

## Swallow XP sails

### Comments and observations from Darter: Saturday 17 April 2010

#### Setting up

##### Mainsail

- The mainsail now has a red rope attached to the clew if an existing outhaul cannot extend to reach the clew on the shorter foot.
- We found the slug was a tight fit in our boom track and was not easily adjustable under modest load
- We are not familiar with Batt sails and found the mainsail boltrope size/character, and possibly top batten, required greater effort to hoist
- The Cunningham has a block attached at the cringle point – a benefit for us.

##### Jib

- We took Skua's advice and added a shackle at the tack (in our case an ordinary shackle as we have a twist shackle at the bottom) in order to marginally raise the foot curve and to avoid too much deck-sweeping
- We are not quite sure if we like or hate the small plastic hanks – a hassle for a big fingered bloke to attach - but the quick release is attractive
- We found that the barber-hauler/lead blocks provided by Skua were for 8mm rope (theirs a double purchase system) and we have single 10mm jib sheets so we were unable to use them. We moved our existing lead blocks as far forward as possible (some 6" behind the foredeck intersection) and not as far inboard as recommended – in essence adapting our existing set-up as best we could.
- At the outset we could not eliminate a vague crease from the bottom of the 2<sup>nd</sup> panel (below the window).
- Being the same luff length we had no problem in using our existing halyard set-up but even so we had difficulties in getting adequate halyard tension.

#### Race 1 (our first of the year!)

- A beat to Itchenor and a run to Wear, Teapot, Park, Finish. Max F2, sometimes zilch (especially the run to Wear) and spring tide (HW- 3.5 hrs) flooding.
- Started well, caught Solitude on the opening beat quite quickly having both marginally better pointing ability and speed (both sailing 2up). Rounded Teapot the wrong way while leading, dropped to 3<sup>rd</sup> but got back to 2<sup>nd</sup> (but unrelated to boat speed) and on the final beat was comprehensively covered by Solitude, but closed quickly at the end. Retired as failed to re-round Peacock correctly.

##### Race Observations

- We had too much main halyard tension (and because we do not have an easily adjustable main halyard system elected not to make any adjustments during the race)
- This was not a boatspeed race - the beats were relatively short and tide-assisted. Nonetheless we felt we had superior speed which but for our various errors would have delivered a race win.
- Until we put on some back stay tension the top batten was getting caught in a tack. It was also occasionally necessary to 'flick' the mainsail in a tack to avoid top batten reversal in these lighter conditions.

#### Race 2

- Borrowed some larger blocks from Curlew and only had time to set up on one side only. We found the resultant 'mechanics' such that we could not quickly and easily adjust the sail under load and could not achieve the

desired/recommended inboard sheeting angle. We were able to reduce the jib crease by tensioning the luff adjustment.

- Wind SSW F2/3. Windward/leewards from Park start to Rookwood/Wear and Ellanore/Park. HW just before the start, ebb building quite quickly therefore tide- assisted beats once again. Best starts were from the pin end and then into the shore – Kansu best and Bluff close. We had clean air from the CB end but no obvious advantage and rounded about 6<sup>th</sup>. The jib and spi halyards were twisted so we sailed 400 yds of the downwind leg without either spinnaker or jib and lost contact with the leading group. We had a better 2<sup>nd</sup> beat and fortuitous 2<sup>nd</sup> rounding of Ellanore so were back up to 5<sup>th</sup>. Gained one more place on the next beat and sailed close to Marengo but could not overtake despite being able to point out from under her lee on the 2<sup>nd</sup> beat.

### **'Part 2'**

In the absence of any booking for Sunday I was permitted to keep the sails for another day. (One could argue that it will take more than one day to both set up the sails and understand their characteristics and therefore a complete weekend is more beneficial).

- Harry showed me on Darter how they had set up the bridle system on Skua but now using Curlew's 10mm blocks – the same system would also work well on Darter with a couple of inconsequential holes drilled in the side deck web support. I have photographed the set up. It would have resulted in a much closer sheeting angle than we had used the day before. The 'mechanical' problems we had encountered could be side-stepped by routing the jib sheet directly from the bridle lead block to the deck-mounted turning block and by-passing the existing track-mounted lead block.
- Harry recommended dropping the spinnaker behind rather than under this jib
- Alas there was no wind/race to try out these substantial refinements!

### **Comments from others**

- They look good (several)/ so glad there weren't any faster - so we can forget them/ the jib, while looking good, now emphasises the short luff.

### **My additional comments**

- The jib window may be too high in the second panel. The mainsail window panel is a substantial benefit.
- The jib set appears to be quite sensitive and requires rather more trimming – particularly offwind. Will it therefore also need (or encourage the fitting of) a transverse barber hauler?
- Other than moments in the AM race we did not feel we had any meaningful extra speed but an occasional pointing improvement of about 3°. However this was not really a boat speed day with beats of relatively short duration.
- Mostly unfamiliar with a mylar main, I occasionally found it difficult to 'read' the mainsail, especially when reaching
- I need more time and a wider range of conditions to form a better overall view.

### **Bits and pieces**

- Both sets of blocks, the bridle ropes and shockcord are now in a black Magic Marine bag borrowed from the scran bin that is tucked inside the jib. We have put a blue sail tie around the jib. Both sails (with pink ribbon identifiers) are on the lower rack of the right hand section of the sail loft, as before. The sails are a tight fit in their dark blue bags!

