

## *The sailors' views from Looe- summarised by Paul Hobson (Chimp)*

The 2011 Nationals at Looe was, as ever, another great champs and even though the wind was unkind and we only saw three races all week, Looe as always delivered and I personally came away having had a fantastic week.

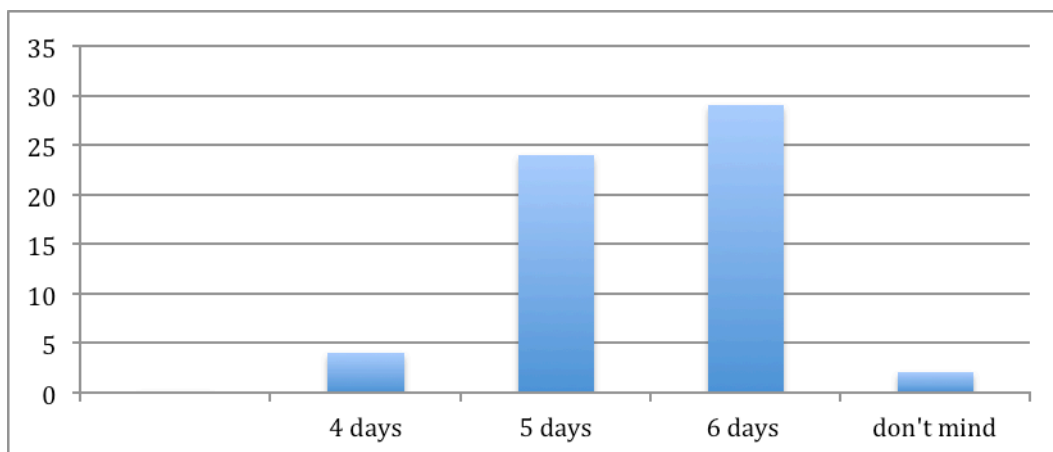
As a sailmaker I get the opportunity to sail whatever boat I choose, and I find myself always coming back to the Enterprise as my first choice. Not only does this boat of ours still offer some of the best close quarter racing you will find, but in my 32 years of sailing the Enterprise I have made many friends, and I cannot think of a better bunch to spend a whole week on the shore with. A rare mix of young and “experienced” sailors all who I just love to chat and chin wag with over a beer.

I remember sailing the Ent with 170+ boats on the start line at the Nationals and I know some of you had the pleasure of competing in races with 200+. Sadly those days have gone and as more new class boats are launched each year we have settled down to be a steady 50+ club class. However this does not reflect the true numbers of Enterprises sailing up and down the country at club level and on the open meeting circuit.

I have to applaud the G&T brigade (Alice, Tracy & Carol) for making the best of their time at Looe. Most of us sat around eating pasties and testing some of the local brew whilst waiting for the wind, but these ladies “surprisingly” put down their cocktails (not for long) to put together a survey for the fleet.

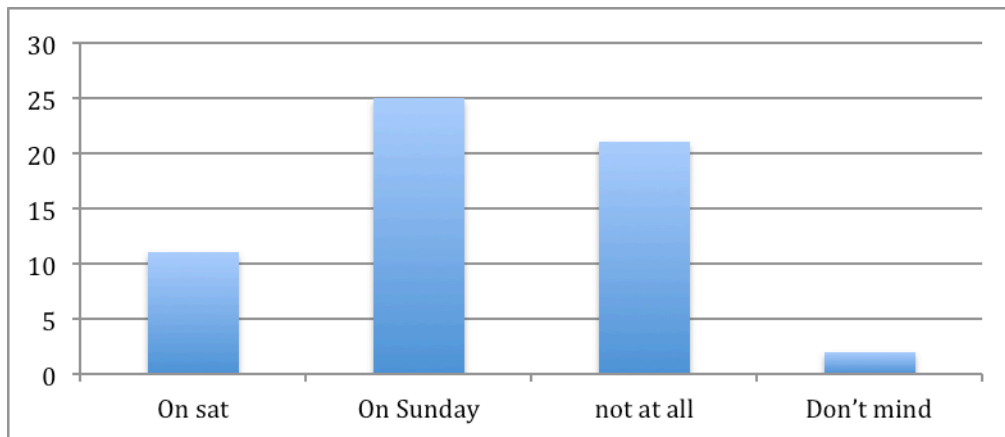
The key questions were... **What do we think of our current Nationals system** and **What do you think would increase attendance at National Events?** Here are their findings....

Q1. How Many days do you want the Nationals to last?



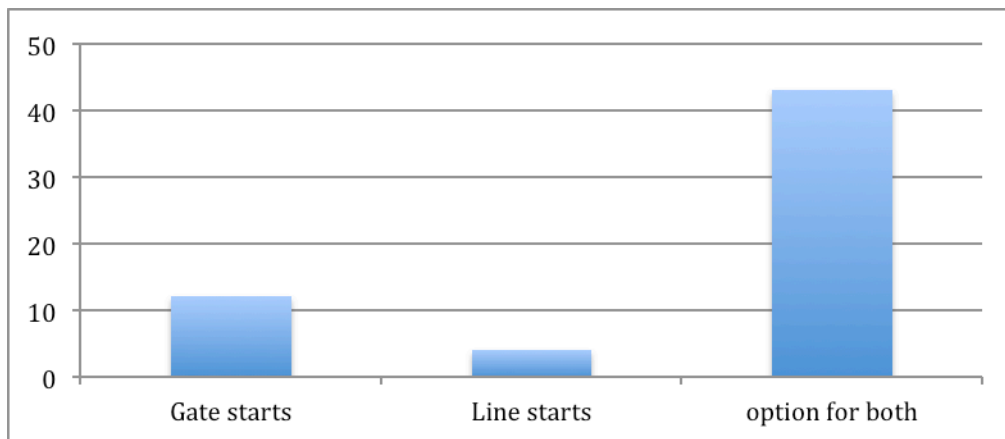
*Looks like our current format is still favoured.*

Q2. Do you want a practice race?



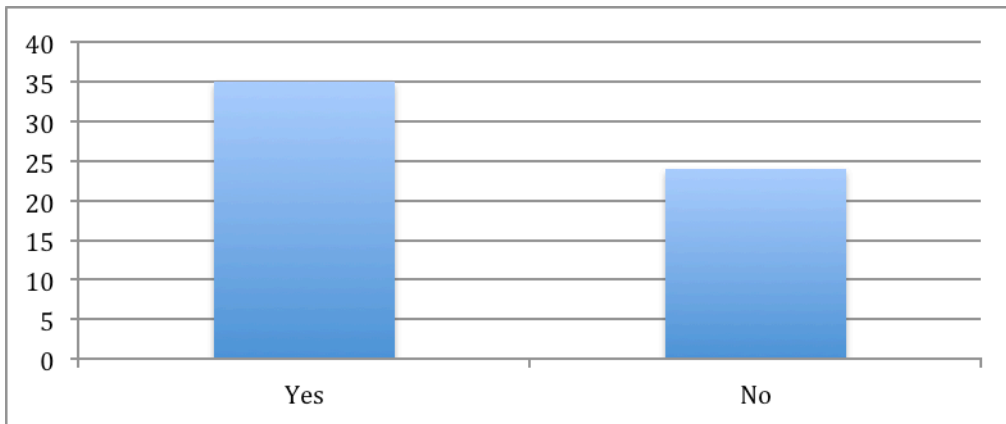
*Close call, but still in favour, good for race committee to get in gear...*

Q3. Gate or line starts?



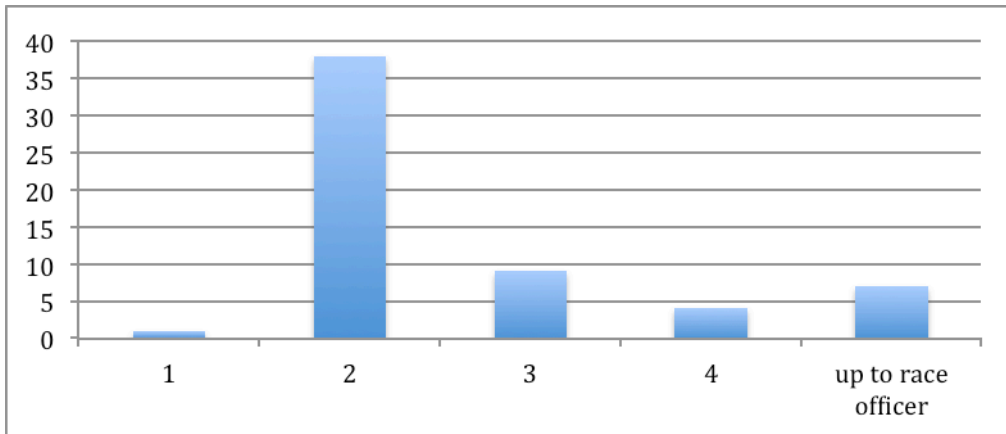
*This speaks for itself, if struggling with conditions maybe we should leave to race officer's discretion and have the option for both?*

Q4. Do we want a layday?



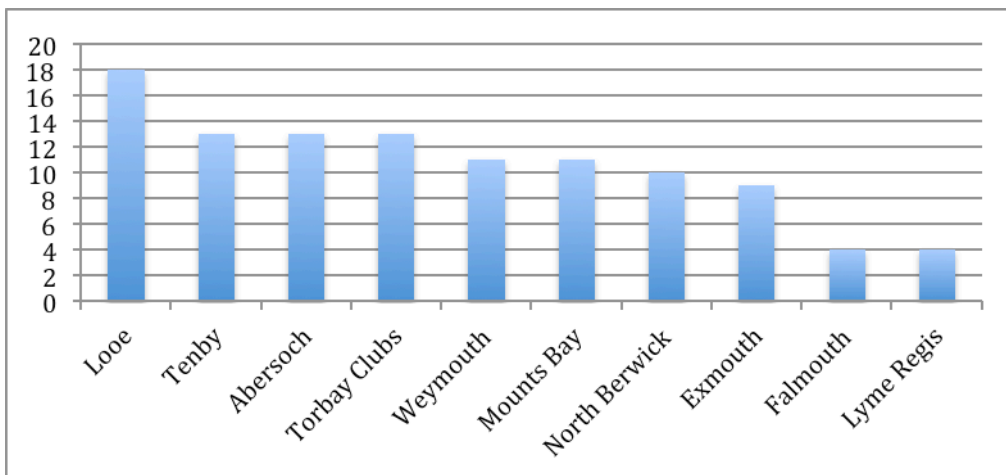
*Mixed feeling but Yes, and 75% said to be flexible at the race officer's discretion. Something to be reviewed as the fleet attracts more youngsters. They come to sail...*

Q5. Number of races per day?



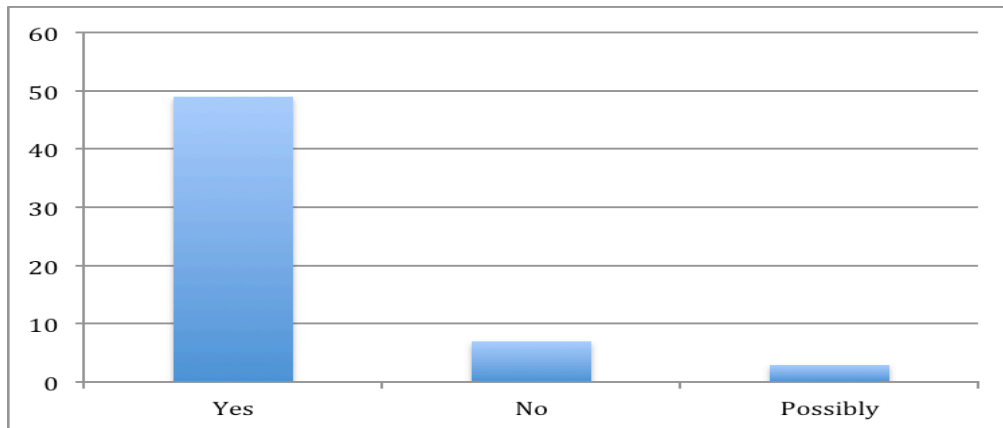
*Two per day, 9 races with layday, 11 races without. I am sure we can find more trophies....*

Q6. Where would we like to go for Nationals?



*These were the top 10, many individual requests based on past experiences.*

## Q7. Are you going to Tenby Nationals 2012?



*Great response. The 'No' and 'possibly' responds were doing other events, or don't want to do Nationals every year, or have to work.*

All in all everyone was reasonably happy with the current format. Some small minor changes, possibly giving a little more power to the race officer, may improve all our Nationals experiences.

However how do we attract more people to attend? The ladies got a long list of suggestions, and here are the key most common...

- Better publicity to highlight the great socials, an underestimated attraction. Big marketing push, showing social racing format and social calendar.
- New look website with an open Forum, all other classes have this. More focus on PR. Better use of Facebook and Twitter.
- Put a list of loan boats/available crews on web
- Association owned boats to invite youth sailors from other classes such as mirror and topper. Not just for Nationals, but available all year round. We have the money, let's spend it.
- Each boat attending to try and bring at least one first timer to come along. First time prize.
- More Club interactivity, Penarth lead the way on this. Start at the roots getting clubs more involved. Maybe a club group discount?
- Buddy system – 3 way with Gold, Silver, Bronze team of three and a Best Buddy overall Trophy.
- To attract the young, make it a week of racing and no laydays, all they want to do is sail and party. We have to think about the future not just keeping present sailors happy. We have to be seen as a class of mixed ages not just old farts.
- Look for title sponsors to try and reduce entry fee.

- Consider merging championship with another fleet.
- More prizes, up to 12<sup>th</sup> place prizes and other prizes.
- A world Championships is much needed for the status of the class.
- National venues to be published one or two years in advance rather than finding out at the Nationals the year before.

Great points and a lot of work to do. It looks like for 2012 we will stay in the 50+ club but for me that's not good enough, let's push for the 70+ club. Our class has so much to offer and with some real effort and a little spending we can bring it up to speed with the modern world. Rondar raceboats have done a fantastic job in bringing the Mk3 up to date, and the boat now looks modern without losing what the Enterprise is all about.

To make the class grow we need every single member to do their bit, let's all push and make 2012 our best year ever. Let's get out on the water, whether it's club racing or on the open circuit, drag out the old Ent guys, and pull in new people. The Nationals is truly a great family holiday and Tenby is a top place on the water and on shore.

Thank you girls for doing this!

Best

Chimp