

S&S 34 Association Webmaster Report 2014

The new website has been up and functioning now for over a year and I have been gradually improving and streamlining it. It has proven to be more interactive than the old one and people have been posting comments, there have been 84 to date. I have largely solved the spam problem, my antispam software has eliminated over 88,000 spam comments to date. I can see that I have also been a reasonably interactive webmaster, as I have posted 92 posts to date, on various topics. I also reply to numerous emails. Anything requiring a more "official" response I forward to the President, my correspondence is more of the interactive and chatty variety, trying to make people feel involved with the Association.

The Discussion Forum has continued, although not as actively as I would like. There have now been a total of 907 posts over 197 topics, but it is a bit sporadic. I do have to constantly remove spam "members" and sincerely hope I haven't removed any genuine ones by mistake. So far no-one has emailed me to say this has occurred.

There is still some work to do in tidying up the website, both in format (not everything transferred cleanly to the new site) and in the fact that many photos and other items were left on the old site (which is still hosted by Futuretek) and simply linked to the new site. This saved us hundreds possibly thousands of dollars in labour costs but is less than ideal and I am gradually trying to move items onto the new website. This will take quite some time as there are many hundreds of items to move over. Our website is quite large, and probably getting close to the limit of what the Word Press software was designed to handle. However, Word Press has the great advantage of being free, widely used and quite easy to manage the sort of things we routinely want to do with our site. It is certainly much quicker and easier to use than the old website as well as looking better and having more features.

I have gradually been scanning in old newsletters (now up to # 23, 1985), plus adding a few other things like the Swarbricks list of boats built. I have also tried to improve the histories we have on the boats, if you look you will see far more hull numbers allocated than in the past (currently 95 boats have hull numbers) and many more boats with histories attached. Some of the owners' names are out of date, but I can't allocate a new owner to a boat until I know who it is. Any help in sorting out remaining histories, hull nos, and current owners would be much appreciated.

One innovation added recently is a box at the top of the Home Page with immediately important new information, such as the details of the AGM etc. This sort of thing can be missed if it is just allowed to sit as a heading on a column to one side. Any further suggestions are welcome.

Overall, I think it has been a steady year of building up the website, remembering that once information is placed on the site it is not lost. I do periodically back it up at home and Futuretek also backs it up, so the information is quite securely stored. Ultimately we should have not only a current, live and interactive website but also a good historical record.

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