

**CHRISTCHURCH SAILING CLUB
AVON SCOW CLASS HANDBOOK**

September 2012

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document is primarily, but not exclusively, for the guidance of new and / or prospective class members, embodies the class rules and complements the CSC Sailing instructions.
- 1.2 The first of many types of traditional balanced lug sail Scow boats were built before 1914 at Lymington and led to variants becoming established around the Solent, at Lymington, Keyhaven, Beaulieu, Yarmouth, Bembridge and Christchurch.
- 1.3 There are two interesting articles in the CSC library; A125 years of sailing (1874 - 1999) at CSC and 'The Great Scow Mystery', Classic Boat magazine 1989.
- 1.4 The Christchurch Scow was based on the shape of the Bembridge GRP hull and has evolved into our Avon Scow commonly known in CSC simply as the Scow, a heavy 11 ft 3 in (3.4 m) long 4 ft 6 in (1.37 m) beam boat with a PY of 1458.
- 1.5 The near 'one design' class is very popular, with a membership at Christchurch Sailing Club of over 70, largely limited by the number of spaces available in the club boat park.
- 1.6 Although harbour cruising is encouraged, the main Scow fleet activity at CSC is racing in the harbour, with one annual race which is partly at sea and limited winter racing on the rivers, Avon and Stour.
- 1.7 In the following sections rules and conditions are set out with the object of ensuring the boats are fundamentally the same. New boats should not gain advantage over older boats by using new innovations, materials and design 'tweaks'.
- 1.8 The Rules Committee is tasked with the checking of all boats in the fleet for compliance with these requirements and the vetting of new boats who wish to join the class.

2. MEETINGS

- 2.1 An annual General Meeting shall be held in October each year.
- 2.2 Notice of the date for the AGM shall be affixed to the noticeboard forty two days before the meeting.
- 2.3 Notices of any motions for the AGM must be received by the Class Captain not less than twenty eight days before the meeting.
- 2.4 A Special General Meeting may be convened at any time by the direction of the Committee or on a requisition addressed to the Class Captain by not less than 25 members.
- 2.5 The Class Captain shall give each member seven days notice of such a meeting specifying the business to be considered and the proceedings shall be confined to the matter specified in such notice.
- 2.6 The quorum for an AGM or a SGM shall be 20 full voting members present in person and for committee meetings 5 full voting members present in person.

3. MANAGEMENT

- 3.1 A Class Committee shall be elected annually at the AGM and shall consist of the Class Captain, Vice Captain and 5 other members.
- 3.2 Should any member be concerned about any aspect of the fleet management they should, in the first instance, raise the matter informally with the Class Captain or a Committee member.
- 3.3 The Scow Class Rules Committee of 3 shall be appointed annually by the Committee.
- 3.4 Owners proposing additions or modifications to their Scows which may be considered as contravening the current rules shall consult a Rules Committee member and then submit their proposal in writing to that committee.
- 3.5 Similarly any potential owner contemplating the commissioning of a new boat should, together with their boat builder, consult with and secure the approval of the Rules Committee prior to construction.
- 3.6 Any proposed changes in the class rules must be submitted in writing to the Rules Committee who in turn will present draft amendments to the Class Committee.
- 3.7 Any proposed changes shall be presented by the committee to the AGM or a SGM of the class members with a requirement of a two thirds majority.
- 3.8 In the case of part owned boats, only one vote per boat will be permitted at any formal meeting of the class.

4. CONDITIONS

- 4.1 Membership of the fleet is to be restricted to boat owners and non boat owners active in fleet affairs.
- 4.2 All members should ensure that their personal membership and boat details, displayed on the class noticeboard, are kept up to date. The Class Captain should be notified promptly of any changes.
- 4.3 Membership of the class is to be restricted to boats of traditional Avon Scow design as approved and administered by the Class Rules Committee.
- 4.4 Any boat that, in the opinion of the Rules Committee, is not within the spirit of the rules will not be eligible to race within the class.
- 4.5 Boats completed before 31st January 1985 that, in the opinion of the Rules Committee, do not deviate significantly from the latest rules will be permitted to race in the class.
- 4.6 Boats completed and / or modified since 31st January 1985 will be required to adhere to all current rules.
- 4.7 The boat and equipment as defined shall not weigh less than 250 lbs (113.4 kg) and certification of weight shall be by the Rules Committee. Additional weights to bring the boat to minimum weight should be fixed to the underside of the centre thwarts.
- 4.8 Boats must be capable of floating awash, in which respect the Rules Committee may require the adequacy of buoyancy to be demonstrated at the same time as the boat is weighed.
- 4.9 All owners who wish to race their boats must ensure that they are insured with a £2 m minimum limit of Public Liability indemnity.

5. THE HULL

- 5.1 The hull is formed in GRP from a master mould, owned by CSC and available to approved boat builders for a fee. It is approximately 11 ft 3 in (3.4 m) long and 4 ft 6 in (1.37 m) at the beam. See Section 15.2 and 15.3.
- 5.2 The gunwale shall not be wider than 2 ¾ in (7 cm) and not project outboard of the hull more than 1 ½ in (3.8 cm). Bilge runners of wood, GRP, metal or any combination of the three shall be fitted of not less than 47 in (1.19 m) length and may be tapered 3 in (7.6 cm) at either end.
- 5.3 No alterations are permitted to the shape of the hull, or keel either before or after GRP moulding ie: no streamlining, flattening, fairing of the hull or keel other than smoothing, polishing and damage repairs.
- 5.4 The centre plate casing shall be of traditional enclosed design formed in GRP or similar rigid material and at its aft end shall be linked to a timber or GRP thwart, together with a thinner metal or timber stay between the gunwales at its forward end.
- 5.5 Flexible seals for the centre plate slot are not permitted.
- 5.6 The thwart shall be formed of either a single across unit or can be angled forward from the centre towards the gunwales.
- 5.7 It is a requirement that all newly constructed boats be fitted with two self bailers and it is strongly recommended that all older boats get them fitted. Transom cut outs or flaps are not permitted.
- 5.8 The height of the deck above the inside of the hull at the centre line and immediately forward of the mast shall not exceed 22 in (0.56 m). A coaming or washboard of no more than 3 in (7.6 cm) and no less than 2 in (5 cm) height above the outside surface of the deck at the centre line shall be fitted.
- 5.9 The deck on its fore and aft centre line shall not extend aft more than 44 in (1.12 m) from the stem, and at the inside of the gunwales shall not fall aft of a plane at right angles to the centre line of the boat 56 in (1.42 m) from the stem. No part of the deck or its attachments shall fall aft of a plane between these points.
- 5.10 A forward buoyancy tank, complete with access hatch / hatches, may be fitted forward of the mast but not extending aft of a line drawn vertically from the coaming to the inside of the hull at its centre line.
- 5.11 A similar aft tank, complete with access hatch / hatches may be fitted which must not be more than 13 in (0.33 m) high at the centre line and not extend more than 18 in (0.46 m) forward of the transom.
- 5.12 Additional tanks may be constructed underneath and within the silhouette of an across type thwart but their inboard face shall be at least 5 in (12.7 cm) outboard of the centre plate box.
- 5.13 Additional inflatable buoyancy bags are recommended and may be fitted anywhere in the boat and also within the fore and aft built in tanks.
- 5.14 Side seats formed of solid or slatted timber are permitted in the space aft of the thwart and forward of the aft buoyancy tank. Maximum permissible width from the inside surface of the hull shall be 12 in (0.31 m). The side benches shall not form the surface of built in buoyancy and the top surface of the seat shall be no higher than the aft tank or the thwart.
- 5.15 Toe straps, brackets, fixed or flexible must not be fitted.

6. FOILS

- 6.1 The Rules Committee has full size templates of the centre plate and fixed type rudder for reference.
- 6.2 The centre plate shall be made of stainless steel, zinc galvanised or zinc plated mild steel of a thickness no less than $\frac{3}{16}$ in (4.75 mm) or more than $\frac{1}{4}$ in (6.35 mm) and may be smooth or polished.
- 6.3 No knife edges are permitted although the edges may be rounded to a radius not exceeding half of the material thickness.
- 6.4 The shape of the centre plate shall be within the underwater template provided by the Rules Committee and the profile shall not deviate from that template by more than + 0, - 5 mm. See Section 15.4.
- 6.5 The centre plate shall be restricted so as not to protrude by more than 25 in (0.64 m) measured vertically below the keel of the boat. In the fully down position the attachment pin for the lifting arm shall be at least 2 in (5 cm) below the keel.
- 6.6 The plate shall be operated by either a notched metal handle or an arrangement of rope / wire fixed to the plate trailing edge leading to a cleated pulley system on the centre plate casing.
- 6.7 The rudder shall be of a fixed type, wooden construction with a blade not less than $\frac{3}{4}$ in (19 mm) in thickness which may be rounded or chamfered not more than 4 in (10 cm) from any edge.
- 6.8 The shape of the rudder shall be within the tolerances defined on the template provided by the Rules Committee which shall include the start point on the keel. See Section 15.4.
- 6.9 Lifting rudders to the same pattern are permitted but during racing must be firmly held down.
- 6.10 Both types of rudder to be positioned on its pintle such that it extends no more than 13 in (0.33 m) below the keel at the transom.
- 6.11 Rudder tiller extensions are permitted and a retaining leash recommended for the rudder unit.

7. SPARS

- 7.1 The mast, boom and yard may be constructed of either wood or tubular alloy metal.
- 7.2 The length of the mast shall be such that the top of the sheave is 10 ft 10 in (3.3 m) above the bottom skin of the hull with no more than 6 in (15 cm) extending above the sheave.
- 7.3 A wooden mast must have a circular cross section with a minimum diameter of 2 ¼ in (5.7 cm) for two thirds of its length reducing to 2 in (5 cm) at the sheave.
- 7.4 An alloy metal mast must have a circular cross section with a minimum diameter of 2 in (5 cm).
- 7.5 An alloy metal boom or yard shall be slung on the port side and be a maximum of 10 ft 2 in (3.1 m) long with a maximum diameter of 2 ½ in (6.36 cm).
- 7.6 A wooden boom or yard shall have the same maximum length but with either a circular or rounded rectangular shape with a minimum thickness of 1 ¼ in (3.2 cm) and a maximum diameter or depth of 2 ½ in (6.36 cm).

8. RIGGING

- 8.1 The mast shall be supported by two shrouds and a forestay whose upper ends shall be mechanically attached to the mast at any position above the sheave. However their lower ends shall be attached to the hull by cord lashings with an optional shackle.
- 8.2 The lower attachment points of the shrouds to the hull shall be equidistant from the transom such that an imaginary line between them is between 81 in (2.06 m) and 86 ¼ in (2.19 m) from the transom, measured along the boat centre line.
- 8.3 The yard shall be suspended on a stainless steel wire halyard, attached to an adjustable rack, which then passes through the sheave to a non adjustable anchor cleat attached to the mast, all operated by a rope halyard.
- 8.4 Other securing devices, fair leads, etc may not be fitted to the mast, with the exception of a halyard rope cleat.
- 8.5 The boom shall not be attached to the mast but has attachments to it for a down haul, kicking strap and main sheet.
- 8.6 One down haul tackle only is permitted, fixed at its forward end to the boom or sail bolt rope, to run directly to the mast foot area without wrapping across the mast.
- 8.7 A kicking strap may be fitted but must not be attached in any way to the mast.
- 8.8 The down haul and kicking strap are to be operated by a system of pulleys or equivalent, the control ropes for these to be located either side of the centre plate casing with cleats fixed no more than 6 in (150 mm) outboard of it.
- 8.9 The main sheet blocks may be fitted anywhere around the junction of the centre plate box and thwart.

9. THE SAIL

- 9.1 Sails have previously been made by Alan Ford and Sanders of Lymington and are also available from Quay Sails of Poole..
- 9.2 The sail area represented by the straight lines joining the four corners, as per Section 15.3, is approximately 63 sq ft / 5.85 sq m. No roach in the leech and no battens are permitted.
- 9.3 Although two sets of sails of different cuts are permitted, currently most sailors use one sail for all conditions.
- 9.4 The sail must be secured only by cord lashings at all four corners, none of which may be adjusted whilst racing.
- 9.5 As an alternative at the tack a sail luff rope may pass through the boom and then be secured directly to the down haul.
- 9.6 Unique sail numbers of a minimum 9 in (23 cm) height must be displayed on both sides of the sail, these to be approved by and registered by the Class Captain.

10. EQUIPMENT

- 10.1 A pair of oars and rowlocks adequate for propelling the boat must be carried at all times whilst racing and the boat must be capable of being rowed whilst sitting on the thwart.
- 10.2 An anchor with at least 5.5 m of line attached must be carried at all times whilst racing in order to hold the boat against a strong tide in light winds.
- 10.3 A plastic bucket for bailing must be secured, with a simple quick release system, in the forward area of the boat.
- 10.4 Removable slatted timber floor boards may be installed in the cockpit area however if the boat is weighed with them, then it must be raced with them on board.
- 10.5 A rope painter, of 5 m minimum length, shall be permanently attached to the bow to facilitate manageable safe towing and ideally this should be 10 mm diameter, buoyant and brightly coloured.
- 10.6 It is a good idea for each boat to carry first aid plasters, spare fittings and short lengths of rope to cope with on board events.

11. SAFETY

- 11.1 This section contains requirements and suggestions for good practice and is supplemented by a Risk Assessment, produced at the request of the CSC Sailing Committee, and the CSC Water Safety Policy Statement.
- 11.2 No member should go sailing or report for Race Duty unless feeling well and wearing clothing suited to the anticipated conditions. The wearing of a dry suit or steamer is strongly recommended for early and late season sailing and in strong winds.
- 11.3 All helmsmen racing the winter series and the Capers racing must wear a non inflatable buoyancy aid at all times. For all other racing the wearing of a buoyancy aid shall be at the discretion of the Race Officer with the raising of Flag Y.
- 11.4 Members must ensure that projecting metal parts of their launching trolley are padded to avoid leg injuries in the crowded boat park.
- 11.5 Before moving your boat from the park a check should be made of the buoyancy tank inspection covers, inflatable buoyancy bags, ropes, fittings, splices, wires, oars, bungs etc.
- 11.6 Since the harbour is busy with a mixture of cruising boats and racing dinghies from three clubs plus a sailing school, it is essential that a square burgee is displayed at the tip of the yard to indicate you are racing.
- 11.7 The CSC slipway is very slippery requiring careful foot placement on the timber slats whilst floating the boat off the trolley which must then be quickly parked neatly away from the landing apron.
- 11.8 Before launching take particular care to check the busy river traffic which predominantly consists of power boats, not necessarily piloted by experienced or courteous helms.
- 11.9 In stronger winds the boat with sail hoisted is out of control in the short time between leaving the slipway and fitting the rudder. If unsure of yourself, consider taking the boat alongside the quay wall whilst fitting the rudder.
- 11.10 Whilst cruising or racing in the rivers, or within the buoyed harbour channel, Scows do not have priority right of way over powered craft who must be given room to safely manoeuvre.
- 11.11 Whilst sailing in strong and gusty conditions be aware it is easy to ship a lot of water very quickly. The boats can fill to within a few inches of the gunwales making it difficult to make headway and may require the assistance of the race escort boats.
- 11.12 Landing back at the club slipway can be tricky not only because of the river traffic but other CSC dinghies returning from racing are vying for space to land, many of them bigger, faster boats.
- 11.13 Unless there is a clear space available on the slipway, helmsmen should continue upstream, find a suitable place to drop their sail and then rudder *Awaggle@* back downstream to gently land at the slipway.
- 11.14 Getting the heavy Scow on to its landing trolley and back up the slippery slipway and as far as possible from the landing area is a back straining manouever, for which sailors are required to assist each other.

12. GENERAL RACING

- 12.1 The Club is a RYA accredited training establishment and is committed to organising racing in accordance with the RYA Charter.
- 12.2 The dinghy racing rules change periodically so all Scow sailors are encouraged to keep up to date by attending talks at the club and by obtaining a current copy of the pocket size RYA [Handy Guide to the Racing Rules](#).
- 12.3 The club organises dinghy boat racing in the harbour and in Christchurch Bay at weekends and some evenings largely for single handed Finn, Laser, OK, Solo and Topper class boats.
- 12.4 The Scows are included in all these harbour based races together with one race which starts and finishes in the harbour after venturing out into the bay to turn at an O.D.M. mark opposite Friars Cliff,
- 12.5 In addition to this general dinghy racing programme, the Scow Fleet organises its own winter racing on the rivers and pursuit style racing on Wednesdays, the latter referred to as Capers Racing

13. CAPERS RACING

- 13.1 The Capers racing is organised in such a way as to encourage helmsmen of all ages, gender, sailing experience and quality of boat to safely race midweek in friendly company.
- 13.2 Although the decision on whether the weather conditions are suitable for safe racing rests with the Race Officer, racing is restricted to winds not exceeding F 5.
- 13.3 Racing is of a handicap format, based on three starts at three minute intervals and for each race helmsmen are permitted to choose their starting times to reflect their own assessment of competency.
- 13.4 Races will start at the Club Start Line unless there are clear public safety issues, such as congested use of the rivers by other craft or unfavourable wind direction, and will be controlled by sound signals alone.
- 13.5 Whilst conforming to the normal racing and navigational rules, races will be conducted within the [Corinthian Spirit](#) ie: the spirit of gentlemanly amateurishness in its true sense of playing for love not kudos.
- 13.6 The overriding aim is for safe and enjoyable racing without over aggressive tactics. Any incidents should be brought to the attention of the Race Officer for later informal resolution in the Club House.
- 13.8 There are to be no trophies awarded for winning races or the series. However The Dusty Rhodes Trophy is awarded for an individual's improved helmsmanship and The Hadley Trophy for outstanding personal service to Capers Racing.

14. RACE DUTIES

- 14.1 It is a club requirement that all dinghy owners make themselves available to officiate at general club races as Race Officer / Assistant or Escort Skipper / Assistant at least once a year. In addition all Capers racers are expected to carry out escort boat duties, as Skipper or Assistant.
- 14.2 Any sailor feeling unwell, or temporarily handicapped by injury or illness, and unable to carry out an assigned duty must inform the Race Officer immediately.
- 14.3 Regardless of the type of assigned duty, members should report to the Race Officer an hour before a club line start and one and a half hours before a harbour start.
- 14.4 The Race Officer is responsible for deciding whether the weather conditions are conducive to overall safe racing, however it is up to each competitor to decide whether he/ she is competent to race in the forecast conditions.
- 14.5 The Race Officer is responsible for every aspect of a race but primarily has to ensure the safety of all participants. As such the RO must ensure that available escort boats are fully crewed and arrange for any shortfall to be filled from the fleet, on the day.
- 14.6 It is a requirement for all crews to methodically follow the on board pre-launch escort boat checks and alert the Race Officer to shortcomings. It is recommended that they enroll in the club's power boat training programme for skippers and the first aid course.
- 14.7 Although most of the other dinghy classes are self emptying, the Scows can easily fill with water and sailors may need assistance in bailing out, reaching shore or need to be brought on board an escort boat.
- 14.8 In extreme weather situations where helmsmen are in the water and needing assistance they should be recovered into an escort boat to be kept warm whilst their boats are temporarily tethered to any convenient buoy for later collection. 'People first, things second'.
- 14.9 In the event of a sailor suffering serious cold, injury or other life threatening condition the Race Officer must be notified, who will organize for the casualty to be delivered as quickly as possible to either the Sailing Club, Marine Training Centre or Mundeford Quay, whichever is nearer, and for an ambulance to be summoned to that place when appropriate.
- 14.10 Such operations must remain under the control of the Race Officer who is tasked with maintaining adequate safety cover for the remainder of the fleet.
- 14.11 After racing in light airs, Scows may assemble downstream of Steep Banks ready for escort boats to collect strings of boats for towing back up river to the club.
- 14.12 Regardless of the conditions experienced in the racing it is essential, on docking, to complete the on board escort boat log, to enable the bosun to take appropriate action well ahead of the next races.

15. DRAWINGS

16. RISK ASSESSMENT

17. REVIEW

- 17.1 Members are encouraged to provide feedback to the Class Captain regarding the Handbook's use in practice.
- 17.2 The handbook will be reviewed annually in September by the Committee and any proposed changes submitted to the AGM in October for approval.