

NSW 16FT SKIFF ASSOCIATION  
MINUTES OF CLUB COMMODORE'S MEETING HELD 21/6/14  
AT DRUMMOYNE SAILING CLUB

Meeting opened at 1.00pm (preceded by lunch at 12.15pm).

PRESENT: Lloyd Mulholland (Chair), Michael McMahon, Neil Tavener, Riv Robson, Andrew St John, Danny Anderson, James Griffiths, Grahame Dingle and Phil West.

APOLOGIES: Peter Kershaw (PH), Robert Wasson (Qld and Aust Assoc), Grant Windsham (Manly), Robert Flanagan (Bel), Richard Nardone (IYC), Dan Watterson (MH) and Paul Donovan (StG), Mark Graham (13ft skiffs).

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

Lloyd thanked the Commodores, or their representatives, for attending. This is the twelfth 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.

Neil Tavener (**Drummoyne**)

- Neil firstly thanked all clubs for their support during the 2013/14 Australian Championships; their Centenary year is now drawing to a close, but it has been a very successful year, and also included hosting the Sabot Nationals;
- Their 16ft skiff fleet and TS16's race on Saturday and the Juniors and yachts sail on Sundays;
- Their fleet had remained at 7 regular 16ft skiffs starting each week this season; there may be an additional boat next season with a young crew from the F11's;
- They have a fleet of 6-8 OK Dinghies which sails regularly and has been a stalwart fleet for the Club over the years;
- In their Juniors they have around 24 Sabots all together (9 in Gold fleet + 5 x 2-ups and 6-8 in the Silver fleet – a training fleet);
- There are 1-2 Flying 11's, which they hope to increase to 5 next season;
- The Club has a crew from the juniors, Dana Tavener and Catherine Pagett, who won the Australian 420 youths and are heading off to Germany for the 420 Worlds next month.
- There is an Open Class fleet with about 9 Cherubs, one of which won the National Championships during the season;
- There has been a smaller fleet of TS16's (Hartleys) this season;
- Learn to Sail Program continued this season with two TL1 training sessions over the season;
- The Club has about 10-15 yachts racing fortnightly on a Sunday, and about 60 racing on Tuesday evenings during DST;
- There is also a group of about 11 model yacht sailors racing once a month, on a Sunday;
- The initiative amongst the sailing clubs in the Upper Harbour area to work more closely and collaboratively has continued this season, with a combined yacht fleet racing in the Winter season and combined races during the Summer season for their Junior fleets;
- Neil said one of his main strategies has been to bridge the gap between the skiffs and Juniors by having a couple of joint sailing days;
- There were about 60 key volunteers involved in the sailing over the season;

- The Club is conscious of trying to engage parents of new Junior sailors in social activities;
- Club is still trading very well, with consistently good trading results;
- They have benefited, to some degree over recent years, from the closure of several other registered clubs in the Balmain-Drummoyne area;
- They currently have around 7,000 members;
- One concern for the Club is their reliance on poker machine revenue, and the Board is looking at ways that they might move away and diversify from this situation.

#### Phil West (**Middle Harbour**)

- Their fleet for this season had remained at 12 registered 16's; there are indications that there should be at least one additional boat next season and maybe a second;
- Whilst there are four 13ft skiffs stored in the boatshed, they are not sailing with the exception that a couple of boats raced in some major interclub events;
- Their fleet of 29ers is a “travelling fleet” and has increased, on occasions, to 16-18 boats racing on Sundays; the Club has found that people consider they are a cheaper option to the alternative 13ft skiff; the Club has put an age restriction of 23 years of age on the Class; their fleet is boosted at times with boats from other clubs (eg. Northbridge Sailing Club); a couple of crew have moved through to 16's, despite some early concerns that a majority would take the “Olympic” route; Phil believes that those who do not have the money or inclination to follow that route will come through to the 16's and stay with the Club;
- They still have good numbers in their juniors – Optimists (about 16), MJs (about 10, with no sign of increase, at this stage) and Flying 11s (about 8-10, although the fleet is boosted to 18 in joint races with Northbridge Sailing Club);
- The Optimists are used as their Learn to Sail training boats; their training courses are always full;
- A fleet of Windsurfers was introduced last season;
- The Seniors (16's) race on Saturday, Juniors on Sunday;
- The Club again had two combined sailing days on Sundays involving the 16ft fleet and these proved very successful;
- The management of the Junior Division has tended to have been done more independently by parents, but these arrangements are now being more formalised through to Board level;
- Overall volunteer base is still only a small, reliable core and the Club is conscious that this situation needs to be expanded;
- The Club would like to have a paid Sailing Manager (even part-time) to arrange sponsorships, etc..., but cannot afford it at the moment;
- Phil described the sailors within the Club as a very sociable group;
- The Club is happy to host major Regattas and are keeping their eyes open for any opportunities that are on offer; they will be hosting 2014-15 MJ Nationals;
- The Club has continued to improve its financial position, continuing to consolidate its relationship with ZEST function group which has now been in place for about 4 years;
- The Board continues to focus on their original business plan which was initiated about 5 years ago and are continuing to trade at a profit;
- There has been challenges balancing Zest's desire to operate the premises as a restaurant-function centre, with the members wanting to maintain it as a Club with a bar and bistro;

- A new Secretary-Manager has come on board to help manage this situation; he is a sailor (Mark Wilson) and has a solid business background;
- They still have no poker machines, although they retain 6 licences;
- Rent imposed by Lands Department lease continues to increase;
- The Club has a membership of around 2,000 with approximately 100 sailing members;
- The “Catalina” complex on the southern side of the Club has lodged a DA for a marina in front of their building; it will be 102 metres long and end up extending half way across the MH Club, further restricting their boats getting in and out of the beach area adjacent to the Club; the Club is fighting this DA application.

#### Andrew St John (**Manly/St George**)

- The **Manly** Club’s fleet reduced again this season with 22 registered skiffs and 17-18 regular starters; next season, they look like losing 2 skiffs, reducing the fleet to 20;
- There was a fleet of 12 13ft skiffs regularly sailing again this season; expects about 17-18 next season as juniors continue to move up from F11’s; some 13ft sailors have continued to move through to the 16’s; Rob Napper has taken on the role of mentor to the 13ft fleet and is also trying to promote the Class; racing this season will consist of more sprint series events as this seems to be what the younger sailors would like; Club is appointing a coach for the fleet;
- Flying 11 fleet has remained around 25 boats, with about the same number expected next season;
- MJ fleet was around 27 boats, with at least the same number expected next season;
- The Club has run a Class Development Program for the MJ’s this winter;
- Boat storage is at a premium and this is limiting the size of the Junior fleets to some degree;
- The Learn to Sail programme was again outsourced to an external entity and has continued with some flow through benefits to the MJ fleet; Club needs to work out how more can be encouraged to move into MJ’s or F11’s; there were 2 x 10 week Programs and one during each School holiday period – all were very popular, despite the cost of up to \$400 for the school holiday sessions;
- A Junior sailing day with 16’s taking out junior sailors was again a huge success this season;
- The Board of Directors are currently considering a long term strategic plan for sailing – aim is to get younger ones into sailing and transition through within the Club’s fleets;
- The Club is currently undergoing major renovations, the first since 1991 – it includes lounge area, covered deck area, kitchen, toilets/change rooms and replacing a number of timber piles under the timber deck area; expected to take another 6 weeks or so;
- As a result trading results this winter have been very much reduced;
- At **St George**, there was a reduced fleet of 4 16ft skiffs racing each week; a young crew from Cronulla Sailing Club started sailing an older skiff towards the end of this season and are expected to return next season; they are trying to encourage several others from that Club to get into skiffs; there are 4 boats stored in the Club but have not sailed due to lack of crews;
- There were 18 Moths, 15 MG’s and NS’s (with 5 more to come next season) and a small fleet of 8 Skates;
- Junior sailing is still a concern with no regular races for MJ’s or Flying 11’s;
- The outsourced Learn to Sail Programme continues, but the focus will be changing next season with training and junior sailing moving from Sundays to Saturdays;

- In regard to the 16's, the Manly Club Board offered participation money to be evenly split between boats that started, finished and competed in over 2/3rds of the scheduled races, however, this failed to achieve the aim of encouraging more boats to sail; the rules for the amount and distribution of this money for next season will be reviewed;
- Trading wise, the Club is still trading in the black;
- With their business partner, Doltone House, they are still awaiting finalisation of DA approval for the rebuilding plans.

#### Grahame Dingle (**Port Hunter**)

- There were 4 skiffs sailing regularly during last season; this may drop to 3 next season;
- The Club tried giving a boat to some younger sailors to race, but they did not show a lot of interest;
- They also had 3-4 Manly Graduates, 4 catamarans and 8 Flying Ants;
- The Club is trying to involve parents of juniors to become volunteers to assist with the sailing organisation;
- 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;
- Financially, the Club is still quite sound, for its size;
- Under its liquor licence, they are only allowed 26 days of the year where they can sell alcohol which does restrict their activities somewhat; attempts have been made to increase this, but they have been unsuccessful; luckily, they have been able to secure several outside functions, following the refurbishment of the Club last year, and this has helped their financial situation;
- The Club has recently secured a grant from Orica to replace the boatshed roof.

#### James Griffiths (**Belmont**)

- Indicated that their 16ft fleet had increased slightly from last season, with around 23 boats registered and sailing; should be similar next season;
- The Club continues to enjoy a well organised structure under the sailing administration team of Jacqueline Bell and Danny Anderson who are focussed on developing a pathway to lead their younger sailors through to the 16's; together they have embarked on a variety of initiatives, one example being the introduction of theme days and a number of other activities to try and create a social atmosphere for kids and their families;
- The Club is still offering grants (\$2,500 per person) to Juniors moving up to 16's, if they have sailed for 10 years with the Club; the take-up of the scheme continues to be lower than expected, despite the fact that 3 juniors could potentially combine their grants to buy into a 16ft skiff;
- Another initiative of the Club to encourage 16ft crews to seek out a junior as a fill-in crew is a 2 minute handicap bonus per person; a skiff can only use a particular junior for a maximum of two occasions each season;
- The Sailing Executive have identified a perceived disconnect between the Saturday and Sunday fleets (Juniors on Saturday, Seniors on Sunday) and are implementing initiatives such as combined sailing days and picnic days on Saturdays involving the 16's;
- Their Pelican fleet has continued in popularity this season with 40 registered boats and an average fleet of 26; still race on Saturday mornings, with two Divisions – Adventure Training Squad and a Racing Fleet;

- There are 23 registered F11's with an average fleet of 12 who race on Saturday afternoons, with an encouraging overlap of some of the older/more experienced Pelican kids;
- The 29er fleet has 10 boats registered with about 6, on average, racing each week (Club has 23 years age limit for males); one crew has competed in the World Championships overseas, together with other major championships within Australia; 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;
- Cherubs (about 22 in all); the Club has reversed a decision to disband the Class by the end of the 2015/16 season; an age restriction of under 25 has, however, been placed on the Class within the Club for a crew to be eligible to win the Club Championship and earn travel assistance or other financial support; the aim of this initiative is to encourage sailors to move through into the 16's;
- There is now a fleet about 22 Lasers sailing regularly, many of whom are ex-skiff sailors and parents of kids in the junior fleets;
- The Club is still trading well with another very strong year;
- A DA has been lodged to convert the old boatshed and auditorium area of the Club is planned to be converted to a boatshed bar area, which will in turn allow for layout changes to the poker machine area and food serving area and the creation of a child friendly area within the Club; is planned to start next January.

**Illawarra** – no delegate, but a written report submitted by Paul Linnett.

- The skiff fleet is holding steady with 7 skiffs sailing regularly; last season, the skiff racing at the IYC was very competitive with most of the fleet finishing within a few minutes of each other; there is "talk" of potentially another skiff turning up next season;
- The senior open fleet has steady numbers of around 15 each week, but the TY fleet has been rather disappointing again with only 3 to 5 turning up to race;
- The Skyrider learn to sail program is going well with about 30 students starting the program; to provide properly trained coaches to run the learners program, last season the Club paid a couple of interested sailors to go to the YNSW coaching program;
- As a result of the learn to sail program, the Club is starting to convert a few into the next level, sailing sabots and Flying Ants;
- Currently, the Club has 4 Flying Ants sailing regularly; last season one of the Flying Ants crew won the National Championship; also the Flying Ant Association has successfully converted the boats over to an asymmetrical spinnaker;
- This season, the Club hosted 2 regattas - the Illawarra Youth Regatta and the NSW NS State Championship;
- Next season, the Club is looking at hosting the Flying Ant Nationals at Christmas, Spiral Nationals over the Australia Day weekend and the Tasar State Championship over the Easter weekend
- Financially, the Club is doing ok;
- Initial renovations have started, which has modernized the club making it more appealing to visitors;
- The Oak Flats Bowling and Recreation Club board has been very supportive of sailing initiatives that have been proposed; the Club is looking forward to continue working with them in the future; many ideas are in the planning.

No reports available for **13ft skiffs** or **Queensland 16's**.

## GENERAL BUSINESS

1. “Cheaper 16ft skiff” - Lloyd Mulholland gave a brief rundown on the Australian Association initiative for a cheaper 16ft skiff from China.
  - A potential builder has been identified to have a skiff hull and 2 blades built in China for \$20,000; the builder is based in Australia, with a factory in China;
  - Rob Wasson and Clint Bowen have made one trip to China to view the factory and are likely to make one more trip once a mould, etc... is ready; both trips were carried out at their own expense;
  - Rob and Clint are also looking at sourcing sails and rigging in China;
  - There is a requirement for a minimum production run of 8-9 hulls;
  - At this stage, first hulls are due by Xmas and will go to Manly and Belmont as both these Clubs and the NSW 16ft Skiff Association will be financing their initial up front purchase cost.

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

Meeting closed 2.40pm

**NEXT MEETING** – tba.