

EXPERIMENTAL SAILS SOLITUDE'S REPORT (TRIALLED SATURDAY 25.04.10)

Rigging/sheeting

No problem. The jib went up on the current hoist (as expected). Sheeting was to the current fairleads moved forward about three inches. Solitude's jib tracks extend to the corner but we did not need to use the full forward extent. We did not use or need the blocks/bridle (in jib bag for possible use).

The main was lightly stiff in the luff groove but no difficulty. We needed a short strop to the main clew to attached to our outhaul (a line is fitted for this).

Setting

No great changes. We banged the jib in, adjusting slightly as the wind went up and down, as we would the current jib. We trimmed the main much the same as usual, with perhaps a little more attention to kicker tension.

Sailing

The sails are faster and closer.

Race 1 was not a boat-speed race and in light and fluky conditions, but the slight speed gain upwind allowed us to round the windward mark in the top three. We pulled away downwind and held easily to the finish.

Race 2 was perhaps the full proper test of the experimental sails. Although we had a good start the extra speed allowed us to wriggle free and a favourable header put us usefully ahead at the end of a short beat. Clear air downwind gave us a lead of some 100 metres until a navigational error brought us back into the middle of the fleet with a lot of catching up to do. Two beats M to B, in force 3-4, showed the extra speed and we easily went through a number of boats, with only Migrant hanging on. With another beat we would have caught Archon.

The sails look good, have a definite speed edge and we pointed higher. There were no trimming difficulties. We would probably want jib barber haulers for two-sail reaches, and I would be tempted to try sheeting the jib a fraction inboard. The main material was fine and easily handled. As would be expected we could do more with the cunningham.

Balance was fine, perhaps with marginally less weather helm.

Ideas

The jib needs a longer luff to make it visually better. I would like to see the full for length on the main, and see if a bigger roach is possible. We had no instances of the backstay catching.

Minor points

I am not too keen on the fiddly jib luff hanks fitted.. Although visibility was not a problem with the new job, I remember that the former trial jib had a good window (more easily fitted with the cross-cut construction allowed by a low clew). The main is a little flatter than we are used to.

Overall

Better looking, modern materials, slightly faster, a more flexible main. What is there not to like? Solitude supports the class advancing along these lines.

AMR 26.04.10