

NSW 16FT SKIFF ASSOCIATION
MINUTES OF CLUB COMMODORE'S MEETING HELD 15/6/13
AT MANLY 16FT SKIFF SAILING CLUB

Meeting opened at 2.00pm (preceded by lunch at 1.00pm).

PRESENT: Lloyd Mulholland (Chair), Michael McMahon, Gavin Cooke, Dan Watterson, Grant Windsham, Sean Harrison, Neil Tavener, Clint Bowen, James Bury, Robert Wasson, Sandra Wasson and Mark Graham.

APOLOGIES: Grahame Dingle (PH) and Riv Robson (Drum).

CLUBS REPRESENTED: Belmont, Manly/St George, Drummoyne and Middle Harbour.

Lloyd thanked the Commodores for attending. This is the eleventh 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 valuable means for clubs to share information and ideas.

Sean Harrison (**Belmont**)

- Indicated that their fleet had dropped only slightly from last season, with around 20 boats registered and sailing; should be similar next season;
- the Club is now clearly focussed on developing a pathway to lead their younger sailors through to the 16's; they are also focussing on trying to create a social atmosphere for kids and their families, rather than creating an "elite" type fleet; the Club believes that sailors who are more socially engaged are likely to stay with the Club more so than those who are "elite" and highly coached (these are more likely to move on to more competitive pursuits);
- Club is still offering grants to Juniors moving up to 16's, if they have sailed for a certain time with the Club; the take-up of the scheme has, however, been lower than expected;
- Their Pelican fleet has continued in popularity this season with 30 boats; still race on Saturday mornings; many of the junior sailors are kids or grand-kids of former 16ft skiff sailors;
- There are still about 12 F11's who race on Saturday afternoons;
- Cherubs (about 10 in all); their sailors are mostly older and do not tend to contribute to the Club as volunteers; the Club is continuing with the move to disband the Class by the end of the 2015/16 season and focus on the 29er as their mid range class;
- Only about 5 Lasers sailing regularly;
- The 29er fleet has reduced slightly with about 6 boats (Club has 23 years age limit for males); the Club has continued to support this Class because the boats are relatively cheap and are sailed by other clubs on the Lake which means their sailors might ultimately move to the 16's at Belmont;
- The old boatshed and auditorium area of the Club is planned to be converted to a "hotel" like configuration/atmosphere;
- There has been some discussion about the possibility of 16's racing on Saturday afternoon, so that all Club sailing is on the one day and make the Class more visible to the Juniors; further consideration is likely to continue on this idea;
- 16ft skiffs who race with a Junior crew member continue to get an automatic 2 minute handicap adjustment for a maximum of 2 races;
- The club did purchase a new starter's boat at the beginning of the season;
- The Club is still trading well with another very strong year (net profit of \$1.5 million);
- The Club is still reliant on poker machines as a major revenue source, however, the Board is actively pursuing other options to hedge against possible reductions in revenue from this source.

Neil Tavener (**Drummoyne**)

- Neil firstly thanked all for the continuing support that Drummoyne has received after they successfully retained the right to hold the 2013/14 Australian Championships;
- Their fleet had improved slightly again this season with 7 regular skiffs starting each week;
- Their Juniors are a highlight for the Club with around 3 Flying 11's and 20 Sabots;
- Have an Open Class fleet with about 7 Cherubs and 7 OK Dinghies; the parents of the young Cherub sailors tend to be quite involved in volunteering to help with the sailing activities;
- Most juniors were involved in representing the Club at their respective Class Nationals during the season;
- There are about 18 regular TS Hartleys;
- Learn to Sail Program is still running and very popular with two TL1 training sessions over the season;
- The Club has about 10 yachts racing each Sunday, and about 50 racing on Tuesday evenings during DST;
- There has been an initiative amongst the sailing clubs in the Upper Harbour area to work more closely and collaboratively; their Commodores have met on several occasions;
- Club is still trading very well, although down a little on their peak about two years ago;
- There has been some infrastructure improvements to the downstairs area – improvements to the verandah and installation of a proper BBQ area;
- There is a high degree of energy and excitement amongst the sailors to be involved in celebrations for their 100th year anniversary; a number of celebrations are planned, including the 16ft Skiff National Championships;
- On-water and off-water sub-committees have been formed to organise the Nationals; a number of logistical aspects have been considered and Council approval obtained, where necessary – eg. trailer parking on the lawn area above the rigging beach; rigging space in front of the Club, approaches to Birkenhead for parking space (although this has yet to be ratified).

Dan Watterson (**Middle Harbour**)

- Their fleet for this season had risen to 12 registered 16's; there are indications that they may increase by a couple more next season;
- The 13ft skiff fleet is still small with only 2 boats this season;
- They still have good numbers in their juniors – Optimists (10), MJs (about 10-15) and Flying 11s (about 10-15);
- The Optimists, which have replaced a fleet of Skyriders, are owned by the Club and used as their Learn to Sail training boats; their training courses are always full;
- The MJ's race on Sunday morning, whilst the F11 race on Sunday afternoon;
- Their fleet of 29ers has decreased to between 5 and 10 racing on Sundays; they have an age restriction of 18 years of age; some also race with the 13's on Saturday afternoon with the view to also encourage them to mix with the 16's sailors; a couple were allowed to sail with a couple of older sailors and they have now moved through to the 16's;
- The Club had two Junior Sailing Days on Sundays with the 16ft fleet and these proved very successful;
- In addition, if a 16ft skiff crew race with a Junior sailor, they get a handicap benefit;
- The Club has continued to improve its financial position, consolidating its relationship with ZEST function group; they are now trading at a profit.

Gavin Cooke (Manly/St George)

- The **Manly Club's** fleet reduced slightly this season with 26 registered skiffs and 21 regular starters; next season should remain about the same;
- There was a fleet of 12 13ft skiffs regularly sailing this season; expects about 15 next season as juniors continue to move up from F11's; some 13ft sailors have continued to move through to the 16's;
- Flying 11 fleet was around 25 boats, with about the same expected next season; several F11 sailors are moving to the 13's next season; leaving a younger age group in the F11 fleet (Club Champion this season was only 14 years of age);
- MJ's fleet was also around 25 boats, with about the same expected next season;
- The Learn to Sail programme has been outsourced to an external entity but has continued this season with some flow through benefits to the MJ fleet (about 50% of trainees have moved through, with an even mix of boys and girls); there were 2 x 10 week Programs and one during each School holiday;
- A Junior sailing day with 16's taking out junior sailors was again a huge success this season;
- The Club has had a strong trading year;
- Work continues on the beams under the Club to once again combat the concrete cancer (a problem since the early 1970's), fortunately, the work has not been as expensive as first thought, although still at a cost;
- At **St George**, there was a fleet of 7 regular 16ft skiffs, with the same number expected next season;
- There were also 16 Moths, 12 MG's and a small fleet of Skates (Flying Ants have gone);
- The outsourced Learn to Sail Programme has also been implemented at St George;
- The Club successfully hosted both the MJ and F11 Nationals next season in the December/January period;
- Trading wise, the Club is still breaking even;
- With their business partner, Doltone House, they are still awaiting DA approval for the rebuilding plans.

Michael McMahon on behalf of Grahame Dingle (Port Hunter)

- There were 4 skiffs sailing regularly during last season;
- A couple of older skiffies may make a comeback next season, providing an additional skiff;
- They also have 5 Manly Graduates, 2 catamarans and 6 Flying Ants;
- Some additional junior sailors are expected next season;
- Another proposed coal loader proposed for the Port continues to be put on hold, meaning that shipping movements will now continue at the current level for at least 5-6 seasons;
- The Club received a grant from one of the coal companies to build a new kitchen area and this work has been completed, along with replacement of the Club's roof and a repaint of the building; they have also been able to refurbish their furniture and some equipment after the Belmont 16's gave them access to the Swansea Bowling Club which has been closed down;
- Financially, the Club is still quite sound, for its size.

Georges River and Illawarra – no reports, as the Clubs were not represented.

Mark Graham (13ft Skiffs)

- There are currently still about 19 boats in NSW, which has remained static in the last season or two; 12-15 at Manly and 4 at Middle Harbour, although not all have been regularly sailed;
- State Championships were sailed separately to the 16's this season, but feedback from 13's indicates that, if possible, at least two heats might be able to be held with the 16's;
- The Association is considering a Youth Training Day which will involve training in the 13's then an afternoon on the 16's;
- Consideration also being given to racing 13's at a Flying 11 interclub event.

Robert Wasson (**Qld 16ft skiffs**)

- Major focus has been on Darling Point Sailing Club where negotiations have lasted about 7 years on their lease arrangement; the Government was looking for a developer to take over the site along with the adjacent 18ft premises and Coast Guard premises; now looks like being resolved after some recent media coverage by Channels 7 and 9; looks like a 5 year lease for the Club with a further 10 year option.
- Learn to Sail has been expanding; there are plenty of juniors; a Learn to Sail campaign has been running once a month to get interest in the 13's;
- There has only been about 5-6 regular 16's sailing; low numbers in the 13's, but this situation will hopefully improve next season with the Learn to Sail 13ft Campaign.

GENERAL BUSINESS

1. “Cheaper 16ft skiff” - Gavin Cooke gave a rundown on the Manly Club's current status in their pursuit to see a cheaper 16ft skiff.
 - A new skiff can currently cost between \$70-\$75,000 (off the shelf) on the water;
 - They are currently talking with McConaghy's to finance a hull and deck mould and have the boats built in China (Manly would own the moulds);
 - The current bobstay arrangement and measurement is an issue (ie. the maximum 125mm “Depth of bowsprit”);
 - By making the bowsprit as part of the hull, they can save approximately \$3,000, however, the above measurement would need to be increased to 165mm to allow this to happen; the general consensus is that this would not cause any performance advantage to the skiff; it is proposed that this issue will be further canvassed at club level and, if it looks like being acceptable, the Australian Association would propose a rule change;
 - If the previous matter can be resolved, it is expected that a skiff hull could be delivered ex. McConaghy's at Mona Vale for under \$25,000 – that includes painted hull, fittings, cradle, foils, boom and spinnaker pole;
 - They are further investigating a package of complete boat with sails and mast for around \$51,000.
2. Yachting New South Wales - Gavin Cooke indicated that there were still some issues with the fees for a handful of clubs that are licensed, but being resolved; some have resulted from misunderstandings.

Lloyd again thanked all those who attended and agreed that it had once again been a worthwhile exercise. He particularly wished to thank the Manly Club for hosting the meeting and supplying lunch for the attendees.

Meeting closed 3.50pm

NEXT MEETING – Manly Club (14th June 2014).