

Streaker 'Retro Blue' at the dinghy show

by Neil Firth, 1977

If you're planning a trip to the RYA Dinghy & Watersports Show at Farnborough this year, the Streaker Class stand will be well worth a visit. As well as the usual FRP example, there will be a beautifully restored wooden Streaker to admire.

The Streaker dinghy is a light-weight and responsive single-hander which is enjoying quite a resurgence since Hartley Boats became one of the two licenced FRP builders. The other FRP builder is Butler Boats, who also supply wooden and composite Streakers.

Hartley Boats has now built around 35 FRP Streakers and their latest will be featured on the Class stand. It's easy to see why this boat continues to attract some top sailing talent, with its modern construction and handy continuous control lines... and it's a pleasure to sail!



© Simon Cory

For the first time in some years, the Streaker stand will also feature a stunning 35-year old wooden example, 1384 'Retro Blue', which is sure to catch the eye. This all-wood Streaker was originally supplied by Brian Cory as a part-built boat, completed in 1989 by Arthur King of Redoubt SC. Brian was a professional Streaker builder at the time, supplying complete boats and Class-approved kits for completion by amateur builders. The boats were beautifully built from UK-sourced plywood, made to Brian's specification with a core of obeche, one of the lightest hardwoods available. All of these boats were minimum weight and the example at this year's show demonstrates the longevity of a well maintained wooden Streaker.

After completing the original build, Arthur King raced 1384 at Redoubt for many years and was a regular winner in his pride and joy. He was fifth, including a race win, at the 1990 Streaker Nationals at Downs and also took the boat north to the Scaling Dam Nationals a year later. The boat stayed at Redoubt for most of its life, changing hands a number of times. Peter Brooker owned it twice in that period and was responsible for two colour changes; from the original blue to



© Craig Harrison

1384 sailed by Matilda Harrison of Ogston SC

ruby red and finally cream. This was the boat's colour when it eventually left Redoubt in 2021 to be sailed by Matilda Harrison of Ogston SC.

Meanwhile, Brian's son Simon has taken the helm of the Cory business. They are primarily yacht builders these days but Simon, who raced his father's Streakers in the 1990s, has recently revived his interest in the class. In 2021 he built himself a new wooden Streaker, 2137 'Deja Blue', and joined the growing fleet of Streakers at Downs SC. His partner, Denise Judd, was also sailing a Cory Streaker, an old generation GRP hull rescued from behind the workshop. This was hardly fair on Denise, especially when her boat was seen beside Simon's beautiful craftsmanship. Something had to be done!

And so, in late 2021, the stars aligned when Simon spotted that 1384 was for sale. He knew the boat's history and that it would be perfect for Denise, never mind the romance of bringing one of his father's boats back into the family!



For some, a lick of paint and varnish would have been all this boat needed. But to Simon's discerning boat-builders eye there was an opportunity for a more thorough restoration.



Modern Streakers - both wood and FRP - have a raised cockpit floor forward of the thwart. This significantly reduces the volume of water in the cockpit area following a capsize (or after taking a wave or two over the bow!). Simon himself was instrumental in proposing this upgrade to the Class at the 1996 AGM. It was approved and quickly adopted on all Streakers since; an essential feature, particularly for sea sailing. It is also fairly straightforward to retrofit on earlier wooden boats, and so the die was cast for Simon's total restoration of 1384!

'Retro Blue' is the end result of this stunning restoration and she will be proudly displayed on the Streaker Class stand. The refit includes new decks, raised floor, new paint and varnish and new fittings throughout. The boat is virtually indistinguishable from a new wooden boat (apart from the sail number!) and is equally competitive. She is finished in Cory's signature navy blue and named in the family tradition, following on from Simon's well known racing yacht 'Cool Blue'.



© Simon Cory

Denise Judd sailing her newly restored Streaker 1384 'Retro Blue' at Downs SC

If you're heading to the show, be sure to check out Simon's expert handy-work... as well as the latest Hartley Streaker (if FRP is more your thing)! The RYA Dinghy & Watersports Show is on 24-25 February at Farnborough International. The class experts will be on stand E22 all weekend to show you over these fantastic boats and talk all things Streaker sailing!

Use code RYAEX24025 when buying your tickets online at → www.rya.org.uk/events/dinghy-show