

Buying a boat to sail at Pitsford

Having completed your training course hopefully you are considering purchasing a dinghy to sail at Northampton Sailing Club. If so then you might find the following of interest.

There are many different sailing dinghies on the market. In fact the range of boats available is so large that to any newcomer to sailing it can be bewildering. Some are produced in large numbers and others are aimed at niche markets. Some have fallen from popularity or have simply not sold in great numbers.

Modern production techniques mean that the vast majority of boats made today are made from glass reinforced plastic or similar material.

These modern boats need far less maintenance than traditionally built wooden boats and enable you to maximise the time spent taking part in your new found sport (sailing) rather than sanding, painting and varnishing etc. which wooden built boats demand on a regular basis in order to keep seaworthy.

Experience has shown that quite a few people taking up sailing purchase inappropriate boats. As result they are lost to the sport at early stage, either through frustration at not being able to satisfactorily sail and thus enjoy the boat they have chosen, or because they have purchased a boat that has seen better days and is more of a DIY project than a boat to sail.

With the above thoughts in mind the list below has been published to give some guidance in narrowing down the vast range of available boats. This selection of boats enjoys relative popularity both at Pitsford and other clubs. This means that there is usually an active second hand market both to buy your first boat from and to sell into when you are ready to progress to the next level or if sailing turns out not to be for you.

All of these classes are sailed regularly at the club and contact details are given of fleet captains and other members who can give you more information or help, and can even arrange for you to try out a boat.

Laser

They say:

“3 Different rigs - Three simple, interchangeable rigs take the growing sailor from the Optimist to an introduction to youth sailing with the 4.7 rig and then to full youth sailing in the Radial (5.7m²) with the final step to the full rig (7.06m²). A step- by- step progression in the same equipment in the same Class with the only difference being the sail and lower mast. Why are there 3 different rigs?

This is for people who are of different body weights and abilities. For example, the ideal weight s for racing are: The Laser 4.7 from about 50kg – 65kg(ish), the Laser Radial 60kg-75, and the Standard rig 70g +. Lasers usually last for years. You still regularly see boats dating back to the 1970’s and early 80’s!”



We say:

Pretty bullet proof.

Boom is quite low so a degree of athleticism is required

The interchangeable rigs mean that you can “grow into the boat”

Can be transported on a roof rack.

More information from Don Breen (Fleet Captain) laserfleet@northamptonsailingclub.org

Try the website for more information (www.lasersailing.co.uk)

Solo

They say:

The National Solo is a classic, one-design, single handed dinghy. Designed by Jack Holt in 1956, the Solo remains a popular dinghy, sailed at many clubs in the UK, Holland and Australia. Originally designed in wood, competitive boats are now widely available in Foam Reinforced Plastic (FRP) or composite construction (FRP hull and wood deck) as well as wood.

We say:

If you sail single handed there is a wide choice of boats available. It is not just the boat design you must consider, but what it can do for you.

At Northampton Sailing Club, as in many other clubs throughout the UK there is a strong fleet identity, which means there are Solos sailing in races throughout the year. If you need help, tips or encouragement there is always someone to provide it. This also has social benefits, with events such as the pre-season Fleet Supper and the Fleet AGM which are held in local hostelrys.



The boat itself is very adaptable. The age range sailing it at National Events is from teens to seventies and the weight range is similarly wide. Flatter sails and more flexible masts (e.g. Wavelength, Proctor C, Superspar M1) are generally suited to lighter helms and the more rigid ones (Proctor Cumulus or Superspar M3 and M7) for the heavier. Newcomers to the fleet should not be too preoccupied with rigs and equipment. Spending time in the boat and getting to know it is more rewarding.

Nationally there is also a strong class structure, with a Website which is acknowledged as one of the best in the sailing world. There are Open Meetings throughout the country, with 15 in the Midland Area alone. The Midland Area Championship is based on the best five results from these.

Importantly the strong class structure and strict one-design rules result in very strong residual values for the boats.

For more advice contact solofleet@northamptonsailingclub.org

Try the website (www.solosailing.org.uk)

Laser 2000

They say:

'..... can be enjoyed by anyone who has completed a week's sailing course.'

Laser 2000...unique versatility. The ride is smooth; the sailing position is perfect and the confidence factor high thanks to a real 'sit in' feel. It's like a chameleon that has different moods to suit the occasion. Her handling and performance will impress the enthusiast and tempt them onto the race track. Her versatility allows you to take it easy and load up the family and equipment for a relaxing day out. Newcomers and youngsters can be taught aboard easily and can even have different power for different days thanks to the unique reefing system and furling Jib!

Construction & Maintenance. Laser 2000 is hand built in GRP Foam Sandwich. This gives the benefits of normal fibreglass - it is easy to maintain, gives a long lasting finish, but with the added benefits of being lighter and stiffer.

We say:

Suitable for those wanting to sail with the family as well as take part in club racing. A very solidly built boat which will accommodate a large weight range. Very stable, but in lighter weather heavier crews may find it a little sluggish.

More information from Anthony York aka "Chunky" (Fleet Captain) rsfleet@northamptonsailingclub.org



Try the website for more information (www.lasersailing.co.uk)

RS Vision XL

They say:

“.....A boat that is tough and virtually maintenance free. A boat that is roomy, stable and great to sail. A boat that looks a million dollars, but won't cost the earth.”

Sparkling performance - Club racing or cruising. Perfect size - Big enough for a family crew Small enough to comfortably sail single-handed, huge cockpit All weather" capability Single line mainsail reefing for fast and simple sail reduction, furling jib

We say:

A similar boat to the Laser 2000 but a little lighter and faster. Races very competitively whilst still being a good family boat to develop your skills in.



More information from Anthony York aka "Chunky" (Fleet Captain) rsfleet@northamptonsailingclub.org

Try the website (www.rssailing.com)

RS 200

They say:

Responding to finesse rather than physique, the RS200 allows parents, youngsters, couples and friends to share the excitement of asymmetric sailboat racing.

On the open sea or the smallest of lakes, the success of the RS200 is proof that it has got what it takes.

We say:

Being lighter the RS 200 is a bit more lively than the Laser 2000 or the RS Vision and probably not as suitable for sailing with more than two on board. The RS200 is a great boat for those wanting to “have a blast” whether racing or cruising. You will also see it’s big brother the RS 400 being sailed at Pitsford.

More information from Anthony York aka “Chunky” (Fleet Captain) rsfleet@northamptonsailingclub.org

Try the website (www.rssailing.com)



For the younger sailor

Topper

They Say:

“Topper is simple, safe and sensational. Nothing comes close to the Topper. She is so simple to rig, own and sail. The Topper will inspire confidence in total newcomers quicker than anything else around. That is why the Topper has introduced more newcomers to sailing than any other boat! Rugged and safe to soak up any punishment, light enough to be responsive.”

We Say:

A great starter boat with a competitive racing set up for those that wish to develop their racing skills.

More information from Isolda Marroquin (Watersports centre manager) info@northamptonwatersports.com

Try the website www.toppersailboats.com



The Optimist

They Say:

“Optimists are designed for children -They are safe and straightforward for beginners to use and technically challenging for the experienced sailors.

Single-handed is best - They didn't learn to ride a bike on a tandem

Over 150,000 kids in over 100 countries have got to be right

It's an RYA "pathway" class - that means it's recognized as developing technical, physical and racing skills necessary to succeed at Youth and Olympic level.

Over 70% of the sailors at the last Olympics learned to race in an Optimist.”



We Say:

Young club members are regularly selected for training in the RYA squads and many have progressed their sailing careers from initial experience in an “Oppie”

More information from Isolda Marroquin (Watersports centre manager) info@northamptonwatersports.com

Try the website www.optimistsailing.org.uk

The Mirror



They Say:

“...the Mirror is the classic family sailing dinghy, ideal for both cruising and racing. Many have started their sailing careers in the Mirror, first sailing with their parents then with other juniors. Some have gone onto be champions and even win Olympic medals. MCA organises a comprehensive programme of training and racing for all abilities, and ages. For youngsters with aspirations to race at the highest level, the Mirror is a recognised RYA Junior (Pathway) Training Class.”

We Say:

A good boat for a parent to sail with a child or for two youngsters to sail together. If buying second hand and intending to race be aware that the class has recently modernised it's rig set up. Take advice before purchasing.

More information from Isolda Marroquin (Watersports centre manager) info@northamptonwatersports.com

Try the website (www.ukmirrorsailing.com)

RS Feva



They Say:

“Fun for all. Big cockpit and high boom make the Feva really comfortable for youngsters and adults. Single handed or with a crew The Feva is the perfect size and has rig options that allow easy handling by one sailor, family crews or friends. Novice to racer. Not only confidence inspiring and very easy to sail, the Feva is also the fastest of her type. More features, best quality, great prices. Most durable. Lowest maintenance”

We Say:

A good boat for a parent to sail with their child. A modern and rapidly growing class. A smaller version of the RS 200 and RS 400.

More information from Isolda Marroquin (Watersports centre manager) info@northamptonwatersports.com

Try the Website (www.rssailing.com)

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This list is aimed at those who are relatively new to sailing, (probably buying their first boat). All the boats are generally considered to be straightforward to sail, and there is an active resale market for each of the boats.

Many other boats are suitable to sail at Pitsford, and if you own a boat already or have access to a boat that is not listed above feel free to discuss the boat's suitability. Whilst we have done our best to describe the different boats we do strongly suggest that before you buy your first boat you have a chat with some of the club's regular sailors to help you match your new boat to your needs.

During the last twelve months the following boats have taken part in club racing:-

405	420	National 12	International 14	29er	Albacore	Boss
Comet	Contender	Drascombe Lugger *	Enterprise	Fireball	Flying Fifteen	GP14
International 2.4	Kestrel	Lark	Laser	Laser 2000	Laser 4.7	Laser II
Laser Pico	Laser Radial	Laser SB3 *	Laser Vago	Mirror	Optimist	Phantom
RS 200	RS 400	RS 600	RS 700	RS Feva	RS Vareo	RS Vision
Solo	Spectrum	Supernova	Tasar	Topaz Uno	Topaz Magno	Topper
(* not really suitable for Pitsford)						

If you would like further information or assistance please do not hesitate to contact one of the club contacts above or come along on a Sunday and introduce yourself, have a chat and a look at various options. The club has many members with experience in a wide range of boats and lots of help and advice is available.

Membership details and information about the Sailing Club are available at www.northamptonsailingclub.org