

Minutes of Solent Sunbeam Class Meeting

Saturday 30th January 2010

1.0 Present: Julian Money (V42) Class Captain
Graham Colbourne (V43) Vice Captain
Rebecca Wickens (V12) Treasurer
Anne Colbourne Social Secretary

Barker, Susie	Pearson, Sarah (V24)
Bell, Desmond	Powell, David
Creagh, Mike	Ratcliffe, Simon
Davis, John (V41)	Robinson, Anthony (V33)
Dickson, Bill	Rolls, Allard
Ford, John	Sampson, Barry (V17)
Kay, Ian & Sue (V27)	Stannah, Alan & Jackie (V46)
Kent, Richard & Susan	Stoddard, Stamford & Valerie (V13)
Leach, Nick	Weston, Dave
Miller, David (V28)	Wickens, Roger & Jacky (V25)
Nicholson, Peter (V1)	Williams, Viv & Anna (V16)

In Attendance:

Andrews, Mike (Haines Boatyard)	Stedman, Ray (Falmouth Sunbeams)
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Apologies:

Batt, Dick	Moss, Mike (V31)
Boissevain, Trish	Murdoch, Tessa
Brooks, George	O'Kelly, Duncan (V11)
Clatworthy, Alan (V29)	Oldham, John
Clementson, Peter	Palmer, Angela
Craig-Wood, Peter	Palmer, Gayle (V6)
Crane, Simon (V32)	Pearson, Richard
Dale, Richard	Pople, Nick (V30)
Davis, Valerie	Robinson, Jill
Glaister, Malcolm (V30)	Ross, Mary
Green, Patrick	Russell, Andrew
Hankey, John	Slatter, John
Hartley, Jim & Graine	Smith, Sue (V43)
Hill, Tim (V25)	Stobie, Ian
Hollis, Mike	Sturt, David
Hornby, Johnny (V36)	Tanner, Petra
Howland Jackson, Judy	Taylor, Brian
Jackson, Linda	Timberlake, Nick (V30)

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Jefferies, Mike	Weston, Mike (V14)
Jones, Tiffin	Wilbourn, Simon
Law, Mike (V31)	Williamson, Mike & Diana
Leach, Juliette	Wootton, William
Martell, Tim	Yeats, Jussie
Martin, Louise and Graham	Yeoman, Roger (V32)

- 2.0 The Extraordinary Meeting of the Solent Sunbeam Class was called to discuss the proposal by Alan Stannah and Roger Wickens to build a GRP Sunbeam.
- 3.0 The Class Captain opened the Meeting by welcoming the owners, associates and our two guests, Mike Andrews from Haines Boatyard and Ray Stedman from the Falmouth Sunbeam Class. He then invited Alan & Roger to introduce their proposal.
- 4.0 The Proposal
- 4.1 Alan Stannah provided the background to the GRP Sunbeam proposal. He said currently there was a reduction in membership and 10 boats were for sale between the two fleets. The value of the traditional Sunbeams had fallen in common with other classic wooden boats. We needed to widen the appeal of the Sunbeam Class and attract new owners, perhaps from a different segment of the racing fraternity.
- 4.2 Alan then highlighted the experience of several other classic wooden boats that had introduced a GRP version. Generally their experience had been successful in preserving their class and increasing the number of boats racing. However, it was important to also strengthen the brand and image of the Sunbeam Class. He felt the GRP initiative would be seen in a positive light in this respect.
- 4.3 Roger Wickens then commented on the several new GRP day boat classes that had emerged over the last few years, including the Rustler 24 (ex Piper) and Tofinou. Although one-design racing for these classes had yet to be established, he thought the major threat to the Sunbeam Class was the loss of critical mass for our racing. Who would we be racing against in 10 years time? To protect our racing fleet, the Class should introduce a GRP version to attract new owners who wanted a quality GRP day boat, for which competitive racing existed.
- 4.4 Roger had recently looked at the Victory class that now had 6 new GRP boats, although 5 of these had been purchased by previous wooden Victory owners. He commented that the GRP boats were well built and were expected to prolong the Victory class.
- 5.0 The Discussion
- 5.1 Allard Rolls commented that the Swallow class had gone through the same dilemma 25 years ago and the introduction of the GRP boat had proved a great success to that class.
- 5.2 David Powell thought a GRP boat would attract potential owners who were concerned about the time and costs of maintaining a wooden boat. But he was concerned about how the GRP boat could be built to race on level terms with the wooden boat and also how this would be determined.

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- 5.3 There was general discussion about how the GRP boat would be built to try and make it sail on level terms with the wooden boats. Attention should be paid to its shape, weight, weight distribution and ballast. Roger Wickens said his main concern was that the GRP version, after taking all these factors into account might not be competitive, and that they would probably aim to bring in the new boat slightly under weight and add weight correctors as necessary. This was because it is much easier to add weight than to try to reduce it.
- 5.4 Mike Creagh commented on the experience of the Dragon and Finn classes, which had successfully introduced GRP versions even when they were Olympic classes. Mike noted the three key elements for the new boat were shape, rigidity (panel thickness) and weight distribution. Although a GRP boat would have a fairer shape, rigidity and weight distribution could be adjusted to ensure the GRP boat raced on level terms with the traditional wooden boats.
- 5.5 Peter Nicholson thought we were unlikely to attract 30 – 40 years olds into the Class, even with a GRP boat. He noted that the 6 new owners in the last 3 years were from broadly the same demographic as the current owners. The recent decline in members was not a new problem – of the 12 boats sailing in late 1920s, only half were sailing a few years later. Henry Chisholm had provided salesmanship to revitalise the Class. If we go down the GRP route, we will still need marketing & promotion to get new owners into the Class. Also there is a risk that building a GRP boat will be seen as an admission that our wooden boats are no longer viable. We would need to strongly refute any such assumption.
- 5.6 John Davis related his experience with dinghies (e.g., Dragon, Flying 15) where GRP versions had effectively killed off the wooden versions. GRP might keep the Class going for another 50 years, but potentially at the expense of our traditional wooden boats. John also thought the issue of splining, epoxy and ballast had to be considered in association with the GRP issue. Wooden boats could only be competitive with GRP versions if epoxy hulls were permitted and weights regulated.
- 5.7 Alan & Roger reaffirmed their intention to create a GRP boat that sailed on level terms with the existing wooden boats and agreed that the points raised by John Davis needed to be considered. In particular they will value input from a sub-committee formed from current Sunbeam sailors and outside experts to produce the best GRP boat possible.
- 5.8 Mike Andrews (Managing Director of Haines Boatyard) declared a vested interest in Haines and its customers. He had built roughly equal numbers of wooden and GRP boats. Potential GRP owners should not think their boats would be maintenance free, but clearly the annual running costs would be lower. Epoxy would similarly reduce the annual running costs of the wooden fleet and make the boats stiffer. He cautioned against building a budget GRP boat – it should be built to the highest design and construction level possible. Only a high spec / high tech boat would appeal to our target market.
- 5.9 Viv Williams was concerned that if the GRP boat was initially designed to race level with the existing wooden boats, it might become uncompetitive if the wooden boats were then permitted to spline and epoxy.
- 5.10 Roger Wickens said the plan was to try and produce one GRP boat to be ready to race at Cowes in August 2010, in order to maximise marketing and promotion opportunities. He thought the cost of a GRP boat would be around £45,000, compared to over £75,000 for

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a new wooden boat. The boat would have sail number V51 and it was his and Alan's wish that it should be named 'Betty' after Betty Moore.

- 5.11 Although Alan & Roger would be responsible for developing, commissioning and financing the GRP boat, they welcomed the contribution of ideas and expertise from everyone. They would be guided with its design, specifications and construction by a technical subcommittee of the Class, and it was recognised that "as built" technical drawings and specifications were required to control the build of future boats.
- 5.12 Ray Stedman said he was here to listen and report back to Falmouth. He confirmed that although there was a fleet of Rustlers in Falmouth, they had not been able to establish a racing fleet. The problem for the Sunbeams in Falmouth was not getting enough of the boats out to the starting line to race.

6.0 The Resolutions

- 6.1 Barry Sampson thought the wording of the 1st Resolution could be strengthened. Several other comments were made and Richard Pearson's suggested amendments to Resolutions 3 considered by the meeting.

7.0 The Vote

- 7.1 Resolution 1 was proposed by Alan Stannah & Roger Wickens and seconded by Anthony Robinson:

"That the Proposers be permitted to use the existing CAD Sunbeam drawings and patterns to develop and build a new GRP boat at their own expense. The boat to be built with the intention of racing on level terms with the existing Sunbeams and thus having the same overall weight, weight distribution, sail area and rig as the existing boats".

The Resolution was carried by 19 votes to 3, with 1 abstention.

- 7.2 Resolution 2 was proposed by Alan Stannah & Roger Wickens and seconded by Anthony Robinson:

"That when this boat is built it is permitted to race with the Solent Sunbeams in all their normal races with sail number V51 for a period of time reasonably sufficient to determine if it can fairly be judged to perform on level terms with the existing wooden Sunbeams, if necessary making modifications to it to achieve this aim".

The Resolution was carried by 19 votes to 3, with 1 abstention.

- 7.3 Resolution 3 was proposed by Alan Stannah & Roger Wickens and seconded by Anthony Robinson:

"That if the new GRP boat is fairly judged by both the Solent and Falmouth Divisions to race on level terms with the existing Fleet it should formally be accepted into the Fleet as a Sunbeam, and the Class Rules revised as appropriate to allow hull and deck construction in GRP"

The Resolution was carried by 18 votes to 4, with 1 abstention.

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- 7.4 Since the wording of the Resolutions had changed, the Secretary was asked to confirm with each boat that had lodged a proxy vote that their proxy votes were still valid.
- 8.0 Other Business
- 8.1 The Meeting agreed to recommend to Carolyn Brigg, ISC Rear Commodore Sailing, that the Club adopt a single turn penalty system.
- 8.2 The Class Social Secretary's suggestion that the postponed winter cocktail party beheld at Itchenor Sailing Club on Saturday 13th February 2010 was supported by the meeting.
- 8.3 Julian Money said he expected 6-7 Sunbeams at each of Classic and Cowes Week, but several owners had yet to advise if they were entering either event.

*GRLC
31st January 2010
version 2.0*