

National Squib Owners Association

Special General Meeting held on 28 June 2016 at Weymouth Sailing Club, 19.00 hours

Minutes

The Chairman, Steve Warren-Smith welcomed some 70 full members and some 20 Associate members of the Association to the meeting

Apologies: Apologies were received from Lou Bibby, Mike Probert, Duncan Grindley, Simon Wakefield, Derek Sandle, Ricky East, Ross Nolan, Neil Oram, Clive Bennett,

Steve Warren-Smith opened the meeting by reminding the meeting of the timeline to date:

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| February 2014 | The Technical Committee put out a Tender document to all interested builders itemising the requirements of the Class in seeking a new builder to replace BPS. It received 8 serious responses. |
| April/May 2014 | All applicants were visited, by the NSOA and the list was whittled down to 3 main contenders. They were asked to submit their ideas for the future of the Squib, as well as their financial details and to prove their legal composition. |
| June 2014 | The three builders were visited by several groups of TC members and individually evaluated as to their suitability. |
| July 2014 | Rondar were unanimously selected as the new builder and the announcement was made at the AGM at Lowestoft. Paul Young attended on behalf of Rondar, and addressed the meeting. |
| Aug/Sept 2014 | The moulds were moved from Lowestoft down to Wiltshire by Rondar, at their expense. |
| October 2014 | The Rondar build proposal was submitted and discussed at the SGM at Rutland. Paul Young attended, and there was a question and answer session with the membership present. At the same SGM, the class voted and passed an amendment that allowed postal / electronic ballots of all members to be carried out. |
| Oct/Dec 2014 | The class members were invited to vote for a proposal to allow the committee, the RYA and Rondar to carry out a reappraisal of the Squib, to allow it to be attractive and competitive against more modern competition, without altering its speed on the water, in order to preserve the close one design racing. The RYA Technical department approved the wording and the proposal was voted upon electronically by the complete NSOA membership. The vote was passed by 51% of the total membership, and by 90% of the number of members who actually voted. |
| February 2015 | The RYA Technical Committee ratified the class voting process and the final decision, allowing the work to develop the boat to start. |
| March/Aug 2015 | The new boat was evolved, with the self draining, internal moulding concept, and a number of onsite visits and meetings were held by the Technical Committee, the RYA and Rondar over this period. |
| July 2015 | Paul Young attended the class AGM in Howth, and had a question and answer session about the new boat. |
| September 2015 | The prototype boat was launched for the first time at Lymington to validate the self draining concept. |
| October 2015 | The prototype mouldings were brought to Rutland Inlands for their first public viewing by the fleet. |
| November 2015 | The Technical Committee met at Rondar, and approved the completion of the prototype mouldings into a boat to be tested for the performance element of the mandate. |

December 2015	Rondar completed the mouldings into a boat, and the first sail was carried out at QMSC with SWS present.
Dec 15 – Feb 16	Initial 2 boat testing was carried out under the auspices of the RYA, on the River Blackwater, and subsequently at Weymouth also under RYA jurisdiction, and the boat went up to WOBYC for further testing and fleet involvement.
March 2016	The boat went to the dinghy show in March as a prototype and was exhibited to the general public.
March/April 2016	On water testing continued at WOBYC, Abersoch, Rutland, West Mersea, and Burnham with a variety of helms
May 2016	NSOA Committee vote 13 / 6 to request the RYA to issue the licence for one production boat in order for testing to be completed.

Richard Sullivan, on behalf of the proposers of the SGM Motion, said he appreciated the efforts of Steve Warren-Smith, Malcolm Blackburn etc to progress the build. His view was that Item one of the SGM Motion was the important one, with 2 – 4 being subsidiary, with the question being “has the mandate been met”. He continued to explain that he had voted no in the members’ ballot as he felt that there had not been enough debate and the lack of meetings are the reason for the SGM motion.

So far as the licence to build the first production boat was concerned he was not convinced that the mandate had been met. Concerns had been expressed about performance with the boat using an old keel but then (according to the GPS trackers) achieving the highest speed at one stage in the West Mersea open meeting. The boat had also not been sailed consistently by the same person. There was no understanding that the licence was initially for just one boat and that testing would continue. The NSOA Technical Committee appear to be divided and had not made any recommendation regarding the technical paper from Malcolm Blackburn which went to the May Committee meeting. Experts feel their views have not sought or listened to if given.

Bas Edmonds (RYA Technical Manager) clarified that the licence for one boat was the next stage in the process. That one boat would be built to the exact production specification, remembering that the prototype was just that – a test for concept and lay-up - fitted with the new keel and then take part in an enhanced testing procedure to ensure it meets the mandate. The RYA have to trust the NSOA to accept the process and also to trust Rondar to comply with the agreed specification.

SWS and BE further explained the testing process that will take place: A new keel will be fitted to the prototype, a boat will be built to the production specification and again fitted with a new keel. Three boat testing (prototype, first production boat and leading existing boat) will be tested in Weymouth Bay / Portland Harbour in a variety of wind conditions – light (0 – 10kts), medium (10 – 20kts) and heavy (over 20kts). The RYA will organise and supervise this testing. The intention is that all three boats will be sailed by members of the British Sailing Team.

SWS commented that the materials in the specification for the new build will result in a repeatable boat whereas the older squibs were a bit variable. Samples of the new material and variable cores from the same (old) squib were circulated.

Paul Manning (RYA) commented that in December 2015 (Bradwell and onwards) the only keel available was used as the new keel had not been finalised. The next round of testing will be 2 boats with the new keel (prototype and production spec) and a benchmark boat from the fleet.

Malcolm Blackburn (Chair NSOA Technical Committee) reported to the meeting on the process followed by the committee. He reiterated that the Technical Committee meeting in November 2015 voted in favour of proceeding with the project following a site visit to Rondar. Details of the proposed build were published as part of the mandate put to the membership so everyone should have been aware of what was being proposed. Once the prototype had been built it was the task of the NSOA to test the concept. The report to the May Committee meeting contained the facts resulting from that testing including trying to deal with queries on the boat being stiffer, lighter at the ends, C of G. In order to clarify these points MB had taken the prototype into his shed and compared it with no 96. One query that was resolved was that the prototype seemed bow heavy when lifted on Squib strops.

The keel box part of the mould had not been retrieved from BPS and the lifting eyes were in a slightly different place. The main focus had been to deal with facts not opinions.

Robert Coyle commented that concern had been expressed about the fragility of the foam sandwich construction.

Paul Manning replied that there had been a lot of discussion re impact damage. However when you look at the material samples there is a clear difference between typical dinghy construction with, from the outside, gel coat, thin structural FGP, foam sandwich and then thin FGP. The Squib would follow the same principle but with much more FGP. The outer layer provides crash resistance. Impact testing will be done on samples. It is important to remember that the dinghy analogy is not appropriate.

Nigel Grogan commented that he thought that foam was a red herring. This was an important decision but this was a risk too far. Why change to foam?

Paul Young commented that the class needs to have new boats sold to keep the class alive. However, although the £20000 price makes the Squib affordable, using 1960s technology would make it unattractive. The idea today is low maintenance. The current squib is not saleable as a new boat – and this is probably a contributory factor in the last builder failing.

Brian Holland asked about changes to boats over a period. PY replied that everyone tinkers with the rigging on a boat to make it suit themselves over time

PY continued that his view is that what is needed is a standard boat, no faster (a very small market for those from the few top sailors) but nicer and low maintenance to make the package viable. In today's market it is a turnkey solution that sells.

David Wines asked why nothing had been done about the uncomfortable deck moulding when self draining had taken centre stage.

PY replied that self draining cockpits have proved to be a critical selling point generally. The deck mould had not been forgotten and would be returned to, hopefully in the not too distant future.

Retrofitting internal moulds: PY said that there will be a need to work with the RYA to come up with a solution for this. There would be a need to withdraw the certificate and then re-measure after work had been completed. At this stage there is no detail of either process or cost. On further questions PY said that retrofitting would involve taking the old boat apart – and until that happens time (and therefore costs) will not be clear.

Gerard Dyson expressed concern that the proposals would dilute the one design nature of the Squib. He said that he was opposed to self-draining cockpits.

PY reminded the meeting that it is the RYA who issue the build licence and approve all details including the specification not the NSOA.

SWS said that he was convinced that the NSOA had done everything that they could as amateurs to fulfil the mandate and therefore voted to ask the RYA to issue a licence for one boat. He noted that Malcolm Blackburn's testing and subsequent report had been done to answer queries from the membership raised during the testing of the prototype. He further commented that a lot of myths have been raised during the process.

Bas Edmonds reiterated that the full licence will not be issued until after the testing process is complete and performance has been checked. This is the RYA's decision. They will also be conducting various other technical tests.

Vincent Delany asked where the prototype was as he was disappointed not to see it at Weymouth. It was pointed out that the boat had travelled widely across England and Wales but that it would be arranged to bring it down to Weymouth on the following day from the Rondar yard. (It was agreed that PY would arrange this and that the first casting of the new keel, which had just been collected from the foundry, would also be on show.)

Eddie Harper asked whether electric bilge pumps would deal with the perceived difference between self draining and the existing boats. It was pointed out that that debate was due to take place in the AGM.

Tony Saltonstall summed up the debate. He said that the debate had thrown up different views between many of his oldest and closest friends. However, there had been no boats built for three years now. The class needs a builder who will take the Squib forward. He commented that speed is not necessarily just the boat (re the fast speed recorded at one stage for the prototype at West Mersea) and he has known 800 do the same when caught just right by a gust – it didn't last long though! He continued that the builder has to want to build boats and make money – otherwise nothing happens at all. If the new boat is a rocket ship it will be sorted!

SWS announced that the vote at the meeting would be by a show of hands.

The result of the vote, which was verified, was 56 in favour and 9 against with 3 abstentions. The SGM motion 1 was therefore approved and motions 2, 3 and 4 automatically fell.*

The meeting closed at 19.20pm.

* Note that if proxies had been counted the vote would have been 100 in favour and 61 against giving the same result.