

# Hartley 12 & 12.2

Fifteen years after launching its first boat, Hartley Boats has established a new range, all suitable for training, cruising and racing. **Jeremy Evans** tests the new members of the Hartley line-up, designed by dinghy legend **Phil Morrison**

Hartley Boats is known for breathing new life into traditional classes in decline. The company started with the Kestrel dinghy and moved on to four more Proctor designs – the Wayfarer, Wanderer, Gull and Osprey. Later, they added popular single-handers, the Supernova and smaller Byte CII. And even tried their hand at the performance market with the Rebel skiff.

All of these boats are built in glassfibre or epoxy sandwich. But in order to provide a choice of dinghies with the widest appeal, Hartley Boats launched its own range of low cost, rotomoulded dinghies, going head-to-head with designs by RS, Topper and Laser.

## Concept

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Phil Morrison designed the new range, and Hartley Boats launched the Hartley 10, 12 and 12.2 together at the 2012 Dinghy Show at Alexandra Palace. Hulls are produced by AC Canoes based in Chester and rotomoulded from tough polyethylene plastic, sandwiching a mid-layer of foam to reduce weight and increase stiffness. Together with masts and

booms by SuperSpar, sails by Jeckells and fittings by Allen manufactured in Hampshire, Essex and Norfolk respectively, it's good to discover these three dinghies come as close as possible to being 'made in Britain' products.

The 12 and 12.2 have exactly the same hull, which feels quite hefty. This significantly helps stability on the water, but you would need to feel enthusiastic and strong to lift one on or off a car roof rack. Better to invest in the optional trailer and trolley if you are going to travel often.

The main difference between the 12 and 12.2 lies in the interchangeable rig. While the 12 has a simple unstayed mast, boom and mainsail, the 12.2 has a slightly heavier section mast, stepped further aft with support from shrouds and forestay, allowing the addition of a jib and the choice of asymmetric or symmetric spinnaker. A choice that is unique in this market and one which should be applauded. Both the 12 and 12.2 are also available in Racer or Cruiser mode, with the principal difference of a fully battened Mylar or partially battened Dacron mainsail respectively. Additional options include a race upgrade kit (£179.98) providing superior controls for the kicking strap and cunningham, spinnaker ratchet blocks (£98.98) almost certainly worthwhile particularly in stronger winds and padded toe straps (£69.98). You can also fit Hartley Boats' clever masthead floatation kit, consisting of a slim, buoyant plastic tube that slides over the top of the mast – reassuring for those using the boat in 'training' mode!

## Cockpit, rig and deck layouts

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Phil Morrison has designed the 12 and 12.2 with a deep, roomy cockpit so the sailor can sit down inside as well as up on the side decks. It is fitted with a traditional swiveling centreboard, which Hartley say is unique for this size and type of modern, multi-purpose dinghy, most of which have vertical lifting daggerboards. But a centreboard offers many advantages. The board simply swivels between horizontal and vertical positions, retracts automatically if it hits the bottom and acts as a structural girder for the hull. In addition, the centreboard case allows a useful thwart to be fitted as standard to the 12.2 and



1 Deep freeboard and a wide lip to the gunwales keep splashes down 2 The Hartley 12 has an easily accessible rudder stock mounted on its open transom, which features both uphaul and downhaul ropes for the rudderblade 3 A simple plunger locks a gate to hold the Hartley 12 mast in position 4 Sailing with jib and asymmetric spinnaker, the Hartley 12.2R provides a more dynamic experience, ideal for a couple of teenagers having fun. 5 Shrouds and forestay help stiffen up the Hartley 12.2R rig, with the slot between jib and mainsail delivering upwind performance



**With thanks**  
Thanks to Peter Smith and his team at East Anglian Sea School for providing facilities for this test. Located on the River Orwell the EASS fleet includes a great selection of Hartley dinghies. [www.eastanglianseaschool.com](http://www.eastanglianseaschool.com)

SPECIFICATIONS	
<b>Construction</b>	Rotomoulded polyethylene
<b>Length</b>	3.7m
<b>Beam</b>	1.55m
<b>Hull weight</b>	62kg
<b>Sail Area</b>	Mainsail 7.5sq m Jib 2.0sq m Asymmetric 7.0sq m Symmetric 5.5sq m
<b>Hartley 12 optional sail area for schools</b>	7.1sq m



**ABOVE** For many sailors, the symmetrical spinnaker is a lost art. But it's a lot of fun and great for running downwind

**FAR RIGHT** Good ergonomics and comfortable side decks make it easy to move weight outboard and hike over the side

as an option to the 12, allowing the crew to sit up and out of the wet cockpit.

Rigging the 12 is about as simple as sailing can get. Its alloy mast (a two-part sleeved option is available for easy roof-racking or storage) slides down inside a hole in the foredeck, where it is locked by a simple, but sturdy, gate with a large pin – easy to use with cold hands.

Unlike rivals such as the Pico, the mainsail is not sleeved over the mast, but hoisted up a luff groove by a halyard. This provides the option of dropping the sail into the cockpit in a jiffy, or rolling it round the mast for storage or reefing. The three principal controls are centre mainsheet, kicking strap and a simple outhaul, plus tiller and rudder that slots onto the open transom with simple control lines to pull the blade up and down. With a little practice, boat-park to sailing could take little more than five minutes of your time.

To allow space for jib and spinnaker, the 12.2 has its mast stepped further aft and the more powerful rig is supported by shrouds to the side decks and a forestay to the foredeck. Unlike the 'soft' Dacron cruising mainsail, which has two vertical battens to allow furling or semi-reefing round the mast, the Mylar racing mainsail has two full length battens supporting the head and two shorter battens stiffening the roach. Sail controls are naturally a little more complex than the basic 12 due to spinnaker and jib requiring extra sheets and halyards. Despite

these additions, it's still an easy boat to rig from a trailer – I am told 20 minutes from mast down to sailing is very achievable.

**Under sail**



First thing that strikes you about sailing the Hartley 12 is its deep, roomy cockpit, with plenty of room to move around and excellent stability for a small 12ft dinghy when you get on board. The boom is at a good height to avoid bangs on the head and the kicking strap far enough forward to allow a secure area forward of the mainsheet for the crew.

Despite having plenty of volume in the hull, even if the transom sinks, water drains rapidly

through the turbulence with the luff of the mainsail backwinding, sheeting in once the gust has passed. Keeping a dinghy under full control also relies on good boat trim, which in turn relies on being able to move your weight confidently around the boat. The ergonomics of the 12's cockpit are excellent. You can sit inside with your back fitting comfortably against the side decks in light winds, slide up to perch on the side or hike out, with a great foot brace against the centerplate case and a comfortable padded strap (£69.98) down the centreline, which is really easy to tuck your feet under or – just as important – slip them out, making movement simple.

The 12 is well-balanced, provides a good

“The 12 is well-balanced, provides a good turn of pace and is fun to sail. It tracks nicely to windward”

from the cockpit, which has been designed to stay dry – enhanced by a high freeboard hull, with chines to deflect splashes.

Given that the roach of the 12's Dacron cruising mainsail is only supported by two vertical battens – allowing the sail to be wrapped tightly around the mast for partial reefing or furling – the sail sets well in a light or medium breeze, maintaining a stable shape upwind and on a reach. As with any simple unstayed rig, you would expect the centre of effort to shift in strong gusts and make the sail less easy to control. The simple solution is to ease the mainsheet as a gust hits, power

turn of pace and is fun to sail. It tracks nicely to windward under the single sail and a moderate breeze around Force 3 is enough to get a light/middle weight crew planning downwind. The boat should stay fairly easy to manage with white caps on the water, helped by a stable hull, relatively small rig and well-balanced characteristics. All of this makes the 12 feel relaxed dead downwind and forgiving when learning to master gybes.

We sailed the 12.2 in asymmetric and symmetric spinnaker mode. Its Mylar 'Race' mainsail offers greatest control due to the shrouds and forestay and extra sail controls

**HARTLEY 12 COMPARISONS**



**Pico**  
Classic rotomoulded single-hander designed by Jo Richards in the mid 1990s and built by Laser. Widely available second-hand. A stalwart of the sailing school.

**Length** 3.5m

**Beam** 1.43m

**Hull weight** 60kg

**Sail area** 5.1sq m standard mainsail plus optional 1.57sq m jib; 6.44sq m 'Race' mainsail also available



**RS Quba**  
More recent multi-purpose rotomoulded dinghy designed by Paul Handley. Single-handed or double-handed options available. Well suited to young teenagers and lightweight adults.

**Length** 3.53m

**Beam** 1.42m

**Hull weight** 58kg

**Sail area** 7.1sq m or 5.7sq m mainsail plus optional 1.2sq m jib.



as you would expect. The addition of a jib makes life more interesting for the crew, adds an exciting performance dynamic, and of course it becomes a lot more interesting when you hoist the spinnaker from the wide, moulded chute. Which style you go for is a matter of personal preference. An asymmetric is the popular choice because it's simple, forgiving and great fun to sail downwind. But all credit must go to Hartley Boats for uniquely offering the classic symmetric option at the same price in this day and age. A symmetric spinnaker demands a more precise technique, but where else can people practice

this vital art – still very much essential in any number of bigger boats? Of course a symmetric spinnaker is also much better if you need to sail straight downwind or are planning on sailing in restricted waters. One of the main advantages of this boat is that you have the choice!

**Verdict**



The 12 and 12.2R have exactly the same hull with interchangeable rigs, making it possible to flip between easily handled single-hander and more powerful double-hander driven by

three sails. In fact, both the Hartley 12 and 12.2R are minimum hassle sailing and ownership, thanks to super tough hulls, easy rigging and hardly any maintenance. The hull shape is forgiving and stable with a deep roomy cockpit that is rated as suitable for carrying a payload of three adults up to 290kg under EU conformity. In the real world, these are probably more likely to be used single or double handed but the option to safely take three is a boon. The upshot is both could be satisfying for a couple of adults or teenagers, or an adult could enjoy cruising with two young children. ▶

**HARTLEY 12.2R COMPARISONS**



**RS Feva**  
First of the RS rotomoulded range designed by Paul Handley. A huge success that provides young competitive sailors with keen racing in many countries, led by the UK.

**Length** 3.64m

**Beam** 1.42m

**Hull weight** 63kg

**Sail area** 6.5sq m or 5.5sq m mainsail; 2.1sq m jib; 7sq m asymmetric spinnaker



**Topaz Tres**  
Multi-purpose rotomoulded dinghy designed by Ian Howlett and Rob White for one or two lightweight sailors. Available with four different rig options.

**Length** 3.86m

**Beam** 1.45m

**Hull weight** 60kg

**Sail area** Mainsails from 5.64sq m to 6.93sq m, jibs from 1.75sq m to 2.13sq m, 8.41sq m asymmetric spinnaker.

**ANSWER BACK**

**From:** Xxx  
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**Contact:** www.hartleyboats.com



**LEFT** 18 year old Amelia shows there is plenty of room for a teenager or lightweight adult to have fun sailing the Hartley 10R **ABOVE** The Hartley 10R rig is about as simple as you can get, with a small, easily handled mainsail that can be reefed by rolling round the mast

# Hartley 10R

## Concept

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The Hartley 10R is the smallest boat in the range, also available as a tender powered by rowlocks and oars, with an optional bracket for a small outboard motor. Designed by Phil Morrison and using the same construction as the 12 and 12.2, the 10 is squarely aimed at young newcomers to dinghy sailing.

## Cockpit, rig and deck layout

★★★★★☆☆☆

Despite the mini 10ft length of the hull, the cockpit is deep and roomy, specifically designed so novice sailors of all ages can feel safe and comfortable, with the option of sitting down inside the protective walls of the cockpit or

perching on the side decks. The simple, single sail rig is unstayed with no battens, making it as easy as possible to furl the mainsail tightly round the mast. Unlike the 12 and 12.2, the 10 is fitted with a small daggerboard, but has the same self-draining cockpit.

## Under sail

★★★★★☆☆☆

Beginners will appreciate the secure feeling of being able to sit inside the boat, coupled with the fact that the Hartley 10 is extremely stable, which is not that easy to achieve on a small hull. The 10 is licensed to carry a maximum payload of 200kg, but will clearly perform best with one or two young children aboard, who could start enjoying it from around the

age of five. However, Duncan Adams from Hartley Boats demonstrated that the 10 really is a very buoyant little boat when he sailed with his own young daughter making an insignificant addition to his splendid 17.5 stone frame! He admits the transom sank a little, but the boat still sailed fine.

## Verdict

★★★★★☆☆☆

The 10R is very tough, very reasonably priced, very easy to look after, very simple to rig, very stable and forgiving and will sail nicely and predictably with a true lightweight crew. It's a great choice for junior beginners, particularly well suited to sailing schools and Mediterranean holiday companies. ▣

## COMPARISONS



### RS Tera

Established ISAF and RYA Junior racing class designed by Paul Handley, particularly well suited to competitive youngsters (and their parents) who want to be involved in the regatta scene. Rotomoulded construction.

**Length** 2.87m

**Beam** 1.23m

**Hull weight** 39kg

**Sail area** 4.8sq m 'Pro' sail, 3.7sq m 'Sport' sail or 2.7sq m 'Mini' sail



### Topaz Taz

The smallest dinghy in the Topaz rotomoulded range from Topper. This little boat was designed by Ian Howlett and Rob White with the primary aim of introducing sailing to youths and very young beginners.

**Length** 2.95m

**Beam** 1.2m

**Hull weight** 40kg

**Sail area** 4.39sq m mainsail plus optional 1sq m jib

## HARTLEY 10R SPECIFICATIONS

<b>Construction</b>	Rotomoulded polyethylene
<b>Length</b>	2.94m
<b>Beam</b>	1.28m
<b>Hull weight</b>	45kg
<b>Mainsail</b>	5.1sq m
<b>Opt. sail area for schools</b>	3.7m