

The National Championships – Lancing 1997.

Despite an atrocious weather forecast for gales and lashing rain, a healthy fleet of 31 boats, representing 14 clubs from as far apart as Sheffield and the Isle of White, attended the Streaker National Championships hosted by Lancing Sailing Club over the weekend of 28th/29th June.

Race one was sailed in a south-westerly force 2-3 sea breeze which arrived right on cue as the Race Team were preparing to set the course. Alan Gillard, reigning champion (Sheffield Viking SC), set out his stall for the weekend by taking an early lead at the first mark which he never relinquished. Peter Northen (Filey SC) rounded in second followed by Allan Raistrick, (Pennine SC) and Steve Garrett (Bexley SC). These positions remained unchanged to the finish with Dave Butler (Blackpool LCC) fifth, and Liam Beamish (Lancing SC) climbing from ninth place to take sixth.

After the break for lunch the wind strengthened slightly and following the only general recall of the championship Gillard again established the lead over Northen up the first beat. Northen suffered a broken sail outhaul at the top of the beat and stopping to make repairs saw him back in seventeenth place as the fleet went through the gate at the end of the first lap, with lots to catch up on the fast disappearing fleet. Behind Gillard, Ian Fletcher (Dudley YC) was holding second place ahead of Butler and Ian Whitfield (Tamworth SC) who was enjoying his return to sea sailing. As the wind built creating a short chop, Butler powered through using his weight advantage to maximum effect to take second place ahead of Whitfield. Garrett held off Raistrick with Northen clawing his way back to sixth.

In contrast to race two, race three was held in a falling breeze which saw Gillard hit the line at speed to again round the first mark in the lead. Northen managed to pass him on the reach and hold onto the lead for most of the race, only to lose out by half a boat length at the finish. Behind these two Garrett, Whitfield, Butler and Raistrick battled for the minor places with positions changing regularly. At the finish the order was Whitfield in third with Garrett, Raistrick and Butler to follow.

On day two the forecasted force 5/6 north-easterly wind did not materialise for Sunday morning's first race causing Race officer Barry Goacher's team to postpone, allowing the battle between the sea breeze and the land breeze to settle before attempting to set the course. After an hours postponement the fleet were sent away first time, albeit in a shifty, variable force 1. Gillard proved that he was not invincible allowing Northen to dominate the race despite his greater weight. Andrew Bowes (Chipstead SC), the overall Junior trophy winner, held a creditable third position for much of the race only to choose the wrong side of the run which dumped him back to seventh. Local helm Steve Lynch took advantage of his home club knowledge to climb from tenth to fourth behind Garrett, but could not hold off Raistrick on the shortened beat to the finish. The finishing order was Northen, Gillard, Garrett, Raistrick, Lynch with Roger Finbow (Pennine SC), registering his best result of the weekend in sixth.

After the break for lunch the wind again was cyclonic as the fleet left the beach for the race area. Gillard had elected not to sail and watched from the shore as the Race Team moved everything to keep track with the wind. Eventually the sea breeze won and the fleet were away in a welcoming force 2/3 south westerly. Straight away, the fleet split tacks with Northen, Raistrick and Fletcher choosing the more competitive inshore tack, all arriving at the windward mark in that order. A little further back, they were closely followed by Lynch and Steve Hamblin (Bexley SC) who had both taken the less favoured starboard tack out to sea, right off the start line. Hamblin however

showed poor downwind speed and by the time the competitors re-crossed the start/finish line at the end of the first lap, he had dropped to ninth place.

As the race progressed, Northen extended his lead to assure himself of victory, but meanwhile in the following pack Fletcher continued to nibble away at Raistrick's second position, eventually squeezing past him on the penultimate reach. A little further back Garrett and Lynch had been swapping places during the race and this saw Garrett needing a monumental effort to hold of Lynch by inches at the finish line to clinch fourth and fourth place in the series. After some mixed results earlier on, Streaker Chairman George Robinson at last found his form to post his best result of the Championship in sixth place.

Only a matter of four weeks after taking his fourth Northern Area title at Thornton Steward, Alan Gillard deservedly took the National Championship trophy for an equally creditable seventh time, once more confirming his total mastery of the boat in all conditions.

Ian Fletcher (1332).

STREAKER NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP				LANCING 1997					
FINAL POS.N	SAIL No.	HELM	CLUB	POINTS - RACE No.					TOTAL POINTS
				1	2	3	4	5	
1	1374	ALAN GILLARD	SHEFFIELD VIKING	1	1	1	2	32	5
2	1484	PETER NORTHEN	FILEY	2	6	2	1	1	6
3	1483	ALLAN RAISTRICK	PENNINE	3	5	5	4	3	15
4	1404	STEVEN GARRETT	BEXLEY	4	4	4	3	4	15
5	1418	DAVE BUTLER	BLACKPOOL LC	5	2	6	10	12	23
6	1332	IAN FLETCHER	DUDLEY	8	7	8	14	2	25
7	1446	IAN WHITFIELD	TAMWORTH	9	3	3	13	32	28
8	1309	STEVE LYNCH	LANCING	12	8	11	5	5	29
9	1328	ANDREW BOWES	CHIPSTEAD	20	9	7	7	8	31
10	1298	ROGER FINBOW	PENNINE	13	12	9	6	7	34
11	2030	LIAM BEAMISH	LANCING	6	14	13	9	11	39
12	1480	RUSS HALL	BROXBOURNE	11	10	12	11	14	44
13	1052	STEVE HAMBLIN	BEXLEY	17	13	10	12	15	50
14	137	IAN GILBERT	LANCING	23	16	18	8	9	51
15	1469	PETER BRODIE	ROYAL VICTORIA	16	11	17	21	10	54
16	1449	MAC HATELEY	BEXLEY	15	32	14	15	13	57
17	1458	ALAN SIMMONS	LANCING	10	17	16	16	16	58
18	1078	JACQUELINE BISHOP	LANCING	22	18	19	17	18	72
19	1360	PETER CROOKS	FILEY	18	21	20	18	19	75
20	1468	RICHARD SMALE	CHICHESTER	14	15	15	32	32	76
21	1419	MIKE SNOOK	LANCING	21	20	21	32	17	79
22	1294	JEREMY DANIELL	DOWNS	19	19	24	23	32	85
23	462	ALLAN BUNCLARK	BEXLEY	26	23	23	19	21	86
24	1406	GEORGE ROBINSON	SCALING DAM	25	25	32	32	6	88
25	1207	ROGER HORTON	LANCING	27	26	22	22	22	92
26	853	LEN BLANN	LANCING	24	22	25	26	23	94
27	1479	CHRIS HILL	BLACKPOOL LC	7	24	32	32	32	95
28	1365	OLLIE PAGE	LANCING	30	32	32	20	20	102
29	1348	DANNY ROACH	BEXLEY	31	27	26	25	24	102
30	199	DON ALLWRIGHT	LANCING	28	32	32	24	25	109
31	1386	FRANK SMITH	LANCING	29	28	32	27	26	110