



OKDIA NEWSLETTER

October 2011

From the Secretary

KEY DATES

2012

Spring Cup – Medemblik Holland

Sailing dates: 4 – 6th May

OK Dinghy World Championship – Vallensbæk Denmark

World Championship venue has moved to Vallensbæk.

Sailing dates: 23rd – 28th July 2012

As it is the 50th World Championship the meeting will be an Open Championship, with numbers not restricted to 80 competitors. All are welcome!

2013

OK Dinghy World Championship at Royal Varuna Yacht Club Thailand

Dates: 26th March 2013 to 5th April 2013. Website: www.varuna.org

Please look at this website <http://www.thaicatregatta.org> for information about the area and accommodation ideas.

OK Dinghy European Championship at Carnac in France

Dates: 22nd -26th July 2013.

2014

OK Dinghy European Championship in Steinhuder Meer, near Hanover

The event will be held in July on a very large lake.

OK Dinghy World Championship – Melbourne, Australia

Nationals 26 – 28th December, Worlds commencing on 30th December

OK Dinghy World Championship – Vallensbæk Denmark 2012

Korsør Sailing Club has just advised the Danish Association that they will not hold the OK Dinghy World Championship next year. Fortunately Vallensbæk has agreed to host it instead. This venue will be familiar to some. Here is some information for you:

- Vallensbaek has a really good wind statistics,
- Excellent harbour facilities
- Free camping approx 300 meters from the boats
- Experienced club
- Close to Copenhagen. 20 min by train to the centre, lots of stuff for families to do within a short distance.
- The club is eager to make an absolutely outstanding worlds, basically they will apply the same platform at they used for the Finn Gold Cup, which was a very successful regatta.

http://www.finnclass.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=103:image-gallery-finn-gold-cup-2009&catid=55:galleries&Itemid=18

- It is likely the pre-Worlds regatta will be held at Hvidovre Sailing Club which is 5 km from Vallensbæk and shares the same waters.

Nick Craig chats to Robert Deaves after his record-equalling fourth OK Dinghy World title



How times have changed. A little over seven years ago, no British sailor had ever won the OK Dinghy World Championship. It was a commonly held belief in the class that no British sailor ever would. They were just not up to the job, or jinxed by 50 years of history. Jim Hunt changed all that in 2004 with a decisive win on home ground at Parkstone on the UK's south coast. Then it was Nick Craig's turn, winning the title in 2005, 2006 and 2007 to become only the third person to win three titles and only the second to win three in a row. This year in Largs, Scotland, Craig won it for a record equalling fourth time after one of the trickiest and closest world championships ever held.

Craig joins Leith Armit (NZL), who won in 1983, 1985, 1990 and 1994, and Bo-Staffan Andersson (SWE) who won in 1988, 1991, 1992, 1993, as the only sailors to have won the title four times. In addition, Craig rises to the top of the 'Best OK Dinghy sailors of all time' list, overtaking class legend Jørgen Lindhardtzen (DEN).

Several weeks after the win, Craig reflected on the regatta. It was not the easiest of weeks, plagued by light and unstable winds and unusually high temperatures. Only seven out of the ten scheduled races were held after several long days on the water with very little to show on the scoreboard.

Craig said, "However, it was a very well run event. On shore side, it was one of the best events I've done. The family and friends events were organised by Sue Byers. There were activities every day, which meant my wife and kids had a great time which is very important."

"It's just a shame the wind didn't play ball. The sailing was very challenging with light, unstable winds, but the race team made the best of it so we raced in the best conditions available."

What were his expectations going into it the regatta and how did that change during the week? "I was aiming to win but stayed pretty philosophical with the difficult conditions. I was sailing my best and if the wind was a bit random there wasn't a lot I could do about it. I didn't open the week well with a 16th and then an 11th in race three but I knew it would be high scoring so I just kept plugging away." And the threats? "It was as expected – a great mix of experience in past World Champions Thomas Hansson-Mild (SWE) and Greg Wilcox (NZL) and new blood from Bartosz Rakocy (POL). In light winds I expected the German team to be fast which they were and in breeze the Aussies are fast."

After finding great speed in years past to win three world titles with his Celidh mast and North sail combination, Craig has struggled with speed issues in recent years, after the rest of the world caught up. And to some extent this still dogged him in Largs. "The biggest challenge was my lack of pace in the very light airs. I was just off the pace upwind in sub-hiking conditions, which made life very difficult on the big course. I was having to start very aggressively and get all the shifts right to get any decent results in these conditions."

The event had started on a low point for Craig. "My car, which was packed for the event and a two week family holiday, was stolen from the sailing club the weekend before the event and it made the week before very hectic with replacing the car, towbar, clothes, cot bed, credit cards and sailing kit as well as going to work. The biggest low point was how useless the police were – the thief phoned my wife on my phone so could easily have been caught." And once into the racing, he didn't have the best start. "The opening race was pretty horrible for me. I got a great start but my pace was ordinary, I got on the wrong side of the last shift into the windward mark, and then got killed when the second reach turned into a run so I just scraped a 16th."

However the championship was still wide-open going into the seventh and final race, held right on the time limit. Craig, who was in fourth place overall, needed things to go his way. "The highlight



of the event for me was the first beat of the last race. I got a bit lucky - there was a shift and new breeze on the left which I was in so I rounded the top mark first with none of my competition in the top 20. After that stroke of good fortune, it was still a tricky race. The wind stayed very light and I again struggled a bit for pace so slipped to fourth through the race whilst Greg Wilcox was coming through quickly. The run was painful as the leeward marks were moved to make it longer and the wind filled in from behind so at one point it looked like I'd be engulfed by the chasing pack. The fleet then inevitably split at the leeward gate but thankfully the wind filled in on my side so I clung on to take the title by just two points."

What does a fourth world title mean to him? "It means a lot – winning it this time round was in many ways a lot harder than any other time as I'm sailing less so it's harder to get an edge. The rigs have also moved on a lot over the last few years and I've been behind as I've been sailing other boats and doing less sailing. But I'm happy that I've now got a rig that works well across the wind range. I've got no edge though, so I'll be trying a few things over the winter to find that edge again." Craig is certainly game to try for a record fifth world title. "It would be fantastic and I will go for it, more because I love racing the OK Dinghy internationally than because five is a magic number. I hope to have many more years of great international sailing and beer drinking. But I know it will be hard. There is some great young talent coming through the class as well as some very experienced hands who are tough to beat."

Robert Deaves

OK Worlds from the shoreline

The West coast of Scotland for a week? I'm packing during a wet but mild week in southern England so layering is order of the day. But serious emphasis on waterproofs, indoor children's entertainment and wellies.

How wrong could we be – and how well the Largs M&Co summer sale did out of us all, stocking up on summer essentials.

Him, me and 3 small children are new to the OK fleet. Yet by the end of the week we all felt totally part of it.

"Social programme". Yes, that usually features at a championship. Opening gathering with a few nibbles, an evening event at some point in the week, with a complimentary beer, and a prize giving – that sort of thing? (Well, yes, but on steroids ... I'm sure the daily pint and hot-dog, the piped haggis and the marching bagpipes will get a mention elsewhere.)

No, not THAT social programme, never mind the sailors. They were customarily towed far enough to the North of Cumbrae to lose sight of their wallets, for a number of hours each day, and Sue took us out on a day trip. The



Scottish Sailing Institute had very kindly extended use of their minibus for the week and, not taking the offer lightly, Sue made sure it was used.

Sue had spent the previous few weeks (in far more seasonal Scottish weather, I must add) investigating local attractions and negotiating group discounts. Ferry trips, activity days, restaurants, open-topped buses – even the ice-creams.

The itinerary was so varied that it catered for all - from the families with small children to those wanting to take in the more cultural aspects of Largs, as a foreign country. As such I

can't comment on all, but do know that there was a lot of appreciation for all of the events.

I was pleasantly surprised how WAG friendly Largs was. Last time I'd been it had rained! There was a lovely flat walk along the shoreline to the town which took about 20 minutes, even at toddler speed (rather more with the diversion of rock pools though). Once there it boasted one of the best play areas I have been to and enough of a selection of town shops. Morrisons 'did what it said on the packet' and provided with all supermarket basics (and Disney cards!) for the week. Nardini's appeared to be the Largs home-brand, ranging from a simple ice-cream take-away to a multi-faceted café/icecream shop/restaurant to suit all tastes.

I was put on the spot at one point as to whether the OK fleet is the 'friendliest fleet'. So I sat on the fence, of course :o) We have many friendships from other fleets, all different and special in their ways. But without doubt the OK fleet have made the greatest impression and we felt instantly integrated as newbies into the fold. Not just the family - Simon has found the fellow sailors to be extremely helpful and welcoming. He now feels more sure of what rake to use, how far to pull the main in and, well, apparently he tells me he needs a new sail ...

So, many thanks to Sue Byers and her team, including Carol, Amanda and Debs (to name a few but not an exhaustive list, by any account), but also to the lovely WAGs I have met and befriended.

Belgian National Championships

There were 40 participants from 7 countries attended this weekend event, including Brad from the USA! There was some very close racing, but Tony Woods (GBR) sailed clear of the chasing pack to win and become the Belgian Open Champion. Yannick Laumans became the Belgian National Champion.

Irish Association

There are a number of sailors in Eire who are very keen to get an Irish Association together. They are proposing to submit an application for membership to OKDIA next summer. To generate enthusiasm in the country, (and world-wide judging by the number of hits it has received), Hugh has developed a new website iokda.wordpress.com. We look forward to meeting the Irish next season.

Masters Trophy

We cannot deny the fact that some of us are getting older by the year. However, many are still very competitive OK Dinghy sailors. A Master's Trophy will be added to the prize list at a World Championship. Andre and Roger Blasse have kindly agreed to donate a trophy. You have to be over 60 years old to be eligible! There will be a proposal to amend the constitution at the next AGM.



ALF LOCK

It is with real sadness that I write to report that Alf Lock, designer of numerous champion OK Dinghies (most notably the multiple world championship winning Icebreaker design) and other yachts, and well known stalwart of New Zealand sailing and boating, died last Thursday. A number of representatives of the OK Class attended his funeral in Auckland yesterday.

All current and former OK sailors in New Zealand, and many outside New Zealand, know what a debt of gratitude we all owe to Alf for the contribution he made to sailing generally and to the OK class in particular. It is a remarkable fact that, despite having been designed by Alf almost 35 years ago, the Icebreaker design is now more dominant than ever, being the current world champion design and now being copied by overseas manufacturers.

Ben Morrison

Mary Reddyhoff OKDIA Secretary