

During 2016 Peter Craggs trailed his Aero to various Open Meetings around the country (with some success)

Aero Adventures (Part 2)

Peter Craggs

Two weeks later I was heading over the border. North Berwick is one of my favourite venues and was top of the list when the Aero fixtures were published.

Despite a initially breezy morning, racing was held in a rather moderate, dropping to light, breeze. I still enjoyed some entertaining racing even if the journey home was in hideous weather.

A new corner of the country

Next up was Brightlingsea in deepest Essex. Located on a creek off the Colne estuary it attracted my attention as somewhere different, in a corner of the country that's new to me. The sailing club wasn't the easiest to find but did have plenty of space once located.

This was a two day event shared with the Merlins and Fireballs so a packed clubhouse awaited the briefing, which was direct and to the point.

"...and it's a long way from Brightlingsea to anywhere!"

(Roughly — it's shallow in places, try not to hit the bottom or the wreck. Have a good day. It's breezy. See you out there...)

So we were soon on our way out to the race area.

Until this point every Aero event I'd done had been held in light or moderate breeze, I'd sailed the Aero on the river in a blow but not on open water. This was about to change. It was windy, in fact, very windy. The ride to the start area



Aero 9s racing on the River Severn. Peter is in the foreground (photo © Steve Stone)

was, once out of the nice sheltered creek, more or less a dead run and it was a rather wild ride (made worse by the mention of shallows!)

Charging around waiting for the other starts to clear was bumpy, and windy enough to get a loud whistling noise from the top of my drink bottle as I tried to remove the salt water from my mouth! The racing was much better than the hanging around and other than the bottom of the run, which was a minefield, it was hard but perfectly doable.

With two races on Saturday afternoon, Sunday was an earlier start to get three in before everyone had to head home (and it's a long way from Brightlingsea to anywhere!). It was still breezy but not

wild. With the tide out launching was interesting. The slippery slipways were a bit like home after a flood, mud everywhere!

After launching we had to sail parallel with the shore for a few boat lengths in very shallow water before rounding a sandbank. Maybe that's what he meant at the briefing!

Racing was physically easier than Saturday but still hard going with big courses and as the tide turned it effectively made the beats longer. We didn't get ashore that much earlier than Saturday.

River racing!

Three weeks later it was time for something different but ultimately very similar! The first Aero River



The River Severn at Avon SC



North Berwick's harbour



Aeros at Avon SC (© Steve Stone)

Championships were held at Avon Sailing Club. They sail on the River Severn just downstream of Tewkesbury. Not to be confused with the Severn Sailing Club who sail on the River Avon! (obvious really).

It's a long way from York but down a long and narrow lane, seemingly in the middle of nowhere, I found eighteen other Aeros all ready to race on a river!

"...a two mark slalom across the river, midway down the run..."

I'd upgraded to the bigger 9 rig for this event and was intrigued as to what it was like to race on another inland river. This bit of the Severn was maybe a third wider than ours and had more current. (Whilst not tidal it occasionally flows 'the other way' when a big spring tide overtops the

weir!). It had no moorings to speak of and little or no river traffic but we were still invaded by a rowing boat or two.

The wind was pleasant but not overly exciting and the forecast suggested it would ease as the day progressed. It was right but it wasn't a problem until the very end. The courses took advantage of the extra width with a two mark slalom across the river midway down the run. It sparked some interesting debates on mark room. All in all a very pleasant day out and an interesting comparison between rivers!

The Inlands

A week later it was the Inlands which were being held at Chelmarsh SC in deepest Shropshire (Steve P had been here just a fortnight earlier for the GP Midlands). It was slightly nearer than the

Rivers but seemed a much worse drive. (Or maybe the second Saturday of an 0515 alarm was taking its toll!). The forecast showed light winds and it was spot on! Five races in a day was always going to be ambitious and with a 40 minute wait between races one and two whilst the wind settled (it never really did) we were always up against it. In the end we had to settle for four, the last one being a rather painful drift. Interesting spot to sail in nice countryside just a shame about the wind.

The final event of the year was a combined all RS classes 'End of Season' at Rutland...

To be concluded

Thanks to Steve Stone of Avon Sailing Club for permission to use his photos.

RYA Small Craft First Aid Course

Mike Craggs is planning to run an **RYA Small Craft First Aid Course** on the **29th April 2017**.

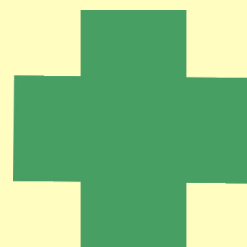
It will be held at the Club from 0900 — 16.30hrs. The cost will be £35 for club members and £60 for non-members, including a First Aid book and certificate.

The course will include **hypothermia, CPR, bleeding, major illness and the use of a defibrillator**.

This is a mainly hands-on course and will be based round water activities.

If interested please contact Mike at **mike_craggs@hotmail.com**

Mike will require a £10 deposit by 18th April and full payment by 27th April. Please pay directly into the Club account and let Mike know when you have paid.



Steve Parry has some technical tips on maintaining your GP14 Combi road trailer in good order

Pre-Season Trailer Tips

Steve Parry

The towing season will soon be with us again and this might therefore be the moment to take a look at your trailer. I am writing this as someone who tows a delicate old lady all over the country (and occasionally takes the 'old yellow boat' as well!).

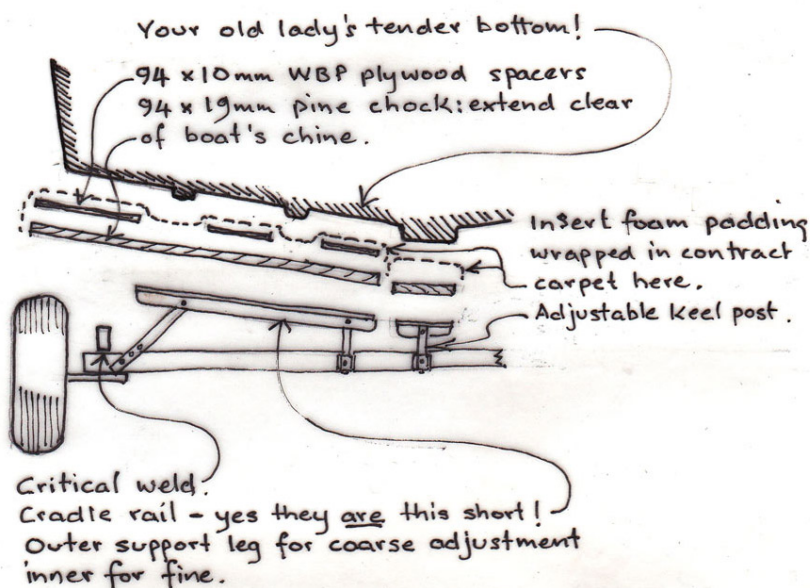
My trailer is one of the early Dragon combi jobs that, like the boat, passed its dump-by date several years ago but with TLC and a recent big overhaul it continues to give excellent service. So if you have one of these, read on!

Trailer suspension

Firstly the road frame: these are very heavily built and seem to give little trouble but after long service the rubber in my torsion-suspension units no longer held the trailing arms at the correct angle and there appeared to be very little spring left in them. Having obtained new units (readily available online in a wide range of load options), things are much improved.

"...find yourself far from home with part of the dinghy trolley dragging on the road..."

Fitting is easy but if you do need to drill new holes in the mounting plates make sure that the wheels are properly aligned, if the trailer is 'out of track' you will suffer both tyre noise and rapid wear. The only other weakness that I have found is the mast-post socket. Trailing empty with the post in place causes it to oscillate violently and with time this can lead to hair cracking in the weld at the bottom of the stem. I had to have mine welded (and we added two small bracing bars) many years ago and since then I always take the post out if running empty.



Trolley welds

Now the trolley: it is easy to forget that the boat spends the greater part of its life sitting on the trolley so it needs to be both safe and comfortable. The frames are built of relatively light section steel and it is advisable to check the welds occasionally. Take a look at the cross rail in particular as this carries almost the entire weight of the boat and it is welded to the underside of the side

rails. When the trolley is mounted on the road frame and the ratchet straps are tightened these welds suddenly have a massive job to do! The later road frames have a couple of projecting tags onto which the cross rail of the trolley slides. However you have the early version you may one day, like me, find yourself far from home with part of the dinghy trolley dragging on the road and the boat at a precarious angle! Once

home, repair was straight forward enough (steel angle reinforcement and welding) but preventative maintenance would have made life much easier!

A worthwhile improvement

Finally, how are your chocks? If your trailer is like mine, it still has the arrangement of narrow steel bars covered with green plastic tubing, to which layers of carpet have later been bound in an act of kindness to your old lady's bottom. But when did you last take a close look at the cradle adjustments? I had always assumed that mine were correct but in fact the carpet binding merely concealed the true picture, and it was not until I discovered a suspicious bulge in the floor of the boat that I realised that the angles were too steep. The poor old girl had been riding on the outer points of the cradle, and as the cradle itself stops well short of the chine, this was not good! (I have since checked a colleague's trailer and it too displays the same defect so maybe this is a common occurrence).

I have now made what I think is a very worthwhile improvement that was easy to do and has hopefully cured the problem permanently. Start by stripping off the plastic (only held on with feeble aluminium rivets), Lubricate and release the bolts that set the cradle angles and readjust to match properly the shape of your hull.

"How are your chocks?"

(I made a very simple template to do this on which I recorded the position of the bilge keels). Using 94mm x 19mm wrot pine, fashion the two chocks and the centre support and this time make sure the chocks reach beyond the chines. Bolt these to the cradle frames with stainless steel Nylock nuts and bolts. Next add pieces of 10mm thick wet-grade plywood to create a profile that will accommodate the bilge keels, allowing plenty of space around each. Now double check the setting against your template. Finally apply a layer of 10mm

foam (I used an old yoga mat) and then wrap this in carpet, securing it on the underside of the chocks with old pieces of aluminium rubbing strip and s/s screws. This more or less replicates the modern GRP cradles and it is strong and durable.

Last job, check the tyres (and the spare), pop the bearing covers off and if things look a bit dry, bung in some grease. And with that you should be good to go all the way to Looe!

You might of course ask me why I did not simply go out and buy a new trailer? Just take a look at the new EU regulations governing lighting and wiring and I think you too might decide to keep your present trailer going if you can!. Fortunately the new regulations do not apply retrospectively.

Go safe and sail fast!

Commodore's Corner



Spring is finally on it's way and the sailing season has once again started. As I am typing this, the first races of 2017 have been sailed, in glorious sunshine and minimal winds. Not a bit of frostbite was risked by anyone and at least one participant was seen wearing shorts. However, this can still change, so let's not get overly excited, at least not about the weather.

As your new Commodore I am pleased to report that the club is up and running for you to come sailing. The cleaning day was quickly sorted this year, mainly thanks to no major flooding having occurred during the winter. Don't forget, though, to pay this year's membership fee, which is still at the same level at last year.

I hope that you've all seen this year's sailing programme which has been published on our website as well as on the Facebook page. Aside from the usual activities, such as the *GP 14 Classic and Vintage Open*, *Ullswater Weekend* and the *Open Day*, we

are this year planning to take part in the *Annual Regatta in North Berwick* the first weekend in June. This opens a new opportunity to sail in some tidal waters in a beautiful location (and watch some rare seabirds in the process).

Also new for this year is that we are holding the Open Day in conjunction with the national *Push the Boat Out* event on 14 May, somewhat later than usual, but still just before the Training Course. So have a look at the sailing programme and our social media channels for more info.

Lastly, in order to conclude this first Commodore's corner in style, we have some administrative announcements. The club has updated its **Child Protection Policy**, and all members are encouraged to read the summary available in the clubhouse.

The club has also been successful in securing a City of York YorWellbeing grant to fund the training of a parent/parents of a child with an ambulant disability so they can take their child sailing, cost £340.

And with that I wish you all a good start of the sailing season — see you at the club!

Jens