

Access Class Association UK Annual General Meeting 2009

The Annual General Meeting of the Access Class Association UK took place at Northampton Sailing Club on Saturday 11th July at 11.30 am. There were no objections to the AGM being run early. There were 48 members present.

1. Apologies

Pat Jackson
Janet Lee
Paul Holzherr

2. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the 2008 AGM were approved.

3. Chairman's Report

Richard Smallwood, Chairman of the ACA (UK), welcomed everyone and gave the following report:

The past year has seen a further growth in our activities, with the Access Classes developing as the main classes for people with disability in the UK to start sailing, to improve their skills, and to get involved in serious racing. This year your committee were so confident of the ability of the Access racing fraternity to hold their own, that we agreed to follow the rest of the world in making all our competitions open to people without disability as well. I can report that, since that decision, virtually all the prizes and trophies for National Championships and TT events have gone to those with some form of disability so please give yourselves a round of applause.

In 2008, I can report that 24 sailors entered the 2.3 TT series, 29 crews entered in the 303 class and 9 took part in at least one Liberty event. So far in 2009, with only half the TT events completed, we have had 16 entries in the 2.3 class, 26 crews have taken part in the 303 One-person and Two-person classes, with most of these in the Two-person class, and 7 have entered in Liberties. All this shows that Access racing is increasing in popularity with more and more people getting involved. From experience at my own club, I am also confident that we are getting more and more newcomers into Access sailing so the future is very bright.

Turning to international competition, our success at the French Nationals in 2008 was followed up this year with the small UK contingent winning the 2.3 and 303-Solo classes and having a half share of the 303-Double class. There were competitors from France, Australia and The Netherlands as well as our team. In September there will be an Access Class European Championships in the south of France and I know that there are some UK entrants. It is not too late to enter if you fancy some autumn Mediterranean sunshine; see Andy Sheath or me later for more details.

To organize the Access Class World Championships to be held at Rutland in June next year a special committee has been set up, mainly of experts from Rutland Sailing Club, and preparations are well in hand. A questionnaire to other national Access Class Associations has revealed that we can expect around 115 entries, with the SKUD 18 class, which is now part of the Access family, adding another 15 boats. If you want more details of what is proposed, please ask in "Any Other Business". The committee are working to publish the formal Notice of Race in September.

As your representative on the International Access Class Association, I have also been busy trying to get the modifications to the Access Class Rules, which we allow in UK, accepted world-wide. I can report that the additional blocks for helmsman's control of the clew outhaul have just been approved internationally, as has the additional block on the console for the mainsheets of 303s and Liberties. Additional fittings which are likely to be approved soon are for ratchet blocks on the mainsheets of 2.3s and blocks for the clew outhaul at the end of the boom of all classes. When these are approved, the Secretary will post news items on the ACA(UK) website, so I suggest you check the website regularly. Any of you who expect to participate in the World Championships, and your supporting helpers, should familiarize yourselves with the respective International Class Rules shown on the websites. You should have noticed that Technical Committee members have been helping by checking boats and sails during 2009 TT meetings, and these National Championships, to try to ensure that your boats comply with the Class Rules, but the main responsibility rests with you, the competitors.

Finally, I and most of the Committee have declared ourselves willing to continue as committee members for another year. I hope you will be prepared to give us your vote of confidence later in the meeting.

4. Secretary's Report

Ron Sawford, Secretary of the ACA UK gave the following report.

Ron apologised for not having members' membership cards distributed as promised at the last AGM. He explained that he and Jackie had undertaken a major revamping of our membership database and that membership cards that will be valid until December 2010 will be issued within the next four weeks.

Ron gave a description of the layout of the website stressing to members that all details of events, all management documents, minutes of all meetings, details of clubs sailing Access dinghies, and all contact information are available on the website and that members were encouraged to look at least once a week at the news section of the website because Ron uses the news section to bring members attention to all significant additions or changes.

Ron explained the work involved in the establishment of each year's racing programme and thanked Andy Sheath for the great amount of work he has put into the 2009 programme.

Ron brought the members attention to all of the excellent work that had been done by our chairman Richard Smallwood in raising the standards of our association, developing the management documents and in chairing the 2010 Access Worlds committee.

Ron also thanked Steven for all the work he had put into making sure people had their boats and equipment as well as support at the traveller events during Ron's period of injury. This was particularly difficult due to his loss of Ron's input to the business during this time. Clare proposed a vote of thanks to Steven be recorded, and the members agreed.

5. Treasurer's Report

Ron distributed the financial papers that our treasurer Paul Holzherr had supplied.

Income and Expense 01.04.08 through 14.11.08 in UK pounds sterling

Total income £4308.71

Total expense £1715.56

Total funds in bank £8228.12

Income and Expense 19.11.08 through 06.07.09 in UK pounds sterling

Total income £1387.14

Total expense £1829.00

Total funds in bank £7536.63

Paul points out that the expenses for the Worlds are kept entirely separate and not included in the figures above.

Ron asked if there were any questions on these figures. The only question was what interest rate we received for the deposits in the bank. Ron was not able to give the rate but pointed out that a total of £249.85 had been received during the period that the figures covered.

6. Election of Committee

The following members were elected en bloc to the Access Class Association UK Committee:

Chris Emmet (Rutland)

Pat Jackson (Sussex YC)

Bill Mitchell (Rutland)

Keith Harris (New Forest)

Paul Holzherr (Sussex YC/Frensham)

Brian Thake (Northampton)

Richard Smallwood (Frensham)

Andy Sheath (Frensham)

David Cousins (Woolverstone)

Dave Durston (Whitefriars)

Ken Butterfield (Swarkestone)

Ron Sawford

7. Suggestion of Venues of Future National Championships

Ron reported that the 2010 National Championships will be held at Swarkestone Sailing Club, Derbyshire. Matt Grier informed the membership that Farmoor Sailability, Oxford are having a new pontoon fitted that, when completed, may make it an acceptable venue for future National Championships or traveller events. Richard offered on behalf of Frensham Pond Sailability to host the 2011 National Championships. The membership accepted this offer.

8. Plans for 2010 World Championships at Rutland on 5th – 11th June 2010.

Richard explained the patterns of racing planned for the Rutland Worlds 2010. He pointed out that there were chances for individuals to enter more than one class as the single person classes and the two person classes were planned for completely separate times so it is possible to enter both. There will be an extra entry fee charged for this, possibly around 50% extra. The organisers have significant sponsorship in place and therefore hope to be able to finance some extras such as visits etc.

Keith asked if there was to be a separate servo assist class. Richard said they do not believe they will have enough entrants for a separate class so the servo assist will sail with the manual fleet. Clare asked if the Libertys that are to be shipped to the UK would be available to UK sailors. Richard confirmed that they were probably not available to UK sailors. There was a considerable discussion around the availability of Libertys but it was generally considered that there would not be many UK Libertys available and that anyone interested would be wise to try to secure personal loan of a boat as early as possible. Dave asked if overseas sailors should be asked to bring their own sails, and Richard confirmed that they will.

9. Any Other Business

It was suggested that photographs showing the correct set up of certain aspects of the Access dinghy be available on our website. Ron said that if someone could produce such photos he would use them.

Mike asked about progressing from the Access boats to the Paralympics. Matt explained that he and Steven are working to investigate how the new Liberty may be used to develop a more achievable pathway to Olympic sailing. He will keep us informed on the development of this.

Dave asked if the Access Liberty was being considered as an Olympic class as a wider range of disabled people can sail this than the 2.4. Ron pointed out that Chris Mitchell, designer of the Access classes, is active in trying to achieve this.

Dave Durston asked if Access sailing could be arranged during the winter months. Ron pointed out that Tideway run a winter series and Richard told us that Frensham have done so in the past. The members were asked if they would like a winter series and eight said they would. The committee has taken note of this suggestion.

John Figures who is working with Richard on Access boat measurement pointed out that he and Gordon had looked at sails being used to date and they did not all comply with the regulations i.e. the need for a sailmakers label (Horizon), the need for the class logo to be at the top of the sail (one on the clew as well as the top is acceptable) and that sail numbers should be 175mm. He urged members to get such things put right as soon as possible. He pointed out particularly that sail numbers and GBR lettering have to be in the correct position and in the correct order as laid out in the racing rules and class rules. Sailors must get this right or they will be disqualified at the Worlds 2010. Ann asked if boats were found to be underweight would the weights needed to correct this be provided. Richard said that they would. Richard stressed that sails and numbers must be correct to be used in the TTs and the National Championships and the Worlds next year.

The AGM was then closed.