

## **QUOTATIONS from people who have sailed the HADRON H2**

**Jack Munnely, Arun YC, January 2017.**

(Jack's comments were made after he won 3 club handicap races in one day)

"Well all I can say is thanks for lending me your pride and joy again after the last time I test drove it!!

Lovely little boat. Definitely the nicest singlehander I've sailed by far!

Honestly feels like the back end of a decent 2 man boat. And quite nice to be in charge of your own weight distribution without shouting at a crew haha!"

**Top international OK sailor Douglas Powell, Burghfield SC, January 2017**

(Previously has owned Blaze, Phantom)

Thanks [Keith Callaghan](#) for bringing the demo boat the the Bloody Mary and letting me loose.

Before the start the wind was just enough to hike fully out and what a great boat it is in that wind strength. Easily driven hull, not much load on the mainsail and points nice and high upwind. Unfortunately that was the best of the wind for the rest of the afternoon. In ghosting along conditions the H2 certainly struggled at times to show its potential, but still kept Aero 9's and Halo's honest.

In (very) light winds the 5 key things I found:

1. Weight forward of the thwart is a must to get the boat moving fast. The plus is there is plenty of room to get comfortable.
2. Downwind - sail angles and drive it low once speed is up
3. Bailers work very well even in very light winds
4. Fit a drinks holder - my bottle is now drifting around the lake due to it sliding out the back.
5. Because of its light hull the mainsail isn't huge - keeping clear wind from bigger boats is essential.

The handicap given was 1015 which was a bit stupid. I would suggest 1037-1040 is more accurate and hope it gets there in the next few updated of PY.

Also de-rigging the boat afterwards is a doddle! - taking a few minutes rather than the 20-30 mins of other boats.

**Top helm MIKE ISZATT, who sailed H2 #102 at the Grafham Grand Prix on 2 January.**

(Mike's achievements include: Winner Bloody Mary, Grafham Grand Prix Slow Fleet, 3 time winner Leigh on Sea Brass Monkey, current club champion).

"If you want to get 'close to the action' with a continual barrage of spray then the Hadron H2 is certainly not the boat for you. Spray is deflected nicely and does not even come close to wetting your brow. After the first race in the boat, despite only 2 degrees of temperature and a brisk northerly wind I was forced to strip off a layer of clothing and my hat to prevent overheating. I'm too used to a 'standard wet boat' and was not expecting the comfort of the Hadron.

The boat can be held almost head to wind without the fear of getting stuck in irons, a very useful feature when jockeying for pole position during a big fleet start.

The 'foot well' in the cockpit ensures that it's almost impossible to clip your head with boom when manoeuvring and yet the sail sits nicely close to the deck giving the boat a nice 'racing look'.

The boat looks like a bit like a Merlin and like the Merlin will outpoint almost any other single hander, it's this advantage that must be utilised to gain a good result. The Hadron will hold its own on any run or reach but the big place changer is upwind.

The boat takes kindly to any heel and does not stall disastrously as some other boats do even though sailing flat is of course beneficial. The Hadron planes quickly and will tack on a sixpence enabling wind shifts to be taken advantage of.

I'm pleased that the boat is amazingly strong since a port tack yacht hit the boat very hard and yet only very minor damage resulted.

Overall a very nice looking, comfortable, streamlined boat with plenty of cockpit room.

My only criticism would be that the tell-tales were slightly too close to the mast and should be moved back by about 20cms.

I'm not sure what your target market is and it might be an idea to play around with different sail sizes since the boat could certainly cope with a slightly bigger sail. Since sailing is an aging market this might not be suitable for your target market. A sensible sail size also has the advantage that the boat is capable of being sailed in almost any wind. I'm sure that in a strong breeze whilst others have to sit and watch the Hadron H2 sailors can be out enjoying their sailing.

With regard my own performance, the boat is fine but I really was not up to scratch on the day having made too many errors which I repeated lap after lap. The main being that I did not take advantage of the H2's advantage over other boats, it's pointing ability!

It would take me about 3 months to get up to speed since the boat does not appear to have a steep learning curve."

**Another top helm - Richard Burton, who sailed an H2 at the Grafham Grand Prix, January 2017.**

"Nice to meet you and Simon and thanks for all the help was a good day out.

It's interesting to hear Simon's comments I think the boat would be better off in a handicap around 1035 in those winds [8-10 knots] but would be a bandit in the breeze.

In respect of the boat the rig needs more adjustment so it can be tuned for different conditions. At the moment it's very simple which is fine when it's breezy and you just pull most things on... however in the light you needed to be able to loosen the shrouds to get the boom forward but keep the rig tension on which may mean it needs some lowers to keep the stiffness in the mast low down and be able to cant the rig forward. Are the anchor points for the shrouds set in place or could they be pushed forward? I'd like to have another go sometime if the opportunity arises."

Richard and Mike Iszatt sailed off a GL handicap of 1015, which put them at a disadvantage against the other singlehanders.

Simon Lovesey, organiser of the GJW Direct SailJuice series later commented:

"Using the D-Zero Great Lakes number Richard Burton would move up to 21<sup>st</sup>, just ahead of Ian Morgan (D-Zero Champion). The Great Lakes (I am NOT on the committee) do have a policy of low numbers for new classes, the D-Zero and RS Aero 9 started at 1015 [In this event they sailed off 1033 and 1028 respectively]. The key is getting Hadron H2s out competing in these big handicap events."

**Comment from a Yachts & Yachting Forum post, January 2017.**

(From someone who enjoyed a sail in an H2 at Salcombe).

"Well, I really like the Hadron H2 which fits a niche that I think there is a market for, I enjoyed sailing it, and with a few personal tweaks it would be a lovely and rewarding boat own one. If I lived somewhere without a strong one Design fleet racing alternative, I would have one in a flash."

**There are now (January 2017) 11 H2s on the water and here are some of the comments from the first 3 owners.**

**Dick Holden (H2 #105), Arun YC.**

I absolutely love the boat Keith. It is just brilliant.

To me, close reaching in a big sea is certainly the most fun. If I manage to get to Heaven I plan to spend the first 15,000 years just doing this.

I find it quick upwind. It is quick downwind. But on a beam reach – especially in waves – it is stunning.

I remain absolutely delighted with the boat which is exactly what I wanted. It attracts huge interest.

**Kevin Connolly (H2 #106), Deben YC**

It is such a great feeling every time we meet you and Simon and share the great pride you show in the H2. I am going to sail it every day next week and let you know how it feels. It already feels a privilege to just own it!

I just had to write to let you know what a brilliant sail I had today on our race down and back on the River Deben. When the wind got up to 15mph+ on a tight reach and then on a wider one the boat just took off and sat on the plane like it was on rails. I never once felt that I would lose control. It was the best fun I've had in a boat for years or perhaps ever! Thank you for designing such a great boat.

**Ian Dawson (H2 #104)**

It's a masterpiece.

**David Henshall (yachting journalist)**

David's initial thoughts on the H2, after he had sailed the first boat on launch day, February 2016.

"Helm weights on the day ranged from a little under 70 kgs to an admitted bit over 90 kgs (not saying who that was!) but we all found the boat delightfully responsive and comfortable to sail. Given the temperature of the water and the chill in the air, the extra freeboard that kept the helms out of the wet stuff and the flared hull form that gave the helm a dry ride were both well appreciated."

David subsequently borrowed an H2 for a few weeks and sailed it from Netley SC. Here is a write-up of his experiences.

## **“The Hadron H2 – A Day (more like a month) in the Life...**

I recently had a mega length article published on Yachts and Yachting.Com website titled ‘Silver Dream Racer’ (you could be forgiven for thinking that I have a penchant for using songs for my titles). The theme of the article was fairly simple, as it suggested that whilst those that run our sport seem fixated on the needs of a Youth minority, that the vast majority of club sailors, many of whom are past that first flush of youth, are being poorly served by the modern breed of dinghies. In response to this, designer Keith Callaghan suggested that his new H2 dinghy would tick all of the boxes that I had identified and then some more. The topic of a boat test was then raised, but I was initially cool on the idea. Back in the days of Dinghy Sailing Magazine I’d taken part in some boat tests but had not always been that popular as I insisted on a fierce independence; I wanted to be able to tell it as I saw it, regardless of any feelings that I might hurt in the process.

Moreover, I had a real dislike of choosing a nice sunny afternoon with a F3-4, blasting around for an hour or so and then using this to determine what the boat is like. With something as demanding as a boat, a test for me had to be a real test, across a range of conditions and encompassing what it is like actually living with the boat.

However, Keith seemed happy to meet those conditions, so for the last month or so I’ve been sailing the prototype H2 from Netley. The first impression of the H2, when finding a space for it in the dinghy park, was one of size. Was this really a single hander? Rigging the boat was an easy task, the Superspars carbon mast being light enough to easily step up onto the foredeck. The shrouds are fixed but the forestay is adjustable; the control, along with kicker, clew and Cunningham are all led back to the thwart (I understand that the production boats will have the option of bringing the control lines out to the carlins).

Once changed into sailing gear, it was time to move the boat down to the water, at half tide on a soft shingle beach this can be a testing activity but the H2 seemed light and well balanced on the launching trolley. The rudder system is very simple, with a clever lock on the pintles holding the tiller stock in place. The fully battened sail takes just a moment to hoist, and then it was time to go afloat. Launching into wind and waves on a lee shore, I found it easiest to come in over the stern tank. Whilst a great way to get on board, it can result in a bucket full or so of water coming in with you into the foot well in the main cockpit area, but the self bailers are very efficient and quickly get the water back where it should be. The boat accelerates quickly and you need to get your weight up onto the side tank, where the hiking position is great. If the boat were mine I’d probably invest in a set of ‘pussy pads’ as the boat really does reward effort up on the side decks.

Turning downwind the boat sparkles, quickly lifting up onto the plane and no matter how fast you go, the boat stays level. Upwind or down, the ‘fat top’ sail, neatly made by HD, is easily controlled and by blading out in the gusts, does much of the work for you. Sailing deep downwind, the trick is to use enough kicker to not let the top batten get ahead of the boom. Too little kicker and the

rig will let you know immediately, for this is one of the few moments when I felt anything less than in full control.

After a couple of sails in a moderate breeze with some interesting gusts, I took the boat out on a seriously windy day, as I wanted to see just how the H2 behaved and besides, I had a goodly degree of confidence in the boat. Taking a leaf out of the old Mirror 14/Marauder, the H2 has vented side tanks that flood in the event of a capsize. Not only does this slow up the rate of total inversion (a potentially serious issue on some singlehanders) but once on its side, the H2 floats docilely and with the centreboard just a few inches above water level, making recovery far less of a worrying issue. Not that I found capsizing the boat an easy thing to do, for even in conditions that had passed the border into 'extreme' the handling of the H2 remained vice free and manageable. The helm stayed light and the boat controllable, to the point that for some of the sailing adrenaline junkies, they might reach the point of saying that the boat is too easy. Broad reaching in waves, which is surely the Achilles Heel of singlehanders, I struggled to get the boat to go 'down the mine'. In the end I had to really abuse the boat, driving straight down the wash from a passing ferry (on top of the existing wave pattern) and even then as the foredeck buried, the buoyancy in the hull took over and we popped back up again – and still upright!

I would not say that the H2 is particularly easy; I'd prefer the description of 'well mannered'. I quickly found that the vice free handling gave me yet more confidence to push the boat even harder and even the breezy weather gybes were just – a breeze! One thing that did change the nature of the H2 was the sea state, for in flat water you can hike the boat upwind with the weight up against the thwart and claw your way upwind in a very satisfying manner. In a seaway you have to change your approach, more twist in the main, move the weight aft a bit and the boat will tramp away; again, the more you hike the better it gets! Going back to the Keith Callaghan Merlin Rocket designs of the 1970s, they were known for their windward ability and the H2 is no different, with some tuning and work from the helm, the H2 is remarkably good (in hiking single hander terms) for going to windward.

The layout of the boat, with the buoyancy in a large domed tank down the centreline is a surprise, for the intuitive view is that this will make tacking an issue. Yet, with the angled up aspect of the boom, tacking quickly becomes second nature and it could be that tacking standing up will become the best way of making the most of the boat's ability to spin from one tack to the other. However, that central buoyancy tank is perfectly positioned to provide a base for your feet when hiking hard in the 'far aft' position. In wind and waves having a secure footing gives an addition sense of being 'planted', or really being connected to the boat.

What is surprising here is that a boat that looked big on shore looks perfectly proportioned afloat. Compared to some of the more modern single handers, which can feel cramped and constraining, the more generous proportions of the H2, with its comfortable hiking position and deep cockpit just felt 'right'. Best of all is that with the thwart and the central buoyancy tank,

the evil of singlehanders, having to kneel on the cockpit floor is a thing of the past.

It would be easy to think that despite my earlier comments, that I've only talked up the good bits of the boat, but there are some tricky bits to living with the H2. Because of the beam of the boat, I'd like to see a launching trolley with a wider wheelbase to give a little more stability when on shore in breezy conditions. The beam of the boat can be a P in the A...just simple things like trying to get the cover on can be an issue, for after being so comfortable in the cockpit, getting to the straps that go under the boat can be quite a Quasimodo moment! The low stern tank can also be problematic if you are early in to the start line; the usual trick of pushing out the main to stop forward progress can result in water pouring into the cockpit foot well. In the same way, in flat water, the H2 will happily 'sit' on its topsides, heeled well to windward as the clock runs down. Do that in waves and you will quickly get water into the cockpit. As already highlighted, as long as there is breeze this will quickly empty, but coming off the line is not the time you want to be carry that extra bucketful of water (or two). The beam of the boat can also be an issue when coming back ashore onto a lee shore when there are breaking waves; getting you weight over the gunwale to dismount from the boat sees the hull go from the one extreme, heeled so far to windward that the waves break into the boat, to the moment when the hull becomes unweighted when it will flip over to the over side, filling up both sides of the cockpit in the process. Finally, sailing from a lee shore, I'd want an immediate change to a system that would allow for an easy dropping of the mainsail, without having to scrabble around trying to release a masthead lock. Most of the other problems I found with the boat were nothing more than the niggles that can be found in any prototype and I hear that many of the issues have already been addressed in the production boats that are now being produced by White Formula at Brightlingsea.

The intention of the H2 is to have the hull follow the usual SMOD ideal, yet allow a good degree of freedom in terms of layout and fittings. In addition to pussy pads for the hiking, I might well look at the addition of a curved track mounted on the thwart and a dagger board style of rudder, but these are the results of personal preference rather than any fundamental failing in the design or build.

And it is this freedom to make the boat a more individual product that is, to me, where it's greatest strength lies. Being able to chose a stiffer mast section and a sail cut that will best match on to my build (okay..Yes, I'm over weight!), style of sailing, location where the boat will be predominantly sailed (open water, coastal, inland) are all big plus points. However, they pale into insignificance against the far bigger plus points of having a boat that gives confidence, comfort and an excellent sailing 'experience' – for these are the values that don't just get people to buy into a boat; they keep them sailing it" itlong term.

**David has since authored a Boat Test which will appear in Yachts & Yachting magazine very shortly.**

**Alan Henderson** wrote an article for 'Yachting Life' magazine, which is listed separately.