

# Go Racing: Wayfarers

**W**ayfarers have been an active class at the club since the 1970s. Initially the numbers were small but were swelled by some Dragonfly-owning members struggling to keep their wooden boats in good condition.



Charlie Taylor in W7292, a Moore's Wayfarer, teaching on one of Rosemary Schlee's RYA courses

Then Rosemary Schlee championed the Wayfarer, encouraging others (included some from DYC) to join in ordering six new boats from Moore's of Wroxham. These boats included Charlie Taylor's MkII fibreglass boat with a blue hull and yellow deck in the Waldringfield club colours. It soon became apparent that keeping the boat ashore, not on moorings, was the way to do well. But in keeping with the boat's all-round attraction, Rosemary also organised a seven Wayfarer cruise to Walton-on-the-Naze.

Later new wooden boats arrived with mainly 8000 numbers – they were reckoned to be quicker than the fibreglass boats. A myth sprang up that boats with a double 8 in the sail number were even quicker! This was prompted by the success of Michael McNamara and Ian Porter who alternated in winning the National Championship for many years in wooden boats carrying double 8s on their sails.

Ten years ago the Class nationally was not seeing many new boats built, and the builders were struggling. Then Hartley Boats stepped up and acquired the rights to the Wayfarer dinghy from the copyright holders,

the designer Ian Proctor's family. Hartleys asked Phil Morrison to refine the design for today's market, and set about producing a boat which was much more modern, but which (to many) looked nothing like a Wayfarer.

There was considerable controversy over this, and initially it failed to measure at the transom because of discrepancies in the aft sections. This was made worse by having an ill-considered way of joining the hull and deck components, which meant that some boats were longer than others. I was asked to join the builder Ian Porter to modify the tooling and processes to make the boat comply with the hull measurements and make the hull totally one-design. Some 'cut and shut' work was carried out, and a new trimming line added to ensure all the new boats are as alike as possible.

So now the Wayfarer is a truly one-design class. This has caused many of the keener racers to get new boats but it has helped to revive the class as a whole, and with it the class at WSC. Not bad after more than 40 years as an adopted class at our club.

Gordon Harris



The necessary 'cut and shut' work

Photo: Gordon Harris

