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A most unusual feature of the Unicorns is the 7-ft. long tiller extension which leads forward from the centre of the tiller connector bar. This is close to the main sheet sheave fixing point on the aft beam and it is, therefore, necessary to swing the whole length of the tiller extension aft and through 340 degrees as one goes about from tack to tack—a most exciting manoeuvre.

The running rigging on *Iolanthe* is as simple as the Unicorn's is complex. It consists of nothing more than a wire bridle on the aft beam, on which the main sheet lower sheave travels and a normal main sheet assembly to the end of the boom. There is no boom vang or kicking strap but it is true that *Iolanthe's* top three sail panels were not often free of twist and it will not be surprising if Peter resorts to a vang to reduce twist and increase power.

#### Under weight

Unmentioned so far, Jack Neale's *Solitaire*, this craft turned out to be under the 160 lb. minimum limit allowed by the "A" rules. Jack did not fancy the idea of loading the boat up

with lead so he found a "standard" weight helmsman, John Airey, an expert "National 18" helmsman, who did very well for a novice to such an unusual rig. But all was not well and, after brief appearances, the boat was withdrawn.

*Bambi*, Roland Prout's "veteran" "A" size boat, was likewise not in good form. Instead of her original dagger plates, *Bambi* is now fitted with long fixed keels and although these looked, to the practised eye, as though they were very well aft, it turned out that they were not far enough. This, of course, resulted in serious weather helm and although Roland was able to move the mast forward a few inches, by improvising a wooden block on the forward edge of the main beam, it was not enough to achieve sail balance for the una rig converted from sloop. Although the craft went quite fast on a reach and running, she was no match for the other boats when on the wind. In the third race *Bambi* strained a joint between hull and bridge and had to withdraw from the rest of the meeting.

Summing up the lessons of the Trials is not easy—some important boats were absent; *Yellow Bird* and *Bambi* were not in best racing

trim; the standard of helmsmanship seemed the worse for winter lack of practice and most of the starts were appallingly ragged. The well-tried conventional rigs of the veteran Thais were superior to even the top Shearwaters but *Vivace's* extra hull length and beam and higher aspect ratio sail more than made up for her gear trouble.

The "A's" too, left many questions unanswered.

True Mazzotti was a clear leader and the other two Unicorns were faster than the "A" Lion but, if Mazzotti himself had not been there, it would have seemed that *Iolanthe* was the fastest boat, as she was able to out sail the two other Unicorns.

#### Surplus power

What if there had been three *Iolanthes* and only one of the slower two Unicorns?

Another question arises—which of the top boats was the more fully tuned? The Unicorns may have had the most competitive sailing experience before the race but it was noticeable that *Iolanthe* seemed to be improving steadily and looked, even on the last day, as though



TOP: *Iolanthe II's* simple net deck layout and sheeting arrangement. The loose-footed sail has an unusually wide batten. The poles running fore and aft on each side are for the helmsman's heels as he pushes himself out on the sliding seat. The seat is retained only by a loop of cord at the centre and it is therefore an easy matter for the helmsman to move fore and aft on the seat to trim the boat.

TOP: Peter Butcher bears down on the boom while he looks up to see if the new top sail battens are giving more shape to the highest panels. Throughout the meeting Peter was experiencing difficulty in obtaining maximum drive from the top three panels.

BELOW: J. Palmer's *Sue*, sail No. 152, dicing with Sanger's *Thai-foam II*.

BELOW: Alan Smith's *Vivace* leads from Neil Coster's *November Charlie* at the start.