



## Chairman's Report 2020

Hi All

It's been an absolute honour to have been the Chairman for the last year and it remains my absolute conviction to serve the Scorpion community for the next 12 months (assuming that meets with the association blessing), and a heartfelt thank you, to you all for being such a wonderful class to be part of.

I've built on last years report to continue the theme and show progress.

My report is broken down as follows:

- The situation
- The long-term solution
- The people
- The output
- The outlook

### **The situation:**

All discretionary leisure spend has, and will continue to be, put under extreme pressure. This is in part due to the economic climate but also to major changes in social relaxation decision making.

**(2020) This situation since C19 has been made more acute as social distancing will have significantly altered the risk profile of discretionary leisure activity.**

Sailing as a sport has many perceived barriers to entry that are well understood. Additional pressure is created by virtue of the sheer number of different dinghy classes now existing, all attempting to compete for 'customers' with associated financial and 'extinction' risks.

**(2020) It is my belief that like many business' that have fallen due to C19, so that the same for many classes.**

**However, the class with the committed membership has fought this challenge head on.**

- 1. We attempted an end of season championship at Plymouth, now to be a first of the year event.**
- 2. The committee worked tirelessly since May 2020 to bring the event to fruition.**
- 3. The Thursday evening quiz nights have been fantastic community engagement events.**
- 4. The virtual sailing events have kept the community alive and enjoyed the competitive experience both against other classes and from within.**
- 5. The "Tallulah" effect has given the class qudos nationally and been a catalyst for boat building**
- 6. The support of P&B/Ovington, Paintcraft/Duffin has seen unprecedented boat building activity not seen for many years and unlikely to be present in other classes this year.**



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Lack of experience in the amateur dinghy sector on how to achieve a class 'turnaround' is resulting in what I shall call a "Catch 22"; a paradoxical situation from which an individual or community cannot escape because of contradictory rules or limitations. The term was coined by Joseph Heller who used it in his 1961 novel of that name.

**(2020) C19 has just heightened this reality.**

## **The long-term solution:**

Recognise that the reality of 'The situation' will be a reduced active participation within some fleets and that linking up with other classes for Championships and Open meetings will give opportunities for two significant added-value benefits:

**(2020) Delivered, the committee believe we are on the path to securing medium to long term partnerships that will insulate the class to further inclement head winds.**

- Combined class turnouts will be greater than those for an individual class alone, so the prospect of a larger fleet will open up a wider range of sailing venues which in turn proves more attractive to participants and sponsors alike.

**(2020) Delivered, Dave Elston has been an absolute star in proving the art of the possible with Penzance.**

- Host clubs can expect to realise higher food and beverage revenues, which are more likely to be sustainable rather than being dependent on one class alone.

**(2020) Delivered, again by Dave Elton.**

Combined these two benefits yield the key to breaking out of the 'Catch 22' situation!

The Scorpion class isn't exclusively unique but the longevity of the hull means that a reduction in the number of new boats produced does not mean that an 'extinction risk' is imminent. To the contrary, it actually enhances the fleet's status because competitive boats are always available irrespective of age. A quick analysis of the Top 5 boats at this year's Scorpion Nationals in Llandudno underlines my point here; the winning boat 2013 being 10 years old and the fourth placed boat 1923 a mere 30 years old! Rationalisation of Open meetings/ events is also important.

**(2020) we all know this.**

A vibrant, well-attended and 'perfectly formed' Open circuit with a concise number of meetings will support greater attendances; in contrast to many meetings where the reality is reduced fleet turnouts. Dovetailing the circuit to include high-profile 'Regatta' events enables the class to showcase its vibrancy and competitiveness to other fleets, i.e. a subtle form of 'come join us' marketing! A great example of this approach in action was the mid-July Sika Weymouth Dinghy Regatta held at Castle Cove SC where the Scorpions accounted for 22 boats out of the total 99 entries and were the largest single fleet with their own starts; ahead of the Ospreys and Fireballs



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who accounted for 18 boats and 11 boats respectively. The remaining 50 boats consisted of at least nine classes and were split into asymmetric and fast/ slow handicap fleets. Doing the math you can see that their average turnout was only 5-6 boats!

**(2020) Pete Gray had delivered this for 2020 and we shall roll over the events into 2021.**

## **The people:**

Without doubt the 'Scorpion Gang' are the most inclusive and fun seeking bunch, and the long term friendships thus formed are a unique and under-leveraged resource. The Committee structure is set along traditional lines but members make extensive use of e-mail and the WhatsApp smartphone messenger application to optimise time management and aid decision making, which in turn encourages devolved responsibility and accountability.

**(2020) The Committee members this year have been absolute stars:**

- **Steve keeping us on-script, without Steve we would be so much the poorer and lack direction without his leadership.**
- **Malcolm has done an amazing job and our thanks go out to him. After Tenby who would have thought we could have gone through C19 and still have £8k in our bank account. For also taking on the class website and putting that on a better footing. This is a cause for celebration, and we will the next time we meet up.**
- **Dave – goes without saying that Dave has delivered a partnership approach both with the clubs and classes. Well done and thank you.**
- **Peter continues to be a bright star, building a new boat and being a chief advocate, along with Rachel, of the class at the top end of the national dinghy racing scene.**
- **Nicola for not only bringing a 'family of boats' to Open events and the Nationals but also for her ingenuity in sourcing unique and valued prizes. I cannot wait to see the fab prizes for 2021. Thank you.**
- **Jerry for taking on the class rules and pushing them through the RYA.**
- **Hannah for her continued creation of bespoke graphics artwork and PR activities. And rework needed for 2021, thank you Hannah.**
- **Colin for his organisation of the membership database and glad to see you are have fully recovered from your op.**
- **Catherine McGuire and Andrea Fellows have taken up the challenge to bring us medium and short term sponsorship. They expect to deliver great things in 2021 that they had lined up for this year. Thank you both for being so resourceful.**
- **Richard Jones – with the role of encouraging event attendance – you will get your chance to shine next year. Thank you.**



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## The output:

With the above solution and people in place, I am confident that we will deliver the following results to build on everything we've achieved to date and ensure the viability of the Scorpion Class well into the future:

- Take the 'Catch 22' as an opportunity and drive attendances at each of our Silver Scorpion events to meet or exceed the benchmark figure of 23 boats. **(2020) Ongoing.**
- Deliver medium-term partnerships with one or two other dinghy classes; effectively forming a mutually beneficial 'firewall' to protect the Classes against transient factors and economic risk. **(2020) Great work in progress.**
- Trawl through our membership and boat register/ historic records to encourage lapsed members to renew their subscriptions and get their boats back on the water for Penzance 2020! Set a baseline entry target of 50 boats. **(2020) Well we had 107 entries, lets all ensure we deliver this for 2021.**
- Keep the core Committee intact for three years so that the Class can benefit from a period of stability. **(2020) work in progress.**

## The outlook:

Today you have heard about a concise programme of (six) Open meetings for the 2020-21 Silver Scorpion circuit which is now published on the website ([sailscorpion.co.uk](http://sailscorpion.co.uk)) and also maps directly into our WebCollect online membership/ events management portal ([webcollect.org.uk](http://webcollect.org.uk)). Well done to Peter for all the work necessary to book and firm-up these events with the respective host clubs. **(2020) In train for 2021.**

Steve's work with WebCollect allows you to get all of the meeting dates in your diary and then to book and pay for them on-line! **(2020) Amazing result Steve, well done**

. You've also heard that we have achieved financial stability, with a small profit resulting from the Llandudno Nationals. Fleet partnering can only see the Class finances move further into the black, so no more Tenby-style losses of £1,500 or so due to diminished entry levels. **(2020) Well done Malcolm.**



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We have a 5-year plan which can now be revealed as follows:

- 2021 – Penzance, shared venue with Hornet class.
- 2022 – Looe (was Porthpean) not shared with Hornet class.
- 2023 – Eastbourne , shared venue with Hornet class.
- 2024 – Castle Cove SC (was Paignton) , shared venue with Hornets (TBC).
- 2025 – TBC

With our partnership plans, Nationals venues and Silver Scorpion fixtures confirmed for the next five years, the Class now has the appropriate structure and leadership resource to stabilise with a level of confidence and look to the future with real optimism.

Many people continue to support our great Class and I am conscious that I haven't been able to recognise everybody who has played a part this year – no matter how great or small – in helping to take us forward.

I extend my sincere thanks, if I've missed someone or somebody out, I apologise in advance! Just remind me not to forget next time!

From myself and on behalf the Committee of the National Scorpion Class Association, a heartfelt

Thank You.

Best as always

***Chris***

Chris P Yates

Chairman

National Scorpion Class Association

05/10/2020