

Hanson lecture 2020

Mike Golding answers your questions

1 Are you still racing Mike?

Hello Mark, I'm afraid given the restrictions we have been under in the UK and overseas, only dinghy racing here in Warsash this year. We have a family RS400 and I have an Exocet Moth for those days I just fancy a blast around the Solent! Earlier this year myself and Dee Caffari did plan to race a 3300 on the RORC mixed doublehanded circuit but we canned the idea when the restrictions arrived and it became clear that there would be no meaningful racing events this year. I'm still keen to get out on the water racing but maybe a little spoiled by years of well funded sponsorships meaning I find it difficult compromising ...

2 What sort of projects are you currently involved with?

Hi Anne, I guess it's not what you mean, however I'm still involved with the sport in my capacity as Chair of World Sailing Sustainability Commission, patron of the RYA Green Blue and the President of the Little Ship Club but I don't have any current sailing project. From a pure "sailing project" perspective well, I am always on the hunt for prospective partners and sponsors as I still have unfulfilled sailing ambitions...

3 Do you think soft rigging is the way forward for cruising boats?

Hi Joel, Great question. We adopted fibre rigging to save weight aloft to go a fraction faster. Our early rigging was Kevlar or Vecran which have fantastic qualities until they reach the end of their life when they can fail dramatically (Ecover 2's main halyard was Vectran on the 2004 VG!). Later we shifted to PBO standing rigging which, provided you can keep it covered and protected from UV was more reliable. The standing rigging of Gamesa in the 2012 Vendee was all EC6 Carbon which so far as I can see has very nearly a limitless lifespan barring physical damage/chafe. Specra running rigging and where applicable standing rigging is virtually impervious to UV and lasts a long, long time. I think spectra is a no brainer choice for a cruising sailor. As for the higher performing and lighter Carbon, PBO/Kevlar well no these are not good choices or a good spend for the cruising sailor. Good old style wire, Dyform and rod are all fully proven cruising systems plus they have the considerable benefit of being totally recyclable so offer a more sustainable solution. One thing we did learn was that mechanical toggles are far from perfect and prone to failure unless they are well engineered, maintained, lubricated etc. However, a simple well executed (chafe free) lashing termination in say Specra offers 100% toggling, a huge potential lifespan and they are cheap and easy to replace...

4 Mike, not a question but a huge thank you for an excellent talk. I have huge respect for what you've done. Well done.

Thank you Colin.

5 Mike, Two questions 1: Who was your maths teacher at school? (We went to the same school.) And 2: Alex leaves for Les Sables next week, would you like it to have been you instead of Alex?

1. I don't remember who taught math at RBCS when was there 1971-77. However, tech subjects are always easier to learn when the application is real. Pat Patterson was able to teach me spherical trig and nav because it meant something real to be able to calculate one's position on the earth's surface and it was both fascinating and irresistible in a way that understanding matrices and algebra could never be.

2. Of course I would totally love to be out there doing the Vendee Globe again – its the best ocean race by quite a long way so I'm jealous of Alex but now very much in a supportive way.... the truth is that I found finishing 7th in my last VG in 2012 very frustrating, we did not have sufficient budget or time to build a new generation boat and I had to settle for doing less well than I know I'm capable of. I can't really complain, I've had way more opportunity than most with 4 Vendee Globes, 2 Around Alone Races, 2 Challenge Races and a Solo Westabout Record circumnavigation. That's already verging on being greedy...;-)

6 What did you use for your soft rigging?

Early days 1998 onwards Kevlar, then Vecran and PBO. On the 2012 VG the standing rigging on Gamesa was EC6 Carbon – which so far as I can see had an almost unlimited lifespan as it's both impervious to UV and can endure an unknown amount of cycling – it is rather expensive though... all running rigging and soft connections, lashings etc were a good modulus Spectra – which as we all now know is a fantastic and enduring product.

7 Mike, sailing is expensive: did you earn money from it in the early days?

Early days no - indeed my first AZAB, OSTAR and RBR while I was in the Fire Service cost me money even although we did have the odd small sponsorship. Of course as my career progressed the rewards improved significantly although in spite of the perceived risks it was never Formula 1 or footballer salaries;-)

8 A fantastic talk. Thank you very much...

Thank you Steve and Pauline

9 Sir Robin did his last Vendee Globe in his 70's will Mike do another one?

Yes, Sir Robin did the Velux 5 Oceans in 2006/7 - the same race in which I picked Alex off his boat. I had known Robin for many years before that, but I only really got to know him properly in that build up to the V5O in 2006. I recall him scooping me out of a very frustrating compulsory First Aid Course (where the instructors had no English!) we sneaked away like a couple of teenagers to a local bar... we laughed so much that the rest of that annoying course just flew by... I have a huge respect for Robin - not just what he did in being the first but perhaps more importantly, who he is now. RKJ is legend. Of course, I would hope to be equally capable in my 70's and I would love to do another turn around the planet - that would make a nice round 10th turn around the planet! Hmmm

10 Three hints for a first ocean?

1. Plan carefully - but don't let the planning stall you from getting on with it
 2. Prepare your boat carefully, make sure you think through all that might go wrong and prepare accordingly
 3. Notwithstanding points 1 and 2 - just get on with it! - life is full of should've, would've, could've's - and you will only regret not doing it...
- Oh and you should have a good quality, well installed Autopilot plus ideally a fully tested spare...

11 What do you feel about the multi-hull versus monohulls?

Interesting Question, strangely – I've been thinking about this a lot lately... Cruising in mid latitudes I would almost certainly choose a modern multihull design. I know many sailors fear the possibility of capsize but I feel that risk is low provided the boat is well sailed and appropriate precautions are observed - plus a good multihull is extremely unlikely to sink, which would be far worse. I'm also sold on the enhanced speed which offers a degree of safety from being able to avoid serious weather as well as allowing you to extend your cruising range. The additional comfort of a multi comes from the space and also remaining upright with a proper view ahead from the saloon. However, if my intention was to head far North or South towards ice or into certain heavy weather well, I would choose a well found aluminium or steel monohull - with a proper pilothouse so you can manage the boat from the inside.

Mike Golding October 2020