

Notes on use of trial Swallow Sails on Migrant on 22 May 2010

Wind: generally light and capricious.

Crew: AM for 2Up race: Richard Thompson and Charles Fisher
PM: Richard, Charles and Chris Fox

We failed to set up correctly for morning race as the bridle was missing and we had too little time. It was not possible to take a view on relative boat speed as everything depended on where you went and not on how you sailed.

In the afternoon, we were unable to fit bridle as there was nowhere means to secure it. We lifted the tack of sail by about 15cm (a) to get foot of sail clear of deck and (b) to enable use of the existing block on forward end of existing jib track.

As in the morning, the wind was so variable and unpredictable that it was impossible to make any assessment of boat performance relative to other Swallows. However, it did seem that the jib was very sensitive to very small adjustment in sheeting angle and tension. This will make it a very picky sail to set which I suggest is undesirable.

We noted the jib was made of much heavier material than current jibs and probably heavier than material for any future jib. I am not sure of the effect of this heavier material but it certainly made the sail more difficult to read in the light winds.

Again because the very light wind, no conclusions could be drawn about the trial mainsail.

Overall I am very concerned about the jib sheeting position and would strongly recommend a slightly shorter foot with a slightly higher clew. This should allow most boats to use existing sheeting arrangements or with minor adjustments. It would be unacceptable if, to obtain the proper sheeting angle, it is necessary to have lines across the space most of us use for the spinnaker basket.

While the luff length of the trial jib has rightly been kept the same as existing jibs, I would have no objection in principle to a longer luff if it is decided to proceed with the new sails. This would require a one off purchase of a new halliard and a short strop to allow continued use of our existing jibs.

We need knowledge of the trial sails in heavy weather.

We need information from (perhaps more than one) sailmaker about materials and expected life and consequent cost.

It seems that the decision will become a trade off between slightly better performance in lighter airs against a one off cost to purchase sails earlier than we would otherwise do?

Richard Thompson
5 June 2010