December 2009

The Heron Newsletter

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Launching jib pole

Google Groups

If all has gone according to plan, the entire mailing list will have been added to Google Groups by now. Furthermore, you may have even received notification of this newsletter by a Google Groups email. If you don't yet have a Google Groups identity, go there (via the website link) and do it now. It is a much more effective way to manage email addresses where you control the information contained within your account. I have a list of 30 or so email addresses that are either redundant or just incorrect:

This list contains my record of incorrect or old addresses. These regularly bounce. If anyone knows the correct address for any of these people, could you please contact me? It is important that everyone receives correct and up to date information.

Steve Watts
Webmaster
sj.watts@optusnet.com.au

Charles & Ian Homan	ozitsports@yahoo.com.au
Douglas Surmon	surman@bigpond.com
Hans Pfeiffer	hans-pfeiffer@bigpond.com
Howard Mitchell	howard.mitchell@det.nsw.edu.au
Jennifer Overton	overtonjenny@primusonline.com.au
John Veale	veale@bigpond.net.au
Micheal Groves	grovem@integral.com.au
Tom Kemmers	kemmers@bigpond.com
Paul Owens	cmowens8@bigpond.com
Ian Cook	iancook@bigpond.com
Kymble & Karen	k.mann@bom.gov.au
Penny Rafferty	penrafferty@hotmail.com
Rob Murray	murrayr@bigpond.net.au
Leigh Brennan-Smith	leighb@windshift.com.au
Brian Proctor	briproc@iinet.net.au
Andrew Robinson	a.robinson@tpg.com.au
Paul Wedding	paul.wedding@ymail.com
Matthew Brown	matt.brown@org.edu.au
Chris Carey	chrisc@adconstruct.com.au
Robert Duhig	robd.dentist@bigpond.com
Anthony Belton	belton*4@bigpond.com
Rob Davy	rkdavy@bigpond.net.au
Kym Flint	kflint@larwood.com.au
Alex Hayter	aahayter@bigpond.net.au
Courtney Henley	lyndenhenley@bigpond.com.au
Adrian Knoop	adriansally@bigpond.com
Luke Polomka	plonka12@bigpond.com
Peter Smith	pjspod@bigpond.net.au
Peter Agar	p.agar@iinet.net.au
R. Tom Depiazzi	kalabara@iinet.net.au
Anthony Dvorak	anthony.annette.dvorak@bigpond.com.au
Anne & Mark & Nicolle Locke	m.locke@bigpond.net.au

The Heron Newsletter

Published by
The National Heron Sailing Association of Australia Inc.
ABN: 79884913220
Correspondence to:
National Secretary NHSAA
110 Norman Ave
Hammondville NSW 2170
Internet: www.heronsailing.com.au

National Committee

President:
Richard Gibson
Email: rgibson@scorpex.net
Ph (08) 8449 1788
Fx (08) 8449 1799
Mob 0412 974 327

Vice Presidents:
NSW: Rhys Llewellyn
SA: Shane Kelly
QLD: John Deshon

Honorary General Secretary:
Warren Monaghan
110 Norman Ave
Hammondville NSW 2170
Email: wmonaghan@optusnet.com.au
Ph (02) 9731 1050

Treasurer:
Fraser Galloway
128 O'Brien Rd
Pullenvale QLD 4069
Email: vethelp@arrowdata.net.au
Ph (07) 3202 6961

Registrar:
Ian Cole
1 Day Ave
Daw Park SA 5041
Email: iancole@bigpond.com
Ph (08) 8357 4202
Mob 0438 844 974

Measurement Committee:
Chairman: Paul Armstrong
(02) 9872 7840

Correspondence to:
Secretary: Don Jamieson
73 Cutler Rd
Clontarf NSW 2093
Ph (02) 9948 1369
Email: donfjamieson@gmail.com

State Associations

Queensland
Secretary:
Jacqui Carroll
Email: frank@ozfrank.com
Ph (07) 3391 0369

New South Wales
Secretary:
James Gough
Email: saltencrustedsunnies@bunabaroo.com
Mob 0417 060 262

South Australia
Secretary:
Richard Gibson
Email: rgibson@scorpex.net
Ph (08) 8449 1788
Mob 0412 974 327

Tasmania
Secretary:
Janine Crook
Email: jpandcs@netspace.net.au
Ph (03) 3825 7265

Victoria
Secretary:
Leigh Brennan Smith
Email: leighb@windshift.com.au
Ph (03) 9598 1963

Western Australia
Secretary:
Anne and Nicole Locke
Email: m.locke@bigpond.net
Ph (08) 9447 3498

President's Report

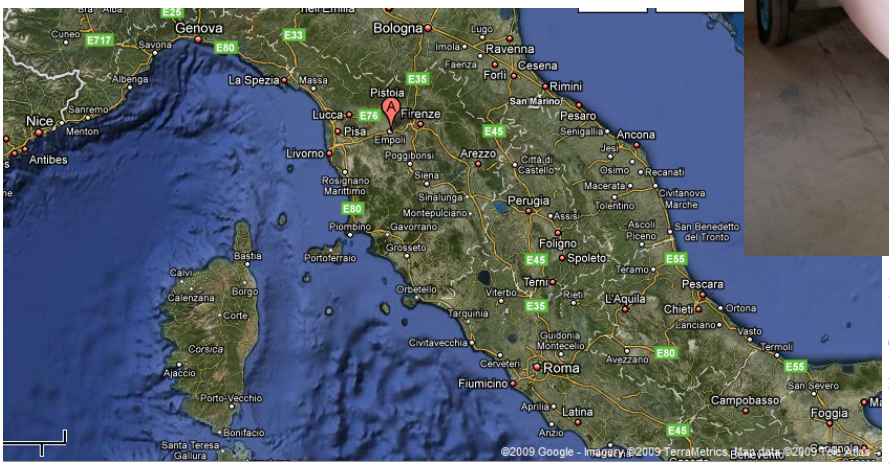
The Spaghetti Heron

What an interesting pedigree this Heron has!

Out of the blue, Ian and Richard were contacted recently by email from the owner of this Heron in Italy. He had found the NHSAA on the Internet, requesting a copy of the Heron Handbook as well as a hat.

Intrigued, Ian asked Mauro for some details of this most unusual discovery.

Read on...



Dear Ian and Richard,

Thank you very much for your gentle and prompt reply. I would like to have an adventurous story about my Heron to tell you, but it is very simple: seven years ago, I was walking by the lake of Massaciuccoli, known also as "Lago Puccini" because the famous musician used to pass most of his time in a beautiful villa by this lake, hunting for birds and young girls. This lake is very close to the beach of Viareggio not far away from Pisa.
Placed by the open theatre where the Puccini's Operas are performed during the summer, there is a little and very busy sailing club, named " Artiglio Vela". I liked the place I felt it could be the right place to make some sport - being not far away from my summer house in Viareggio, good for sailing, but also for rowing. I started to go there, I learned something about sailing using a Finn, but than I was informed that a little English dinghy was on sale, a stable dinghy, good also for rowing. It was love at first sight, without having much information I just bought her and I still love her very much. My "Heron", I was informed by the ex owner, was built by a single old artisan who used to work in a little garage in Lodi near Milan by the river Adda; Vignati was is name. The builder is now dead and he did not sell many Herons I was told. The boat is rigged in the classical way - gunter rig, with wooden mast and gaff - the hull is in fiberglass, the sails are English, made in Birmingham with the Heron logo printed on, but no registered number. My Heron likes to travel. She went (by car) to the Elba Island for two years and sailed all around. She has been also (by car) to Cogoleto near Genova and enjoyed the Riviera. You are welcome to sail on her when you come to Italy.
I send you some pictures I took today. All are taken indoor. Today was raining and very windy - I'm not as you may understand a very experienced sailor.

Best Regards
Mauro Giani
via Veronese, 22
50053
EMPOLI (FI)
ITALY

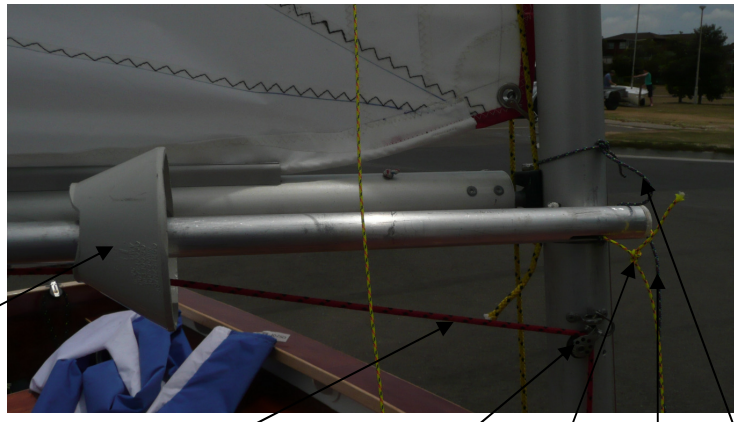
Launching Jib Pole

The adoption of the motion in the 2009 AGM which allowed the use of aluminium jib poles has facilitated the development of a self-launching pole mounted on the boom. A few of us in Sydney have been working cooperatively to develop a pole that works.

The basic design has been borrowed from the spinnaker pole used in classes like the MJ and Flying 11 for many years. The principles involve: automatic retraction along the boom by shock cord carried internally in the boom; a launching rope to pull the pole out; a line attached between the mast and the clew of the jib, fed through the leading edge of the pole and a conical guide to catch the end of the pole as it retracts. These photographs show the use of a topping lift which is in current development. The photos are of 'Flat Chat'.

Movie of launching pole. Click on photo

Forward end of pole



Conical guide (a plumbing fitting)

Launching line

Line between jib and mast

Pulley for launching rope on mast. This is mounted off centre to help launching. The red line passes through a hole in the mast step, through a cleat on the kingpost then down to the hog through another pulley.

Topping lift—runs up to hounds

Aft end of pole

Shock cord enters boom

Retraction shock cord

Launching line

The retraction shock cord attaches to the forward end of the jib pole (internally) and runs out through the hole in the rear of the pole into the boom, around a pulley at the forward end of the boom and to the aft end, all internally. This means that there is something like 6m of shock cord to allow sufficient stretch to allow the pole to be pulled out and sufficient tension to retract it back into position.

What are the advantages of this system? I have found that younger crews can have difficulty in setting the pole, particularly in stronger wind. While this system takes a bit of practice, we have used it in 25 knots on a few occasions in waves—a situation we'd be reluctant to have the crew standing up in the front of the boat. Much of the development was done by Greg Harris and Warren Monaghan.

Steve Watts

Building the Queen Mary

Notices of Motion

Notice of Motion - 1: Big Jib

MOTION 1: TO ALLOW A BIG JIB (GENOA) TO ENSURE FAIR COMPETITION IS AVAILABLE FOR HEAVY-WEIGHT CREWS.

UNDER THE ASSOCIATION CONSTRUCTION AND MEASUREMENT RULES:

A. IN ITEM 6 SAILS, 6.2 Batten Pockets: Add " There shall be not more than two batten pockets in the genoa and neither of these shall exceed 180mm in length. The position of the genoa batten pockets is optional."

B. ADD A NEW ITEM : " 6.5 Genoa A genoa is an approved sail, as an optional alternative to the jib, which may be used in racing when the Notice of Race permits it AND only used by crews of weight exceeding 135 fully dressed for racing. Corrector weights up to 10Kg may be included in the crew weight measurement provided they are securely fixed under the front thwart. The genoa, and corrector weights if fitted, shall be used for every race in any single regatta.

A genoa shall have a transparent panel. Its area shall not exceed 1290 sq. cm. and no part of the panel shall be closer than 203 mm to any edge of the sail.
The yacht sail number shall be marked at the tack of the genoa in indelible figures not less than 12mm high. The genoa luff tension shall not be adjusted while racing but the sail may be fitted with a self-furler between the stem and the tack. The inboard surface of the genoa sheets where they turn through the first lead eye or pulley from the genoa clew shall be no closer together than 800mm and equidistant from the centerline of the yacht.

For guidance the size of the genoa is such that the tack, head, and clew shall fit in the triangle defined by the bow fitting, foresail halyard pulley, and chain plate. The leech of the genoa may have a roach of up to 150mm depth outside a straight line from the head of the sail to the sheeting clew. The Management Committee shall nominate specific measurement details for inclusion in the Measurement Form which shall prevail over this guidance, And which shall form part of the Official Plans.

C. IN CLAUSE 6.4: After "jib" add "or genoa" so that the clause reads "Spinnakers are not allowed, but the clew of the jib or genoa may be boomed out on the opposite side of the mast to the mainsail by a spar (jib pole) which shall be attached to the mast at its inboard end."

(Note: The parts A B and C of this motion are not separable and are all part of the motion)

Notice of Motion - 2: Cross-wise tracks

MOTION 2: A MEASURE TO ALLOW YACHTS WITH CROSS-WISE TRACKS TO SHEET THE HEADSAIL FROM AN APPROPRIATE POSITION WHETHER USING JIB OR GENOA, WITHOUT THE NEED TO MOVE THE HEADSAIL TRACK.

IN ITEM 13.1 In the first sentence delete the words "on a single track on each side of the deck, the outboard end of which is inside the outside skin" and replace with "on a track or tracks on each side of the deck positioned to suit jib and Genoa. Only one set of such tracks shall be used in any race. The outboard end of any track shall be inside the outer surface of the skin of the hull"

EXPLANATION AND DETAILS OF THE GENOA.

The proposed maximum dimensions of the genoa in mm, based on seven prototypes built and trialled are: luff 3165, foot 1480, leech in a straight line 2915, roach measured as width at half luff and leech length 895, height to centre foot 3050,. A transparent panel of the same dimensions and location as permitted for the jib is mandatory, as the extra size of the genoa obscures the skipper's view of traffic. The total area at approx 2.3 square metres is the same as for the genoa used as headsail of choice by the UK Heron sailors. However the Australian genoa has a shorter foot to ensure the sheeting position does not encroach on the for'ard hand's most forward seating position. The equal sail area is achieved by a longer luff and a roach or round of up to 150mm in the leech.

Two battens are permitted in the leech and are necessary to support the round or roach of the leech. Each batten shall be in a pocket not more than 180mm long. (In prototype trials the battens were 160mm long and have not impeded the furling of the Genoa either manually or using a dinghy self-furler.) The Management Committee has been provided with a dimensioned sketch of the genoa and a sample of the prototype.

ARGUMENT FOR MOTION 1.

The Heron is as sensitive to crew weight as all small sailing dinghys, and a heavy weight crew is usually only competitive in winds over about 17 knots when all boats can plane off the wind, and lighter crews start to struggle upwind. Such conditions are in the minority over a sailing season and most regattas. Many current members with heavy crews have for some time been looking for a way that to compete effectively and remain interested in the class. We have lost members for want of a solution to the problem. THE NUMBER ONE PRIORITY OF THE ASSOCIATION IS TO ARREST THE RAPID DECLINE IN MEMBERSHIP AND TO REBUILD CLASS NUMBERS SO THAT IT CAN CONTINUE TO PROVIDE A GOOD LEVEL OF SERVICES COMPETITION AND SOCIAL FOCUS FOR ITS MEMBERS.

One mechanism to deal with the weight issue is handicap racing, widely adopted at the club level but less effective at State and National competition where it is difficult to start with comparable handicaps for all entrants. Another mechanism is to run a Heavyweight Division competition within a championship series, although prizes in this division are usually only given to crews which do not otherwise receive a placing in the series however minor. The proposer of the motion believes that both these mechanisms are seen as unsatisfying by keenly competitive sailors with heavyweight crews.

The present proposal for a genoa provides the option of more sail power and better handling to overcome the weight advantage. The better handling of the genoa rig comes from the elimination of the Heron's chronic weather helm characteristic, the boat accelerating in a gust, rather than tending to round up. Photographs of the genoa in action are shown in James Gough's article in the September 2008 edition of the Association Newsletter.

IN THE NATIONAL SURVEY CARRIED OUT BY THE ASSOCIATION IN 2008 A TOTAL OF 60.4% OF MEMBERS EITHER SUPPORTED THE IDEA OF A BIG JIB FOR HEAVYWEIGHT CREWS OR HAD NO PREFERENCE. Since then samples of the Genoa have been made available for trialing in all states for a year and several have been used on and extended basis in club racing in NSW.

It should be noted that the proposed Genoa is an option only, and limited to heavyweight crews. The rig can be switched between the traditional small jib and the Genoa in a few minutes. All that is required is to insert with shackles a short strop in the halyard above the small jib, and to move the sheeting car along a fore-and-aft sail track. (In some cases the track will need to be moved back by one mounting hole to accommodate the genoa but thereafter will not need to be moved for sail changes. For Herons with cross-wise tracks which are necessary for efficient headsail shape on reaches, two sets of tracks may be set up as provided in Motion 2.)

There has been, in the Association, a strong conservative view which is generally negative to the development of an improved boat, and sometimes conservatism has served us well. However times have changed and with them the fortunes of our little class. In the case of the genoa or "big jib", in the National Survey there were many reactions in the invited comments which said in effect "hands off our sacred Jack Holt jib." But we haven't been sailing with the Jack Holt jib design for about 40 years. Nothing like it. The Heron jib luff as made by all sail makers has a luff length of around 2670mm. Jack Holt's design shows 2819mm and that is the maximum length which still appears in the measurement form. **We have cut a massive 149mm off the luff of the jib and it is a significantly smaller sail than Holt intended.** Why did we do this? Simply to get the foot of the sail down close to the deck where the deck acts as an end-plate to the jib foil, significantly increasing its efficiency. The underlying theory is explained in SAILING THEORY AND PRACTICE (C.A. Marcharj 1964) and Ben Lexcen put an end plate (the "wings") on the bottom of the keel of Australia II to get the same effect. Raking the mast also helped to get the jib foot down onto the deck, but the biggest effect came from the changing the jib shape. No, the original Holt jib shape is not sacred and we use a significantly smaller jib (which is not "to plan") on every Heron racing today.

We lag a long way behind the UK in original thought on this matter. Years ago they went to two bigger headsail sizes, a massive Genoa which I believe they found unworkable a lot of the time, and a smaller Genoa which according to articles and photos in their Newsletter has become their sail of choice today. This mid-sized UK genoa is the same area of approximately 2.3 sq. m. as the one proposed in this Motion. (To rub it in, if they needed to, the UK Association is set to trial an asymmetric spinnaker, on a short bow extension pole, in their next season.)

ARGUMENT FOR MOTION 2.

Some boats have cross-wise tracks to allow for more efficient sheeting when reaching. For such boats a second track may be needed on each side if jib and Genoa are interchanged for different crews in different events. Otherwise crews of these boats would be obliged to unscrew their crosswise track from one position and re-fasten it in a different position each time they changed headsails. This seems unreasonable, and a second set of tracks should be allowed. Note that this motion, while complementary to Motion 1. stands on its own so that a member may vote in favour of Motion 1. but reject motion 2.

The motions are commended for your support

Don Jamieson	Mover	Warren Hodgkinson	Seconder
Laurie Menogue	Seconder	Paul Armstrong	Seconder

Notice of Motion - 3: Rudder box

MOTION 3: To allow the use of aluminium or fibreglass rudder boxes
The basic principle of this motion is to allow Herons to use rudder boxes made from either aluminium (folded sheet or die-cast) or a fibreglass moulding, as well as tillers made from aluminium tube. The motivation for this change is cost and durability, plus a simpler way of building a rudder.

Alloy and glass rudder boxes are widely used in most dinghy classes

The changes to the relevant measurement rules and constitution items are:

Measurement Form

Existing:
B 7.1 Cheek Thickness (min) 9mm (max) 13
Change to:
B 7.1 Cheek Thickness *(timber)* (min) 9mm (max) 13

And, on the back of the form:
Existing:
B 7.0 Fibreglass rudder boxes are permitted i.e. timber or plywood with moulded or glass fibre cloth and resin. The tiller and extension need not conform to the dimensions specified on the official plan; type and length being optional.

Change to:
B 7.0 Fibreglass or aluminium rudder boxes are permitted. The tiller and extension need not conform to the dimensions specified on the official plan; type and length being optional.

Constitution

Existing:
4.3 Tiller and Tiller Extension.
The tiller and extension need not conform to the dimensions specified on the official plan; type and length being optional. The tiller SHALL be constructed of timber; the extension MAY be timber or aluminium.

Change to:
4.3 Tiller and Tiller Extension.
The tiller and extension need not conform to the dimensions specified on the official plan; type and length being optional. The tiller and the extension may be timber or aluminium.

Arguments in favour of the change:

Having just finished a rudder box for my new boat, Flat Chat, I was surprised at the length of time taken to produce the final product. It is a fairly complex piece of work with some inherent difficulties. To build it light, as well as strong, is not easy. To estimate the final space between the cheeks so that the blade will rotate smoothly without jamming took some time and care. The box itself needs to have the insides of the cheeks epoxy coated for durability since it is difficult to access after assembly. The tiller, also in wood, needs to be well engineered to prevent breaking off when leaned on heavily in a clumsy gybe.

Heron history is littered with broken rudder boxes, blades and tillers. Repairing such items is sometimes difficult to achieve, meaning that the whole part needs to be remade. As an item on the boat that is subject to stress, and made from timber / ply that only becomes weaker with age, it is sensible, I believe, to allow rudder boxes to be constructed from aluminium sheet (as in the photograph above), as a die-cast item, or from fibreglass mouldings. Additionally, the tiller can be easily made (and replaced) from aluminium tube.

Most dinghy classes nowadays allow alloy or glass rudder boxes. The various commercial builders / assemblers of Herons over recent years have complained that the timber rudder box is an expensive item to produce. Exactly the same reasons have been used to allow the adoption of alloy masts, booms, jib poles and Bermudan rigs for cost benefits without changing the nature of the boat or its performance. Note that measurement item: *B 7.3 Blade and Rudder Box shaped to plan?* remains unchanged. The size and outline of the rudder box would be the same as existing timber boxes. The only permitted exception to this would be on sheet aluminium boxes, curves on the back edge of the box would need to be a series of 2 or 3 straight sections to accommodate a strengthening flange to be formed, not unlike the one pictured. Measurement Committee would be best able to come up with final specifications for the shape and recommended thicknesses of materials.

Proposed by: Stephen Watts (NSW)
Seconded by:
Richard Gibson (SA)
Warren Monaghan (NSW)
Fraser Galloway (QLD)

Notice of Motion - 4: Rudder blades and Centreboards

MOTION 4: To allow the use of moulded fibreglass rudder blades and centreboards.
The basic principle of this motion is to allow Herons to use rudder blades and centreboards constructed using modern production methods, such as a fibreglass moulding. The motivation for this change is cost and durability, plus a simpler way of building foils.

Measurement Form: No change required

Constitution:

Existing:

4.1 Centre-board.
The centre-board profile shall be shaped to plan but may be faired to an aerofoil section. In order to ensure correct position, the boat hole must be placed in the position shown on the plan. The method of keeping the centre-board in the "down" position is optional. Centreboards shall be made of timber or plywood and may be covered with glass fibre cloth and resin. The centre-board shall not be ballasted. Thickness, including protective finish and fibreglass, shall not exceed 18mm.

4.2 Rudder
The rudder shall be shaped to plan and may be of 10mm or 12.5mm timber or plywood, and the blade may be covered with glass fibre cloth and resin provided that the overall thickness on completion does not exceed 15mm. Fixed blade NOT permitted. The rudder blade may be positioned at any angle whilst sailing but shall not be capable of being rotated beyond a position where the leading edge is parallel with the front of the rudder box.

Change to:

4.1 Centre-board.
The centre-board profile shall be shaped to plan but may be faired to an aerofoil section. In order to ensure correct position, the *bolt** hole must be placed in the position shown on the plan. The method of keeping the centre-board in the "down" position is optional. Permitted construction materials for centreboards are: timber, plywood, fibreglass and foam. The centre-board shall not be ballasted. Overall thickness shall not exceed 18mm.

4.2 Rudder
The rudder blade shall be shaped to plan. Permitted construction materials for rudder blades are: timber, plywood, fibreglass and foam. Overall thickness shall not exceed15mm. Fixed blades are not permitted. The rudder blade may be positioned at any angle whilst sailing but shall not be capable of being rotated beyond a position where the leading edge is parallel with the front of the rudder box.

Arguments in favour of the change:

Most commercially produced foils today do not have a shaped timber blank with a hand-finished fibreglass surface. The most time-consuming part of producing a foil is producing a fair outer surface. Anyone who has made one knows how difficult it is to produce one with a smooth surface. Commercial builders of Herons, as well as professional foil makers in recent years have called for the rules to be changed to allow for moulded foils. One way of making centreboards and rudder blades is to have a pair of female moulds, inside which the foil is cast. The change to the rules proposed here would allow for the finished board to have stiffening timber stringers inside, and different manufacturers may wish to use some foam as well. Using modern materials and methods, it is expected that foils produced in this manner will be equivalent in strength and stiffness to foils produced using plywood—which would be used in a large proportion of Herons sailing today.

* the original typographical error “boat hole” has been changed to the correct intention “bolt hole”

Proposed by: Stephen Watts (NSW)
Seconded by:
Richard Gibson (SA)
Warren Monaghan (NSW)
Fraser Galloway (QLD)

News from Tasmania...

Tasmanian Herons are going through a period of transition. Old faces are being replaced by newer, younger ones. As a result, the nature of the racing is also changing. Joining the class this year have been several adult skippers with young children as crew. Whilst racing has been at times well patronised, much of the action has taken place away from the race course.

We have welcomed George Rance and his Granddaughter Ayla. They have been sailing the beautifully restored "Starlite", built in the mid 1970s. Eight year old Ayla is very keen to learn the ropes. Also making a long anticipated appearance is Mike and Noah King, sailing "Lively Lass". This is the first Tassie boat to sport the new Bermudan rig option. Youngsters Tom and Lilly Rasmussen have joined dad Mark aboard "Monkey Business."

A recent learn to sail program has yielded three potential new Heroners. Leon Brawson, Scott Jordan and Andrew Daft and their families are keenly searching out boats. It seems certain that at least two of these families will become regulars in the LSC fleet.

On the race course, numbers have been variable. As a result, almost everyone has managed to win a race at some stage. "This is The Life" (Tony Pearce), "Wot Not" (Guy McDougall), Family Ties (Tyler Crook), Rug Rats (John Cooper) and Monkey Business (Mark Rasmussen) have all won races at some stage during the first half of the season. Other participants have included "Starlite", "Lively Lass" and "Two Blind Mice" (Malcolm and Grace McDougall)

Moves are afoot to accommodate the changing nature and experience levels of the new owners and their crew. Shorter races in more sheltered conditions are being examined as a way of ensuring that the new crop of Heroners is given a positive introduction to the class.

Hopefully, the second half of the season will see increased fleet numbers as newcomers become more competent and the notorious pre Xmas Tassie winds abate.

The local fleet also received valuable publicity with the publication of a story in "40 South" magazine celebrating 50 years of Herons in Tasmania.

Mark Rasmussen

NSW news

The NSW Association has run two events this year that provided excellent sailing and competition. The annual training day conducted by Rob Brewer at GRSC was a valuable learning experience for all involved.

The weekend away at Mannering Park on the southern shores of Lake Macquarie was attended by 8 boats and many families, taking advantage of the great location and the opportunity to socialise. The convenience of being able to camp or cabin right on the lake front where the boats are launched makes for a stress-free weekend. Being only an hour or two north of Sydney adds to the appeal of the event.

This year the conditions provided some close, short-course racing. Three 40 minute races back to back on Saturday and Sunday made an ideal format. By Sunday the breeze had built to around 30 knots from the north and 40 degrees. Hopefully next year more Heroners will join in this excellent event.

The next two association events are scheduled for the Australia Day long weekend at Toukley. These are the State Championships and the Navigatum IT Teams Racing Trophy (formerly the Jax Trophy). As per previous years, a strong turnout is expected for both events, and both trophies will be keenly contested on the water. With a dedicated social organiser in Jenny Harris, more emphasis is going to be placed on making this a fun social time too. Go to the NSW website to download Notice of Race, Sailing Instructions etc. Also, check out the dates and details of the Junior States.

The NSW committee took a reluctant decision in the off season to not conduct a travelers trophy series this year due to poor participation for the last few seasons. The importance of inter-club events has nevertheless been recognized. Next season 2010-11, will likely see the launching of a new inter-club series where clubs compete against each other and gain points, rather than individual competitors. The idea being to encourage newer members to participate in the larger Heron community.

The final event for the season will be a presentation dinner. This is scheduled for shortly after Junior State Titles. The details of this will be circulated when confirmed.

Have a merry Christmas everyone and a safe holiday. Our NSW representatives to the Nationals in Adelaide are: Rhys and Georgia, Warren, Sarah and Stephanie, Steve Swavley and extended family, Mike Armstrong, Greg and Emma and Steve and Jerome.

Georges River Sailing Club news

Our Saturdays of extraordinary sailing days continue…. Almost every week it seems that we've had 15 plus knots of breeze. In the big open water and tide we get great waves, huge reaches and runs, testing works. Sailing heaven if there ever is one.

The number of boats competing is about steady from last season but the problem has been having everyone on the water together. Ian and Stuart Mooney have moved on to a 420 and Adrenalin has been sold on to a Heroner from many years past, Paul Sleeman. Alex Cawsey and Jacquie have decided to spend more time sailing at Cronulla, with the intention of establishing a fleet there. The other week Alex came for a visit and to show that he's not forgotten anything, showed a clean pair of rudder cheeks to the rest of the fleet for the afternoon.

Warren has launched 10253 'Queen Mary' and almost immediately has been very fast. The Queen is a jig-built boat, a sister to 10250 Flat Chat. She is very impressive in bright orange. With such hot competition, celebrity sailors like Greg Harris have been regularly visiting.

Junior racing and Sailing school at GRSC runs on Sunday mornings.