

The Clyde Yacht Clubs' Association

Boat Owners Survey

With an emphasis on racing

October 2008

Prepared by

The Clyde Yacht Clubs' Association
PO Box 5438, Helensburgh, G84 8WH



with support from

The Clyde Cruising Club



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Special thanks go to Liz Redstone, the CYCA Administrator, for all her help with this project.

Definitions and Abbreviations Used

An ordinary keel boat is defined as one which is multi-purpose – being used for family cruising as well as club or regatta racing. It may or may not be a performance cruiser.

The Clyde Yacht Clubs' Association is referred to as CYCA

The Clyde Cruising Club is referred to as CCC

The Royal Yachting Association Scotland is referred to as RYAS

The International Rating Certificated handicap system is referred to as IRC

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Index

1.0	Executive Summary	4
2.0	Introduction	6
2.1	Wider Background to the Survey	6
2.2	Specific Background to the Survey	7
2.3	The Survey Managers	8
2.4	Methodology	8
3.0	The Survey Results	10
3.1	Question 1 – CYCA Yearbook	10
3.2	Question 2 – CYCA Website	11
3.3	Question 3 – CYCA Handicaps	11
3.4	Question 4 – Club Related Changes to Increase Racing Turnouts	13
3.5	Question 5 – Why Owners No Longer Race	15
4.0	Conclusions and Recommendations	18
4.1	Question 3 – CYCA Handicaps	18
4.1.1	Conclusions	18
4.1.2	Recommendations	19
4.2	Question 4 - Club Related Changes to Increase Racing Turnouts	19
4.2.1	Conclusions	19
4.2.2	Recommendations	20
4.3	Question 5 – Why Owners No Longer Race	21
4.3.1	Conclusions	21
4.3.2	Recommendations	22
4.4	General Recommendations	22

Appendices

Appendix 1	Copy of the Survey	23
Appendix 2	The Clyde Yacht Clubs' Association	25
Appendix 3	The Clyde Cruising Club	26
Appendix 4	Premier Business Development Ltd	26

1.0 Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of what is believed to be the first comprehensive survey of Scottish keel yacht owners on the subject of why they race or not.

For a number of years, there has been a marked decrease in the numbers of ordinary, production keel boat yachts racing. The decline has been most visible on the Clyde where the largest numbers of racing keel boat yachts are located. There are about 6,000 yachts on the Clyde.

Racing is probably the most visible part of a sailing club's activities whether on mid-week evenings or at weekends. A strong racing profile is known to be helpful in attracting new members to a club, either as crew members become boat owners themselves or as crew/associate members of the club itself. It is in a club's own interests to encourage racing.

Boat owning is increasing yet there is no corresponding increase in the number of yachts coming out to race.

The CYCA holds a database of some 4,000 yacht owners mainly, but not exclusively, based on the West Coast of Scotland. Due to a historic, pre 1990s, lack of useable data, only the most recent additions to the database, some 1,600 owners, could be surveyed. The 1,600 represent around 25% of all boats on the Clyde. Most surveyed hold a Clyde handicap.

All 1,600 yacht owners were surveyed using the questionnaire at Appendix 1 and 690 (43%) responded. This is an exceptionally high response rate.

Outcomes & Conclusions of the Survey

94% of those who responded to the questioning found the CYCA yearbook useful

61% of those who responded to the questioning use the CYCA website regularly

Positive and negative responses on the handicapping questions were evenly balanced, which is regarded by the CYCA Executive as evidence that, on the whole, the system is working well.

“Rogue” handicaps cause angst to clubs and other owners. It is not clear to clubs and owners that “rogue” and other handicaps can be appealed against.

A number of suggestions on new allowances were made

Feedback from clubs, racing secretaries and owners to CYCA is vital if handicaps are to be adjusted.

There is a strong desire for more passage and white sail racing. Round the buoys racing is the least popular form of racing, with windward/leeward racing being particularly disliked.

Many have simply become bored with what is on offer at their sailing club. However, there is reluctance on the part of sailors to express their wishes regarding changes in race formats to their clubs.

Clubs should co-operate more and compete less

The majority of those who have given up racing now go cruising. Lack of crew is a key factor in giving up racing.

There is an endemic shortage of racing crew. The frequency with which this point was raised indicates a demand for crew registers or some other mechanisms to put owners and crews together.

Racing or high tech yachts “pot-hunting” in white sail classes is particularly disliked.

Recommendations

A number of recommendations have been made. Key recommendations include:

CYCA should look at more widely publicising the new handicap application form.

CYCA will make it clearer that handicaps can be appealed against.

Clubs, racing secretaries and owners should increase levels of feedback on racing results to the CYCA so that adjustments can be made more swiftly.

Large regatta organisers may need to re-focus publicity to encourage more to enter the passage race side of their events.

Clubs, racing secretaries and regatta organisers should examine what is currently offered and change race offerings, where necessary, to meet new demands.

Feedback mechanisms that allow club members to feed back to their clubs should be devised and implemented. Such feedback could be facilitated through the CYCA to allow club members anonymity.

An “Advisor/Buddy” system should be put in place along with “Introduction to Racing” courses held at club level. Relevant advice should be sought from RYAS and others.

More frequent inter club co-operation is recommended.

There is a strong demand for a crew register

CAVEAT – During the period this survey took place, a new handicap application form was introduced and widely publicised. The new form addresses a number of points regarding handicaps and allowances which were raised in comments in the survey.

2.0 Introduction

This report presents the findings of what is believed to be the first comprehensive survey of Scottish keel yacht owners on the subject of why they race or not.

It is thought to be the first survey of this magnitude of yacht owners on the subject of racing and so has wider implications for all sailing clubs which offer racing across the UK.

The survey was carried out by the Clyde Yacht Clubs' Association (CYCA) with financial support from the Clyde Cruising Club (CCC).

The CYCA gratefully acknowledges the support received from the CCC in the carrying out of this research exercise.

The CYCA is an organisation run by sailors to serve sailors, primarily on the West Coast of Scotland. In accordance with RRS Prescriptions – Appendix G.2 (c), it offers the C series sail numbers, the CYCA handicap system and also represents local sailing clubs on a wider scale. Fuller details of the organisation are given in Appendix 2.

2.1 The Wider Background to the Survey

For a number of years, there has been a marked decrease in the numbers of ordinary, production keel boat yachts racing whether at club level or at larger inter-club or open regattas. This has been noticed across the whole of Scotland but has been particularly concentrated on the Clyde where the largest numbers of racing keel boat yachts and owners are located. Anecdotal evidence from those connected with clubs and in England and Wales shows that the same decline is taking place. Further anecdotal evidence suggests that this decline goes well beyond UK waters.

Every keel-boat racing sailing club has noticed the decline and the majority wish to take steps to stem it but have been unsure how to encourage racing.

The decline has been noticed in boats which race under all handicap systems – the three most common in the UK are the internationally recognised International Rating Certificate (IRC) handicaps; the CYCA Clyde handicaps which are primarily found in Scotland, and the Portsmouth Yardstick System. A strong local handicapping system in Scotland means that Portsmouth Yardstick is not widely used and, so for the purposes of this study, has been ignored.

IRC handicaps tend to be held by those boats racing at the top end of racing – i.e. national and international regattas. However there are some local Clyde based events which either offer IRC classes or are wholly IRC based. Some 1,962 boats hold IRC certificates UK wide, of those around 70 (3.6%) are based in Scottish waters.

Racing is probably the most visible part of a sailing club's activities whether on mid-week evenings or at weekends. A strong racing profile is known to be helpful in attracting new members to a club and has the consequential effect of raising the public profile of a club through the reporting of race results in the local papers and the yachting press. Racing keel-boats also provide a potential pool of new members for clubs either as crew members become boat owners themselves or as crew/associate members of the club itself.

In many clubs, racing is either self-financing or contributes to the wider running costs of the club. It is therefore in a club's own interests to encourage racing amongst its owners.

Clubs and administrative bodies like the CYCA and the RYAS are also keen to encourage racing. Racing is fun and allows wider skills to be learnt by owners and crew. Yachts which race tend to be more frequently used than those used simply for cruising.

Acting as racing crew also brings many new entrants into sailing, a proportion of whom go on to own their own boats.

The British successes in the Olympic sailing classes and those of endurance sailors such as Ellen MacArthur, Dee Caffari and others have made headlines and, through that, encouraged more people into sailing.

Boat owning is increasing yet there is no corresponding increase in the number of yachts coming out to race. When coupled with the decline in those already racing, questions started to be asked as to why people are not racing. The racing secretaries/convenors of sailing clubs have a feel for why people are not racing but there is no hard evidence as to whether their assumptions are correct.

This survey set out to address some of the more common questions as to why people have never started to race or have given up racing and to generate hard evidence for clubs and associations to act upon in the future.

Its processes and conclusions are outlined below.

2.2 The Specific Background to the Survey

The CYCA holds a database of some 4,000 yacht owners mainly, but not exclusively, based on the West Coast of Scotland. The database has been in existence for many years - data from the period pre-1990 lacked usable owner details and, therefore, had to be excluded from the survey base. The remaining database comprises 1,600 owners for whom full address details were held, however, this database was known to hold 'dirty' data as well as a significant number of out of date addresses.

The database has been built up from applications for CYCA sail numbers and handicaps. These handicaps, known as 'Clyde Handicaps', are part of a nationally recognised but locally administered handicapping system for keel-boats on the Clyde. Although developed on the Clyde, the system is used widely across Scotland and, due to its simplicity, is starting to be adopted by some non-Scottish sailing clubs.

The vast majority of boat owners surveyed hold a Clyde handicap. More details on the Clyde handicaps and how they are calculated can be found in Appendix 2.

The main purpose of an owner applying for a handicap is to race his or her boat – either at club level or in the larger local regattas.

Until 2008, a Clyde handicap certificate cost £30.00 and was valid for the duration of the ownership of the boat to which it was issued. The handicap ceased to be valid when a boat was

sold. An amendment to an existing certificate, perhaps if a roller furling headsail was added, cost £10.00.

In 2008 the cost of a Clyde handicap was raised to £50.00 with the cost of an amendment raised to £15.00. The certificate still remains valid for the entire period of ownership by the owner to whom the handicap was issued.

No measuring or weighing is required for a Clyde Handicap and there are a wide range of allowances for items such as fixed propellers, roller-furling systems, keel configurations etc. A current application form for a CYCA handicap can be seen on the CYCA website at www.cyca-online.org.uk.

When compared to the cost of an IRC handicap certificate, from around £70.00 upwards and valid for 1 year only, the attraction of the Clyde Handicap to the average boat owner can be seen.

IRC handicap certificates are charged for by metre of boat length. Rates vary according to the measurement options chosen, unless the boat is of a recognised one design class, where a standard metre rate is paid. For example, the charge for a recognised one design class IRC certificate can start at around £70.00.

In January 2008, to ensure they were abiding by good data protection principles, the CYCA Executive took the decision to mail all those on their database for whom a valid address was held. As part of the data checking process, a simple survey covering the CYCA's Yearbook, website, handicap system and racing in general would be appended to the mailing piece and the responses analysed.

The survey was discussed with the largest and most active racing club on the Clyde, the Clyde Cruising Club, and they expressed an interest in financially supporting the work of the CYCA and sharing in the outcomes of the survey.

2.3 The Survey Managers

The Survey was developed, managed and analysed by the Clyde Yacht Clubs' Association with support from the Clyde Cruising Club. As the largest racing club on the Clyde and the organisers of the renowned Bell Lawrie Scottish Series, the CCC chose to support the survey as the outcomes of the work may influence the offerings they make.

To ensure impartiality and robust analysis of the data, the CYCA made use of experienced social and market researchers in undertaking this survey. Their help is gratefully acknowledged.

2.4 Methodology

CYCA was aware that it needed to tidy up its database under Data Protection rules and, in Spring 2008, were contemplating an exercise to do so. Being advised that the swiftest way of cleaning up a "dirty database" was to mail it, the CYCA chose to prepare a mailing to the 1,600 boat owners where an address was held.

At the same time, the CCC were changing the format of the popular Bell Lawrie Scottish Series to encourage more CYCA handicap yachts to enter and approached the CYCA to include race information in the data clean up mailing.

The methodology used was extremely simple. 1,600 boat owners on the CYCA database were sent a simple survey as part of an exercise to tidy up the data held on the CYCA database.

To facilitate responses, the mailer was a simple fold & tuck envelope which was a pre-paid reply.

A full copy of the survey, including the data clean up material, is attached at Appendix 1.

The responses were analysed using a simple logging system, followed by the appropriate calculation and interpretation.

3.0 The Survey Results

The results generated by the survey were impressive. It was sent to 1,600 known boat owners on the CYCA database. 690 boat owners responded, a raw response rate of 43%.

To put the data in a wider context, according to a recent survey of sailing on the West Coast of Scotland, it is estimated that there are around 6,000 yachts on the Firth of Clyde, with a further 4,000 elsewhere in on the West Coast i.e. outside the Clyde.

It can be seen that the survey was reaching approximately 1 in 4 (25%) of all boat owners in the Clyde area and 16% of all boat owners in the West of Scotland.

These figures attest to the robustness of the survey data set and allow valid conclusions and recommendations to be drawn.

To put the response rate into a UK wide comparison by comparing the numbers of boats holding a CYCA handicap with those holding International Rating Certificates (IRC) handicaps, the following figures are noted:

Across the whole of Scotland around 70 boats hold IRC handicap certificates

There are 1,962 boats in the UK holding IRC handicap certificates

Of these 1,962 boats, 1,154 are based on the central south coast of England between Dorset and Brighton. This is to be expected as performance yachting in the England tends to centred around the historic yachting venue of Cowes, Isle of Wight and the Hamble River.

When compared to the IRC figures, a response rate from 1,600 boat owners of 43% can be regarded at robust and significant.

Of the 690 responses received, 389 (56%) had completed the survey, which equates to 24% of those mailed overall (base 1,600).

Many respondents added comments where given the opportunity to do so and these have been distilled down into general themes and presented with the question to which they relate.

It should be noted that not all respondents answered all the survey questions and others gave multiple answers to the same question.

3.1 Question 1 – CYCA Yearbook.

The first question asked whether or not the respondent received a printed copy of the CYCA Yearbook and whether he or she found it useful. A supplementary question asked what other information should be included in the Yearbook.

278 survey respondents, 71%, replied to this question.

Of the 278 respondents, 261 (94%) found the CYCA yearbook useful. However the comments made provided useful information to the Association and gave strong guidance to the way forward.

Those respondents who commented constructively asked for more information on classic yachts, more cruising information and cross-referencing of information across boats in alphabetical boat-name order.

The availability of the Yearbook as a downloadable pdf on the CYCA website was seen as a very positive move. However a number of respondents commented that the CYCA Yearbook overlapped with the clubs' own year books and, depending on which clubs a sailor was a member of, the same information could be received in several year books.

In light of the information generated by this survey, the CYCA is reviewing the format of its Yearbook.

3.2 Question 2 – CYCA Website

The survey asked whether the respondent used the CYCA website regularly. Of the 285 who replied, 175 (61%) use the site regularly. Comments made on the site reflected on its age and its now rather dated layout. Further comments expressed a desire to see tidal information, the dates on which handicaps were decided and the date they were last adjusted added to the site.

CYCA is in the process of writing the specification for its new website and the comments from this survey may be incorporated, cost permitting, into the new site structure.

3.3 Question 3 – CYCA Handicaps

This section should be read with the Caveat on page 5 in mind.

As expected, the question on potential refinements to the CYCA handicap system generated a flurry of comments from a large number of CYCA handicap holders.

Surprisingly the responses were evenly balanced – with almost equal numbers saying the whole system worked remarkably well and a similar number saying that it was not working well. The two comments below perfectly illustrate this situation:

“Handicaps are set in stone and aren’t adjusted often enough or quickly enough”

“Handicaps are adjusted as soon as you start winning”

The lack of any significant bias one way or the other is regarded by the CYCA Executive as evidence that, on the whole, the system is working well.

The management of the handicap system also prompted some comments. The CYCA handicap is issued once at the start of a boat's ownership and is not re-issued unless the owner changes the configuration of the boat in some way or the original handicap is found to be unsatisfactory. An owner may, therefore, change the configuration of his/her boat (for example

fit a roller furling headsail) and may not realise that the CYCA needs to be informed of the change so that a new handicap can be issued.

Suggestions from respondents to overcome this included introducing an annual declaration of some description and making a handicap “void” if a boat has not raced in a season.

There will always be boats which by their uniqueness or their configuration have what is described as “rogue handicaps”, and a number of respondents commented on these. The CYCA is aware that the handicap system can create such handicaps especially when handicapping boats which are either new to the Clyde system or are one-off designs.

However, the organisation does not check race results on a regular basis so relies on clubs to feed back results to the CYCA – if clubs and racing secretaries do not feed back results and information on boats which they believe are wrongly handicapped, then those boats will remain with that handicap. The sheer numbers of race placings generated over a sailing season – see calculation below – means that the CYCA, which is a voluntary organisation, simply cannot track racing results in the manner which some owners seem to think it can.

Rolling handicaps were mentioned by more than one respondent. These are used successfully in many places but as the numbers below show, with the volume of boats racing on the Clyde, administering rolling handicaps would put immense strains on the resources of the CYCA.

Other comments led the CYCA to come to the conclusion that many owners are not aware of the complex range of data inputs used to assign handicaps – a small but solid tranche of owners seem to believe that handicaps are allocated randomly as a “good guess”, rather than as a result of informed assessment.

Several comments compared the CYCA handicapping system with IRC but given the numbers of IRC boats in Scotland (70) v the CYCA (1,600), it is not necessarily a valid comparison. It should be noted that the CYCA handicap committee and that of the IRC, do correspond as both are handicapping a similar amount of boats in the UK (IRC 1,962).

When it came to allowances, owners suggested that the following new allowances should be included in the calculation of handicap:

- Age allowance
- Allowance for low-tech (Dacron) sails/Penalty for hi-tech sails
- “Living on Board” allowance for boats where the crew stay aboard during events
- Saildrive allowance
- “Encouragement” allowance for owners new to racing

On the existing allowances, owners requested that the following allowances were re-examined by the Handicap Committee:

- Fixed bladed propeller allowance – thought to be inadequate
- Fully battened main – needs re-examination
- Below deck furling drums – needs re-examination
- Shallow draft & keel design – should be taken into account

One of the conclusions that can be drawn from the answers to this question is that owners do not realise that the CYCA handicap now takes into account many more factors – such as keel shape, position of furling drum, etc.

During the period of the survey, a new handicap application form was introduced, and widely publicised. The new form takes account of more factors and thus addresses part of this question. The CYCA will continue to publicise this form using the message that “you can now take more factors into account, so if you think your boat’s handicap is unfair, it may be worth asking for a review of your boat’s handicap with the new factors being taken into account”.

CYCA will also make it clearer that clubs and owners can appeal against those handicaps which are perceived to be unfair to other boats racing locally – even where the owner disagrees. If required, the CYCA may look at an on-line reporting system, through email, where racing secretaries and owners can bring “rogue” handicaps to the attention of the CYCA.

It cannot be stated often enough that the CYCA can do nothing without feedback from clubs, racing secretaries and owners. If the organisation is not informed, then nothing can be done.

Calculation of numbers of boats racing during the Club racing season

The club racing season is assumed to be 1st May to 30th September in any one year, roughly 22 weeks. There are 28 members clubs of CYCA, 27 of which are sailing clubs. It is assumed that, on average during the season, each sailing club races twice a week with 15 boats turning out per race.

Number of clubs x number of races per week x number of boats = 810 race placings per week

Race placings per week x number of weeks = 17,820 race placings per season

Over the season, this leads to 810 race placings per week, and 17,820 race placings per season.

This figure ignores any major regattas with CYCA fleets e.g. Bell Lawrie Scottish Series, West Highland Yachting Week, Largs Regatta Week etc.

As well as general comments, the CYCA received 5 specific complaints, all of which were passed to the CYCA’s Handicap Committee for resolution with the owners concerned. At time of writing, all had been resolved.

3.4 Question 4 – Club Related Changes to Increase Racing Turnouts

This question related to club related changes that might increase race fleet turnouts.

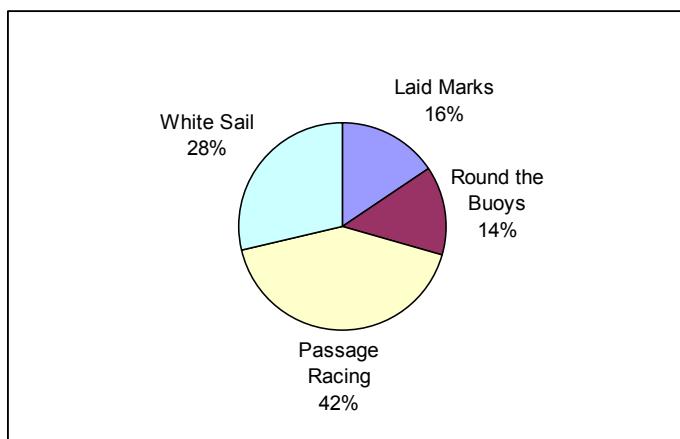
Part 1 of the question asked respondents the following: I would like to see more racing using: laid marks, ‘round the buoys’, white sail, passage racing.

From those who replied to this question (186, 27% of the overall responses), the key desire was for more passage racing. 77 (42%) respondents indicated that they would like more passage racing to be offered by clubs and regattas.

The attraction of white sail racing (desired by 28% of respondents) ties in with comments made in the replies to the next section – that crew are increasingly hard to find, therefore owners want more racing that allows them to participate without the necessity for crew. Typical comments noted that as families are smaller now, there was a need for more racing which could be sailed short-handed.

In addition there were requests for more single-handed, two-handed and overnight racing.

Interestingly ‘round the buoys’ racing seemed the least popular, polling only 14% of the vote. Given the number of regattas that have moved to ‘round the buoys’ racing, this may be a significant reason for the decreased turn outs seen in recent years. ‘Round the buoys’ racing is simply not attractive to a substantial number of owners.



Part 2 asked whether the respondent had expressed this wish to their club.

This part of the question produced probably the most depressing statistic of the whole survey - 52% of those who responded which equates to 97 owners, had **NOT** contacted their club to make their preferences known.

There may be many reasons for this. Perhaps a desire not to upset the status quo or perhaps the fear factor as was suggested by one respondent - ‘if I tell them, they’ll want me to come on the committee’.

This attitude, and the lack of communication with their club, is somewhat self-defeating for those keen to race. If committees are not made aware of new needs, there is a tendency on their part to assume that all is well and to continue offering the same events. Indeed comments were made that ‘clubs keep doing the “same old thing” and change needs to be encouraged.’

Part 3 asked for any other suggestions which might increase racing turnouts.

Again the respondents made many suggestions. These have been divided into broad categories and reported upon.

White sail classes attracted a number of comments on the class split with respondents noting that the class split is often far too large. At its simplest, this is a factor of the number of boats entered – the more boats entering, the narrower class bands can be. “Pot hunting” by large or known racing boats in white sail classes was also commented upon and actively disliked as it was felt to be against the ethos of the classes and to the detriment of the family crews at which the classes were originally aimed.

Several respondents noted that clubs should do more to encourage people into racing perhaps by offering advisors to sail with newcomers to help and encourage them. If the numbers in one club are not enough to do this, then respondents suggested that racing clubs should get together and offer “Introduction to racing” courses.

The sailing clubs themselves attracted comments.

A common theme was that clubs should co-operate more and compete less. Areas in which co-operation was suggested were:

Minimisation of event clashes

Larger, combined club events, with a strong social programme, as these are more attractive

Introduction to racing events

Team racing between clubs – including winter series

The practicalities of running a boat in races were also commented upon. Individual costs such as insurance, sails and the cost of complying with increasingly demanding ORC regulations were all perceived as too expensive. Entry fees were also perceived as expensive, although clubs could go some way to negating hostility by being more open with what race entry fees covered.

Tying in with the desire to see more passage and white sail races offered, comments were made that regattas should offer a wider variety of courses – whilst windward/leeward courses suited some, many simply found them “boring”, “bland”, and “stereotyped”.

Race managements also came in for comment – a typical comment noted that sailing under a poor race officer was “soul-destroying” and was killing racing.

It is depressing that all of the above comments can be addressed by clubs – providing they have the willingness to do so.

The RYA run Race Management training programmes for race officers dealing with large, national or international events and the majority of clubs are willing to train up their own race officers – usually through those who do race “taking their turn” at starting or finishing a club race.

3.5 Question 5 – Why Owners No Longer Race

This question related to why owners have given up racing.

The question gave a number of options as to why the owner may have given up racing. These were:

I am not interested in racing because

- I don't know enough about the racing rules
- My boat isn't rigged for racing
- It is too hard to find crew
- Racers seem unwelcoming/cliquey
- My family isn't interested enough
- I used to race but I am no longer interested
- Other, please specify

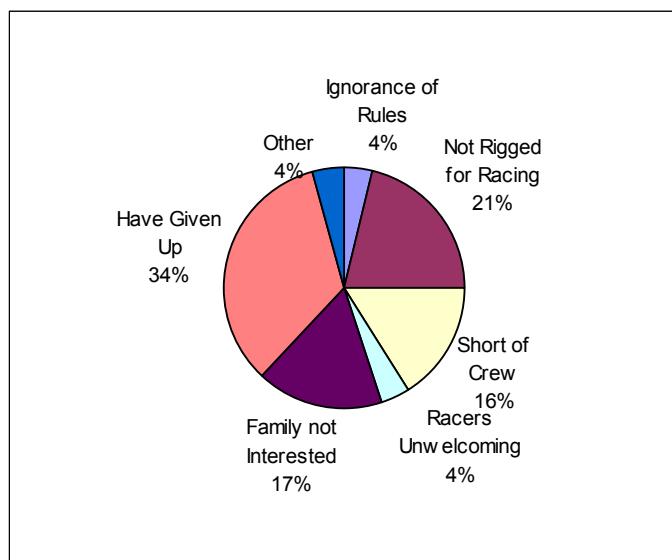
311 responses (80% of all questionnaire responses, 19% of all responses) were received, with some respondents giving further information in the comments section. The table and its accompanying pie chart below show the reasons quoted. Please note that some respondents gave more than one answer.

Table showing why people have given up racing

Area	Number	Percentage Questionnaire Responses (base 311)	Percentage Overall Responses (base 1,600)
Have given up racing	106	34%	7%
Not rigged for racing	65	21%	4%
Family not interested	53	17%	3%
Short of crew	50	16%	3%
Racers unwelcoming	12	4%	0.75%
Ignorance of rules	12	4%	0.75%
Other	12	4%	0.75%

Pie chart showing why people have given up racing

(Information base: table above)



It should be noted that the majority of those who stated that they had just “given up” is from owners who now declare their main interest as cruising.

The second key theme to emerge from this question is that the shortage of crew is endemic. The frequency with which this point was raised by respondents implies that there may be a strong demand for a club or a central crew register. However, in such a litigation conscious climate, creating such a register has a number practical difficulties attached to it. Crew registers have been tried for major events such as the Clyde Cruising Club’s Bell Lawrie Scottish Series with mixed success.

The third key theme is lack of time. Many commented that with increasingly busy lives, they now lacked the time to race as much as they would like to do.

Again respondents expressed their boredom with clubs current offerings as part of their reasons for giving up racing.

One category where it was immensely disappointing to see positive replies was that racers were unwelcoming. Starting racing is a daunting prospect for many boat owners and receiving a cold response can end a racing career before it has started.

Comments were also made by owners who lived a distance from their boats in that they were unable to race as regularly as they liked due to needing to live closer to family and work.

The final, very heartfelt, comment in this section has to be left to the respondent who, when asked why he or she had given racing, simply commented that “Racing hurts too much.”

4.0 Conclusions & Recommendations

Whilst many of the results of this survey will not be surprising to clubs and race committees, it does provide food for thought for both the CYCA and for member clubs. In this Conclusions & Recommendations section, this paper has focused on Questions 3, 4 and 5 as these are the most relevant to member clubs.

This survey has produced empirical rather than anecdotal evidence on what racing owners do and do not want clubs and regattas to offer. Action should, therefore, be taken on its outcomes. The majority of the issues that have been highlighted by respondents are matters that clubs & regatta committees can, relatively easily, address.

Using the data, the key conclusions & recommendations which can be drawn from this survey are as follows:

4.1 Question 3 – CYCA Handicaps

4.1.1 Conclusions

On handicapping, the main conclusion is that the CYCA handicap system works extremely well but there are “rogue” handicaps which are perceived to be unfair.

There is also a perception that CYCA is too slow to change handicaps, “rogue” or otherwise.

The management of handicaps is generally sound, although many owners are not aware that the CYCA should be informed of any changes to a boat’s configuration which may affect her performance.

Owners suggested a number of new allowances which should be included in the calculation of handicaps and also suggested modifications to existing allowances. From these, the conclusion can be drawn that many owners do not realise that more allowances are now given and that they can re-apply for a new handicap.

Sound suggestions were put forward on how handicaps should be managed including an annual declaration and the making of handicaps void if not used within a given time period.

Many owners are not aware of the complex formulations used to calculate handicaps.

Many clubs seem unaware that they can provide results to input into the handicap calculation and can appeal against handicaps which are perceived to be ‘over-generous’ or otherwise ‘rogue’. Likewise owners can appeal against those handicaps which they perceive to be unfair.

Comparing CYCA to IRC handicaps is not necessarily valid. Both systems have their merits and both handicapping committees share data. It should be remembered that only around 70 boats in the whole of Scotland hold IRC handicaps.

4.1.2 Recommendations

The majority of recommendations in this section are for consideration by the CYCA and their various committees. However, some recommendations require increased club and owner input and it is recommended that clubs and owners feed more information back to CYCA.

During the period of the survey, a new handicap application form was introduced. However from comments made, there may be a case for the CYCA continuing to publicise its introduction and the fact that it takes more factors into account.

CYCA will also make it clearer that clubs and owners can appeal against those handicaps which are perceived to be unfair to other boats racing locally – even where the owner disagrees.

It is recommended that to bring fairness to the system, those clubs with boats sailing under handicaps which could be considered “rogue”, bring such handicaps to the attention of the CYCA Handicap Committee.

If required, the CYCA may look at an on-line reporting system, through email, where racing secretaries and owners can bring such “rogue” handicaps to the attention of the CYCA. Feedback from CYCA member clubs will be sought on such a system.

It cannot be stated often enough that the CYCA can do nothing without feedback from clubs, racing secretaries and owners. If the organisation is not informed, then nothing can be done.

4.2 Question 4 – Club Related Changes to Increase Racing Turnouts

4.2.1 Conclusions

Key conclusions from this question are:

Owners have simply become bored with the racing which is currently offered.

Passage racing is far more popular as is white sail racing.

There is a significant lack of racing crew.

Clubs and regattas should modernise their offerings to attract more to race

The most disappointing finding from this survey is that 52% of all those who had made suggestions about how racing could be improved for them in their club, had NOT contacted their club or its racing committee to make their views known.

There are two main conclusions that can be drawn from this – the first being that owners may be afraid, for some reason, to upset the status quo within their own club and the second is that clubs are not providing a mechanism through which constructive comment and criticism can be fed back to those managing racing.

A further conclusion is that clubs should do more to encourage newcomers into racing through a variety of mechanisms and recommendations have been made below.

Finally, it can be concluded that clubs need to co-operate more and compete less.

4.2.2 Recommendations

Given that most racing calendars and formats are set up to 15 months in advance it can be difficult for race committees, both in clubs and at regattas, to make immediate changes. However the findings of the survey can be taken on board for planning into 2010 and beyond.

Offering more white sail and passage races would encourage owners to turn out and it is recommended that clubs and regattas look at how this can be done within the confines of the racing calendar.

It is also recommended that clubs and racing secretaries deal more robustly with those who are seen to be “pot-hunting” in white sail classes, perhaps by being more robust in declining entries from boats which are not felt to be “within the spirit of the class.”

It is also recommended that clubs and, particularly, regattas whose offerings have traditionally focused on the ‘round the buoys’ elements of their racing programme, rather than passage racing, may need to substantially boost the publicity for any passage racing to attract new entrants to come along.

This would particularly apply to large regattas, where the traditional publicity and advertising focus may have been on the small numbers of high-end racing boats (often those holding IRC handicaps) at the expense of the wider CYCA handicaps.

The question of how to encourage club members to give feedback on the current racing offered is a difficult one. Anecdotal evidence says that the majority of race committees would like feedback from members on their race programmes’, this survey says many would like to give feedback. The vagaries of human nature will come into play here and it is recommended that clubs look at using either physical or virtual “suggestion boxes” to encourage feedback.

It is recommended that clubs could also use online survey tools, such as Survey Monkey, attached to their website to gain feedback on individual races, regattas or full racing calendars.

In a close circle such as a sailing club, people are often reluctant to give feedback if they feel they may be able to be identified and it would be recommended that such surveys be anonymous. Anonymous surveys to third parties generate better and more honest feedback.

A general recommendation has been made in Section 4.4, that the CYCA facilitates such anonymous surveys for member clubs.

To encourage people into racing, it is recommended that the ‘advisor’ idea where experienced racers go out with novice racers under a ‘buddy’ scheme, is further developed, either in a club or, if numbers are small, with two or more clubs joining together. It is further recommended that clubs develop a very basic ‘Introduction to Racing’ training course which covers, in very simple terms, items such as starting, mark rounding and finishing.

If contemplating a ‘buddy’ scheme, advice should be sought regarding relevant insurances for both the owner and the person(s) offering advice. It is acknowledged that professional tuition can be bought in through the use of sailing instructors and clarity should be sought as to what is being offered.

It is also recommended that clubs look at ways of encouraging new owners to come and race – perhaps by holding a special day/series of very gentle races for them where they are racing other novice racers, rather than the club ‘experts’. Stressing the seamanship benefits of racing i.e. knowing what your boat will do should be encouraged. As there are a limited number of new owners, this type of exercise would provide an excellent platform for inter-club and, perhaps, inter-marina co-operation.

More frequent club co-operation is recommended. For something like an Introduction to Racing course, inter-club co-operation should see more experienced sailors, more boats and more new owners being available to take part in such a course. On wider issues, clubs should co-operate to promote racing perhaps by holding team racing events between clubs which encourage novice racers to take part.

Further recommendations include:

Clubs should be more open about what race entry fees cover – i.e. breaking out costs such as committee vessel costs (diesel etc), berthing, insurance, race management etc.

Race management training should be encouraged to improve the standards of race officers.

4.3 Question 5 – Why Owners No Longer Race

4.3.1 Conclusions

Four key themes emerged as to why owners no longer race:

Owners are bored with the current offerings from clubs

Owners now prefer to go cruising

There is an endemic shortage of racing crew

Limited time

Section 4.2 above covered the first of these key themes, boredom with the current racing offering, in more detail.

All the above themes are interlinked – if crew, as well as owners, become bored, they will go off and take part in other activities which, in turn, leads to a further shortage of crew which, in turn, means that owners will look for alternative racing which requires fewer crew (passage/white sail) and so on.

The main conclusions to be drawn are that clubs:

Need to seek ways of encouraging people who wish to sail as crew to come forward

Should re-address the type and frequency of their race offerings

Should co-operate more to achieve a wider result for all.

The shortage of crew is surprising given the enormous increase in interest in sailing over the past few years in the UK. A critical question to be asked is ‘are those who are coming new into sailing being discouraged at an early stage, as they are unable to find anyone to sail with outside paid crewing opportunities?’ or is it more simple in that there is no mechanism to match those who wish to sail with those who need crew. This question has been posed as a result of this survey and would merit further investigation.

Owners have indicated that there is a strong demand for an online West of Scotland crew register. There are numerous practical difficulties with operating such a register – not least being who would fund, manage and moderate it.

4.3.2. Recommendations

Section 4.2 dealt with the current race offerings and should be referred to.

Those owners whose sailing priorities have changed and who now cruise may be encouraged back by changes to sailing programmes and/or cruising races and it is recommended that these are including in annual race programmes.

Overcoming crew shortages will call for joint action between owners, clubs, marinas/berthing areas and sailing bodies.

It should be remembered that, for a potential crew member, it can be very daunting to walk through the gates of a sailing club/marina etc. It is thought that most people come into race crewing through knowing someone with a boat – if you've done the RYA courses, if you want to sail more, and if you don't know anyone with a boat, then how do you start?

A recommendation would be that individual clubs look at putting in place a mechanism where those wanting to sail could be introduced to those who are seeking crew. Online crew registers have been suggested – they are used successfully in some places but questions have been raised as to liability should a crew match prove unsatisfactory.

It is also recommended that clubs, and possibly marinas, look at ways of encouraging people to come along to try sailing – such as publicising their activities in local media and holding open days. It is appreciated that in today's increasing litigious society, clubs often fight shy of such events, however support and advice are readily available from bodies like the CYCA and RYA Scotland.

4.4 General Recommendations

To help clubs obtain feedback from members, it is suggested that the CYCA should set up a facility to run anonymous surveys through a web based media such as Survey Monkey. A small administration charge should be levied by CYCA for this service.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Copy of the Questionnaire

CYCA Boat Owner Survey 2008



The Clyde Yacht Clubs' Association

Hon. Secretary, PO Box 5438, Helensburgh, Argyll & Bute, G84 8WH tel/fax: 01436-821234 email: office@cyca-online.org.uk

A N Owner
Main Street
Somewhere

27/09/08

XY2 1AB

Dear Owner(s),

The CYCA is required to meet Data Protection Act obligations to keep our records as accurate as possible. Owners are keen to tell us about new acquisitions, but the information flow thereafter tends to be erratic.

Please correct any errors in either your personal or boat details (as shown below) and return to us using the window envelope enclosed, refolding this letter to show our FREEPOST address in the window. Thank you in anticipation.

We would like to use this opportunity to ask about your perceptions of the CYCA, and about your satisfaction (or otherwise) with the racing opportunities currently offered by the Association and its constituent clubs.

In addition, we are very supportive of the Clyde Cruising Club's efforts to make the Bell Lawrie Scottish Series more attractive to owners racing under CYCA handicap. A flier describing the changes they have made, plus a Notice of Race and Entry Form for the event, are enclosed. You may, if you wish, return any forms and cheques in the envelope to us and we will forward them to CCC.

We welcome any further comments you may have.

Yours sincerely,

Honorary Secretary

*** Please note that each point awarded for "Other Adjustments" has recently been amended to count for just 0.05 min/hr instead of 0.25 min/hr. Any existing points have been multiplied by 5 to maintain the existing handicap. A replacement certificate will be provided (free) in the near future.

Boat Details	Sail Number	Boat Name	Class / Type Description
	0	Speedy Gonzales Nought	Slow Racer

Variations from Standard

Engine:		Engine Allowance Value		
Propellor:	Fixed 3-blade	Propellor Allowance Value	0.50	<i>Total Allowances (min/hr)</i> 1.50
Foresail:	Furling Foresail	Foresail Allowance Value	0.25	<i>Final Min/Hr</i> 29.25
Mainsail:	In-mast, vert battens	Mainsail Allowance Value	0.25	
Thruster:	Non-retractable/no baffle	Thruster Allowance Value	0.50	<i>TCF</i> 0.513
*** Adjustment Factor for unusual variations (each point worth 0.05 min/hr)	0	"Others" Value		

Comments:

Other Details	Contact Phone No	Secondary Phone No	Email	Owner's Club
	01234-567890		speedy@gonzales.com	

Details correct / Amend as shown / Boat wrecked or lost / Boat sold (please give any details you have)
or

Different boat now owned - details

Signature

Date

- Notes on changes:**
1. Changes affecting your handicap (and needing a new certificate) should be accompanied by a cheque for £15 payable to CYCA
 2. Sail No and Handicap Application forms can be obtained from the website www.cyca-online.org.uk or the office

The CYCA produces an annual Yearbook which contains a Programme of Regattas and Musters, tidal information, and lists of handicaps by boat and by class. Copies are sent free to approx 400 owners, clubs and class associations and copies are available for sale in major chandleries or from the office. The 2008 Yearbook is currently being printed, and a copy can be accessed (in pdf format) from the website.

Freepost RRUA-LTUB-BZKG
Clyde Yacht Clubs' Association
PO Box 5438
HELENSBURGH
G84 8WH

I do / do not receive a copy

I think printed Yearbooks are / are not useful

The CYCA Yearbook should include:

.....
please fold so Return Address shows in envelope window

The CYCA has a basic website, updated weekly with the latest handicap details. It also includes the other information contained in the Yearbook, plus copies of the application forms as noted above. The site is to be upgraded to improve its appearance and usability.

I do / do not use the website. Any upgrade should include the following:

told

To enable fine-tuning of handicaps, the CYCA Handicap process has been further refined as noted overleaf regarding the "Other Adjustment" factor, to take care of similar boats with minor differences.

Other potential refinements?:

I do not race under CYCA Handicap because:

Support for traditional regattas has been mixed in recent years. Clubs have responded with passage races, White Sail classes, and other innovations. Attempts to keep costs down through sponsorship, so increasing participation, have had mixed results.

I would like to see more racing: using laid marks / "round the buoys" / passage racing / white sail

I have expressed this wish through my club: Yes / No

Any other suggestions to increase racing turnouts?

I am not interested in racing because

I don't know enough about the Racing Rules

Yes / No

told My boat isn't rigged for racing

Yes / No

It is too hard to find crew

Yes / No

Racers seem unwelcoming / cliquey

Yes / No

My family isn't interested enough

Yes / No

I used to race but am no longer interested

Yes / No

Other

Please add any other comments or suggestions you may have:

Appendix 2 - The Clyde Yachts Clubs' Association

www.cyca-online.org.uk

The Clyde Yacht Clubs' Association is an organisation run by yachtsmen to serve yachtsmen, on the Clyde and West Coast of Scotland. Its area of operations covers the coastline from Girvan in the south to Armadale, Skye in the north.

Originally established in 1898 as the Clyde Yacht Clubs' Conference, it existed simply to coordinate racing activities on the Clyde. The objectives - to ensure that there was no conflict of courses and dates, and that racing yachtsmen would find some consistency of race management and regulations in the different events in which they entered - remain as valid today as they were over a century ago.

In 1968 its terms of reference were enlarged to make it an Association to represent all clubs in the area, which became members, and to deal with all aspects of sailing including cruising, moorings and handicapping.

Each member club appoints delegates, the number depending on the subscription paid to the CYCA. Spring and Autumn Delegates Meetings enable the efforts of the Association's Executive Committee, who manage the day-to-day running of the Association, to be assessed and commented on by the delegates.

The officers of the Association are the Chairman and Vice Chair, elected annually. Members of the Executive Committee are elected from among the membership of Constituent Clubs and considerable expertise and knowledge is available to the Association from them and from the members of sub-committees.

A valuable feature of the Executive Committee is that it has a nominee from Clydeport and from the HM Naval Base Clyde, normally from the Queen's Harbourmaster's office. The Association also participates fully with these and other bodies in

- The Clyde Moorings Committee, which is chaired by the Clydeport Harbourmaster and oversees small craft mooring arrangements within the area of Clydeport jurisdiction, and
- The Clyde River Marine Safety Committee, chaired by the Maritime & Coastguard Agency (MCA), looking at the interaction of all users of the estuary waters.

The Association is also represented on the council of RYA Scotland.

The CYCA is one of three bodies in the UK authorised to issue internationally-recognised sail numbers. In addition, the Handicap Committee administers CYCA Handicaps which offer a cost-effective local alternative to IRC ratings for the average club racing enthusiast. In addition to responding to requests from owners, a Winter Review takes account of club feedback, and initiates any necessary adjustments.

Government Regulations and Restrictions - both intentional and as unforeseen spin-offs from, for example, taxation or environmental legislation - remain an area requiring to be monitored. The Association accepts its obligation to represent the interests of the sailing community in general in its interaction with the bodies concerned, including the Firth of Clyde Forum. Given the skills and resources available from the member clubs, the Association can be effective in a way in which individual clubs might find difficult if not impossible.

Appendix 3 - The Clyde Cruising Club

www.clyde.org

The Clyde Cruising Club was formed in 1909 with the object of encouraging cruising, racing and the social side of sailing. It is the largest sailing organisation on the Clyde with over 2,000 members.

Today the Club is best known to racing sailors as the organisers of the Scottish Series, currently the Bell Lawrie Scottish Series, which it has run for in excess of 30 years with a number of major sponsors.

The Club was accepted into membership of the Yacht Racing Association (now the RYA) in 1921.

In 1925 Club yachts raced to the Royal North of Ireland Yacht Club and the Royal Ulster Yacht Club in Belfast Lough. The first ocean race from Scotland was run from the Clyde to the Clyde via the Kish light vessel in 1933. Cruising races became very popular and the Club's first Tobermory Race took place in 1932. In this year the Club became a member of the Clyde Yacht Clubs Association.

Good seamanship and competent navigation have always been encouraged: this admirable tradition was started in 1913 when a syllabus was published in the Journal and arrangements made with the Royal Technical College in Glasgow for tuition each week. A certificate was awarded to those members who had passed in the examination, in the practical work in seamanship and who had completed 300 miles of cruising outwith the Firth of Clyde. Such classes are now run by further education colleges but the Club is still requested to comment on course syllabuses.

Basic seamanship is still taught by Club members to the Dinghy Section members at Bardowie Loch and Club members are encouraged to obtain Royal Yachting Association qualifications.

The Club also supports disabled sailing at its Dinghy Section and is widely known for its comprehensive sailing directions for most of the Scottish Coast.

It has very active racing and cruising sections covering both inshore and offshore racing.

Appendix 4 – Premier Business Development Ltd

www.premierbusinessdevelopment.com

Premier Business Development (PBD) provides effective research consultancy focusing on social and economic development. The company specialises in market and social research and its associated reporting.

PBD delivers research and development services including feasibility studies, evaluations, business planning and other research led models for social enterprise and public sector clients.