

From the Technical Department

The Sonata A National First

On a cold afternoon at the 1975 Southampton Boat Show, David Thomas and Peter Poland met in a draughty beer tent. By the time he left the tent, David Thomas had agreed to draw up a provisional new design which would be about 22 feet long. By May the following year the first Sonata was launched and others followed in rapid succession so that in their first season there were enough Sonatas around the coast to make an impact on the sailing scene. The impact was not only in quantity but also quality. During the first season Sonatas won races at Cowes Week, Burnham Week, the Clyde and also the Channel Islands. The first National Championship for the class was held the following year and attracted 15 entries. Open class events were also held on the Clyde, the Solent and Windermere. The Sonata Class Association was formed and affiliated to the R.Y.A. and the Sonata itself became only the second cruiser ever to be selected by the Design Centre in London. In the wider fields of open handicap events, Sonatas were first and third

overall and first and second production boat at the U.K. Mini Ton Championships and again amassed numerous victories at Cowes Week, Poole, the Crouch, Clyde, EAORA, Northern Ireland, Menai Straits, Falmouth and the Lakes as well as in Holland, Norway, Sweden, Germany, Belgium and Hong Kong.

1978 was a year of further consolidation. The National Championship held at the Island Sailing Club, Cowes attracted 28 entrants and indeed a Dutch entry finished



second overall. Scottish, Southern, Eastern and Northern Regional Championships were also held. Probably the most dramatic single event of 1978 was in Class V/VI at Cowes Week where Sonatas, in very rough conditions, filled first, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth places in the Level Rating Series! The Sunday Times panel of experts judged the Sonata to be the best One Design Cruiser Racer of her size in the UK.

By the beginning of the 1979 season well over 300 Sonatas had been built and there were more than ten UK based fleets with 5 or more boats. The four largest were Clyde (29), Solent (23), Crouch (20) and Chichester (18). The same year the idea of obtaining National Status and an IOR Standard Rating for the class was also spurned. Over the next 12 months or so negotiations between the designer, the builder, the class association, the RYA and the RORC continued so that by the beginning of this season the Sonata is able to boast of being the only Cruiser Racer class afforded both National Status and an IOR Standard Rating.

There are other One Design Cruiser Racing classes, some much older than the Sonata, but none have the protection

of design that the R.Y.A. can afford by the granting of National Status. There are other Cruiser Racers afforded Standard IOR Ratings but none which can offer the Rating to existing owners for just £34.50 including VAT. What there most definitely is not is another class which can offer its owners both.

The 1981 Sonata National Championship will be run from Hayling Island Sailing Club between July 11th and 18th (sponsored by Pimm's Ltd.) and will be the first ever National Championship for a National Cruiser Racer where all the entrants will be IOR Rated. Why not drop in during the championship and witness for yourself a class that can only be described as being a First Class?

Ken Kershaw — RYA
Technical Secretary

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OR A GENTLE NUDGE FROM
THE TECHNICAL DEPARTMENT
GIRLS

R R you Racing this weekend in the National Champs?
E E we'd like to oblige, if you'd give us a chance.
G G how We wish you had posted it sooner,
I In a panic you phone us, "has it arrived"
S Sure you posted it to us ages ago!
T Try pulling the "other" we're not daft you know
R R you sure that it "measures" according to "Rules"
A And is the correct payment enclosed.
T To find out what's owing, just give us a ring,
I Information we have in abundance!
O O please don't leave it until it's too late,
N No racing without a valid certificate!