

Racing Courses

We are fortunate to enjoy everything from village regatta courses to pure windward/leeward racing. But in the main we rely on the buff BSC, or blue CYC course cards, and time and experience suggest that some of these courses will now stand selective revision.

If you agree, and have all painted up your keels again, then rounding "post", rather than following the shore, both inward and outward on BSC no.8 will make a start! Then the suggestion to eliminate the slight loops and gybes in one or two courses may also be possible so long as we collectively accept responsibility for rounding those marks the opposite way to the rest of the BSC fleet.

We can check again that, when faced with a heavily biased start line, there is no better arrangement. Dead beats and runs are fine, and fetches and reaches out of a line forward biased at the leeward end will also work. But "one berth" windward end starts are to be avoided if possible. - Angling the CYC starting line, race by race is of course possible but will complicate both the sailing instructions and the OOD's job, - for one thing hauling a muddy anchor rather than simply tying to "BOD race" buoy - so the improvement must be worth it. All of this is up for discussion at the AGM so please comment.

General Purposes Committee

After mopping up a considerable backlog of business over the previous four years including the new alloy mast spec., spinnaker rule change, boom height, securing possession of the GRP mould, etc. etc., the committee has not been convened during the year since the last AGM. Almost certainly though there will be a demand for their wise counsel during the ensuing year. The committee is elected at the AGM, and is empowered only to sort detail and refer back, or make decisions within a remit given by yourselves at the AGM so please do come and give your views and ideas.

Technical

Wind speed (squared) and therefore drive in your sails is greatest higher up. Better then with your mainsail hoisted firmly to the top measurement band on the mast then worry about a gap near the gooseneck. Try tying the tack of the sail forward around the mast only, with no tie down to the boom. Then leave the luff slack and crimped until its breezy.

Look on the internet, second hand, for "Go for the Gold", Gary Hoyt, which is the most psychologically motivating book on sailing I ever came across, and "High Performance Sailing", Frank Bethwaite, which by contrast is the most fanatical technical bible imaginable! - other titles are available of course, even the B.O.D. Tuning Guide! (on our own website, - do have a look, masses of archive information, history, and photos. Apologies, Lance, for holding you up so long for my own photo collection. Everything from sepia ladies in hats to modern rebuild sequences. They really will appear soon!)

I had one or two lovely cruises this year, - on the sail back from Wivenhoe Regatta single handed with just the mainsail, boats with full rig and crew only took around three hundred yards out, which only proves the old chestnut about the "RMS Queen Mary" needing twice the fuel to do 25 knots as to do 21. So I am determined to find time to make my set of cruising sails. Slightly lower but considerably narrower mainsail with a higher boom at the back end, - and a self tacking roller jib to suit. Got an idea too, for a "non invasive", corner of the cockpit, outboard clamp. Thrust slightly across to compensate for being at the side, quiet four stroke, easy access, full use of rudder....

Fleet Overview 11/12

Scanning the newsletters, reports and minutes of the last six or seven years reveals a record of each sailing season in some detail. But also, and more importantly, it reveals the growing background strength and potential of the fleet in terms of people and boats. Even in the brief time since reporting the "State of the Class" in the spring, that strength has increased further.

On the sailing side, if you are looking for the spectacular it is very easy to find. Three boats sailed in Pyefleet week 2005, and now an average of fifteen. An overall race turnout for each season which had risen to 99 by 2007 but is now consistently over 140 (record 149 in 2010, this year 141. And all enjoyed by rather more than two hundred and fifty sailors, a statistic which is also reflected in the broad popularity of our social events, - "bring your friends" indeed.

Obviously the number of boats available is critical, and early on a good deal of slack was quickly taken up by underused seaworthy boats rapidly joining the fleet. A new GRP boat was also built and fourteen sailed in the 80th anniversary race in 2007 representing pretty well every floating B.O.D. at the time.

Next year with the rebuilds and acquisitions since 2007, and including C43, and Richard White's timely purchase of C26 "Krystina" from Suffolk, both since July the available total will have risen to at least twenty two. (Not including three new GRP boats, C51 and 52 expensive in Holland! and C50 nearing completion in Burnham. - or the single other original boat elsewhere, C75 "The Mike" ex Bob Osborn for sale at West Mersea.)

All that would be good - but it's not the end of the current momentum. Having completed the said C43 "Endeavour" (ex Bobby Stoker, West Mersea) first sailing again at the Corporate event in August, Tracey Barnes and Tom have already begun another re-build, the previously derelict C5 "Sybil", for Nick Readings. - My own rebuild of C9 "Bidi" for Dan and Colin Willett is also well under way (visitors welcome, ring first). So that as the clock ticks away the number of hulls lying about has dropped from thirteen to seven - Nick now only has one! - I have three including Ralph Sutton's "Cormorant", and three others are local.

If restoring all the original boats were the only option then the fleet could amount to just over thirty. But as we know, considerable planning and thousands of hours have gone into all the moulds, templates and casting patterns of which the GRP hull mould probably carries the

greatest potential. The problem at the moment is that GRP boat production is hamstrung costwise by the (essential) EEC buoyancy/self rescue regulations. Because the built-in buoyancy is currently constructed in plywood, as per C53, this renders the boat frankly more expensive to build than a traditional wooden shell with steamed ribs, which falls outside the regulations. So in spite of all our moulds and patterns we are still one short - GRP buoyancy tanks.

Fortunately then I can report that an initiative is under way involving a local craftsman/boatbuilder, with some involvement from myself with templates,- but crucially the first initiative comes from another, very prominent local boatbuilder to own a new GRP B.O.D. and see a production boat available (still with wooden decks - who can it be?!).

Re-consolidating the fleet has been a long and steady process, but this project is really important - potentially we are just a step away from the routine availability of a good quality, low maintenance boat at an affordable price. I very much hope we can manage it because, for one thing, the class could transcend all previous growth and for another there are too many great colour schemes and lovely names out there, yet untaken. Romantic fool!

Maybe though it really is hearts, then heads that have got us this far? Certainly if you shut your eyes and take simply the design formula of the boat, just the weights and dimensions, you have a super little hybrid somewhere between a dinghy and a keelboat. But then you look, - and a B.O.D. just has to have a name.

The nature of the boat is the seed of it all, and as an organisation we always seem to have experienced and focused people, playing to their strengths around the fleet and in the formal tasks. Fortunately those tasks are not too onerous and always about boats, sailing or socialising and a collective energy develops which feeds off itself and the dream stays alive.

Which is perhaps where we say thank you to both our clubs whose "establishment" involves so many more mundane responsibilities! We congratulate both on their continued ambition and achievement and thank them for their support. We couldn't do without it. And thanks again to Marilyn, our OOD - its been years now! - and to Nick and Mike. The availability of dry sailing and the general upward pressure from the rebuilds, corporate days, and invitations for helms and crews to enjoy our racing all make a huge difference.

My impression, right now, both afloat and ashore is one of steadily building interest. Ultimately peoples perception is what really counts for the future, and at present the good sportsmanship, close racing and reliable turnouts came across well. The carefully selected technical advances seem to have settled just right so, for example, a full-race B.O.D. is not in the least compromised in its cruising role.

People may also be aware that we sail for fun. Attendance is "as available and inclined", and that the good turnouts are due to making the Sailing Programme fit the sailors.

Talking of which, depending upon those very sailors, sometime soon it could be possible (on the way to achieving thirty) to have twenty boats racing. Possibly a designated race, with a reserve, during one Fyefleet week?

Inevitably now, or at any time, some boats may be "resting betweentimes" and so we would need to consult with owners and fix on the most feasible options well in advance. Next year may be possible - certainly the first seventeen or eighteen boats would be easy - or 2014 may be better?

Quite apart from the fun there are obvious pay-offs in terms of perception of the fleet, photo/video opportunities and general publicity so that this could be a very worthwhile project, which I rather feel we ought to look at soon. And afterwards we could have a "bit of a do".

All new ground and its a great time to be messing around with the B.O.D.s - owner, sailor, or groupie - enjoy it.

Malcolm Goodwin

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Boats for Sale

C75 "The Mike", around 4K, in sailing condition. Aldous built 1949, centrecase epoxy installed by MG, well worth a look.

Gary Powell, West Mersea. 01206 382543 (last original boat not in B'sea fleet).

C? (possible sale) Full-race, B'sea fleet, excess 10K (Not C1, but ring MG who will know whether further enquiries are welcome.)

Subscriptions

Due now or at AGM please

Owners £20, Associates £10.

to Richard Stephens, 10 Chestnut Way, B'sea, Essex, CO7 OAU.

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