

“This house believes the displacement boats that are

future of cruising is fast, light fun to sail and seaworthy”

This was the motion proposed by designer Tony Castro at a debate attended by over 200 people at the Royal Lymington Yacht Club at the end of February. Tom Cunliffe opposed the motion and Bob Fisher chaired the debate.

Although Ed Dubois and Nigel Irens were seconding the proposers, both agreed that this was not an area for debate because it demanded a formal conclusion, and in an area as rich and varied as yacht design, the emphasis should be on good design, whether light or heavy, not on displacement as a single factor.

Despite these reservations, the two and a half hour debate was lively and there many viewpoints represented from the invited guests and from the floor. The invited guests were *Yachting World* Editor Andrew Bray, John Channon, Bill Dixon, Rob Humphreys, Major Willie Ker, Howard Letty, Tony Marchaj, Colin and Rosemary Mudie, Mike Pocock, George Tinley, David Alan-Williams and Merfyn Owen.

During the evening, views ranged from one extreme to



the other, with one vision that lessons learned from yachts such as the Whitbread 60s will mould tomorrow's cruisers, to that expressed by several speakers of a preference for cruising boats that sat in rather than on the water.

At the end of the debate, in which the motion was defeated by 69 votes to 51, the fact that

there were more abstentions than either for or against the proposal indicated that the majority agreed with the reservations of both seconders, Ed Dubois and Nigel Irens, that the spectrum of cruising design was so wide that it was impossible to be specific on the question of displacement, which was only one of the many

aspects of yacht design.

It was David Alan-Williams who made the one point with which all parties agreed when he said: 'cruising is about people, their boats are secondary', a view supported by Rosemary Mudie.



“Colin Archer did not have the huge advantage of modern materials”

Ed Dubois



“Light boats have less material and less ballast and can have more righting moment”

Tony Castro



“You should learn to study the barometer, not the speedometer”

Tom Cunliffe



“This is an area for rich discussion - a debate is not the right forum as it demands a conclusion”

Nigel Irens

Quotes from the delegates

Tony Castro

“Handicap rules for dual purpose boats are bad rules, leading to bad derivatives, like a cross between a Winnebago and a Maserati”
 “Both light and heavy boats can be stable upside-down”
 “Stability is like money – you can never have enough of it”

Tom Cunliffe

“It's nice to be in a boat that looks after you, not one that tires you out”
 “Speed is different things to different people”
 “What's important is the ability to maintain high averages, not short bursts of speed”

Ed Dubois

“A boat's motion is more to do with design than displacement”

Andrew Bray

“It is irresponsible to squander non-renewable resources on heavy boats”

George Tinley

“It's ridiculous to say that the future lies in light boats. It lies in all types”

Nigel Irens

“Long may there be diverse design”
 “Cruising gear should be the smallest possible proportion of total displacement, which favours the heavier boat”
 “Boats I have designed range, in displacement:LWL ratios, from Tom's Westernman at 400 to a new French trimaran at 27”

Mike Pocock

“On a bluewater cruiser the owner's comforts account for 2.5 tons”

John Channon

“Today, bigger boats tend to be sailed by smaller crews which demands lighter displacement”

Rob Humphreys

“You can't label heavy and light displacement black and white, it is all shades of colours”

David Alan-Williams

“For tradewind cruising I'd choose a catamaran”
 “If you don't enjoy being at sea don't choose a heavy boat”

Rosemary Mudie

“It's not the boats that matter, it's the people who sail them”

Tony Marchaj

“You can have speed or seaworthiness, but not both – these factors are mutually exclusive”
 “It is impossible to design cruiser-racers that satisfy both camps – only politicians believe they can ignore that rule”

Colin Mudie

“Boating today is safer than driving cars”

Willie Ker

“Compared with a Nic 32, a Contessa 32 is a light boat”
 “Weight is useful in an icebreaker”

Merfyn Owen

“Herreshoff said: simplicate and add lightness”
 “Heavy keels on light boats is the way to go”

For the motion 51

Against the motion 69