zone squad. They are: Matthew & Ben Lulham Robinson, Catherine & William Hide, Peter Sedgwick & Ewan Byers, and Oliver White & Edmund Byers. Congratulations to you all!

As I write this we are reasonably confident the area will run the Armada scheme again this year at a different venue, and I would encourage anyone who wants to improve their performance on the racetrack to attend.

Finally this year's Travellers will be five events with three to count. This reduction will hopefully increase the number of people who qualify and make it very competitive. See you there.

NORTH WEST

By Richard Elsdon

Welcome to 2008, I'm the West Zone Mirror Class Representative. I was once a Mirror sailor although I don't get onto the water much these days.

As well as travelling the Mirror circuit, I'm also a member at Royal Windermere Yacht Club and I'm also the Rear Commodore at Ribble Cruising Club in Lytham.

The season of 2007 saw a very successful representation from North Western boats around the country in championships at all levels.

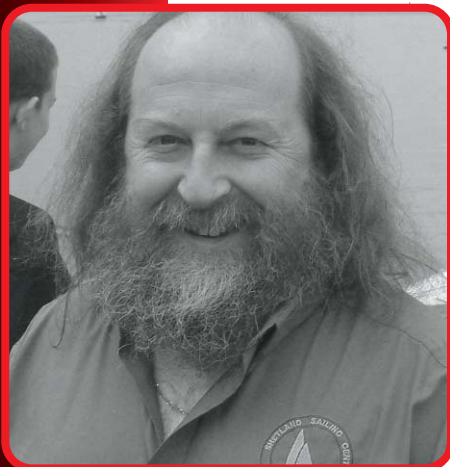
The year got off to a very successful start when many of us from the North West had the privilege of travelling to Port Elizabeth, South Africa, to take part in the Mirror World Championships. The success of the Team GBR, and especially our own Anna McKenzie, has been documented elsewhere, but other boats from the North West made a very credible impression.



Richard Elsdon



Ernie Turpie



Bruce Leask

RYA West Zone Squad

In the 2007 season, as with the season before, the North and West Zones were combined into a single squad because of the reduced availability of boats. The 2006-2007 squad again consisted almost entirely of Royal Windermere sailors. The squad was very fortunate to once again have Matt McGovern as its coach, and the hard work produced a squad of exceptional standard, emphasised by the fact that once again at the Eric Twiname Championships at Rutland in May the squad swept the board in the Mirror Class.

The encouraging news is that with the establishment of Amada status for Ripon SC and Hollingworth Lake SC a new influx of Mirror sailors joined the North West Zone Squad.

The Squad is now drawn equally from both east and west of the Pennines, and with Anna McKenzie as the newly appointed coach there is continued hope for the Squad in the North.

Towards the end of the season the North and West Zone Championships at Ullswater SC produced some surprising results. In slightly shifty conditions, it was interesting to see the Robinson boys run away with the first race, leaving several National Championship boats trailing in their wake. Eventually, however, experience won through, Brendan Sweeney & Max Ligema winning overall.

Nationwide Series

Northern boats did well in the Nationwide Series again.

David & Beth Grey triumphed in the end after a close count at the top of the leader board following the final race of the final event at Blithfield.

The 'Northerns' in 2007 were held at Bassenthwaite SC, as part of the Selden Nationwide Series. In lively conditions on the Saturday Hector & Ben Ciseneros triumphed. Ironically, racing was abandoned on the Sunday because there was no wind at all.

North West Travellers

The first Traveller of the season was held at Gresford. Sailed in relatively light conditions, it saw some close racing on what was a very tight lake between Dave & Beth Grey and Brendan Sweeney & Max Ligema, which proved to be the theme for the season.

At Royal Windermere in July the Grey's boats dominated with Ed Grey & Adam Whitehead being narrowly beaten by elder brother David.

There was another good turnout of boats at Hollingworth in September, the numbers being swelled by the contingent of Armada boats. Brendan & Max won through over Ed & Adam.

Towards the end of the season the final Traveller

took place at Budworth SC on a cold bleak weekend on October. A good contingent of local boats swelled the numbers. There was some very competitive sailing, Ian Escritt & son won in their brand new Mk3 Mirror, collected the night before, narrowly beating Brendan & Max.

Overall Traveller winners were David & Beth Grey, adding to their collection of trophies for the season.

2008

I'm looking forward to seeing many of you sailing in the North West of England. There are many events planned in 2008 for all levels of Mirror sailor.

The highlight for many will be the European Championships in Sweden in early August.

We look forward to the consolidation of the Armada initiative at Hollingworth Lake SC and this year Budworth SC join their ranks as the next club to benefit from Mirror Class sponsorship.

If you need any help with aspects of Mirror sailing please get in touch, my contact details are posted in this handbook.

SCOTLAND

By Ernie Turpie

There are two Area Reps for Scotland – I deal with the South and Bruce Leask, based in the Shetland Isles, the North of the region.

Last year Annandale took four boats to Shetland and in spite of it being a very cramped weekend (sailed up on the Wednesday night and returned on the Sunday night's ferry, back in Annandale Monday lunchtime) they all returned asking for more. August saw visits to Newburgh (Fife) for Round the Island Race (all class handicap but usually won by a Mirror, we were beaten by a Heron) and St Mary's Loch for their annual regatta.

As a result of our Shetland trip there have been requests that we go back but make it longer. So this year it's proposed that Annandale Mirrors attend Lerwick Regatta Week followed by Shetland Inter-Club Regatta Week

After last year's Championship in Shetland Bruce and I thought that it would be a good idea to move the Championships around as opposed to the old standbys of Annandale or Delting (Shetland). The plan was that there should be a three or four year cycle of one north, two central and one south. As a trial we agreed to try Loch Ard as I had heard that they had some Mirrors and by visiting we might encourage the local boats to travel. On enquiring I was told "yes, there are two Mirrors in the Club. They don't race, but we might be interested in hosting in 2009".

The date for this year's Scottish is the first weekend in July (5-6) at Annandale.

SINGLE-HANDED

By Angus Carlisle

I am often asked questions about Single-Handed Mirror sailing that surprise me, including the ever-popular "are we welcome?"

Well, after a very busy 2007 I can safely tell you the answer is yes. And you will be among a growing group of interested Mirror sailors in 2008 who are active in the regions and also nationally.

I am going to mention the contribution of the 'Shustoke Gang' in 2007 who turned up *en masse* at the Nationals to give chase to the usual bunch of suspects who were after the annual collection of silverware. It was good to have more competition on the water and to enjoy and beer or few afterwards. I understand that there is a bit of a spending spree going on this winter by these S/H Mirror sailors who are upgrading their racing machines with a view to a bit of a challenge in 2008. Watch the website to see if this effective.

After such a busy year I also think it would be appropriate to mention the contribution of a number of people to S/H sailing as these particular individuals are paving the way for more to follow;

Pat Hufton who celebrated his 76th birthday while competing in the Nationals at Brightlingsea. Never mind the age here, it's the speed that Pat sails at to be commented on. I thought I was fairly fit this summer but at each race to find that Pat was always there over all 10 races has to be an inspiration and target for us all to match. "If he can do it..." I hope I hear you saying.

David Moore has come from the ZS and NJS, and being very tall took a sensible decision to race his Mirror as a S/H. David is therefore somewhat younger than the rest of the normal bunch, yet his participation demonstrates my belief that once the youngsters get too heavy to be competitive as D/H the S/H route is an easy way to stay in the Class and continue to sail and socialise with friends and family. You now don't have to move on to another Class at a particular age – if you don't want to, don't, is my suggestion.

Simon Lovesey coined the phrase "Sad Dads" this summer when handing out S/H prizes at the Llandudno event. It gained a lot of laughs and continues to be amusingly used to describe some of the S/H fleet. Both Simon and I are certain that there is huge potential for the Sad Dad group (and even Sad Mums!) to have a lot of fun but feel many are a

little daunted about being shown up out on the water. Seeing as I only started sailing 5 years ago I think there is hope for you all, and it's time to bite the bullet and bring your boat along before regrets of missed opportunity set in.

In addition to the people I am going to mention the wretched PY number and I hope these comments will help all of the club sailors who are tormented by this across the country. I know that some areas have seen the enjoyment of using all three sails (and it's very difficult to get it right) destroyed by the PY advantage of not bothering. At the Nationwide series we have got rid of this torment. The race officers are happier and results are achieved on the water and not against the clock. When fleet racing in Mirrors we see no difference in boat speed whether S/H or D/H and win or lose places based on our sailing mistakes alone. My belief is that this PY number has grown due to some mathematical oddity at club level racing that probably has more to do with good sailors racing Mirrors S/H in good quality boats rather than some tangible technical advantage. It seems very difficult to formally rid ourselves of this number however informally I would urge clubs to drop using the three numbers and concentrate on one number for the boat, whoever is in it and whatever sails they chose to use.

With all of this positive talk about S/H sailing it might also be worth saying that I am hearing a rumour of something interesting at Pwhehelli in 2009. Hopefully if there is enough drive and participation in 2008 the rumour will become a clamour and we can put ourselves on the international map – we shall see.

Finally, I wish you all good luck in your Mirror sailing this coming season. I hope you don't beat me on the water but somehow I suspect that I might have to give my trophy back next year!

MIRROR YOUTH SQUAD

By Angus Carlisle

The Mirror Youth Squad has re-launched itself in 2007 with a 2009 World Championship target.

A group of enthusiastic youngsters makes up the Squad and they will spend six training weekends per year on top of their normal sailing activities to hone their Mirror skills. Differing from previous Squads there is no permanent Squad Coach instead the MCA is selecting different coaches for each weekend to concentrate on the specific skills the Squad need to move forward, balanced against the skill set that a particular coach may have.

At the time of writing the Squad has had two training sessions focusing on firstly course

management, with Ross Kearney, and sails and boat speed with Tim Rush. Both have been fascinating and resulted in a lot of hard work being put in by both the coaches and the Mirror sailors.

With the target being 2009, half of the sessions are being held in Pwhehelli so we can get a better insight into what conditions exist there and get the Squad comfortable with the venue. Due to the travelling distances this involves there is a big parental ('taxi driver') commitment which has to be acknowledged with a heartfelt thank-you.

The Mirror Class is well known for being friendly both on and off the water, and in the Youth Squad this ethos continues with time being set aside to socialise. The Squad goes out to dinner at each training weekend so everyone can get to know each other that little bit better and cement friendships that we hope will continue into adulthood.

A big push is being made on fitness, and with MCA website headlining our five mile runs to warm up before we go sailing we are amusingly being described as Angus's Boot Camp by some quarters. We are very pleased to see that some supporting parents are also joining us on these and out on the water in coach / safety boats – so it can't be that bad really! – and we are forever encouraging everyone to join in to make it easy for the sailors to be involved in keeping fit both at Squad weekends and when at home.

As well as being a lot of fun and very enjoyable we are also targeting top results for our sailors. So far the Squad performance is very closely matched at the training events and there is no pecking order being established in regard to race winning. We all therefore have to wait and see what 2008 will bring. I hope you will be watching as closely as I will be – our future sailing stars are in this group. ■



Angus Carlisle