

INTERNATIONAL GP14 CLASS ASSOCIATION

69TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Monday 5th August 2019 at South Caernarvonshire Yacht Club

THE SECRETARY'S REPORT

As I conclude of my third year as secretary to the Association and prepare to hand over the reins to my successor, I am pleased to be able to say how much I have enjoyed the job and appreciated the support that I have received. The GP14 is a great boat and it attracts a great bunch of people!

The past year started with a bang at Mount's Bay and we have sailed on successfully from there, following what has become a familiar and well understood course.

Here is a summary of our activities:

Administration

Julie Courtney and her team at Type-IT Services continue to look after our administration needs in exemplary fashion and at very competitive rates. As an enthusiastic GP14 sailor, Julie does much more than merely providing office back-up and for this I, in particular, am most grateful.

General Committee has met as usual on three occasions over the year and the Finance and General Purposes Committee has met (using Skype) every month.

Financial control has been overseen by our treasurer, Paul Bowmer, and Paul's report is before you. We shall consider this under its own heading on the agenda but suffice to say here that our financial condition remains sound and we owe Paul a big debt of thanks for his careful work on our behalf.

Maintaining membership numbers continues to be a matter of great concern. At the time of writing (early July), our total membership stands at 769 while by August last year it reached 840. The worryingly steep decline of recent years did slow last year, but that was assisted in significant part by an influx of short-term memberships generated by the attraction of a World Championship. This phenomenon occurs in many classes and indeed we can expect a similar growth-spurt as the Worlds 2020 approach. In the meantime we have been doing our best to attract new members at every opportunity while at the same time working to retain our members and to understand the reasons behind any losses. curly Morris has continued to act as liaison for our overseas members and in particular, he has been trying to address their concerns about the refreshing of their fleets. This remains a work in progress.

10 new boat registrations were issued over the year and although this is significantly down on the previous 12 months when the total was 23, it is not out of line with other 'non-worlds' years.

Championship Sailing

Shortly after the last AGM Hayley Ramadhar's life circumstances changed and she found herself unable to continue as Chair of our Championship Committee. We are very fortunate that Vanessa Devereux was willing to be co-opted for the role and we owe Vanessa a huge debt of gratitude for taking on this challenging task. This has to be one of the most demanding of any of the positions on

General Committee and 'learning on the job' in this role is always nerve-racking but Vanessa has taken to the task with her customary detailed care and diligence and in conjunction with our Area Representatives, a great programme of racing has been delivered. Fixturing to avoid clashes and

bunching of events has been difficult as so many host clubs have their own problems in this regard. We may therefore look to share more of our events in the future , particularly if this can be arranged in partnership with one of our feeder-classes.

Cruising and Vintage

Oliver Shaw returned to General Committee this year to represent the cruising and vintage fleet. Oliver has worked hard to re-establish a programme of events and while take-up is usually small, enjoyment is always high. The restoration of boat no2 is nearing completion and it will be on display at the Dinghy Show next year as well as being on the water at Skerries. In the meantime the boat will undergo trials on the river in York and with luck it will be on the start line at the Round Holes Trophy. But this is an Association boat, not the preserve of the restoration team, so if you would like to borrow it and take it to a vintage/classic event in your area do please come forward.

International issues

The GP14 continues to be a fully recognised international class by World Sailing and providing we continue to attract the usual number of overseas entries to our world championships I see no reason to doubt the safety of our position. That said, some of our more distant branches have been struggling to maintain their membership and in spite of Curly Morris's best efforts it seems that our new fleet in Barbados has died out. The other, well established, fleets remain active but efforts to improve communications, and thereby support, are proving somewhat challenging.

Sri Lanka is to be our destination for the World Championships in 2022 and negotiations are now gathering pace.

Training

Working with Gill Beddow, Mark Collingwood has continued to oversee the organisation of a comprehensive programme of training events. Between them they have built on recent successes to put training right back where it belongs in the GP14 curriculum. Mark is standing down at this AGM and we must record our thanks to him for a great job well done. At the time of writing, a successor has yet to be identified but several names are in the frame.

Grass roots

Our Area Representatives have been working hard with their Fleet Captains to encourage GP14 sailing at club level and it is pleasing to note that the growth in support for the Travellers' Series noted last year has remained solid. General Committee has been very aware of the continuing need to attract the 'occasional club-sailor' into membership of the Association and this year a special training event targeting exactly this group is to be held at Bassenthwaite Sailing Club.

Technical and Rules

The T&R Committee of David Rowlands, Jon Close and Jimmy McKee continues to meet as and when required. Tasks have mostly been routine over the past 12 months but the trial of built-in spinnaker storage compartments at the aft end of the foredeck has been concentrating minds. Following very inconclusive results of the preliminary trials, the test period was extended to the autumn of this year and the opportunity to participate was offered to all our builders. Two builders have now become very keen to adopt the modification, and a third may offer it as a 'special option'. The final decision as to whether to allow the rule change will be made at the autumn meeting of General Committee.

David Rowlands has also continued to provide an invaluable checking service for our championship NOR's and Sailing Instructions.

Promoting the Class

We were once again represented at the RYA Dinghy Show and again took a 2-boat stand in order to display both the wood and the glass versions of the hull. We owe a debt of thanks to Steve Parker and Nigel Potter (Paintcraft) for providing the boats and to Michael McNamara and Sam Woolner for providing the sails. Sam also kindly supplied a genoa for our raffle once more. The stand this year was extremely busy as we had been selected as a participant in the children's treasure hunt. All the children took away cardboard kits of the GP14 so if nothing else, the boat found its way into households all over the country! It is very hard to measure the value of an event like this but it is certainly the case that our absence would be noted if we ever decide to give it a miss.

Mainsail continues to be very much part of our 'shop-window' and Julie Courtney does an excellent job in her role as editor. Julie is always on the lookout for articles so please do not hide your talents, write a piece today and send it in! Mainsail will only ever be as good as its content so it really is down to us as contributors.

E-news is now well established as one of our best means of communication and again, Julie continues to do a brilliant job in assembling it on a regular monthly basis.

Chris Hearn remains the overseer of our web-site and he does an invaluable job in keeping it up to date and posting the material that we all send him with great speed and efficiency.

A UK class calendar was produced for 2019, it is certainly our best yet and is now starting to match the quality of the well-established Irish calendar from which we first took our inspiration. We are grateful to the production team of Justin Smith, Vanessa Devereux, Ann Penny and Julie Courtney.

Steve Parry

Hon Secretary