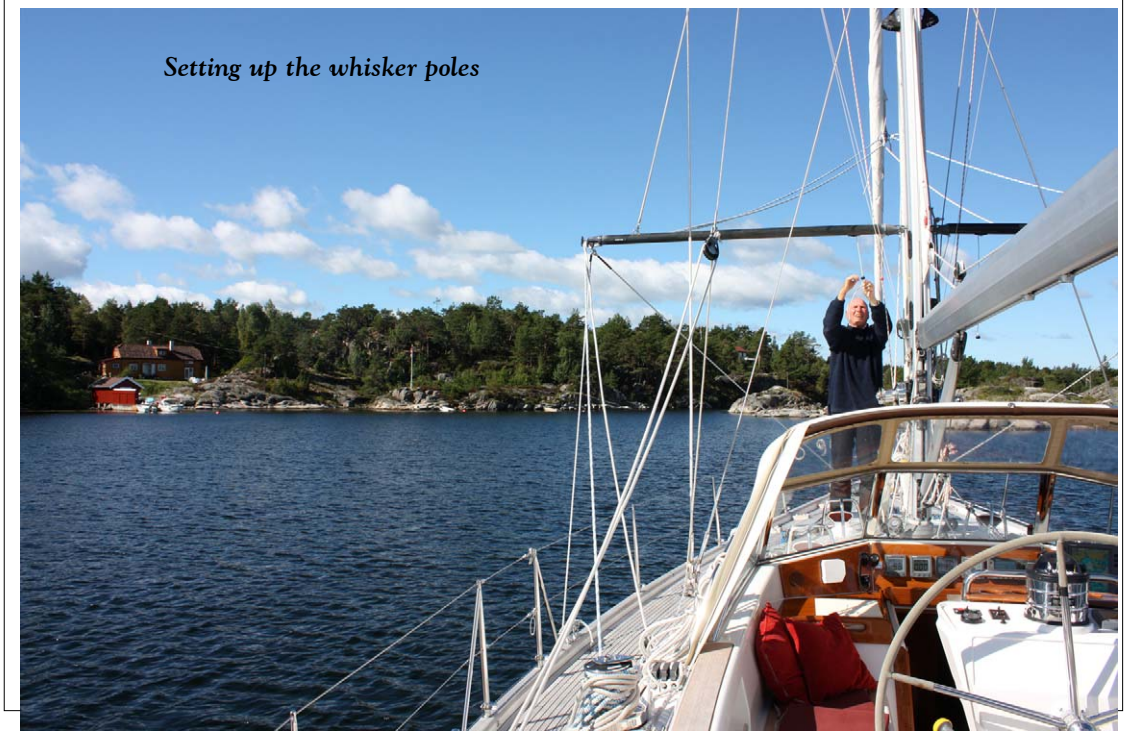
THE SIMBO RIG
Iain Simpson

(*Iain first described the Simbo Rig back in* Flying Fish 2005/1, *but a good deal of water has flowed under his keel since then… or more accurately that of his and Jan's Najad 511* Song of the Ocean – *see* Back to Base, *elsewhere in this issue.*)

Although developed for short-handed ocean sailing, the Simbo Rig (Simple Bow Rig) could also prove useful to the short-handed coastal cruising sailor and those who are not inclined to handle flying spinnakers on heaving foredecks in open water. What is required is a twin-grooved jib furler, on which one hoists two identical high-clewed jibs on a single halyard. These sails have two sets of sheets which lead through fairleads to cockpit winches in the usual way.

On the wind, and also when reaching, one trims the windward of the two jibs, tightening up the leewind (lazy) jib against it. Although it is useful to have two cockpit sheet winches for this purpose it is not essential, as the leeward sheet carries no load and can therefore be made up by hand. When easing off onto a run with the wind 40° off the stern, one hoists two whisker poles on separate boom lifts against fore and aft guys made off around the fore and midship cleats. If these are made up to measured marks one can simply hoist the whisker poles until tight against the fore and aft guys in the knowledge they will be horizontal and at right angles to the boat.

At this stage both the running sheets and the reaching sheets are led under the whisker pole retractable bolts and then to the track fairleads. When going onto a run



Setting up the whisker poles

The sheet leads when on the wind

one pulls the upwind leeward jib across the boat to split the jibs, with the lazy reaching sheets lying idle. The wind captured in the weather jib is then directed into the leeward jib to keep it fully powered when it would otherwise be blanketed by the mainsail. The main boom is eased to no more than about 37° off the centre-line, so that the wind in the mainsail redirects wind into the weather jib, which subsequently flows across to the leeward jib.

A further reason for restricting the main boom is to avoid it directly opposing the pressure exerted on the mast by the weather whisker pole. The leeward whisker pole exerts no mast pressure, which all translates into minimum boat roll. The only reason for the leeward whisker pole is to take over weather sail duties after gybing, when all that is required is to haul the mainsheet – the jib sheets/rig remain unchanged.

Running downwind, showing the forward pole guys

Running downwind with the mainsail stowed

When reverting back to a reach one merely allows the weather jib to flop across to leeward, to become the dominant weather reaching sail. The sheets still lead through the whisker pole ends until hardening up on the wind, when one releases the sheets by retracting the end bolts and the poles can be stowed down each side of the mast.

Apart from setting and striking the whisker poles there is no foredeck work required and the sails are controlled entirely from the cockpit. When striking the sails on the run, one allows the running weather jib to fly across to leeward, and then rolls up the two sails with the furling line in the normal way. There is no noticeable wear on the twin sails when they are set together on a reach, although I would advise beefing up the jib halyard shackle as the twin jibs on the run will stress a weaker shackle, which could suffer metal fatigue.

The twin sails for my last two boats have been designed by Chris Owen and built by Owen Sails of Oban, Scotland [www.owensails.com] who have built up considerable experience in this sail plan over the last decade.

As seen through the forehatch, with everything up and pulling