



UKLA
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Chairman's Report AGM 2021

Rob Cage

Last year was a challenging one for all of us and both on and off the water. Lock down, coming out of lockdown, lockdown again, can sail, but club closed etc etc..., I guess we all just got on with it and got used to changing by our car.

We have seen a name change and now we all sail ILCAs, but I haven't noticed much difference when I'm afloat; same boat, same great racing, same great people. I suspect in a year or so's time we will wonder what all the fuss was about.

Despite Covid, we held what was a record breaking 2020 Nationals at WPNSA. It was a little different as we made changes to ensure the Regatta was Covid safe, but the result was a fantastic event with a great vibe - one of our best Nationals. Our thanks go to the WPNSA team. Without their professionalism we would not have attempted even hold the Regatta.

Our Qualifiers were hit not by Covid, but by the weather, and whilst we normally lose 1 due in part to the time of year, last year we lost even more than normal.

Our new UK builders Ovington have done a great job of getting production up and running, and under Chris's leadership have been very supportive of UKLA as we work together to ensure this remains the best sailboat in the world for the next 50 years.

That brings me onto this year and our Golden jubilee 50-year celebration of our Class. I guess you have already read our Yearbook. I was amazed at the quality of both the writing and the production. This was pretty much a Guy Noble production and I think that this will become a treasured possession for many of the fleet.

This year's Nationals will be the highlight of our celebrations with the now legendary Black Tie Gala Dinner with special guests being the highlight.

We have had a lot of questions around the legality of equipment and boats. Alan Davis, our Measurer, has written a lot of great guidance on our website @ www.ilca.uk which answers all your questions. We are inclusive. We all just want to go racing, but we want it to be on level terms. There is no place for cheque book sailing in our fleet. Our Class defines what it is to be 'One Design' and we give that up at our peril.

The growth of the Class at the grass roots level this year has been fantastic and perhaps aided by the fact 2 man dinghies were more difficult to sail during the Covid restrictions. I think the whole Covid thing has made us think a little more about where we want to spend our time and the answer is increasingly 'in my ILCA' – Parkstone with 60+ boats out for an evening race and QM not far behind, this all bodes well for our class and the UKLA has a number of strategies to embrace that growth and help replicate it in every sailing club in the country.





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During the year we have held a number of Super Grand Prix' which have excited a lot of interest as we combine training and racing over the same weekend.

Over the last year we have really ramped up our training. We expanded the excellent coaching that the Class and the RYA provide to youth sailors, to the wider ILCA Sailor. Our aim has been to significantly increase the amount of coaching we offer to the club sailor and those not on the elite pathway. Tim Hulse, our training officer, has lead this strategy with great success and we will continue to offer more and more subsidised training at Clubs across the country to help everybody get the most enjoyment, and indeed speed out of their boat.

As we try and do more for the Club sailor, whilst never taking our eye off the top of our class where we enjoy so much success, the broadening of what we offer must not come at the price of a reduction in the quality of the racing we provide. But we do want to offer more to the Club sailor, so next time you are back at your home club please promote the Class Association and help us broaden our membership base – sailors who are not members don't know what they are missing.

I also wish to record the Class's thanks to Ellie, our Class Secretary who does most of the hard work, much of it behind the scenes. Next time you see her be sure to volunteer some time to help her organise the next event. Special thanks also go to our former event assistant Jan Lasko. He has supported our class for many years and many of us have entered events on the web systems he designed.

This brings me onto the 2 important stakeholders in our class without whom we can't go sailing:

- **Sponsors of our Class.** These firms provide the financial support that keeps entry fees, and indeed annual membership cost, down. Many of these companies don't make a fortune out of selling their product to us. The firms' owners are just putting something back into our sport, so please support them as they support us. A big '**Thank You**' to Fernhurst Books, Minorca Sailing, Noble Marine Insurance, Ovington Boats, SailingFast, SouthEast Sailboats and Wildwind Holidays. A warm welcome to our newest addition to the great list of sponsors; the technical sailing apparel manufacturer Vaikobi.
- **Our Volunteers.** The other group I will unashamedly thank is our volunteers. The amount of hours our members put into the class for free is frightening and without their tireless commitment there would be no racing and the cover would stay firmly on your boat. Please approach me, Ellie or any committee member and ask how you can put something back into the sport we all love.

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