

An Overview of Racing Participation at Attenborough Sailing Club 2009 – 2011

Mike Pritchard, Rear Commodore Sailing

Summary

Sailing participation at Attenborough Sailing Club is very high with almost 80% of the membership involved in sailing activities. This rises to 87% if exclude those members who have joined in the last month or who have resigned.

Over 50% of the membership raced in 2011.

Average entries per race increased 19% on 2010, itself a 10% increase on 2009.

The number of members racing regularly has also increased.

Junior club established which is already resulting in juniors starting to race.

Casual sailing is popular with nearly 20% of membership preferring this to racing.

Introduction

Over the last few years membership has been increasing at Attenborough Sailing Club. In addition the Sailing Committee has been actively encouraging sailing participation by facilitating casual sailing, organising training events, starting a junior club and introducing racing events that will encourage more sailors. The Sailing Committee has felt the club is going in the right direction with more people sailing, but what is the actual position? I have reviewed sailing participation at Attenborough across all activities in 2011 and then undertaken a more detailed analysis of those taking part in club racing activities.

Membership Participation at Attenborough

If we exclude honorary members, Colwick Life Guards and the Sea Cadets then at the end of September 2011, there were 125 members made of family, individual, veteran and juniors. Note that given a fee is for a year the 125 does include people we know will not re-join next year. The participation of the 125 in sailing activities is broken down in the table below.

	Number of Members	% of Membership	Notes
Racing	64	51	In addition over 25 family members of this group also participated in sailing
Cruising	21	17	This group only do casual sailing. In addition over 10 family members of this group also participated in sailing
Undertake OOD duties, training	13	10	Previously active members who currently only undertake OOD duties but do not currently sail at ASC due to ill health, sailing offshore, working overseas, paternity and maternity leave. Some also assist with RYA training.
Joined in Last Month	4	3	Too early to assess participation
Left or will Resign	8	7	Have resigned or indicated they will do so
Not Known to be Active	15	12	My do occasional OOD duties but otherwise inactive and often do not have a boat.

Effectively 68% of the membership takes part in either racing or casual sailing during the year. A further 10% of members undertake their OOD duties but for a number of reasons do not sail at the club, and some of the reasons are in the table above. All in this group have been active in the past and the club clearly has ongoing benefit in that 10% of our membership fees still come from this group and they undertake their duties. I expect a number will resume active sailing next year.

About 10% of the membership is either new or has indicated they will not be re-joining. As such for the future it might be considered that of X members, 10% on our books may be leaving or have just joined

and one could argue this number should be excluded from base membership number to calculate participation.

This leaves 12% of the membership who do the occasional duty but do not seem to sail. A few may sail casually as we as a club do not keep records of who sails when outside of the official casual sailing days of Friday and Saturday.

The figures in the table above also exclude the 20+ juniors that have actively taken part in the Junior Sailing Club. Several of these have now started to race and I expect that junior participation at the club will increase in 2012.

So overall an impressive participation rate for the club with 68% actively sailing, rising to 75% if exclude those who have left or just joined. Add in the 11% who do duties but have specifically chosen not to sail this year but have in the past then at most only 12% of the membership is not involved in sailing activities at the club. Ultimately every member pays a fee and the more members; the longer fees can be maintained at their current levels.

Racing Participation

The mini table below is a summary of last three years looking at the average entry on a race day, number of race entries in all race series and then number who sailed enough qualifying races, normally 60% of races in a series which gives an indication of the depth of participation. More detailed info further down in the document. One can quite clearly see that 2011 was an excellent year with average entry per race day up 19% after a 10% increase in previous year. Actual race day entries have varied from 3 to 30 with numbers dropping off as wind speed increases. Entries in race series were up 24% whilst those racing enough qualifying races went up an incredible 36%. The rise in this parameter shows that the increase in overall entries isn't due to people just doing a few races.

I doubt many clubs in the UK can claim such a year on year increase in participation.

	Number of races	Average Entries per Race Day	% Change on previous year	Number of Separate Entries in all series#	% Change on previous year	No. of Entries Sailed Enough Races to Count*	% Change on previous year
2011	100	17	19%	461	24%	143	36%
2010	109	14	10%	371	1%	105	-5%
2009	108	13		366		111	

This is total entries in all series and in many cases a person will have entered all series. It is another indicator of how many sail in a year.

* Normally 60% of races in a series count in overall score. The number of boats who sail enough races to count is an indication of depth of overall participation in races.

The next table lists all race series for 2009-2011, with the two Frostbite from previous year included in relevant year (i.e. 2010 Frostbite in 2011 figures) so matches our prize giving year. Worth noting that in four races this year, to 13th November, we are averaging 24 starters in each race, so if continues then up 92% on last frostbite series which only managed six balmy races before the great freeze of 2010 set in. Table shows: number of separate entries in series, number of entries that sailed number of races to count, average entries per start and then average for a 'race', i.e. slow and fast together and gold, silver and bronze. Note that for this year the old Summer 1+2 have been split into Spring, Summer and Autumn.

The figures show that Sunday series at start and end of season do relatively better than spring/summer ones in nearly all measurement criteria, perhaps showing the impact of better weather allowing members to do different activities plus take holidays. It may also be the case that spring and summer series are very fragmented with one off events and bank holidays interrupting the series. Although I haven't separated gold and silver in this table the average entry in gold fleet was only 4 boats so this fleet and bronze fleets are very small, both averaging 4 entries.

Wednesdays do very well, especially this year with an average of 22 starters over all 25 races compared to 14 and 13 in previous years, almost a 60% increase.

Although not in the table we also had high participation in the one off events; 42 in the club regatta, 18 for the team racing and 27 for the recent pursuit race.

Race Fleet Turnout: 2009-2011

	Overall Entries			No. Sailed Enough Races to Count			Average Entries per Race			Av Entries per race day		
	2011	2010	2009	2011	2010	2009	2011	2010	2009	2011	2010	2009
Autumn	41			12			17			17		
Frostbite 1	26	24	24	13	7	8	14	14	10	14	14	10
Frostbite 2	21	24	24	9	7	9	11	9	8	11	9	8
Snowdrop	35	41	40	13	11	11	16	14	14	16	14	14
Spring Gold + Silver	35	30	29	11	12	12	13	12	12	16	16	18
Spring Bronze/Rookie	10	21	24	1	3	4	3	4	6			
Spring Fast	18	26	31	5	8	8	6	11	11	15	17	15
Spring Slow	31	17	15	5	5	5	9	6	4			
Summer Gold + Silver	34	32	28	9	10	10	14	12	10	19	16	14
Summer Bronze/Rookie	23	17	17	2	1	2	5	4	4			
Summer General	43	44	42	8	7	7	14	14	12	14	14	12
Wednesday 1	47	35	32	21	13	13	21	14	14	22	14	14
Wednesday 2	61	35	38	19	15	14	24	17	13	24	17	13
Wednesday 3	37	25	22	16	6	8	19	10	11	19	10	11
Total or Overall Average	462	371	366	144	105	111	13	11	10	17	14	13
% Change on Previous Year	25%	1%		37%	-5%		18%	10%		19%	10%	

A pleasing figure from the Sailing Committee's point of view is that entries per race is continuing to rise year on year which would seem to demonstrate we are facilitating events members want to take part in and one can argue if what we are doing is working do we need to change things.

However, will the trend continue and can we do other things to further increase numbers racing and in particular those sailing regularly? A concern is that once you get 30+ boats on the water the existing four person OOD team is inadequate, whether for safety reasons or just being able to write times down as I we saw at the regatta this year and as I am sure many of you experience if you are on the committee boat running races.

At the moment the fleet seems to split into three groups, a small number fast newer boats that generally dominate the results and this group races regularly, a large group sailing older and slower boats such as Laser and Comet who race regularly and then another group who sail similar boats but do not race regularly. Few of the first group race infrequently and in my view are not the target group to increase numbers.

However, in the other two groups there are large Comet (12 boats) and Laser (16+ boats) fleets but overall few race regularly, although numbers have gone up slightly as the season progresses and in reality separate Comet and Laser fleets would be bigger or comparable with the gold and bronze fleets

In the recent Autumn Series, if take people's normal boat, then of 36 entries, 12 were Lasers, covering full, Radial and 4.7 rig and 5 were Comets and ten were from classes with only one boat – rest were 2 or 3 entries for Lark, Miracle, Phantom and Supernova. So Lasers and Comets are almost half of entries and would seem the easier area to target to increase numbers, and race times would not be needed, and an aim should be to have class racing for these two at sometime next year.

If we feel numbers are not high enough another option is to have more slow and fast fleet race series so boats of a similar speed race together. Again for the Autumn cup, for the 19 menagerie outside Lasers and Comets, 14 are in fast fleet and only five in slow fleet with Miracles and the Topaz having similar speed as Comets. There is then the potential to have two 'slow' fleets with quite close PYs, 1082-1106 for Lasers and Radials, and 1175-1212 covering 4.7, Comet, Miracle and Topaz which would have good racing that might encourage people to participate on a more regular basis.

More Comet/Laser training should also improve numbers and new members should also be encouraged to buy these classes as both can be bought for only £500 at entry level and can still be competitive at ASC unlike certain classes where you seem to need to spend ten times as much. Indeed maybe we should move to having only a few recommended classes. Don't need to exclude the menagerie but one-off boats should not be encouraged especially for new members. In addition, although this is my personal view and not that of the club, if you want to sail single-handed get a single-handed boat which helps above numbers, else if you have a two-hander try and ensure you have a crew – if don't have one use Yahoo to ask for volunteers. Paul Warren is an excellent example of a good sailor taking newer members out as crew in his RS200 and this is an excellent way for new sailors to quickly gain confidence and improve their sailing ability such that they can then go and sail on their own, with Vicky Ellis an excellent graduate of Paul's work.

Given the success of pursuit races based on personal rather than RYA PY handicaps, the Sailing Committee at their last meeting agreed that for one race series next year we will use personal handicaps. Exact details of how we will calculate them are to be decided but are likely to be a variation on the way golf handicaps are calculated. This series should be fun as in theory anybody can win, assuming of course you do enough qualifying races.

Acknowledgements

Over the last few years a larger dynamic Sailing Committee has been established that has allowed me and the club to organise more activities and I believe that much of the above success is down to the work the members of the committee put in whether organising races, training, casual sailing and juniors. So thanks to Mark Bell, Steve Boon, Lou Davensac, Malcolm Davidson, Brian Dennis, Nick Marlow, John Shepherd, Rob Underwood and Paul Warren.

A new committee has just been formed with most of the above continuing although four new members have also joined so committee will be slightly larger in 2012.

Mike Pritchard
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