

Specifications

LOA	5.26 m (17 ft, 3 in)
LWL	4.57 m (15 ft)
Beam	2.07 m (6 ft, 9.5 in)
Draught	
■ Fin Keel	1.14 m (3 ft, 9 in)
■ Centreplate	0.61 m–1.45 m (2 ft–4 ft, 9 in)
■ Twin Keels	0.69 m (2 ft, 3 in)
Displacement	612 kg (1,350 lb)
Ballast	
■ Fin Keel	194 kg (427 lb)
■ Centreplate	154 kg (340 lb)
■ Twin Keels	275 kg (606 lb)
Sail Area	13.4 m ² (144 sq ft)
Engine	Outboard up to 4 hp
Headroom	1.3 m (4 ft, 3 in)
Designer	Ian Proctor
Built by	RydgeWay Marine/Ryplas

Also Available:

Foxcub

Designed by Uffa Fox and a little chunkier than the Pirate, this 18-footer is offered with a choice of fin or twin keels. She comes with features such as a forehatch and an anchor well.

Price guide: \$2,500-\$5,500



Skipper 17

From the board of Peter (Mr. Fireball) Milne, she started as a day-sailer with a blister shelter but soon sprouted a bigger cabin. Twin centreplates keep the accommodation clear. Later built as the Eagle 525, hence the higher

Price guide: \$2,000-\$9,000+



Nimrod

More of a day-sailer with a lid and also designed by Ian Proctor, she has an enormous cockpit and a fully-retracting centreplate that leaves a flush bottom for easy trailing. Built by Westerly for many years.

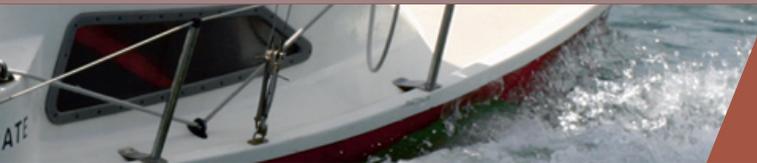
Price guide: \$2,000-\$4,500



Pirate



Comfort.



Power.



Style.



Class.



HISTORY:

When you think of the dinghies designed by the late Ian Proctor, it should come as no surprise that the great man was also responsible for some cracking little cruisers.

Together with Uffa Fox and Jack Holt, Proctor probably had a greater influence on the development of small sailing boats in post-war Britain (and much of the rest of the world) than anyone else: as well as designs in development classes including the International 14 and National 18, he drew such classics as the Wayfarer, Osprey, Gull, Wanderer, Topper, Bosun, Kestrel and Tempest.

Then there were his two designs for Rydgey Marine, the Prelude and the Pirate, at 5.8 m (19 ft) and 5.25 m (17 ft 3 in) respectively. The Pirate was later offered in de-tuned form as the Express Pirate, built by Ryplas with a pair of encapsulated twin keels and supplied, like the Express dinghy, for home completion. But she started life with either a fin keel or with a centreplate that swung up into a ballast stub.

One of the great things about Ian Proctor's small cruisers is while any reasonably light, flat-bottomed boat should be able to go downwind, the Pirate's performance is better than you'd imagined. That they were designed with total disregard to the whims of the IOR (International Offshore Rule) and the fashions of the day in offshore sailing. So whereas some alternatives were scaled-down yachts, with narrow sterns and masthead

rigs, Proctor's mini-cruisers were essentially dinghies with a coachroof and some weight in the keel. They had the same relatively beamy, shallow hulls, and fractional rigs with most of the area in the mainsail – so they were quick, eager to surf (or even plane) downwind, and able to carry the same sail plan across a wide range of wind speeds.

FEATURES:

The Pirate's fin keel gives her a draught of just under 1.2 m (4 ft) and has a substantial flattened bulb at its tip to ensure a low centre of gravity and an enormous righting moment for a boat of this size.

Those who have shallow or drying moorings, or who want to launch their boats from a trailer, can choose a centreplate that reduces the draught from an impressive 1.45 m (4 ft 9 in) to 0.68 m (2 ft 3 in). Its centre of gravity wasn't as low as the fin's, but you can't find many 17-footers with nearly 5 ft draught. Mr. Proctor knew what a boat needed to make it go.

To today's buyers of 17-footers, a fin keel might seem impractical. Surely one of the advantages of a small boat is economy: you can launch and recover it yourself, either trailing it home for the winter or dry-sailing it from your driveway. A fin keel won't stop you from towing the boat home behind the car – your problem will be finding a slipway deep enough to launch from.

While any reasonably light, flat-bottomed boat should be able to go downwind, the Pirate's performance is better than

you'd imagined. Six knots of hull speed is good going, and the grip from the large rudder makes sure she could always be pointed in the right direction.

Not only was the Pirate extremely quick, but compared to many tippy modern trailer-sailers she also feels as solid as a rock. That 194 kg (427 lb) of ballast in the keel, most of it more than 0.9 m (3 ft) below the waterline, really does make its presence felt. Sailing properly-ballaasted boats like this is like driving cars with big, high-torque engines: you keep moving fast without having to work hard or change gears as often. It's a more relaxing way to travel.



The pirate includes all the essentials, including sitting headroom and space for a cooker.

COMFORT FACTOR:

As well as being an outstanding performer for her size, the Pirate is comfortable and surprisingly dry to sail. The cockpit seats have a substantial bulge along their inboard edges, which makes them secure when the boat's heeled. Under the starboard seat is a generous locker, able to swallow the outboard (up to 4 hp) and plenty more.

If you have a centreplate version, the lifting tackle emerges through a hole at the front of the cockpit and runs back in a recess to the aft end, where there's a drain.

Fin-keelers use the same moulding, so the cockpit 'drains both ways', as Phil puts it: water tends to enter at the front, flow to the back and run out.

Below decks, the pictures tell the story with the Pirate. She's sometimes credited with four berths, but three is more realistic, and only then for a friendly crew. With accommodations described as 'perfectly habitable for two people for a weekend, and positively palatial for someone whose previous boat was a West Wight Potter.'

With all the essentials, including sitting headroom and space for a cooker and loo, you're not roughing it. There's certainly more space than on a Nimrod, not that you would like to bet on the outcome of a race between the two if the Pirate was a fin-keeler. There is no doubt the centreboarder sails very nicely, too.



With accommodations described as perfectly habitable for two people for a weekend.

As for which version you should buy, the answer's simple: if you want twin keels, aim for an Express. For the shallowest possible draught, search out a centreboarder. But if you really want a 17-footer

that will leave boats half as long again languishing in its wake, find a fin-keeler.

You'll be impressed.