

Technical Notes

Since the Notes were last published there have been quite a few new ideas that have appeared on various boats some of these I have listed below. Reflecting the younger and possibly therefore more innovated group that are now sailing Dragons, particularly abroad, few of these ideas have necessitated actual changes in the rules. In fact the only items appearing on this years I.Y.R.W. Agenda was to confirm the banning of hydraulics and also banning of any device altering the length of the forestay during the race.

The major innovation, of course, being the introduction of "composite" boats, i.e. G.R.P. hull with a conventional wooden deck. The first of these was Marcus Glass's "CHICHILLI" followed by "WARLORD II" and "STORM". Since then Borresen has completed a new boat for Klaus Oldendorf. Externally this boat is very nice indeed, the internal layout is traditional Borresen although he had incorporated "a perspex shelf at the front end of the cabin", which I thought was a very useful and particularly dry way of keeping tools and the like. The boat also has been built using blast in shelf system for joining deck to hull, which will also be used in Mike Patten's new Dragon that is now being finished off at Burnham.

There is a possibility that another three or four new Dragons may be finished off in this way over the next six months, and if so sail numbers should reach 500 some time next summer.

More particular items of note:-

Masts: John Boyce of Burnham has acquired the necessary extruding equipment to make Dragon masts, and hopes to be in production by next Spring. At the moment there are no prices available and details of fittings have to be sorted out, but almost certainly the masts will be cheaper than importing them from Denmark for no other reason than saving shipping and freight charges.

Winches: Lewmar have confirmed that their brand of small winches can be supplied with bottom action handle cost approximately £51.50. + V.A.T.

An Alternative to Runner Winches: "DONALD DUCK" which won this year's European Championships, had dispensed with their runner wheels, instead were using a two ended system. A run of wire was led onto a single block through which was led some heavy duty non-stretch rope, one end of which was led back to the cleat beam at the halliard drop, and the other through a turning block and onto a six to one purchase which in turn led to a cleat on the side of the combing by the main sheet traveller. The block on the wire pulled afterwards on two lengths of shock cord led to the stern of the boat. This is the first block system I have seen that seems to have any chance of success. The crew of "DONALD DUCK" said it worked extremely well. On the beat the technique was to use "coarse" adjustment, take the slack out of the run of wire when it was just clear of the leeward side of the mainsail. When they tack one of the crew merely took up all the strain on the six to one purchase. When they came to tack again the only thing to be let off was this fine adjustment rope which was on a retaining line, but there was no need to either let off any more wire or take up any slack. I think, however, that it might take a fairly strong crew to make this system work really well, but I am sure that a number of boats will be using it next Season.

Spinnakers: A very large number of boats have now dispensed with their chutes and are using the launch system from the cockpit. This, of course, necessitates very long spinnaker sheets. One or two boats have devised a stainless steel protector to stop the sheets snagging around the bottom of the forestay.

Mainsail Control: Again a number of boats have this year been experimenting with taking the main sheet control aft so that the crew can adjust whilst sitting out to weather. The Americans had them all coming up through the floor to a mini cleat beam situated across the boat just under the main sheet traveller. I could not see how they could really reach this sitting out to weather in any weight of wind. The Austrians led their Cunningham & Kicker controls out through the top of the coach roof. This was probably the simplest system, it was probably difficult to get a good purchase, it certainly didn't add anything to the look of the boat. "WARLORD's" are led aft under the deck and come up through the deck by the cleat beam, and the Finn, "WHITE LADY" led kick back stay control with matching cleats either side of the traveller. It was also interesting to note that "WHITE LADY" had no drum winches on board and was getting the power for kicker by leading a double ended wire strap through a double block on the floor and then up to a three to one purchase on either side to give the necessary power.

Technical Notes (continued)

Through Deck Spinnaker Sheets: Several boats have also devised systems to take the spinnaker sheet down through the stern deck and then up through the side deck halfway between the end of the cockpit and the shrouds. Bearing in mind the number of times we got our spinnaker sheets into something approaching a cats cradle, I think this is something we might introduce before next Season!

Philip Tolhurst.

FLEET REPORTS

CULTRA - The Summer of 1980 for the Royal North of Ireland Yacht Club Dragon Class proved to be most interesting. Very generous sponsorship for the Edinburgh Cup from the Northern Bank Ltd. and support from a number of other sponsors made the running of the event possible at Cultra.

The Edinburgh Cup was a keenly contested event run in very variable weather conditions which gave Tony O'Gorman from Kinsale the opportunity to show his skill, and he was a worthy winner of the event in his yacht "GALAX". James Nixon of Royal North, steering "JOSEPHINE", was second, Mike Cotter of Dublin Bay in "TARASQUE" was third, and Robert Boyd of Royal North, in "PUFF" was fourth.

There was very considerable disappointment and a feeling of having been badly let down by the complete lack of any English entry. As the cost of travel was given as the main reason for not attending the event, I feel this could seriously affect the running of future Edinburgh Cup Events in Northern Ireland.

Prior to the Edinburgh Cup, Royal North of Ireland Yacht Club ran the Irish National Championships for a truly magnificent Trophy, presented by Cavan Crystal. Tony O'Gorman was again the winner, showing his fantastic ability to make the most of any change in wind direction. Second came "REBEL" helmed by Dr. G. Treacy of Dublin Bay.

A very full programme of social events was arranged for competitors, and it is a question whether the racing or the late nights required the greater stamina.

Club racing for Points was dominated by Bobby Graham in his new purchase "SOUWESTER" as he won the Beck Regatta Trophy, two of the Season's Points and the Championship. The late Season's Points was won by Eric Robb in "VIVI".

Dragon racing in Belfast Lough is in a very healthy state with active Classes at Royal North and Royal Ulster, and also the arrival of Dragons at Carrickfergus. Dragons at Killyleagh Yacht Club are within easy reach of Events in Belfast Lough and vice versa.

The use of road trailers for Dragon transport is now very much in evidence, and will, I hope, lead to less difficulty in reaching Events at a reasonable cost, and reduce shipping and maintenance charges.

Eric Robb.

LOWESTOFT - The Season at Lowestoft has been one of the most successful for many years. We are all delighted that the number of boats is now on the increase and next year we should have twelve or more Dragons in the Fleet. This year "THERIO" (Tom Gill) rejoined the Fleet; David Cannell completed the renovation of "CRUSADER" and we were particularly pleased to welcome a new member Chris Clayden who has acquired "TYRA". Richard Clarke has purchased "MYSTERE" (from Gordon Mellor) - we were sorry not to see Richard sailing this year but we look forward to "MYSTERE" being launched next Season. A number of other RNSYC members are thinking about buying Dragons and Ian Anderson, Peter Colby and Colin Bothway may yet be persuaded to buy new or newer boats. With so much interest in the class, the Lowestoft Fleet has good reason to be optimistic about the future.

Four boats went to Levington for the East Coast Dragon Championships - despite the weather conditions we had a tremendous weekend both on and off the water, and our thanks to Richard Riggs and his merry band of helpers for their excellent organisation. The Lowestoft June Regatta was well attended and we were pleased to have good representation from Aldeburgh. In July "INDROS" travelled to Douarnernez for the French Championships - this proved to be a most enjoyable event and apart from the never ending fruit de mer and wine, we had some very entertaining yachting. During the last weekend of September we held our annual team match against the "CIRCUS" which is now being led by Sir Gordon Smith. Only two out of three races were sailed and although each side won one race, the match was decided in favour of the visiting team on the basis that points were more important! There were several nominations for the "Balls-up" trophy which was eventually awarded to Pat Dyas - a number of helmsmen could have been suitable winners for their misdemeanours on the water, but nobody could beat Pat's effort in forgetting to bring the trophy from his office desk.