Solent Sunbeam Newsletter 01/2024

The snowdrops are poking out and the days are getting longer so it's time for our January Newsletter*.

The winning Quiz team (just) – the Deep Enders

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Class Captain's Welcome

By Roger Wickens

Xmas has flown by and we have held our first social engagement of 2024. A fantastic turnout of 41 people for our first Quiz night held at The Ship. A delicious meal with very friendly and attentive staff - Itchenor is so lucky to have The Ship at its centre. A huge thank you to the organisers – James for coming up with the questions, Jacqueline and Nikki for making everything work so well on the night.

* The eagle-eyed will notice that it is now February! The newsletter was embargoed until the Falmouth news was confirmed.

Some of the rules questions had us all tied in knots! A really thought provoking exercise and definitely something to be followed up. We even had a contingent of Mermaid sailors who sportingly had to cope with a section of questions all about our Sunbeam history. It was lovely seeing them.

The Master of Ceremonies, who really looked the part in his sequined jacket.

Social Updates

By Jacqueline Evans

Winter Walk and lunch – Sunday 25th February, with lunch at The Star and Garter, East Dean. Further details (including the walk route and how to sign up) have been circulated.

Winter Cocktail Party – Saturday 16th March – Viv and Anna Williams have kindly agreed to host the party at their home in Emsworth. Details will be circulated soon.

Carbon Fibre Booms - A report from the Technical Committee

By Martin Jones

Following the successful adoption of carbon fibre masts by the class, a number of members have expressed interest in the possible adoption of carbon fibre booms. The Technical Committee has reviewed the potential benefits and cost of carbon fibre booms as an option for Sunbeamers wishing to replace their existing aluminium booms.

One of the key drivers for the adoption of carbon fibre masts was the potential lack of availability of the Selden mast section due to the retiring of the dye tool Selden used to make the Sunbeam mast. Today there is no such problem with the supply of the aluminium section used for our booms. We have obtained prices for the carbon fibre boom of £3,000 fitted compared with £1,000 for the equivalent aluminium boom from Selden. Based on the price differential, the limited technical benefits and the ready supply of our current aluminium booms, the Technical Committee recommends the class does not adopt carbon fibre booms.

Martin

Proposed link up with Falmouth with a new Sunbeam Class Association

Top of the agenda items for the Spring Meeting on Sunday 17th March is the possibility of joining up again with the Falmouth Sunbeams. For reasons set out below, we think this is a good idea, but we are cautious not to be tied too closely. Falmouth may well feel the same. Accordingly, a **Sunbeam Class Association Constitution** has been drafted with the following principles:

The idea is that each Class shares the same Constitution, but is responsible for running, making, and changing its own existing Rules. With only a few minor exceptions each Class can also change as it wishes how it manages itself.

The draft Constitution will be put on the Website for everyone to read and will be circulated in good time prior to our Class Spring Meeting. Everyone is encouraged to think about this and join the debate at our Spring Meeting. We think the reasons for making this move can be summarised as follows:

1. A discriminator from the other two fleets at ISC. The XODs are spread round the Solent area. The Swallows lost their only other fleet at Aldborough. A closer relationship with Falmouth allows us to offer sailing every few years at another location.
2. We have many shared personal friendships with owners and crews in each Fleet, and some boats and owners already travel between the two Fleets.
3. Strengthens the Class – a closer relationship with Falmouth should help both of us.
4. Better access to Falmouth experience - although they race in a different way, they will experience things in their fleet that it would be good to know about and not just rely on personal connections for that communication.

5. An extended network of skilled Sunbeam shipwrights - this is linked to the point above and gives the ISC fleet a broader source of support, albeit with some transport implications.
6. A bigger presence in the traditional keelboat world.
7. Reading the History of the two Classes in the preamble to the proposed new Sunbeam Class Association Constitution one is struck by how fortunate and privileged we are to be part of this intertwined story between Solent and Falmouth, and how after 100 years the Sunbeam continues to bewitch all who sail in her.

Solent has reached its Centenary, and Falmouth are about to. The two Classes were joined in a much tighter single Class for 45 years until we split. In 2024 there will be two GRP boats sailing in the Falmouth fleet. It seems to be the moment to re-unite but in a much looser way.

Meet the Member

Thanks to Martin Jones (Holly, V32) for following David in the "Meet the Member" feature. We asked Martin the same questions. Here is what he had to say:

1. What was your first sailing memory?

Sailing my Gremlin pram dinghy around the creeks at Brancaster and Overy Staithes in North Norfolk on our family holidays. I used to spend hours and hours exploring the creeks from the age of about 7.

2. What is your sailing high point?

Without question, winning the Prince of Wales Cup and week in 1981, I was 21, and am still the youngest person ever to have won POW. It was also quite an upset for the Itchenor 14 establishment, Mike Peacock was second and Phil Morrison third…no one from the North had ever won POW. I had been lucky enough to team up with a very experienced and capable crew called Peter Kassell, He put together a rigorous 6 month training program of sailing 3 times a week and circuit training 3 evenings a week with one goal, to win POW. I learned a lot from Peter. Winning the 14 Worlds in a 130-boat fleet at Torquay in 1991 was great but POW 1981 is still my high-point.

Coming up to the finish of POW in 1981. Note the weight jackets in those days!

3. What is your sailing low point?

Not sure I have a low point as such, breaking 5 ribs in my back whilst helming a Farr 40 was probably my most painful. Breaking a rib in a capsize at the 14 Europeans in Lake Garda, not being able to get back in the boat and floating for an hour until being rescued was slightly unnerving and very cold. My most embarrassing moment was leading a race in the Sigma 38 winter series and having just set the kite on port, the second boat was coming upwind on starboard, as I bore away to give him room we rolled to windward and the top of our mast hooked under his backstay. I have never seen a rig come down so fast or so dramatically…all my fault and our rig was fine.

4. What interesting fact might fellow Members not know about you?

I'm a Geordie who lost what little traces of accent I had when I moved South in my 20's.

In Memoriam

Some of our older Sunbeamers who knew her will be sad to read the notice from our Club that Diana Williamson has died. Her husband Mike died during the Covid lockdown and a celebration of his life was held at the RTYC on 19th January this year.

Mike and Diana were a well recognised couple in Sunbeam sailing and social activities when I joined Sunbeams in the 1980's. Mike had sailed V14 Santa Baby successfully since 1958 winning the McMeekin six times and being Class Captain in 1960 - 1962. I recall Diana sailing with Mike and being given a cheerful wave, and her sparkling company at our social gatherings at Itchenor and Cowes including at the RYS of which they were members.

For very many years Mike was Secretary of the International Dragon Class and was always supported by Diana at their social events.

Mike gave an interesting account of his early days after joining Sunbeams on pages 107 and 108 in Peter Nicholson's book "The Brilliance of Sunbeams". Mike and Diana are a well remembered and respected couple in the history of Sunbeams and we salute their passing and their memory.

Alan Stannah

Mike with Peter Nicholson. What was the year…?

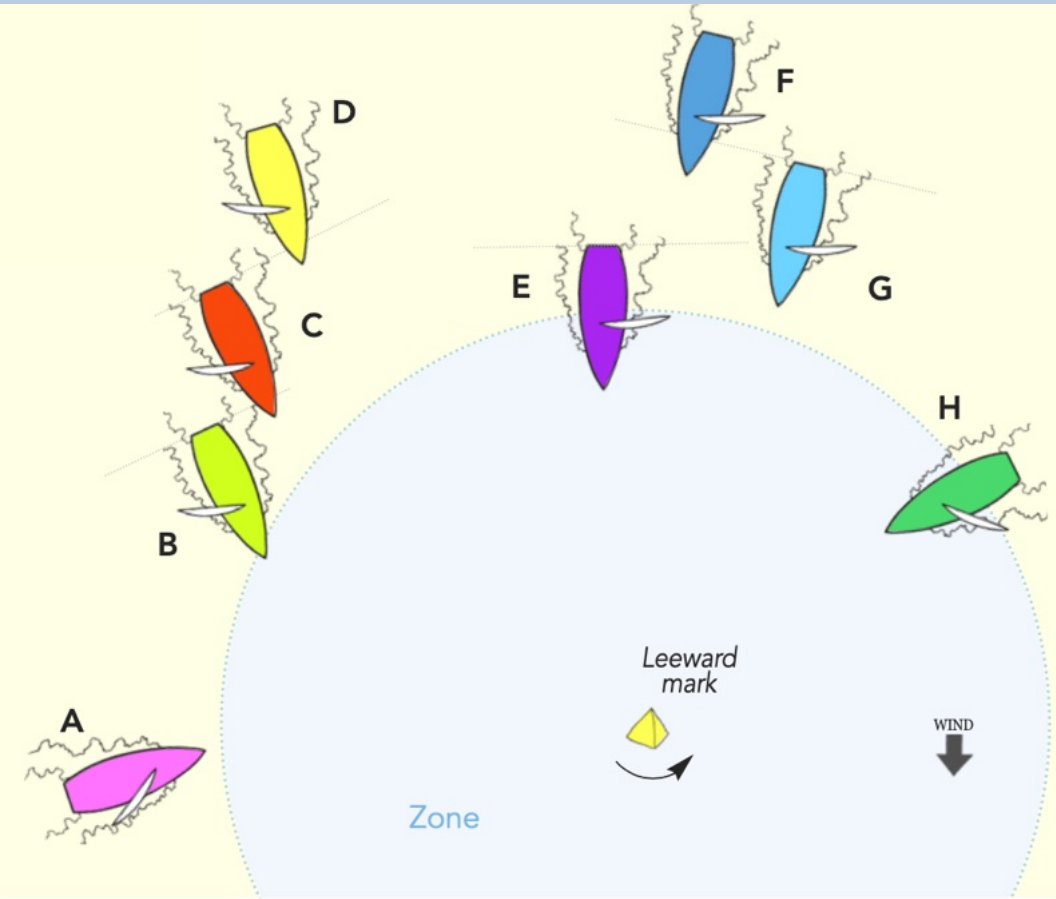
Rules Corner

For those who enjoyed the Rules Quiz here is another situation and questions to test your knowledge.

A fleet of boats is approaching a leeward mark. Assume the overlaps that exist (or don't exist) at this moment have remained the same for at least the past minute or so. Answers at the end so no peeking…

All questions are true or false answers. Good luck!

PS don't forget that the web has a host of resources to help learn the rules. Here is one example: https://www.youtube.com/@racingrulesgeek/videos



Question 1 - Boat C must give mark-room to Boat G.

Question 2 - Boat F must give mark-room to Boat E.

Question 3 - Boat B must give mark-room to Boat D.

Question 4 -Boat A must give mark-room to Boat B.

Question 5 - Boat G must give mark-room to Boat H.

Question 6 - Boat A must give mark-room to Boat H.

Rules questions answers:

Question 1

Boat C must give mark-room to Boat G.

False – It looks like C may have to give mark-room to G, at this leeward mark, but neither of these boats has reached the zone, so rule 18 (Mark-Room) does not yet apply between them. As soon as one of them reaches the zone we will see which one is entitled to mark- room.

Question 2

Boat F must give mark-room to Boat E.

True – Boat E is in the zone at the leeward mark, so rule 18 (Mark-Room) applies between E and F (and also between E and each other boat). Since E and F were not overlapped when E entered the zone, the boat that was clear astern (F) must give mark-room to the boat clear ahead (E). See rule 18.2(b). Even though Boat G overlaps both E and F, E is not considered to be overlapped with F because G is not 'between them' (see Definition 'Clear Astern and Clear Ahead; Overlap').

Question 3

Boat B must give mark-room to Boat D.

True – Even though Boat D is behind Boat B, these boats are considered to be overlapped because a boat between (C) them overlaps both (see Definition 'Clear Astern and Clear Ahead; Overlap'). Since B and D are overlapped when the first of them (B) enters the zone, the outside boat (B) must give mark-room to the inside boats (both C and D).

Question 4

Boat A must give mark-room to Boat B.

True – Boat B has reached the zone, so rule 18 applies between her and each other boat, including Boat A. Because A and B are overlapped at this moment, rule 18.2(b) says the outside boat (A) must give mark-room to the inside boat (B).

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Question 5

Boat G must give mark-room to Boat H.

True – Boat H has reached the zone, so rule 18 applies between her and each other boat, including Boat G. Because G and H are overlapped at this moment, rule 18.2(b) says the outside boat (G) must give mark-room to the inside boat (H).

Question 6

Boat A must give mark-room to Boat H.

True – Boat H is in the zone, so rule 18 (Mark-Room) applies between her and Boat A. Even though these boats are on opposite tacks and A is sailing above 90° to the true wind, they are considered to be overlapped because rule 18 applies between them and neither boat is clear astern of the other. Therefore the outside boat (A) must give mark-room to the inside boat (H).