

## *The Optimist is 60*

**The Optimist, designed by Clark Mills in 1947, is 60 years old.**

We haven't made a great fuss about it because there are plenty of people out there who would like the world to believe that we are sailing an obsolete design.

However the go-kart is only six years younger and has trained Formula One drivers from Michael Schumacher and Ayrton Senna to Lewis Hamilton.

Continual upgrading of gear, always preserving the right of older boats to participate, have brought us to a specification which remains at the same time both safe and exciting.



### *1976 - the halfway stage*

Nazli Imre, president of the Turkish Sailing Federation, hosts of next year's Worlds, has found in their archives some fascinating pictures of the last time Turkey hosted the event in 1976.



As far as we can tell all the hulls were still wooden though this was the year that Winner started production and GRP had been allowed for six years before that. The spars are metal - permitted since 1973.

We have played with the rig a bit since then but it is interesting to note that this hull could still enter the Worlds - though it might need a better sail!



We don't know who is the sailor above but the event was won by Hans Wallén of Sweden who went on to Olympic silver in 1996.

**In 1976 we had 19 countries represented**



**Can we treble it in 2008? (55 in 2007)**



*but it has changed a bit*

60 years of development have produced a boat that sails in winds where few other dinghies can survive.

Heavy winds this summer showed what you can do with it . . . .



. . . . even in the hands of some of our less experienced sailors



On the day when it blew 32 knots only eight of the 232 sailors failed to finish either race - a tribute to seaworthy equipment and courageous young sailors.

