

Notes of Sonata Class Association Owners' Meeting @ Medway YC on 21st August 2018

Attendees:

BD2	Alistair Bolton
Cry Havoc	Chris Lindsey
Dilligaf	Dan Crockett
Exposition	Joe Cross
Figaro	Steven Rolland / Graham Bennett
Old School	Ross MacNish / Greg Pitt
Red Dwarf 11	Zoe Hill
Saraband	Mark Taylor (CHAIR)
Watersong	Luke Hopper / Paul Hopper / Paul Botterill / Richard Furness
White Noise	Ashley Stevens / Charlotte Penny / Lucian Stone / J Hewart

(Others were in attendance but not signed in!)

Discussion:

- 1) **Thanks** were offered to Medway YC for hosting the 2018 Nationals
- 2) **Owners meeting, not an AGM**
 - a) Therefore not possible for any votes to be taken on substantive matters, such as rule changes etc....purpose of meeting is to advise / guide committee on what should be being worked etc
 - b) Meeting did agree that a decision should be taken on 2019 Nationals venue
- 3) **Income & Expenditure (to end 2017).....**summary figures were presented
 - Income £1365
 - Expenditure £1174
 - Net Income £191
 - Cash £11253
 - Assets £3000
 - Total Assets £14253
- 4) **Treasurer Discussion Points**
 - a) Travel Bursary Scheme was suspended in April 2018
 - i. Imprecise scheme wording and uncapped budget risked association funds
 - ii. Belief that scheme wasn't increasing traveling – most/all recipients would have travelled without bursary
 - iii. Recognition that Irish Sea crossings, either way, might be a case for support

b) Proposed Local Reps Budget

- i. Committee has proposed an annual budget of £250 per local rep to support local initiatives, which could for example include coaching days, youth boat support and, if desired, travel support to worthy boats.
- ii. Owners Meeting largely supportive with following observations:
 - £250 might not be enough.....it was suggested that if £250 paid for 2018 and a further £250 in January 2019 then effectively a rep would start with a £500 budget to kick start local initiatives
 - Funding should be held centrally and drawn down by local reps, rather than £250 being handed out upfront. Treasurer should report annually to AGM on spend in each area and on what items
 - £250 figure could be looked at to reflect local association membership levels.....is it right that a local rep with perhaps just a few members gets the same amount as another rep who might have 10-15 association members?

c) Second Mast

- i. Current association mast is held by Phil Evans in the Lake District
- ii. Committee believe a second mast should be bought
- iii. Owners meeting agreed that it would make sense for one mast to be based South Coast (eg Poole / Southampton) and the other in Scotland, particularly as 2019 Nationals @ Helensburgh
- iv. The committee are asked to make sure that any masts are clearly identified as being the property of the association.
- v. It was pointed out that purchase of a second mast was approved in 2014 but not yet actioned

5) Technical Discussion Points

- a) What do owners want.....TIDYING v TWEAKING v DEVELOPMENT
- b) Any of the changes discussed below would have to be approved by owners through either an AGM or a postal vote.
- c) TIDYING
 - i. Crew Numbers
 - Medway nationals allow 3-5 crew with changes of name or number only allowed if previously authorised
 - Discussion held about allowing fewer crew for club events, local regattas etc
 - Meeting concluded that class rule should be amended to 2-5 crew for all events as it will encourage some to participate without offering any advantage to small crew boats
 - Changes of name or number only allowed at nationals or regional events if previously authorised
 - However rule must allow very late changes prior to a race starting, recognising that people do get ill, have accidents etc.

- iii. Bilge Pump – delete portable
 - Owners agreed on this deletion (It was pointed out this was also previously agreed at an AGM but not actioned)
- iv. Guardrails – allow use of unsheathed dyneema
 - Owners agreed that this should be permitted, recognising that ORC allow it on offshore yachts. Benefit will be lower cost and easier replacement for owners.
- v. Headsails – delete foot measurement as LP measured
 - Owners generally not convinced on merits or requirement for such a change, with a suspicion / concern that it might allow a different shape sail to be developed. More work / better argument required!!
- vi. Electronics
 - Wording should be reviewed to ensure that it is topical with what is fitted....eg current rules allow GPS, log and depth.....but is a plotter allowed that integrates all these functions?
- vii. Electric Outboards
 - With increasing environmental concerns and restrictions on some lakes (eg Rutland), the rules should be amended to permit electric outboards
 - Current minimum weight of 13.5kg should be considered with regard to electric outboards, spare batteries etc. Can / should a corrector weight be used to bring total weight up to 13.5kg?

d) TWEAKING

- Increase #2 genoa battens from 215mm to 350mm
 - a. It was explained that this would improve longevity of #2 sails and specifically the batten pocket inboard end, with no or minimal improvement on performance
 - b. Given the above, the owners were generally accepting of the change
- Increase mainsail bottom batten from 690mm to 800mm
 - a. It was explained this would remove the distinctive line at the end of the current batten and improve the shape of the lower sail. Appearance would improve and there would potentially be a very small increase on performance.
 - b. Given the above, owners were generally less supportive but not necessarily opposed to a change

e) DEVELOPMENT

The current size difference between the #1 genoa and the #2 genoa means crews are required to carry the #1 genoa well up the wind range, moving tracks back to twist off leaches and de-power the sails. Boats are feathered upwind and crew weight on rail becomes a significant benefit.

The use of the #1 in such a way is probably a significant factor in explaining why Sonata#1 genoas do not have a particularly long competitive life.

Would there be benefits in either increasing the size / effectiveness of the existing #2 genoa, or even introducing another Intermediate Genoa, midway between the two existing sails.

Benefits might include:

- Reduced performance difference between the #1 genoa and the next smaller sail, particularly helping the lighter or smaller numbered crews
- Increased longevity on #1 genoas by not using them in more extreme winds or requiring them to be heavily twisted or feathered

A) Introduce a Revised Shape #2 genoa

- Full height hoist, low cut foot, minimal overlap, preferably using existing tracks, perhaps with barber haulers
- Such a sail reflects current practice in other offshore boats where they move from a #1 genoa to a #3 genoa, not carrying an Intermediate Genoa.
- Sanders have developed such a sail for an IRC rated Sonata where the owner has actually re-measured without #1 genoa. It has proved successful.

B) Introduce an Intermediate Genoa, between the two existing genoas

- Full height hoist, low cut 120-130% LP overlapping headsail
- Concern from some that the sail would have too narrow an effective wind range and might force boats to carry 3 sails, rather than the current 2, thereby increasing costs, storage space required etc.

The owners' discussion covered:

- Could the #1 genoa last longer if it used different materials....Greg Pitt suggested that a change of material would not significantly improve life but would perhaps be £300-400 extra cost
- One owner spoke positively of the process used by the Flying Fifteens who after trials of a new design foresail had made the change, leading to a boat that was easier to sail. The process had included sailmakers providing trial sails for use by various fleets and in some events, thereby winning broad approval before putting the change to a class vote.
- There was broad agreement to the class looking at the option for an alternative design #2 genoa, hopefully using prototype sails that could be rotated amongst owners and fleets to gain comment and approval.

f) AOB TECHNICAL

i. Floatation Marks

- "as we will be in the rules anyway" can the width of the floatation marks / bands be changed from 30mm to 25mm as that reflects the standard width of masking tape.

6) FUTURE NATIONALS

- a) Format / Duration / Timing
 - i. The 5 day format at Medway, with craning outside those days was not generally seen as a success, despite the great efforts by Medway team to promote the event.
 - ii. Generally there seemed to be a consensus to return to a 4 day format, to include a weekend as this minimises impact on holidays etc. It was recognised travellers will still need additional days, particularly if long distances involved
 - iii. For 2019 the question is largely academic anyway as Helensburgh only prepared to offer a 4 day format
 - iv. Some owners expressed a wish that there were more harbour or long-distance races, rather than repetitive windward leeward courses. The majority seemed content with the current format with just one long distance race.
- b) Venue for 2019
 - i. Helensburgh have offered for 2019 and this was accepted by the meeting.....Post Meeting Note: Dates confirmed as 20-23 June 2019
- c) Venue for 2020
 - i. Whilst Scarborough's interest in hosting in 2020 was noted, owners believed the 2020 nationals should be south coast.
 - ii. Brixham was popular with many, probably with Poole as an alternative
- d) Venue for 2021
 - i. Scarborough would be acceptable as a venue
 - ii. If Scarborough not available then it would be appropriate to return to Ireland (See below)
- e) Ireland
 - i. There was support to perhaps considering an event at Dun Laoghaire, perhaps as a Sonata Europeans and bringing together the UK and Ireland fleets at a quality venue, with the Strangford Lough boats travelling south to a larger event.
 - ii. To maximise attendance at such an event it would be useful to get early agreement with Irish boats on the viability of such an event and also to get dates in the diary.

Mark Taylor
Saraband 8314N

Owners' Meeting Chair
Medway YC
August 2018