



Autumn 97

# Sonata News

*National Sonata Association Newsletter*

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## We have a Chairman!

The best news to come from this year's Annual General Meeting is that David Lippold has volunteered to be Chairman of the National Sonata Association. His volunteering certainly took many of us by surprise, but what a pleasant surprise it was.

From what I saw at Cowes and the Nationals it is clear that David and Sheila are people who get things done. Despite the recent arrival of Jack, they were still pivotal in organising the social

evening for the class at Cowes, producing the dramatic souvenir Rugby and T-shirts for the Nationals as well as organising the final evening's prizegiving meal and music.

I feel confident that this dynamism is exactly what the class needs in order to build on the substantial progress we have made over the past year or so.

I trust he will enjoy everyone's full support over the coming months.

Dear Sonata Sailors,

Just a short note to introduce myself as your new Chairman. It was good to see so many of you at Cowes Week and the National Championships and I look forward to meeting (and beating) more of you over the coming year.

We have been sailing Sonatas for 4 years now. Our boat, 'Dry Red' came from West Mersea in 1993 where it had not been previously raced. Our racing history in the Sonata is as follows:-

1993 First ever race at the Royal Southampton Yacht Club - Broke Mast  
1993 Cowes Week - Last overall  
1994 Cowes Week - Holed boat and nearly sank but ended up 5th overall  
1995 Cowes Week - 5th overall again  
1996 Cowes Week - 2nd overall  
1997 Warsash Spring Series - 1st overall  
1997 Cowes Week - 2nd overall  
1997 Nationals Championships - 8th overall

Before joining the Sonatas, I crewed an Enterprise with my Dad at Henley on Thames from the age of five. I had a Topper when I was twelve then a Fireball when fifteen. Sheila and I have sailed together since then. I grew up in Stratford on Avon and sailed the Topper at Warwick sailing club and then the Fireball at Draycott Water. I have been with Sheila (on and off!) since 1977 when we were twelve but, not wanting to rush things, didn't get married until July last year.

We have a baby Boy called Jack who was 12 weeks old at the Nationals. This is why Sheila was occasionally seen being dropped on or off the boat by RIB between races.

My business is Display Lighting. I am Managing Director of Compact Lighting Limited who manufacture light fittings for use in shops.

In my year as Chairman my main task is to implement the Rule changes agreed at the AGM. In addition to this I hope to find agreement between owners on a statement of where the class is going over the next five years which can be adopted at the next AGM. This may help to answer questions over rules and where the Nationals should or should not be held.

Regards  
David Lippold

AGM

Nationals

Cowes Week

Medway Report

# Editorial

**Vive la difference!** I did three events on the South coast this summer that shows just how varied Sonata racing can be. There was the dawn departure from the Hamble that heralded the very long (sunny) and absorbing day doing battle with the Hoya Round the Island Race. Then we had a couple of damp and soggy weeks coping first with the idiosyncrasies of Cowes and then the fierce competition at the Nationals.

I had never suffered from a shortage of advice from people about the merits of the various events: I was told that Rover was far better than Cowes, that the Round the Island Race is too expensive, that the racing at the Nationals is so boring as it's just olympic type courses but the beer tent alone makes Cowes worth doing.

Well the truth is that they were all superb in their own way. I really enjoyed Cowes as the lack of wind, incredible tides and the race management made just completing the often very long courses quite challenging. There was an excellent atmosphere amongst the large Sonata fleet and Charlotte even joined us on board to finally get some value out of her half of the boat. (She incidentally had chosen to come to Cowes instead of the Scottish 6 day Orienteering Championships which were on at the same time. As we were cleaning all the mud and crud from our camping gear on return home we heard the Highlands had enjoyed continuous sun for the entire week.)

The Nationals were certainly more intense with 10 races scheduled for the 5 days. As there were many more than ten boats capable of getting into the top 10, every small error was punished by several others shooting past. The courses had been set in a very fair area and those boats that did things well did better than those who made errors. Just as it should be at a National Championships.

Even talk of the Round the Island Race has begun to change from 'if we did it again.....' to 'when we do it again....'

So three events and three very different experiences. I enjoyed them all but I can understand why some people prefer one over another. And so be it. We should resist any calls to make any of them more like any of the others. There must continue to be a wide variety of ways of enjoying Sonata sailing. This is one way to ensure it appeals to as many people as possible.

Similarly, the fleets must also be varied so they too offer choice to our members. The Hamble based fleet has grown from nowhere over the past year or so and clearly many people enjoy sharing the rather unique atmosphere at one of the epicentres of international sailing. But it has its flip side

and cost is certainly a bar to some people. We must therefore ensure that the other Solent based fleets (including Cowes, Lymington and Hayling Island) continue to receive support and exposure.

Finally I believe diversity might also be encouraged by looking at the Trophies on offer at our events. I had forgotten there were a Travellers and a Family Trophy at the Nationals which are both great ideas. In addition we have details elsewhere in this Newsletter of an excellent initiative by Andrew Lysser (Irie Blue) to provide a youth trophy for next year's Nationals and Northerns. Perhaps there is scope at our other events to extend this further. How about a trophy for the best 'rookie' at Cowes Week, the top 'Senior' helm at events, or even a trophy for the highest placed MkII Sonata ?

**Accounts:** The mere mention of accounts normally causes my eyes to close and my mind to wander off to some cosy fantasy world. It's a coping mechanism I have evolved to handle the arrival of my Access bill, especially in the month following a major visit to a yacht chandlery.

However at the AGM I did stay focused long enough to notice the Association spent over £500 in the last reported year on accountancy fees. We spent one third of our income finding out where the other two thirds went. In addition, £6000 cash was left in a current account where it accrued no interest. These costs and loss of income represented a major percentage of our annual turnover.

I believe the Association is barely solvent, although gauging this for the current year can only be by informed 'feel' as no projected budget was presented. It is hoped that the changes on the committee will result in a much higher standard of fiscal management at somewhat lower cost. Sorting this out must be a priority in order that the 1998 Association Membership fees can be set and a valid explanation for any increase spelt out in the next Newsletter.

**Stand and Deliver:** A popular perception is that all the sailing related services provided on the Solent are run by a jolly fellow called Roger, his brother Blackbeard and their cousin Dick Turpin. Few seem to be fooled into believing that just because they've taken off their eye patches and ditched the parrot, that they have lost their love (and aptitude) for daylight robbery.

Although this perception is unfortunately often true, it would be sad if people thought there weren't exceptions or ways round these things. The reality is, that not only are Cowes Week and the Round the Island Race

well worth doing, but it is possible to do them at reasonable cost. Admittedly it takes care and planning but many visiting boats do manage it. Some like 'BD2' even seem to have elevated economic Solent sailing to an art form.

The local fleet and area reps are building up their knowledge, contacts and influence in the area and they are an excellent source of information and help. This summer, the NSA bought a new set of spreader bars and lifting strops for use with the electric crane at Hamble Yacht Services. Although they are away being used for the Northerns at the moment, the idea is to keep them at the Hamble. This will allow for craned launching at under half the price of the travel lift and substantially cheaper than even marinas on the Clyde. Jim, the weekend harbour master at HYS, has to be recognised for his cheerful help to us throughout the summer.

So don't let the image of the Solent put you off. Cowes Week and the Round the Island Race are well worth doing. Just be careful.

**Photographs:** While on the subject of the good services available on the Hamble, I must mention 'Eddie Mays Photography'. The photographs he took of the Nationals were both excellent and reasonably priced. Eddie has also given the Association some free prints for use in the Newsletter and in publicity material. If you would like copies of any of the photos taken or the video, contact him on 01703 402194.

**And they say it's grim up North:** The commonest phrase heard this summer around the Solent was 'Well, it's not normally like this down here!' There were easterly winds for the RTIR and most of Cowes Week, an inch of rain dumped down in one hour during the Nationals. We had drizzle, steady rain, thunder and lightning and more drizzle. To be fair we also had some sun and a number of near perfect sailing days. It was just unfortunate that Mike Jaffé chose a particularly windy and dank day to remark, "The thing that worried me about having the Nationals in late August was that we would have a week of blistering sun with absolutely no wind". Mike's channels of communication with the weather gods are obviously working well.

**Thank you:** The success of all our events, whether on the South Coast or elsewhere this summer, were dependent on so many people putting in hours of effort and hard work. On behalf of all the competitors at every event, I would like to say 'Thank you all'.

Jim Doning

# Race Reports

**Medway:** After an unusually low turnout, our Spring Series concluded on the 5th July with a win for Pianissimo. Despite the lack of numbers the racing has been enjoyable and most races have been sailed in good breezes.

Competition has been good throughout the fleet with the top six boats in contention until the last races. Aeolian showed excellent consistency to lead the mid fleeters. Musical Express won the Spring series by two points closely followed by Chrysalis.

We enjoyed an excellent Supper and Disco on May 17th with our resident chef Mike and his team working wonders in the kitchen and with Julie organising the event with her usual efficiency.

The Dragon and Sonata fleets combined on one Saturday evening for a cruise on the Waverley Paddle Steamer to the sounds of a jazz band.

On Sunday 18th May we ran our first ever singlehanded (or should that be multiple hangover) race and four skippers wrestling with the effects of the night before were persuaded out onto the river. With several changes of position, Exposition with Mark Lee at the helm, eventually took line honours.

Musical Express won the Medway regatta series with Aeolian second and Goodbye Mickey Mouse third. The Summer Series was won by Exposition followed by Vivace.

With Pianissimo showing excellent form in the hands of new owner Dick Owens and the awaited return of David Townsend in Solution, the Autumn series is likely to be a hotly contested series. I hope everyone will make the effort to turn out and put the

Sonata fleet back into the top slot as the most successful fleet on the river. In fact I am issuing a challenge to the fleet to celebrate our 21st birthday on the 18th October by attempting to get 21 Sonatas on the line. If we achieve it, the drinks are on

eleventh despite having to count a thirty point retirement as there were no discards this year due to a couple of races being abandoned. Mickey Mouse showed flashes of amazing speed and brilliance, unfortunately sometimes in the wrong direction. But

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me!

I am pleased to report that Tosca has been sold to John Ivory, a fellow Wayfarer sailor (and another crew lost) and I would like to welcome John to the fleet.

Pianissimo, Chrysalis and Goodbye Mickey Mouse invaded Cowes Week and kept the local boats guessing a few times. Dick Owens (Pianissimo) did very well to achieve sixth overall and Chrysalis managed an

generally a very good time was had by all despite the rather indifferent weather.

**Medway Area Diary Dates:**

- Autumn Series 23 Aug to 25 Oct
- Match Racing 28 Sept
- Sonata 21st Birthday Race 18 Oct
- Dinner & Prizegiving 15 Nov

Mike Harrison, Musical Express  
Medway Rep  
01233 850423

## Burnham Week

Despite clashing with the National Championships, Burnham Week 1997 was a success with nine entries. This is particularly satisfying as the fleet at

Burnham has been going through something of a change over the past couple of years.

In the end, the winner was 'Parody' sailed by Michael Iszatt who managed four wins

Saturday by a huge margin.

There was one protest when 'Scirocco' protested the whole fleet, (except F#) for going round Buxey No2 the wrong way.

beating 'Scirocco' into second place with three wins. The other first place went to Malcolm Denham in 'If', who won the race on the first

We were pleased to see two visitors, D Appleton from the Medway and Tommy Mills from West Mersea with 'Quiet Air'.

The other Burnham boats 'Harvest Moon' (D Hill) were 5th, 'Bagatelle' (P Draper) sixth and the new boys 'Flying Tortoise' (A Bryne) seventh.

The weather was perfect for the first four days but then, like at the Nationals, the wind came in with vengeance.

Steve Tribe  
Burnham Rep

Burnham Week		Total with 2 Dis									
1	Parody	Michael Iszatt	5	3	1	1	11	1	1	2	9
2	Scirocco		2	1	3	3	1	5	3	1	11
3	Silver Lining	D Appleton	7	11	6	2	11	2	2	4	23
4	Quiet Air	Tommy Mills	3	2	2	5	11	4	11	11	27
5	Harvest Moon	D Hill	6	6	7	6	11	6	4	6	18
6	Bagatelle	P Draper	4	5	4	8	11	11	11	3	35
7	Flying Tortoise II	A Bryne	8	11	9	4	11	3	11	5	40
8	F Sharp	Peter Davidson	11	11	8	7	3	7	11	7	43
9	If	Malcolm Denham	1	4	5	11	11	11	11	11	43

## The National Championships - From The Wrong End Of The Fleet!

Let me begin by setting the scene; imagine 4 exited (just ex) students emerging from a car after a long slow journey from London to Portsmouth. Full of anticipation of the week ahead in glorious sunshine and a nice breeze they begin unloading the car into the tender. Now imagine these same students three hours later still on the same quay side in Portsmouth, however now the outboard motor is in more bits than they have fingers and toes between them and the glorious sunshine has changed into ominous darkness.

Fortunately this was Saturday and the racing was not until Monday thus with a bit of coaxing from Mr Stella and Mr Artois spirits remained high. Sunday dawned with the outboard in one piece and the journey from Portsmouth to the Hamble began. Then the outboard struck back. The gear shift sheared off and it jammed in reverse. Not to be stopped by anything the offending machine was hammered into forwards gear and the epic 8 mile voyage was completed.

Monday saw the first race in a good wind and sun - this was all anyone could have hoped it would be - until that is the nav lights decided to leap off the top of the mast and promptly sink. Closer investigation revealed a large quantity of grease at the masthead which was placed there by an overzealous crane driver at the boatyard.

Tuesday saw us in second place round the first three marks of a race. We couldn't believe it; there we were with our three year old sails ahead of all these boats with new sails - it obviously didn't last and we finished 11th.

By this time the wind had started to build and our lack of a No 2 became apparent, so Tuesday evening was spent in the bar trying to borrow one from someone. (Many thanks to the guys off High and Dry for lending us theirs)

It was on Wednesday that things became interesting, or should that be 'life threatening'. The Sunsail charter fleet of Jeanneau 36 footers was out and about racing in the same area as the Sonata fleet. One of which decided it would like a closer look at us. He was on a spinnaker reach and to windward of us whilst we were working our way upwind with our newly acquired jib.

Being used to passing close to other boats we shouted a polite 'windward boat' to the rather large caravan approaching us. The reply came back 'we're racing'. They obviously hadn't noticed the other 23 Sonatas all out for a nice afternoon sail and picnic lunch called the National

Championships. Being patient people we again shouted 'windward boat' and this time the reply came back 'we're windward boat too'.

At this point we realised we were in trouble. We tried various other hails which became less polite and more and more frantic as this monstrous bow loomed overhead. Then our Knights in orange rubber appeared, as the HRSC RIB tried to insert their movable shock absorber between the back of out boat and the approaching rammers. Unfortunately the gap was too small so with much revving and spray they shot round our boat and rammed the bow of the Sunsail boat,

and realised that the four pairs of pants Sunsail had offered to replace would have done a better job. It was impossible not to enjoy Friday, the wind was fantastically strong and the sun was out. It has to have been quite possibly one of the best sails I have ever had.

We managed to perform superbly in the race, by perform I mean we kept the fleet amused with our seemingly limitless talent at broaching in all directions and at every possible opportunity, only to be outdone by Duncan Morris in Steamy Windows who Chinese Gybed his way downwind. The end of Friday saw us in the bar for the

National Championships 1997			(1 Race Abandoned)					(2 Discards) Total				
1	Steve Goacher	Eric the Boat	3	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	7
2	Duncan Morris	Steamy Windows	8	5	2	2	2	1	5	3	4	19
3	Heath Gairns	Jammie Dodger	1	4	9	12	4	7	11	2	5	32
4	Bernard, Martin & Paul Price	High & Dry	6	3	3	15	5	5	8	4	10	34
5	Emma & Mike Jaffé	Sonic	7	6	5	7	3	2	22	5	7	35
6	Peter Izzat	BD Two	9	7	13	6	9	4	3	9	2	40
7	Robin Boardman	B Off	4	2	4	4	10	8	12	12	11	43
8	Sheila & David Lippold	Dry Red	2	12	8	8	ocs	6	2	13	13	51
9	Tom White	Pizzicato	11	ocs	6	19	12	11	9	6	3	58
10	Murray Caldwell	Money penny	17	19	16	5	7	9	7	7	8	59
11	Jim Dominy	'Ey - Up	5	15	10	9	11	10	4	11	10	60
12	Joan and Jack Hardie	Pied Piper	10	11	7	3	8	18	20	14	15	68
13	Ben Sharp	Rondo	13	8	14	14	6	12	13	dnc	6	72
14	Charles Stimpson	Gin Fizz	20	16	17	18	13	17	15	8	9	95
15	Kenneth Hay	Zebedee	12	9	22	13	17	16	17	16	19	100
16	Gareth Morris	Hobo	15	14	18	10	21	21	6	18	rtd	102
17	Kevin Marshall	Snot Rag	16	10	20	11	15	14	16	dnc	dnc	102
18	John Boyce	A# Exit	14	13	15	17	16	15	21	ocs	17	107
19	Mark & Liz Harrington	Piccolo	24	21	12	21	14	13	18	15	16	109
20	Guy Palin	Crisis	22	17	21	20	ocs	20	10	10	12	110
21	C Spradbery	Impromtu	18	19	11	16	20	19	14	17	18	113
22	David Franks	Spirit	19	22	19	24	18	22	rtd	dnc	14	138
23	Sir John Woodward	Tiger Rag	21	23	24	22	19	dsq	19	rtd	rtd	153
24	Pat North	High Note	23	18	23	23	22	23	rtd	dnc	dnc	157

spinning them into the wind and away from our suddenly very small craft.

One such incident in a racing fleet could be termed as lucky (or unlucky depending on how you look at it) however on speaking to the race officer it became apparent that we were the third boat which the race committee had saved from a premature demise.

Thursday passed off almost uneventfully, apart from the racing being postponed in the morning so the race officer could make sure we all experienced the full 38 knot gusts in the afternoon. The fact that the outboard had to be stripped and rebuilt again seemed an almost pleasant task compared to everything else.

Friday was the day of our salvation; we managed to scrounge another number 2 (thanks this time to David Lippold of Dry Red) we had high hopes until we put it up

prizegiving nursing a bent boom which was really quite tame compared to the mast that High Note managed to lose the day before.

The answer to the question 'would we do the Nationals again,' is of course yes. In fact you will have to do something daft like hold the Nationals miles away in Scotland to stop us (Good effort to all you northern guys for making it down south). Only next time I will ensure I have the essential ingredients necessary for Nationals victory; a sailmaker on the boat, a new outboard and if there is a charter fleet near by an damned good lifejacket!

At this point I must mention that we now have ongoing legal disputes with the boatyard, Sunsail and the company that designed a boom which was unable to withstand our kicking strap. If I say any more it may prejudice the outcome of the cases!! - The crew of Impromtu. □

## The National Championships - The report from the Hamble River Sailing Club.

Steve Goacher, who won the Flying Fifteen World Championships at Cowes during July, returned to the Solent area in late August to defend his Sonata title. Hosted by the Hamble River Sailing Club the 21st Sonata National Championships attracted an entry of 24 boats from the length of the UK. The formula for the championship was the combination of 5 windward / leewards, 4 old style olympic triangles and 1 around the cans distance race.

Monday's two windward / leewards were sponsored by International Paints. In race 1 Heath Gairns, 'Jammie Dodger' managed to keep ahead of Davis Lippold, 'Dry Red' and Steve Goacher, 'Eric the Boat'. Race 2 saw the true pattern of the series begin to emerge. Steve Goacher took an early lead and steadily improved his distance ahead of Robin Boardman, 'B Off' with the father and sons combination of Paul, Bernard and Martin Price, 'High & Dry' in third place.

Blackstone Franks & Co sponsored Tuesday's two triangular races. In the morning race Duncan Morris, 'Steamy Windows' lead at the first mark before Steve Goacher climbed from fourth to lead the fleet home. Martin Price pressed Duncan hard without being able to capture second place. In the afternoon race the first three places were quickly established. Joan and Jack Hardie in 'Pied Piper' following Steve Goacher and Duncan Morris for third place.

Steve Goacher was undoubtedly the person to try and beat but the competition throughout the rest of the fleet was very close and often only a handful of seconds separated groups of boats at the finish. Tuesday evening was enlivened by the Sonata crews and the club 'Foxyer' dinghies fleet holding a series of short races in the river just off the club house. Support for those afloat was often vociferous and the lady Steve Goacher crewed for did not win.

The weather Wednesday morning was decidedly unfriendly and racing was postponed until 4pm to allow the various fronts to clear the Solent area. The scheduled three windward / leeward races were reduced to two and in the first slightly shorter race, Goacher and Morris were again in first and

second. Mike and Emma Jaffé, 'Sonic' having had a slow start to the week improved their overall chances by securing a third in this race. In the second race of the day they did even better and for the first time in five races Steve Goacher slipped from the top to third. Duncan Morris seized the opportunity presented to record his first win and Mike and Emma Jaffé were close behind in second spot. Billy Foulkes from the day's sponsors Aladdin's Cave chandlery presented the daily prizes.

Thursday's weather forecast indicated a deterioration during the afternoon and so the fleet started on time with the held over race from Wednesday. Steve Goacher won but behind him Duncan Morris let an early second place slip to fifth on the last round. Davis Lippold managed to keep ahead of

The weather pattern of steadily increasing wind levels continued for the final distance race on Friday. The start time was advanced an hour to 10am and the fleet were given a 15 mile dash around the Solent. A short beat was followed by a good reach to the east. From there the fleet grafted across to the Island shore before a series of wild down wind legs lead them to the finish. Steve Goacher won in a course time of 2hrs 30 mins. Peter Iszatt, with a full crew on board for the first time in the week, came second and local helmsman, Tom White was third in 'Pizzicato'.

With 7 Races to count Steve Goacher recorded a perfect score of 7 wins. Duncan Morris was consistent enough to be clear in second place but third to fifth places were only separated by 3 points. Heath Gairns

Photo: Eddie Mays Photography.



This shows the problems of peaking too soon. This is race 1, lap 1 and the last time 'Ey-Up saw 'clear blue water' ahead of them. Peter Iszatt, 'BD2' and Jim Dominy, 'Ey-Up' was third, the Price family fourth and Peter Iszatt fifth.

Further down the fleet, Pat North 'High Note' lost her mast in the short chop near the leeward mark and David Franks in 'Spirit' clashed masts with another boat and had to retire. The second race of the day was a triangular race and in the increasing winds Heath Gairns managed to beat Duncan Morris and the Price Family to come second behind Steve Goacher. By mid afternoon the race officer, Paul Gray was recording gusts of 38 knots on the Committee boat, and race nine was abandoned.

At the prize giving supper, we were very pleased to welcome David Thomas, the designer of the Sonata, as the the main guest of honour and he presented the overall trophies.

Eddie Mays,  
Sailing Secretary, HRSC.



## Cowes Week

Cowes Week opened with no wind, hot sunshine and the abandonment of Saturday's racing. Apparently this is becoming a bit of a tradition at Cowes, but it did provide a pleasant way of getting to meet the other boats as everyone lay rafted up at anchor for

organising an excellent evening.

Tuesday highlighted some of the problems the Combined Clubs have trying to run such a huge regatta. It was a day of rain, brisk-ish winds but with the forecast of severe thunder

occasion was just down tide of a turning mark. For 30 minutes the fleet sat at anchor and enjoyed a very civilised lunch before the wind filled in and the race resumed. It was just the sort of touch one would expect at Cowes. David Franks and crew gained an advantage by subtle use of the mid Solent shallows to extend a lead which they held to the end.

In very fluky conditions on Thursday, managing the tide became particularly crucial. Defying the advantage said to be held by local boats, it was two visitors from the east coast, BD2 and Pied Piper, who did best. Zebedee had their best day with a third.

That night was the Ocean World Crew Ball in a marquee at Northwood House. Some fast work by Mike and Emma Jaffé and the other local crews meant that all the Sonata sailors sat together on four huge tables. It made for quite a presence as well as an enjoyable evening for all.

Friday was the final race of the series and was sailed in a moderate westerly (the first of the week). BD2 were back on the pace followed by Sonic. This was enough to secure Mike and Emma the series. They did very well to remain consistent during a very



The fleet heads inshore to escape the tide, Cowes 97.

Photo: Pied Piper's Shore Support Team

the whole day. It also reinforced the need to have a radio on board as the commentator on Cowes FM was far more intelligible than the strings of code flags hanging limply at the Royal Yacht Squadron.

So the first race, and the first scheduled to be part of the series was on the Sunday. It was won convincingly by Duncan Morris with Steamy Windows and left many wondering if this had set the tone for the week. Second and third were Dry Red and Rondo who judged the final approach to the finish perfectly.

On Monday there was plenty of wind and the race was won, or lost, during the long easterly beats against the tide. Most of the fleet tacked along the Lepe beach before crossing to Gurnard. Dry Red and BD2 however took the Island side and rounded with a substantial lead which they held to finish first and second. The rest of the fleet had their own tales about what was a fairly tough day. Most had a common theme about quite how much 'fun' it was to scream downwind for a few minutes with the tide under you before then spending hours beating back the other way.



But it was a good day for stories as that evening was the Sonata class BBQ and model yacht racing evening at a hotel in the town. There was a superb turn out of members, and the radio controlled racing was as fierce on the swimming pool as the real thing had been during the day. David and Sheila Lippold must be thanked for

storms. Our start sequence included a mixture of engineless open keel boat classes, some classes that couldn't reef, together with well found cruiser racers like ourselves. In trying to play safe for the more vulnerable classes they postponed until late in the day when a foul tide was running with some vengeance through the start area. This made just getting classes away extremely

difficult. Then the Etchells, who had a general recall, did not return until a fleet of RIBS took over 20 mins to physically herd them all back to the start area. As restarts were done within the start sequence this delay was the final straw and late in the afternoon, (and dangerously close to G&T time), we were sent home without a race.

Wednesday gave way to light conditions, which at times faded completely. One

trying week (particularly as the abandonments meant there were no discards) and deservedly retained their place as Cowes Week Champions. Dry Red achieved their best placing yet at Cowes with a 2nd and Miss Moneypenny from the Clyde got to grips with the local tides to manage a convincing 3rd. Consistency was so important and its interesting to note that none of the top 4 boats won a race and that five 5ths would have won the week.

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## Scottish Championships - From Kevin Marshall, Snot Rag.

Although the race on Saturday did not count for the series the majority of the class still turned out. The committee were obviously keen to keep us well away during the start of the Fastnet Race, so they set the longest course of the week. Light and fluky winds gradually filled in and there were many tactical decisions to be made during the middle part of the race. BD2 demonstrated again that there is no conservative middle ground to route choices in that part of the Solent. Slightly edging towards the slacker

water is not the same as boldly diving out of the tide. The advantage they gained by their positive use of the shallow water over the Brambles Bank was dramatic. Eventually, after 5 hours racing the

final positions were still only decided on the last leg. Miss Money Penny deservedly got their first win, followed by BD2, 'Ey-Up and Piccolo. This final race flew in the face of the established wisdom that long races are dull processions. This one was a fine end to a great week.

Mark Harrington,  
Piccolo.

Scottish Championships					
	Race	1	2	3	Total
Kooshtie	1	1	1		3
Dark & Stormy	3	2	2		7
Snot Rag	2	3	3		8
Diana	5	4	6		15
Random FFD	4	5	6		15

Royal Gourock Yacht Club quite rightly cancelled all racing on Saturday 6 September as a mark of respect for Diana, Princess of Wales. This meant that the championship was to be held on Sunday 7th and, in an effort not to truncate the regatta too much, rescheduled one of the Saturday races into Sunday thus giving three on the day instead of the normal two.

This, along with the bad weather, meant that entries were low although of good quality. All races were windward

leeward and the first showed that Graham Campbell in Kooshtie was going to be difficult to take the trophy from especially in his favourite conditions. He won the start when Alan Harper in Dark & Stormy pushed Kevin Marshall's Snot Rag marginally over requiring them to restart. Interestingly

□ Kooshtie, Snot Rag and Random FFD all

started with full sail whilst Diana and Dark & Stormy opted for the No 2. At the windward mark Kooshtie led from Mark Bradshaw's Random FFD, Dark & Stormy and Fraser Hunt in Diana. The order stayed that way down the run despite the breeze moderating in some areas and strengthening in others. The

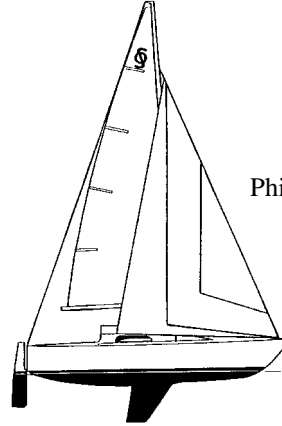
second beat saw Diana and Dark & Stormy going up the middle whilst Snot Rag went hard right to come out third at the second windward mark. Kooshtie rounded first followed by Random who hoisted, broached and took it down again. Snot Rag hoisted, broached, got it back under control and started to close the gap. Three quarters of the way down the run Random rehoisted as she was about to be overhauled by Snot Rag. Snot Rag gybed for the line and a few boat lengths later so did Random. Random broached badly as a result of the gybe letting not only Snot Rag through but also Dark & Stormy. Having seen this

Kooshtie decided not to risk first place and dowsed the spinnaker before gybing.

The second race was started shortly after the

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finish of the first. This caught out Random who seemed not to read the flags on the committee vessel and started well behind everyone else. Given the conditions and the quality of the fleet there was never going to be much opportunity to pass once behind and the first part of the beat was all important in this respect. The start was again won by Kooshtie followed by Dark & Stormy and Diana. Snot Rag's starting was, to be quite honest, awful. The wind moderated two thirds of the way up the beat allowing Snot Rag, with more sail, to get in front of Diana. There was no further place changing for the duration of the race. This left Kooshtie with two firsts and Snot Rag and Dark & Stormy with a second and a third each.

Before the start of the third race Random and Diana left for home. This meant that all Kooshtie had to do was to complete the course whilst a match race was on for second. Dark & Stormy squeezed out from under Snot Rag's lee bow at the start forcing her to tack off. During this manoeuvre Snot Rag's main started to come down leaving her unable to tack back onto starboard when Dark & Stormy were slow out of their covering tack onto port. Throughout the first beat Snot Rag pulled Dark & Stormy all over the Firth but Alan Harper, aided by Murray Caldwell, were not about to let them off the hook and covered closely all the way. Marshall looked for Kooshtie to try to use them, but Graham Campbell and Heath Gairns knew what would happen in the last race and decided to keep out of the way going hard left whilst the other two were fighting it out to the right. This ensured them of a clean sweep whilst the others tacked

## Cowes Week

5 races, No disc (Tues was abandoned & and Sats don't count)

	Sun	Mon	Wed	Thur	Fri	Total
1 Sonic	8	4	3	8	2	25
2 Dry Red	2	2	6	16	4	30
3 Money Penny	5	6	5	13	3	32
4 Rondo	3	8	2	10	10	33
5 BD 2	6	1	NOD	1	1	39
6 Pianissimo	10	5	10	9	5	39
7 Pied Piper	11	15	8	2	7	43
8 'Ey-Up	14	13	11	4	12	54
9 Spirit	20	24	1	5	14	64
10 Gin Fizz	15	11	12	11	19	68
11 Chrysalis	RET	16	7	7	9	69
12 Andante	16	12	14	15	15	72
13 Steamy Windows	1	9	RET	23	11	74
14 Xantz	13	20	18	19	6	76
15 Fat Hen	4	25	4	20	24	77
16 Zebedee	9	7	OCS	3	NOD	78
17 Piccolo	7	21	9	27	16	80
18 Pizzicato	12	3	13	22	DNC	88
19 Hobo	19	RET	19	6	17	90
20 Crisis	27	17	16	25	8	93
21 A# Exit	22	18	17	26	13	96
22 Cygnet	21	22	20	17	22	102
23 Rhythm & Blue	RET	14	NOD	12	18	104
24 Watersong	17	RET	15	NOD	20	111
25 Tiger Rag	25	10	NOD	21	27	113
26 G'Bye M-Mouse	23	DSQ	21	14	23	114
27 Cadenzza	18	19	23	28	26	114
28 Nimrod of Cowes	26	23	22	24	21	116
29 Baby Grand	24	DNC	NOD	18	25	135

## Annual General Meeting - Minutes recorded by Kevin Marshall

The Annual General Meeting of the National Sonata Association was held on 24th August 1997 at Hamble River Sailing Club, Hamble Le Rice, Hants.

1. Minutes of the meeting of 20th June 1996: These had been published in the last newsletter and acceptance of it as a fair record was proposed by Duncan Morris and seconded by Murray Caldwell. There being no dissenting voice, it was adopted.

2. Chairman's report and resignation: Kevin Marshall reported that from the calls he was getting it showed that interest in the class was still high. The accounts to be considered later would show that the Association was still in a strong financial position and lots of individuals throughout the various areas were also creating renewed interest. Jim Dominy was thanked for producing the newsletter over the previous year. He then went on to reiterate that his personal circumstances made it impossible for him to continue with the job of Chairman and that, though willing to become treasurer, would like to resign that evening.

3. Reports from the Areas: As Heath Gairns had now moved to Southampton, Kevin Marshall reported that although the situation in Scotland was healthy with a good fleet at Rover Series, the fleet at Gourrock had diminished due to various individual personal circumstances. Those that remained were still very keen but evening racing was now a non event. Three boats were now sailing under the burgee of Cove Sailing Club and a strong fleet was still in situ at Helensburgh. The fleet on the Tay was now up to four all of whom raced regularly and were represented at the Rover Series.

Mike Harrison reported that on the east coast there were 26 boats on the Medway and 12 at Burnham. The fleet at West Mersea had suffered slightly after the 1995 Nationals but was climbing again.

Duncan Morris reported that they had been quite successful on the south coast in consolidating the fleet at Hamble and that class starts were now being offered in various events such as the Winter Series. The Southern Championships and the Spring Cup had attracted 13 and 14 entrants respectively. A race training weekend had been held which was very successful. The Cowes Week entry had been 29 boats and development continued.

Kevin Marshall reported in David Clarke's absence that interest in the North of England was running very high with approximately 20 boats expected at Sunderland in September for the Northerns. David was organising the regatta along the same lines

as the very successful event at Ullswater last year. The winter series at Windermere continued to attract a large entry and a lot of the calls received by Kevin were from the northern area.

Jim Dominy reported a telephone conversation he had with one of the boats based at Strangford Lough, (NI). Apparently they had an excellent turnout of Sonatas recently and there were at least two more people looking to buy boats. They were encouraged to organise a Northern Ireland championships as soon as numbers were viable. Kevin reported that it had been necessary to appoint a measurer in Northern Ireland due to the demand. This was Jim McKee of Donaghadee in Co. Down. Incidentally there are now four boats in Dublin Bay.

4. The Accounts for the Year Ended 31 December 1996: In the absence of the Treasurer Kevin Marshall presented the accounts. Satisfactory explanations were received for all items except that in the Balance Sheet there was a debt of £422 shown due from Cowes Week which was to be investigated. Subject to the above, the accounts were proposed by Kevin Marshall and seconded by Mike Jaffé. In the light of the deficit and with a willingness to keep up the finance of the newsletter and the new secretarial arrangements it was proposed after some considerable discussion that racing membership be increased to £20 per boat by Mike Jaffé seconded by Steve Goacher. Although the subscription level is set by the committee it was decided on this occasion that the feedback was such that this level should be adopted.

5. Election of Committee: After analysing the job of the Chairman it was decided to alter the advert so that general enquiries went to the various area representatives.

The meeting elected David Lippold as Chairman and Kevin Marshall as Treasurer. The following would continue in office:

Andy Mitchell	David Clarke
Mike Harrison	Duncan Morris
Mike Jaffe	Steve Tribe

Additionally Mark Harrington would continue as a co-opted member in charge of publicity and Jim Dominy would continue to produce the newsletter.

6. The criteria for the National Championship venue were discussed and the feeling from the meeting was that the ideal was an open area of water, at a venue where Sonatas were raced.

7. The venues for 1998 and 1999: Kevin reported that next year's Nationals would be

at Gourrock in July and that discussions had already started with Kip Marina to provide a package (with options) for the period from May to July. The timing had been set to enable visitors to come up for Rover Series, the Scottish Championships and then the Nationals.

1999 was the turn of the east coast and Mike Harrison offered three possible venues: Medway, Ramsgate and West Mersea. Given the previous discussion it was unlikely that Medway would be suitable. West Mersea was the preferred venue and Mike was given authority to get things rolling.

8. Rule Changes: The proposed changes had been circulated in the newsletter and no adverse comment had been forthcoming.

a) To allow GPS's: It was agreed to allow GPS's on safety grounds especially for those racing in CHS fleets. Organisers still have the option of banning them for particular regattas. (Dedicated VMG systems and wind instruments etc. are still banned)

b) To specify the thickness of the front bunk cushions: It was agreed that all the cushions in the boat should be the same as that detailed for the saloon. The wording of the changes was to be left to the committee in consultation with the RYA and were to be effective as of 1 January 1998.

c) To confirm the specification of the galley unit: It was agreed that measurements be taken of as many boats as possible in order that a report could be prepared and a proposal made at the next AGM.

9. There was no change to the engine storage rule, therefore where possible, some boats should be scrutineered as they finish each race at major events.

10. The general consensus was that the current timing for the AGM probably achieved the best possible representation from across the country.

11. The matter of membership categories was remitted to the committee for consideration.

12. AOCB: Steve Goacher reported that Andrew Lysser of 'Irie Blue' wished to present a new trophy to encourage youthful participation and asked the committee to consider the format and get back to him. Steve was asked to convey the Association's grateful thanks to Andrew and assure him that the committee would certainly be contacting him.

Sandy Woodward asked that the committee look at the practice of shackling a block to the genoa car thus effectively moving the track aft. He was assured that this would be done. □



## 21st Birthday Celebration

On Friday 1st August, Hunter Boats hosted a lunch time birthday party for the Sonata at the Royal Southern Yacht Club, Hamble. An invitation was extended to the Association so a representative of the current owners could go. Mark and Liz Harrington were also there with their boat 'Piccolo', so that it could be reunited with its original owners, David Thomas and his family.

The other boat there was 'Sonata in C'. This was the original Sonata and owned by Peter Hornbrook from day 1 until only recently when he sold it back to Hunters in part exchange for a Ranger. Peter was the original Class Secretary and his perspective on the class over the whole 21 years was most interesting.

I think there were three generations of the Thomas family there. Everyone of them seemed to be enthusiastic not only about sailing but also the part their Sonata had played in their family.

All in all it was a very interesting couple of hours, but I was left thinking what a shame it hadn't been combined with an evening at the Nationals or Cowes Week, when more of the current Sonata owners could have shared in the celebrations and reminiscences. I believe the idea was suggested by the local committee, but Hunter Boats seemed reluctant to be too closely associated with a class they no longer build. This is understandable as they are in the business of selling new boats, so quite naturally that is where their energies must lie. Given that, it does then seem slightly odd that they should use their press release of the event to suggest to the sailing world that there are

problems within the Sonata Class. A response to the statement is later in the 'Comments' section opposite, but the need



A Sonata winning the International 1/8th Ton Cup, '76

to make such claims at all seems strange given their desire to distance themselves from us. Unless of course, they see our vibrant, active class of affordable one designs representing some sort of commercial threat to their own boats.

Only they know.

## Sponsors & Trophies

Another of the great features of the Nationals were the prizes. Apart from the perpetual trophies, there were daily prizes of pairs of nicely engraved wine glasses for all the boats down to sixth and then overall prizes down to tenth.

These were well received and easy to share out amongst the crews on the boats that did particularly well.

We are very grateful to all the Sponsors (International Paint, Blackstone Franks & Co, Goacher Sails, Aladdin's Cave Chandlery and Wilko International) for their generosity that made these trophies possible.

Sponsorship is a very difficult issue for a sport like ours. It hardly makes commercial sense for the sponsors, so we are really dependent upon their philanthropy. It was unfortunate that the prizegiving sponsored by Aladdin's Cave Chandlery came at the end of the most disrupted day's sailing. Most crews were still showering or eating during the ceremony. To try and compensate we have provided a free advert for them in the Newsletter.

Apart from that, all we can do when we paint the boat, buy it new sails, get help with our tax returns or treat the crew to some new gear, is to remember the firms that helped sponsor the racing. □

## More on Trophies

□ Andrew Lyser (Irie Blue) has generously offered to provide trophies for the best 'youth' sailors at both the National and the Northern Area Championships.

Exactly what will be the definition of a 'youth boat' is still to be decided. Ideas would be welcome on the merits of using just the age of the helm or the all up age of the full crew.

At present I believe the latter is favoured, but it still leaves the exact definition to be decided. If it's just a total age of less than say 100 years, what stops 'Steamy Windows' being crewed by Duncan (41), Rose (21), Christian (35) and the new baby, Katharine (1) ?

Obviously, there is some sorting out to be done, but the idea is fantastic. It is natural that the Sonata, being so affordable, should be looking to encourage young people into our sport. We really thank Andrew for his initiative and hope there are others who will offer similar trophies in their own area championships. □

### The Windermere Cruising Association is pleased to announce another **Steve Goacher Coaching Weekend.**

The tentative dates are for the weekend of 22/23 November 1997  
The cost will be nominal to cover fuel bills for the chase boats etc

More details from:

**Trevor Roberts (WCA): 01200 423689**  
**or Steve Goacher (Tel /Fax) 015394 88686**

These weekends have been great in the past. Steve assembles a group of really good sailors who swap around the boats and help with many aspects of sail trim, boat handling and preparation.

Obviously bringing your own boat up for the weekend maybe impractical, but crewing and sharing on the boats up here is an excellent idea. John Boyce (A# Exit) from West Mersea did this last year and claims the effort was well worthwhile.

# National Championship Guidelines

Some aspects of the Nationals (and maybe the regional champs as well) are reputed to be guided by a mysterious document called 'The Championship Guidelines'. Although a few people claim to have seen these, no one can actually produce a copy. These guidelines are said to supplement the provisions of the Class Rules. In particular, they are rumoured to contain the rulings on crew numbers.

Despite the allusive nature of this document, it does not diminish its potential usefulness. If they were reviewed and modified each year, then the best features of our championships could be carried forward and any problems eliminated for good.

Below is the first draft of a replacement version of the guidelines. They are based on a complete lack of consultation and no committee or other democratic method has been used in their compilation. Therefore it's essential to have comments and suggestions back from as many people as possible before a working version is approved by the NSA Committee.

## Championship Guidelines:

**Venue:** The venue should ideally be on waters open enough to set good windward legs in all wind directions. The tides should be predicable and offer no unreasonable advantage to local boats.

There should be an active local fleet of boats, who ideally belong to the hosting club.

Berthing and launching should be available locally at reasonable price. Ideally, all the competing boats, (including the local ones) should be berthed or moored in the same area, to enhance the atmosphere and social dimension of the event.

The venue should be decided at the AGM two years in advance of the event to allow sufficient time for both the booking of the ideal dates with the hosting club and to allow the best chance of raising sponsorship. (Companies' budgets are set in

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## Next Summer

With the Nationals up in Scotland next summer, its a great opportunity to think about doing the Rover Series, West Highland Week or the Scottish Champs as well. Once the boat is up there, travelling up and down might be simplest using the Easyjet flights from Luton. This summer they were only twenty something pounds each way to Glasgow (15 miles from Kip Marina).

Alternatively why not crew on another boat. It's a great way to see how other people do it and experience a new sailing area. □

the preceding financial year).

The venue will be rotated between clubs on the south coast of England, Scotland, the east coast of England, the north of England. Other areas (Ireland, SW England, etc) can be added if fleets develop sufficiently.

The championship should be independent of other regattas and events to ensure the race committee is solely focussed on running our races .

**Timing and Length:** The championship should be run over 5 days from Monday to Friday. A long weekend event is not acceptable.

The date for the championships is to be determined by the organising committee with due regard to the following:

- the dates of other events that would compliment the Championships.
- the need to avoid school term and especially exam time. School holidays allow teachers and students to race their own boats or crew for others.
- the need to avoid trailing boats (and sailing) on a bank holiday.

**Make up of Races:** The Championships should consist of 8 races (each a minimum of 90 mins).

Monday: 2 x Windward / Leewards

Tuesday: 2 x Olympic Triangles

Wednesday: Six hour Distance Race

Thursday: 2 x Windward / Leewards

Friday: Medium Distance Race (± 3.5 hrs).

The Distance Race should take advantage of the full sailing area available at the venue. A race around some geographical feature may be appropriate (such as the Islands race at Ullswater, or around Cumbrae Island and back, at the Clyde?)

The Medium Distance race should have a different focus: It should used fixed buoys to provide the normal variety of quality beats, runs and reaches (as would be provided by a laid course) but in a different and interesting way. This is easily possible in the Solent with it's myriad of buoys. The Friday race this year was a fine example of the genre. If the sailing area does not allow for such a

race, (ie, there is a danger of it becoming a series of processional reaches) then another Windward / Leeward should be set instead.

There will be 1 discard when 5 races have been sailed and a second after 7 races.

**Sails:** Up to two sets of measured and checked sails will be approved. They must bear the boat's own sail number.

**Crew Numbers:** Crew is limited to either 3 or 4. After the first race the boat must sail with the same number of crew for the rest of the series, although they do not need to be the same individuals.

**Scrutineering:** Boats will be scrutineered before and during the event to ensure the cruiser / racer nature of the boats is maintained and to eliminate any discrepancies that could give a speed advantage. The scrutineering will be friendly and consultative and a list of the likely measurement areas should be published before hand. Corrector weights and a sail measurer should be available at the venue (at a cost) to ensure boats are able to correct any problems and thereby continue to race.

**Prizes:** As a principal, any prizes awarded in addition to the perpetual trophies should be spread as wide as possible throughout the competitors. Suitable methods might include; rewarding the top 6 places each day and the top 10 overall, or limiting the number of times a single boat can receive a prize (ie, when any boat finishes for a third time in the top 6, the prizes skip them and instead go to the next highest placed finisher), or raffling any material prizes between all the competitors.

Where possible each boat should receive a keep sake memento of the week.

**Socials:** The championships are principally a holiday for all (most) of the competitors and the social provision should reflect this! When organising the program, the priority for the final night function must be to make it as inclusive as possible, to ensure all the competitors and crews are present. □

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## Those little things.

At the Nationals, Steve Goacher was asked the secret of his success. He replied that there was no secret, but rather that he and his crew were doing more of those thousands of little things it takes to sail a boat, just that little bit better.

And while on the topic of little things, Duncan has been using his again and we are happy to announce that Rose gave birth to a 8lb 4oz baby girl early in September. Her

name is Katharine Hannah and both her and her Mum are doing well.

Rose is to be admired for the way she selflessly hung on so the birth wouldn't interfere with Duncan's sailing in the Nationals. In return, and proving what a sensitive, caring new man he is, Duncan has agreed to look after Katharine for the whole of next summer so Rose can enjoy a season of uninterrupted racing. □

## Comment

*The following is a personal response to a press release made by Hunter Boats. It does not necessarily represent the views of the Association and we would welcome other opinions in subsequent Newsletters.*

Parents, understandably, often hope that their children will grow up to share the same interests as themselves. But if your sport is Fell Running, the realistic chances of this happening must be extremely thin. We're led to believe that any youngster when faced with the choice between hours of lung busting, knee shattering torment or lying on the bed with the Nintendo, will always choose..... Well, as it turns out, not always. Imagine my friends surprise when his lads started to join him on some of his excursions into the hills. Although careful that they don't over do it, it's obvious that they share both their Dad's enthusiasm and aptitude.

But then last July things seemed to suffer a hiccup. On turning up at the village primary school sportsday they found that neither lad had entered any of the races but were instead helping with the teas. It transpired that this was not through any loss of interest but rather that they had been banned from competing by the teachers. The school felt that allowing them to run would be unfair on the other children; how on earth could ordinary children be expected to compete with those who, not only had natural ability, but had been practising beforehand?

I'm not qualified to comment on whether this is sound educational policy for primary age children, but I was surprised to see a similar attitude being advocated for the Sonata class. A recent press release from Hunter Boats which, so far has been reproduced verbatim in at least one magazine said, "We made one big mistake with the Sonata and that was not to make it a single sailmaker class. As a result you find a smattering of sailmakers at the front of Sonata fleets. A gifted amateur has to do very well and have a deep pocket to beat a sailmaker's crew. But we learnt from this and Sigmas and Hunter 707's are strictly one sailmaker classes with the result that fare paying customers are not duffed up by sailmakers".

Leaving aside any debate about whether customers are better served by depriving them of choice and handing a monopoly over to a single sailmaker, it still leaves the arguments that the sailmakers do well because they are a) richer and b) professional.

Money cannot buy you the same advantage in Sonatas as it can elsewhere; there are no new lightweight hulls available or optimised

keel profiles to be had. Everyone starts with old hulls that just need work to get ready. I would be surprised if the top boats (Sonic, Eric, Steamy, etc had cost any more than the others). With our restricted sail inventory there are plenty of people who have new sails, often releasing their used ones onto the second hand market. But the boats with new sails don't suddenly start beating all the ones with older sails. Therefore it would suggest something else is the significant factor.

The word 'professional' has a long history of stigmatisation in this country. It's undeniable that amateurs will always find it difficult to beat people who are paid full time to practice and compete. However, in our case, we are not talking about people whose full time job is sailing, but whose full time job is crawling around on their knees making sails. They sail in their free time, either as holiday from their firms or, as is the case with all self employed people, as unpaid leave. Murray Caldwell (Miss Money Penny) was a damn good sailor last year. This year he is still a damn good sailor, who happens to have started work for Hood's.

So why do sailmakers do well in the class? I believe it's the same reason that people do well at anything. They have a modicum of natural talent, but they have then decided to prioritise sailing in their life. They practice, they read about it, they practice some more, and constantly work hard to be good. It's their life and their choice. Often because it is such a priority with them that they end up being drawn into an occupation that gets them closer to their interest. Good sailors often become sailmakers, rarely the other way round.

The good thing is that they are easy to identify and discriminate against. Unfortunately, in my situation getting rid of them would only move me up the rankings a couple of places. I still couldn't be guaranteed to get my hands on the trophies, and I would have to find 'reasons' to exclude some other people: Obviously having babies seems to make boat go fast, so lets get rid

of them (Steamy Windows and Dry Red) and then there's something dodgy about families sailing together (High and Dry). I'm not happy about the way some people are clearly gaining a ballast or trim advantage by having porcelain toilets and bronze sea cocks fitted (Sonic). And then, I think it's unfair to allow married couples to race at all, especially if they have developed a degree of empathy by sailing so much together. That's them out (Pied Piper). At last I could be on my way to being a winner and proving one of sport's great truisms; 'If you can exclude all the people who are better than you, the trophies are yours'. But some victory.

I'm more inclined to think that the sailmaker issue is actually one of the other great sporting traditions, ie 'the excuse'. My other sport, climbing, is also full of them and I must admit to have used them all. Only the other day I trotted a load out to cover our retreat from Trowbarrow Quarry. But the good thing about excuses in climbing is that everyone knows them for what they are. They were cruelly blown apart and exposed over twenty years ago by Tom Patey in his brilliant book, 'One Man's Mountain'. Since then, they have never been as comforting as before; somehow the truth for our poor performances has always been that much closer to the surface.

By choosing a 'One Design' we all opted for a lack of excuses. We deprived ourselves of the commonest, that is the cosy cop out afforded by having a rating. We have all chosen the hash discipline of 'first over the line is the winner'.

Beyond that, I for one, am also pleased to have chosen a class that attracts sailors of the highest calibre, irrespective of their occupation. I may never be as good as them, but in trying, I believe I learn more and am getting better faster, especially when the class is as open and friendly as ours. In the mean time, I am certainly enjoying the tussles and battles along the way.

So, till we meet again my competitive friends (Dry Red, Miss Money Penny, Pied Piper, *et al.*), I'll be out practising.

Jim Dominy, 'Ey-Up. □

## Eddie Mays (Photographer)

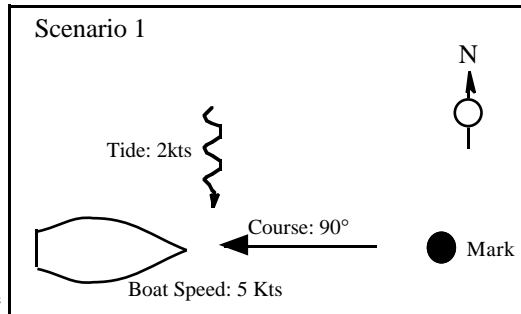
**\* Reprints and Video of the Sonata National Championships  
\* Available to cover other Events**

Eddie Mays  
Sheridan, Rutland Gardens, Bursleden,  
Southampton, SO31 8FZ  
Tel: 01703 402194

# How To Beat The Tide

**Tidal Offsets:** I use a simple but effective method of calculating the tidal offset. It is very fast to do and doesn't need a rocket scientist on board to work it out. It is rough and ready, but I find that it is surprisingly accurate. It can also help you with your lay line calculations.

**Scenario 1.** Your compass course to the mark is 90°, your boat speed is 5 knots and there's a 2 knot tide running at right angles to your course, ie, the tide is running to the South.



Calculating the Tidal Offset: Divide

the boat speed into 60 (ie  $60 \div 5 = 12$ ) Multiply the answer by the speed of the tide: (ie  $12 \times 2 = 24$ ) The tidal offset is 24°. Since the compass course is 90°, steering the boat 65° (say) will take you to the mark. Obviously it assumes that the wind direction allows you to steer 65° compass. If the tide was running to the North instead, then the tidal offset is still 24° but you add it to your course of 90° instead, and steer 150° approximately.

**Second Scenario:** Suppose everything's identical to the above example except that the tide is at about 45° to your course rather than at right angles (in other words it is running to the South West): You calculate the tidal offset as above (24°) and then take 2/3 of that figure (ie  $24^\circ \times 2/3 = 16^\circ$ ). You then sail 75° compass (which is approximately 90° less 16°). Warning: Once the tidal offset calculation gives an answer of more than 30° this method is unreliable. However, with the tide at right angles, this will not happen until the tide is half the boat speed. Do not use my tidal offset calculation method for a Channel crossing. It is only good for short journeys. The more traditional navigation methods should be used.

**Calculating The Tidal Strength In The Solent:** You have to know the strength of the tide in order to calculate the tidal offset accurately. The most commonly used book in the Solent is Peter Bruce's 'Solent Tide' but there is a widespread misunderstanding on how to use it. When Bruce's book shows a tidal strength of, for example, 3.2 knots that is NOT the tidal strength. It is the strength for springs only. This tidal book doesn't show you the tidal strength for any other phase. There is a simple method of calculating the correct strength by remembering that at a neap tide the speed of the tide is exactly half of the

spring tide. So if its 3.2 knots in Peter Bruce's book, then it's one half of that (ie 1.6 knots) at neaps. If you're sailing about half way up a neap and a spring, then the strength is half way between 3.2 and 1.6, ie 2.4 knots You can roughly estimate the tidal strength once you know where the tides are on the neap/spring scale. I usually roughly

estimate the happening at a particular moment (such as 1 hour before high water). I never go past a statements such as "I'm about one third up on a neap today. The tidal strength for the next hour or so is about 2 knots in Bruce's book, so it'll be between 1 knot and 1.5 knots, say 1.25 knots"

## Important Tidal Calculation Considerations:

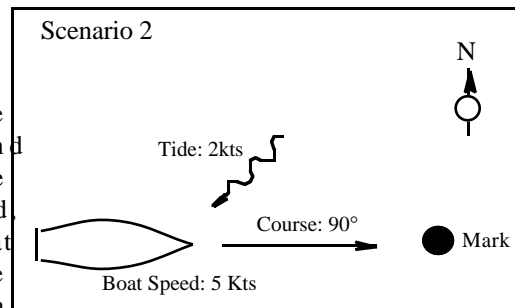
These are four very important considerations when you are using a tidal stream atlas such as Peter Bruce's. Firstly, look at the tide to come, not the tide as it is just now. If you're sailing a 4 mile leg at 4 knots, it's the tide in the next hour that matters, not the tide as it is at the start of the leg. You may have to look at more than one page to roughly average out the speed and direction of the tide. Second remember that you may be sailing over a strong tide area and then a weaker area (or vice versa). You have to average the tide for the entire leg, rather than try to sail the strong area on a different tidal offset to the weaker one. Thirdly, the tides are only estimates and they can be up to 1 hour wrong. They are calculated on the basis of a barometric sea pressure of about 1013 millibars. If for example, there has been several days of high pressure, this will have a significant influence on the tides. It can delay everything by suppressing a rising tide. Indeed, the tidal heights can be quite different. A few years ago a navigator for a large yacht about to enter the Round the Island race in the Solent made up his own tidal height chart of the Needles Rocks using sophisticated electronic equipment. He then calculated when he'd be safe to go over them. Despite his careful endeavours, his yacht ended on the rocks. A high pressure system

had suppressed the height of water by about 1 metre and he had not taken this into account. And finally, your own observations are much better than any book. You can see what's happening at the time, and how that compares with the prediction. The tidal stream is a blunt instrument in that it only gives an indication of what, on average, is happening at a particular moment (such as 1 hour before high water). I never go past a buoy without looking at the tide. And of course once you have the mark in view and against land, you can see exactly what's happening.

**The Most Common Mistake:** The most common mistake on calculating tides is to forget to adjust for BST. Always double check you've got this right. The second most common mistake is to get high water and low water times muddled, closely followed by not adjusting properly for the fact that the tide is a spring (or a neap, or half way, or whatever).

## Tidal Strategies at the Start:

**1. Wind Bias:** If you are shooting the wind to work our your bias, you can ignore the tides because the wind bias takes into account the tide. If instead you look at the flags on the Committee Boat to evaluate the wind direction it may reveal a wind bias to the 'shooting the wind method'. This is because the Committee Boat is anchored and the wind created by the tide is not shown, whereas when you shoot the wind, the tidal wind is affecting the result.



There are, in reality, three winds: The True (or Gradient) Wind, the Tidal Wind and finally the Apparent Wind which is created by the boat speed itself. Of these, the Tidal wind may need some explanation. Imagine it's a windless day and you're at anchor smoking a cigarette. The smoke will rise vertically. Lift the anchor, and your cigarette smoke will stream overboard at the rate of 3 knots. This wind is created by the tide. Many sailors are unaware of the existence of the tidal wind. It is the effect of the tidal wind which accounts for the advantage of the "lee bow" method.

**2. Watch Your Starting Tide.** Be very, very conscious of tide at the start so that you don't get pushed over the line early, or (as happened to me very recently) ended up down tide of the start in light winds with no way of getting to the line on time once the 5 minute gun had gone and engines had to be turned off.

**3. Varied Tide on Line.** A Committee Boat start is unlikely to have a start line where the tidal stream strength varies much along the line. This is not the case on a fixed starting line, such as the Royal Yacht Squadron line at Cowes. The line is often a mile long for an offshore race or Round the Island, and there can be a strong counter current close inshore with a foul stream in the middle of the line.

**Tidal Strategies Up The Course.** There are a few important strategies to remember. These apply equally to the racing or cruising yachtsman. The first is to stay Uptide of the Mark (or Harbour Entrance) The lighter the wind, the greater the tidal offset (since the boat speed is less). Similarly, the less the tide, the less the tidal offset. Light winds and strong tides mean BIG tidal offsets. If the wind might go light as you near the mark, then you should have an even greater tidal offset so that you are up tide of the mark and can drift down onto it, instead of finding you're down tide of the mark plugging away head on into a foul tide, or worse still having to anchor waiting for weaker tide or stronger wind to kick in. The second is to remember that the tide turns first inshore, then offshore. Not only does the tide turn first inshore, but even when its turning in the main channel

there is usually a period when the tide remains stronger inshore than in the deep water. Read your tidal stream atlas carefully, and stay in the favourable tide. Even just 1 or 2 metre difference in height of water can make a huge difference to the tide you are sailing in.

**Using GPS:** GPS will show you what's happening to the tide as you go up the course. Compare your compass heading to your COG (course over ground) and the difference is the tide (and also leeway). GPS will be legal in Sonata racing in 1998, and will make it far easier to spot the tides, and to follow your COG. If you are about to buy a GPS consider one mounted on the mast along with your compass. It is much easier to read, and all your crew can watch it as well. It is a useful additional source of information, but will never replace all of the other information from the other boats and the weather information on the water around you.

**The Banks:** Before the race, you should have worked out whether there are any times when you cannot go over any well known banks (such as the Bramble Bank in the Solent). I reckon, for example, that a Sonata cannot go over the Bramble Bank in the

Solent between 2 hours before LW until 3 hours before HW on most states of the tide. Remember also that such banks can create very favourable tide shadows in the deeper water behind the bank which can be used to your advantage. In the Solent, for example, with an East going tide, the Bramble Bank provides a huge protective shadow to the water to the East of the bank.

**Tidal Strategy at the Mark** Remember that on one tack you may have no tidal offset, whereas on the other tack you could have a very large tidal offset. This must be taken into account when you consider your lay lines to the mark. This can also lead to problems when you're at the mark. An easy way to hit the mark is to tack onto it with a strong tide running onto it. (The opposite is where the tide is under you as you approach the mark, and it is then easy to over stand the mark by not tacking soon enough). The calculation method described at the start of this article can assist you in working out your lay lines. Lay line is nothing other than COG (Course Over Ground). This can be calculated from your compass heading, boat speed and tidal strength.

David Franks  
Spirit

□

## Letters

Dear Class

Having just returned from the National Championships run from Hamble River Sailing Club, our boat would like to say what a great week we had. The event was well run, the racing was excellent with a well balanced selection of races (although I am still unsure as to why we have the triangle bit of Olympic courses which just seem to be a procession) and the competition was excellent. It does seem a pity though that some way cannot be found to get more of all the fleets around the country together at the nationals so that we can all enjoy racing against different faces in a more national type of event - that really is the point of such an event.

We would like to thank all the people who helped organise the event, some who sailed and some who did not. A lot of hard work must have been put into the event and we appreciate your endeavours.

One point we would like to take up is the question of the number of crew allowed to sail on the boat. The preliminary notice of race said three to four people would be allowed whilst the sailing instructions received at the event said three to five people with both versions stating that the same

number of people that sail in the first race should be retained throughout the series. Further questioning at the skippers briefing produced the informal ruling that indeed three to five people would be allowed with that number then being retained throughout the event unless there were unavoidable grounds for change.

In practice, there were several instances of boats changing their crew numbers during the event some of which appeared to be made for not unavoidable circumstances.

Please don't let us be misunderstood (as one of our previous letters was) - this did not give us any problems at the event but it did turn our thoughts to future racing. Next year we plan to put the boat in Scotland and compete at the Scottish series and other events through to the Nationals. Prior to that we shall be sailing in the Windermere winter series which we hope to use to practise with our crew for the coming summer. Our problem of course is that it became plain to us at Hamble that as there is no class rule concerning the number of people allowed to race on the boat, then crew number limitations can be different at each event and the policing of such could, to say the least, be lax.

Our personal feeling is it should be allowed to race the boat with a wider rather than narrower range of people allowing a broader spectrum of crew to compete equally. In this way our present core crew could be augmented to continue sailing competitively in Sonatas against other crews of heavier build. We would have had five on board at Hamble this year as other crews did if we had not believed the maximum to be four beforehand.

We do feel there is no reason someone should not make some ruling now, to allow people to plan ahead for the year and also have their say if they do not agree. Surely this is better than people finding out just before (or even worse at) an event when commitments have been made.

Aside from the above point, we left the Nationals feeling that the class is thriving and look forward to racing against and spending time in the bar with as many boats at as many events as possible in the coming season.

Good sailing from the crew of B\* Off.  
Robin Boardman  
robin@yelmorb.demon.co.uk  
Bolton, Lancs

□

# Taffrail

## Association Wares

The following are available from Kevin Marshall. 01475 636648

**Association Ties** - Navy, of woven satin polyester, with red and white stripes and a single Sonata motif in white. £8 inc P&P.

**Car stickers**, 6"x 4" - 50p - A new supply is being printed.

**Ring Binders**, A5, blue with association name, insignia and profile of boat embossed in gold on the front. £3 inc P&P

Efforts are being made to secure another supply of third legs & oversize rudder pins. Apparently Mike Owers is still the contact for these. 01621 892885

## Boats for Sale and New Members

The 'Boats for Sale' list that Steve Tribe continues to run is still by far the best way for people interested in buying a Sonata to find the boats of their dreams. So keep Steve informed about what's available and what has sold so he is able to offer the best service. Steve is on 01277 654458.

In addition please remember to give any prospective Sonata owner the telephone number of your nearest committee Area Representative. This way they get the most relevant information about Sonata sailing in your area, plus it stops a single member of the committee being overloaded with such requests.

**Helm Wanted:** Replacement helm wanted for 'Steamy Windows' for entire 1998 season to provide cover for present incumbent while he takes paternity leave. Must be a team player (ie willing to follow Rose's instructions to the letter) and the ability to give at least 2 milliseconds warning of any crash tacks would be an improvement. Clean driving licence, plus the ability to read the speedometer essential. Further details from Rose on 0181 9927309, but put down phone if man answers.

Thanks again for all the varied contributions to this edition.

I'm not being ungrateful, but any contributions I get on disk or by Email saves me so much time. However, please still include a printout with the disk in case I have problems translating the various file formats. Plain Text or RTF files are certainly the easiest to deal with.

I'll try and get the next newsletter out in the New Year. Therefore can I have all contributions before Christmas. I know its an awkward time to think about writing something, but I often seem to have time to put a newsletter together in the week between

## Who's Who on the Committee

Chairman	
David Lippold	01489 581232
Treasurer	
Kevin Marshall	01475 636648
Technical	
Andy Mitchell	01723 581729
Boats for Sale & Burnham Rep.	
Steve Tribe	01277 654458
Scotland	Situation Still Vacant!
Northern England	
David Clarke	01325 730413
South Coast & Cowes Week	
Duncan Morris	0181 9927309
Mike Jaffe	0171 7368645
Medway Rep	
Mike Harrison	01233 850423
West Mersea	
Roger Sydenham	01206 384619

# RONSTAN

**From your local stockist**

Discover the difference that free running, lightweight, high-load blocks make to your Sonata.

Comparing specifications and load ratings, you will see that Ronstan blocks are in a class of their own.

**Further information:  
01489 885335**

## Next Edition:

Christmas and New Year, especially if the weather is bad in the mountains.

I'm still looking forward to receiving the articles people offered to write in their questionnaire returns. Don't wait for the deadline, send them in now. Also if you feel moved to respond to anything in this edition, we would love to hear it.

I am hoping that the midwinter edition will also help with the annual refit. The articles about check stays and leak free chain plates will therefore appear at that time.

Jim

## Second Hand Gear For Sale

Proving that advertising in the Newsletter does work, this is all the gear that Grayden has left from the long list advertised last time:

Mast: Proctor tapered section complete with spreaders and foot. New in 96. Used for Scottish & Northern Championships only. Brand new condition. £950

Sails, No1, '94, Reasonable Condition. £100

Boom Cover: Free to a good home.

Ring Grayden Dawson on

0191 510 9850 (W)

0191 529 4500 (H)

0468 634 724 (M)

## Second Hand Gear For Sale

Rudder with fittings (except tiller) £75

Hood Mylar No1 genoa. Some years old but little used. Suit Holt Luff Foil £100

Ulmar Kolius No1 genoa. (as above) £75

Ulmar Kolius Main. ('old rules', but would be excellent for cruising) £75

McWilliams spinnaker. £50

All gear is at Cowes, Isle of Wight.

All prices and carriage negotiable.

Michael Tennant, 'Xantz'

01794 323344

## Up & Coming Events

Northern Championships at Sunderland - 20 / 21st Sept & 27 / 28th Sept. David Clarke is working hard to better even last year's superb event. Loads of sponsorship should make it cheap as well. Phone him on 01325 730413.

Hamble Winter Series - Starts on 12th October and then runs for the following 8 Sundays until 30th Nov. There is a charity pursuit race on 7th Dec. Details from HRSC, 01703 452070

Windermere Winter Series - Starts on 2 November and then every other Sunday until 22nd March. More details from Trevor Roberts, 01200 423689

Post: Jim Dominy, 19 Church Hill Ave, Warton, Carnforth, Lancs, LA5 9NU

Tel: 01524 733891, Fax: 01524 733891, or 01524 762533

E Mail: 106163.3207@compuserve.com

