**HERON RIGS – SAILS – FOILS and FITTINGS**

Heron Dinghies use various rigs, sails, rudders and fittings. This guide is to help you in understanding the differences and what might suit you best.

The class is very helpful and advice will be available from many owners. Visiting a Heron club will allow you to see the different boats. Do remember that everyone will have a passion for their version and so you must weigh up what is right for you and the type of sailing you wish to do.

**RIGS:**

**GUNTER RIG:**

This is the rig originally designed for the boat and allowed all the spars to fit inside the boat. This is still possible with boats with buoyancy bags and half height forward tanks but not with boats with a full height forward bulkhead.

The rig consists of a short mast and gaff which is hoisted as near vertical to the mast as possible. The mast may be wood or aluminium (with wooden end plugs) but the gaff will always be wood. It is easy to use although care must be taken when the gaff is at half hoist as it can swing about and needs to be controlled.

This is a practical rig although some people feel the Bermudan rig is better for racing although this is not proven. People have rigged the main hoist in various ways. Some tie the head to the top of the gaff and then hoist it, others have fitted a halyard sheave and hoist the gaff first and then the mainsail.

**BERMUDAN RIG:**

This rig uses a one piece aluminium mast which can make hoisting the sail easier. It will need to be transported on a mast rest on the road trailer as it is much longer than the boat.

Most new boats have this rig and it can be retro fitted with very little work. Masts can be supplied but several manufacturers and Dave Butler is happy to advise and supply rigs.

**BOOMS:**

The boom may be wood or aluminium with either of the rigs. Spinnaker poles and jib sticks/whisker poles may be wood or aluminium tube and can be rigged in several different ways.

People rig the mainsheet in various ways. The original rig ran from the transom, but people also use centre mainsheets as well. Jammers and ratchet blocks are optional.

**SAILING QUALITIES:**

Those who use the different rigs will all tell you theirs is the best, but in practical use it would seem that there is little to choose between them in terms of performance all round. Certainly people win races with both rigs. The difference is perhaps ease of use but again that is a personal matter.

**SAILS:**

There are no restrictions in the choice of sailmaker and sails have been made by most of the major and smaller lofts. It is worth considering the use you want for you boat and looking at the different options for cruising and racing. Racing sails tend to be made from harder cloths to keep their racing shape. Cruising sails often benefit from being made from softer cloths to allow easier handling in the boat.

**MAINSAIL:**

The mainsail is standard but will need to be cut for either the Gunter of Bermudan rigs for best performance. The sail for Bermudan rig will be in a luff grove for its full length. The Gunter rig has the luff in a groove in the gaff but laces to the mast for the lower third.

**HEADSAILS:**

The boat was originally designed with a relatively small jib and this is still used by many people, particularly day sailing. However, it was found that the boat lacked power in many conditions and a Genoa was designed for the boat.

This is a much larger sail than the original jib but does increase the power – for some people too much. There is a popular 79% Genoa made which some people find more manageable. However you may have any size sail up to the maximum of the 100% Genoa permitted in the class rules.

The headsails may be poled out using a whisker pole/jib stick and various rigging systems are used.

**SPINNAKER:**

The original spinnaker was relatively small and a larger one has been developed. Some people find that on small ponds the legs of the race course are too short to set it effectively but on larger lakes or sea/estuary sailing it certainly a worthwhile addition to the sail inventory.

The sail may be flown with both single and twin pole systems.

**FOILS:**

**CENTREBOARD:**

The centreboard is a standard shape but has some tolerance. Because of the tolerances there is no certainty that a centreboard can be transferred from one boat to another and it would need to be checked.

Like the rudder blade, the centreboard can be made of solid or laminated timber, plywood or a GRP/foam core construction.

**RUDDER:**

The boat was originally designed with a spoon shaped rudder blade and this is still in common use. Some years ago a rectangular shaped blade (which may be tapered) was also allowed. This can be more beneficial on open water as it is generally deeper in the water. Again personal choice will play a large part in the decision of which to use. Some owners have both types.

The choice of rudder stock, tiller and tiller extension is optional.

**FITTINGS:**

There are very few restrictions on the fittings for a Heron. People make the boats as simple or as complicated as they see fit and with the intended use in mind. Boats are cruised, day sailed, raced single handed and double handed and all will choose a slightly different fit out.

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