

NSW 16FT SKIFF ASSOCIATION
MINUTES OF CLUB COMMODORES MEETING HELD 18/6/11
AT MANLY 16FT SKIFF SAILING CLUB

Meeting opened at 12.40pm (together with lunch and Clint Bowen's presentation).

PRESENT: Michael McMahon (Chair), Alexandra Deakin, John Andrew, Gavin Cooke, Chris Andrew, Paul Linnett, Craig Corke, Grahame Dingle, Riv Robson, Clint Bowen, Robert Wasson, Andrew Finney and Mark Graham.

APOLOGIES: Lloyd Mulholland, Troy Dobinson and Richard Nadone.

CLUBS REPRESENTED: Belmont, Manly/St George, Drummoyne, Georges River, Illawarra, Port Hunter and Middle Harbour.

Michael McMahon mentioned that Lloyd Mulholland was stuck in Coffs Harbour due the flooding that had occurred on the mid-North Coast this week. Michael thanked the Commodores for attending. This is the ninth year that this forum has been held and the consensus continues to be that it is still worthwhile on an annual basis as it provided a means for clubs to share information and ideas.

Clint Bowen / Rob Wasson (**Australian Association**)

- Clint and Rob Wasson gave a presentation on marketing initiative being developed by the Australian Association.
- The Association has been relatively inactive in recent years, but has now regrouped and believe that it is time to move forward.
- The Association has virtually no funds, so sponsorships, club support and voluntary input will be a key to promoting the Class.
- They are endeavouring to find a major sponsor – they would like to then see a sponsor's logo on all skiff sails and at each member club premises.
- A quarterly magazine is proposed.
- They are also looking at ways to get a cheaper boat and rigs, possibly through mass production.
- A letter is to be sent to each club soon seeking a commitment as to what level of involvement they are likely to accept; one on one meetings with individual clubs may be an option.
- In regard to the Hervey Bay Nationals, Rob is meeting with the local MP for the area next Tuesday with a view to approaching the Qld Government for assistance; there is a problem with finding a sponsor – tourism and businesses in the Hervey Bay area have been flat over the last year or so (the effect of Qld floods and the high Australian dollar); a Notice of Race and accommodation info packs will be sent to all member clubs in the next month or so.

Neal Petherbridge (**Flying Ant Association**)

- Addressed the meeting to outline their proposal to sail in conjunction with the NSW 16ft State Championships.
- Their objective is expose the Flying Ant class to 13ft and 16ft sailors, particularly those that are parents, to promote sailing and get kids on the water and away from computers, etc....
- The boat has a jib, main and spinnaker, plus a trapeze and they are currently considering introducing an asymmetric spinnaker, which will closely align it with the 13's and 16's.
- They are currently sailed at IYC, Port Hunter, Toronto and St George.

- There are only about 30 in NSW; they are very strong in WA and only about 8 in Victoria.
- They are happy to fit in with the skiffs and, rather than race, may just run some training events;
- It is expected that about 10 boats would attend each State Championship race.
- The age limit for a Flying Ant is 17, although there are very few close to that age.
- Michael McMahon indicated to Neal that the Association would finalise an answer by the next Association meeting on 13th July.

Paul Linnett (Illawarra)

- The Club's 16ft fleet looks like decreasing slightly next season to 7 or 8 boats;
- They do still have a junior training program with a fleet of Skyriders and Sabots, however, they have not translated to any real numbers for their junior and intermediate fleets;
- Skyrider fleet is sponsored by TRUenergy;
- A fleet of Sabots in the Club is now self draining, which might help retain some Juniors; work was done by Seawind;
- Flying Ants have dropped in numbers as some have moved on to other things; the Club did win the Nationals in 2010/11;
- Commodore, Richard Nadone, is keen for an Adult Learn to Sail Program, following a number of enquiries; the Club's problem is getting boats to run the Program; some may be sourced from the Yacht Shop;
- Trading wise, the Club has not travelled that well this year, however, they are just managing to keep their head above water.

Andrew Finney (Georges River)

- There were 7 registered skiffs this season, however, their weekly fleet was again boosted at various times during the season by 2 or 3 Middle Harbour boats;
- Expect about the same number next season;
- The Club still has Lasers (about 15-20), Herons (5-8 boats) and 420's (about 5 boats) and about 5 other different boats that make up the Open Class;
- Junior sailing plus training (2 classes) still takes place on Sunday morning;
- They have purchased a training RIB and an Opti for training to go with the 6 Lasers and 3 Sabots;
- Club is aiming at adopting a fleet of Tasers;
- The Club's turnover is going up, but unfortunately this is not translating to profits;
- The Board is currently undertaking an upgrade of the Club building;
- A new coffee shop has been built downstairs adjacent to the boatshed and all income goes to sailing;
- Georges River may be hosting some of the revamped Sail Sydney events in December.

Grahame Dingle (Port Hunter)

- There were 4 registered skiffs sailing regularly last season; they may gain an extra one next season;
- They also have 4 Manly Graduates, 5 catamarans and 8-10 Flying Ants;
- The Club had a battle with the Dept of Lands last season when they wanted to charge them \$5,000 per annum in rent; this has been re-negotiated to \$1,500 per year;
- They have a good relationship with Newcastle Cruising Yacht Club who are helping out with their juniors;
- Contrary to rumour, at this stage, there has been no suggestion from the Newcastle Port Authority that sailing in the Harbour / River will be curtailed once the new coal loaders come on line;

- Currently coal ships arrive and depart in pairs, one after the other; this potentially causes some disruption if a movement occurs during race time;
- The Club may be hosting the VS Nationals next season;
- During subsequent discussion, it was agreed that a flexible start time be adopted for the 13ft and 16ft State Championships that the Club will be hosting next season to allow racing to be held outside shipping movement times, where possible (ie. shipping movements are usually published at the beginning of each day).

Gavin Cooke (**Manly/St George**)

- The Club's fleet increased slightly this season with 29 registered skiffs and 24/26 regular starters; next season should remain about the same;
- There was a fleet of 8-10 13ft skiffs regularly sailing this season; expects a fleet of about the same next season;
- Flying 11 fleet was around 28 (up from 26), but this was expected to drop to around 22 next season as some move on to other classes;
- MJ's fleet was around 22 last season and was expected to increase to 26 next season; lack of boat storage is still one of the primary limitations on fleet size, with demand still exceeding what can be provided in the limited space that the Club occupies;
- The Learn to Sail programme continued this season with some flow through benefits to the MJ fleet;
- The Club has engaged a full-time Coach (Craig Ferris) for the Junior fleets and to run the Learn to Sail Programme; this includes working with the St George junior fleet; he will re-evaluate the Learn to Sail Program and approaches will be made to local schools with a view to running programs in conjunction with their sports programs.
- With regard to schools, the Club is to buy some Puffin Pacers to complement the schools program; many schools use these boats for inter-school events, so this will allow the Club to host some of these.
- A DA for changes to the front of the Club has been rejected, principally due to the disabled access requirements not being able to be met.
- The Club has now taken over the St George Sailing Club.
- Sailing will continue as before at St George for the time being. They have Moths, Skates, MG's, Flying Ants and an assortment of other classes.
- The Club is looking at a rebuild of the St George Club premises. It is uncertain at this stage whether it will be phased or done in one go.
- The Club is looking to build on the Learn to Sail Programme at St George.
- The Skates Nationals are scheduled to be held at St George in the 2011/12 season.

Riv Robson (**Drummoyne**)

- Indicated that their fleet had stayed the same this season with about 5/6 boats starting each week; expect to stay the same next season, with maybe one extra boat; Club is to encourage one or two of the younger crews to start travelling to interclub events;
- Junior numbers are down to around 3 Flying 11's and 20 Sabots;
- Have an Open Class fleet with about 8 Cherubs and 10 OK Dinghies;
- There are about 16 TS Hartley and Trailer Sailors;
- The Club does run a Learn to Sail Program, however, they found that many did not stay on; future applications for the Program will be culled to try and only accept those who indicate a commitment to continue sailing with the Club;
- Approval was given by the NSW Maritime Authority for a 22 berth marina in front of the Club in 2008, however, the Board has decided not to proceed as they feel it will no longer be financially viable;
- Club is still trading very well;

- Mortgage is due to be paid off next month, on time, after 10 years (it was used to rebuild the club);
- The Board is still supportive of 16's and sailing in general;
- The Club is still very interested in hosting 2013/14 Nationals for 16's (proposing 3/1/14 to 11/1/14);
- The Club's starter's boat has been renamed "Riv Robson" in recognition of Riv's long and enduring service to the Club.

Craig Corke (Belmont)

- Indicated that their fleet was slightly down on last season, with around 21 boats registered; should be similar next season; one concern is still the increasing average age of crews;
- Club offering grants to Juniors moving up to 16's, if they have sailed for a certain time with the Club;
- Their Pelican fleet has continued in popularity this season with 30 boats; problem is, there is still a shortage of boats;
- Cherubs (about 13 in all);
- There are still about 18-20 F11's; the Club hosted Nationals last season – very successful carnival with over 90 boats;
- 5-7 Lasers;
- The 29er fleet is still low with a fleet of only 4 to 6 boats;
- The Club is promoting their Learn to Sail through local Primary school kids to teach them sailing;
- The new boatshed will, hopefully, be finished in October;
- The Club is still trading well with another strong year;
- The Club won their compensation case against Leightons (re. concrete cancer problem with the section under the Club facing the Lake).
- The State Championship heats at Salamander Bay/Soldiers Point were considered successful.

Alexandra Deakin (Middle Harbour)

- Their fleet for this season was about 12 registered 16's; she expected that the numbers would be about the same for next season;
- The 13ft skiff fleet is still relatively small with 5 boats this season and should be the same next season;
- They still have good numbers in their juniors - Skyriders, MJs and Flying 11s;
- Next season MJ's will race on Sunday morning, whilst the Flying 11's, 13's and some 29ers will race in a combined fleet in the afternoon (the 29ers will have an under 18 age restriction in conjunction with the Learn to Sail Program and with the aim to have them eventually move into the 13's); a 13ft fleet will still race on Saturday afternoon as well;
- The Club made a small profit this season, despite the fact that there has been no trading since 31 May 2009 (funds have come from bar sales after the Club's races and the Telco towers on the building);
- The Club renovations, which have taken just over two years, should be finished by the end of July (this year);
- There have been some issues with the road access area in front of the Club, plus the ongoing problem with Council parking fees; once the Club is trading again there may be a courtesy bus covering the area of Mosman and also Seaforth.

Mark Graham (13ft Skiffs)

- Mark noted that more clubs seem to be focusing on a junior sailing program;

- There are currently still about 18 boats in NSW, which has remained static in the last season or two, but there are about 8 in Brisbane which is still growing;
- The availability of cheaper second hand boats is still a challenge;
- The Class has still attracted a good proportion of girls;
- The Class offers about a two to three year transition period for young sailors;
- The 13ft skiff mould is still in Queensland;
- There is still some uncertainty about the number for next season's Nationals at Hervey Bay; there may be only 6 or 7.

Rob Wasson (Queensland)

- Rob attended this meeting at the invitation of the NSW Commodore to provide insight into what's happening in Queensland and also the Australian 16ft Skiff Association (of which Rob is President).
- The revamped Darling Point Sailing Squadron is still waiting to sort out a lease; they now have a QC working on the submission to the issuing authority;
- The Club is having issues with the current owner of the old 18ft skiff club building on the eastern side of the Club as they have built a fence in an awkward position;
- The Club has a fleet of 3 to 4 16ft skiffs;
- The Club has 3 Flying 11's, apart from the 8 – 9 13's and a mixed fleet of Sabots and 125's;
- There is a lot of junior interest within the Club; it is a family Club, with a number moving from the nearby RQYS, due to their high fees;
- Rob is hopeful that several crews from the 13's will move through to the 16's in the next season or so;
- There is a Sailing School run every Sunday morning during the season and it has been booked out;
- Sailability is also sailing from the Club;
- Once the lease is sorted, the Club is likely to spend several hundred thousand dollars in upgrading the clubhouse.

GENERAL BUSINESS

1. Survey - Gavin Cooke felt that there was a disconnect between the results of the recent survey of the Class and the voting for carbon masts; on the one hand, in the survey, there was a general feeling that the Class was too expensive, yet, the clubs voted to accept carbon masts, which were more expensive than the current aluminium. He felt that the voting method on motions might need to be changed to something like a one vote one skiff method.
2. Yachting New South Wales - there is discussion again within YNSW on the fee structure. Gavin indicated that YNSW now had more of a focus on clubs, rather than individuals and the "elite". He indicated that the Victorian and West Australian Yachting Associations get much more funding than NSW from their respective State Governments. Gavin also advised that boats can now be insured through Yachting NSW.

Michael McMahon again thanked all those who attended, especially those who had travelled a long distance (from Belmont, Illawarra and Brisbane), and agreed that it had again been a worthwhile exercise. He particularly wished to thank the Manly Club for hosting the meeting and supplying lunch and drinks for the attendees.

Meeting closed 3.35pm

NEXT MEETING – Manly Club (16th June 2012).