

Report from the Communications Officer Fireball International.

As Ben has stated in his report, under the Marketing portfolio, the perennial problem with trying to promote the Class is sourcing material. Facebook is helping to a degree, but the material that makes its way there isn't always going to warrant the writing of an article for website consumption. There were technical difficulties with my attempts to report from Slovenia, but on Day 3 of the Worlds, when I did get a report out, to Y&Y, it was read by **2894** people.

Since Slovenia there have been two limitations to publishing material from the Class itself;

- a) The agreement that promoting of events should be limited to the next event on the calendar, and
- b) The small turnout for Pattaya.

Frankly, once we made the announcement that Pattaya was proceeding, in a posting to Yachts and Yachting and our own website, the "air went out of the balloon" when it became apparent that we were going to have such a small turnout. The Y&Y website announcement was read by **1043** people.

The plea for material from NCAs via Rear-Commodores hasn't seen any significant traffic directed my way, though there is an international flavour to what is posted on our website. A report from me on 6th January 2014 to Y&Y which started off with the abandonment of Frostbite racing in Dun Laoghaire and concluded with results from the Australian Nationals, a reference to Anthony Parker winning the GP Nationals in South Africa and Fireball participation in the Sydney to Hobart Race attracted **610** hits on the website. The Frostbite reports have attracted **between 230 and 656** hits, even on those days where the report was to the effect that racing had been abandoned. It has got to the stage that even reporting that there has been no racing warrants a posting to their website – evidence that people expect to see it there on a Monday morning!

As part of the Yachts and Yachting promotion of the RYA Dinghy Show in London over the weekend of 1/2 March 2014, I was asked to write a piece in my capacity as the Irish Fireball Class correspondent, so assuming every Show visitor got a copy of the Show Guide, they would have read a Fireballer describing his home waters in Northern Ireland as being his version of a sailing paradise.....when the sun shines! The photograph that went with my piece took prime position in the article to which there were five or six contributors.

I did have some preliminary contact with Pwllheli Sailing Club and Jez White in the context of the "Wales Worlds" in 2015, but the PSC guys didn't follow through with material. At the time of my initial contact they were in the middle of a run of three major events and were under severe pressure. I have had nominal contact with Anthony Parker in the context of Mossel Bay, but this is less critical given that it is a 2016 regatta. John Manson has been pushing the Shetland event via Facebook, so once Thailand is concluded I can work with him on that promotion.

Our Skype conference calls have also dropped off the radar (though I am the last one to talk about those given my difficulties in contributing to them), which means that communication within the Executive has been on the basis of one-to-one and E-mails.

From an Irish perspective, our downturn in numbers last summer has not carried over completely into the Frostbite Series. Numbers have been under pressure, as few as eight on a couple of Sundays, but we have also had a few turnouts of 13 boats which is probably all bar one or two of the boats registered for the Series.

We have just concluded our regatta planning for summer 2014 with five regattas on the schedule again. We have also just confirmed a weekend's training to be provided in early April, using one of the UK's top Fireball practitioners. At this stage we expect to have 4 or maybe 5 boats in the Shetlands.

I have spoken to Ben this week about making a plan to get results from Thailand onto the various websites and given the time difference between Thailand and Ireland, we think a plan can be made, subject to broadband/internet access at his end.

Cormac Bradley
14th March 2014.