



Draycote Unshackled

www.draycotewater.co.uk

www.onboardsurfsails.co.uk

December 2011

DASH EVENT RESCHEDULED FOR FEBRUARY

The Draycote Dash which was going to be the highlight of this year is now set to be an early highlight for 2012.

The event has been postponed to 25-26 February due to the low water levels, which it was felt would make it more difficult to run a successful event with national appeal. We are hoping that by February, sufficient winter rain will have encouraged Severn Trent to start pumping water into the lake.

The format of racing will follow the same hugely enjoyable sequence as last year, with a series of short races on Saturday, using open-meeting style courses. On Sunday, there will be a 60 to 80-minute handicap race at the normal starting time followed by a 100-minute pursuit race in the afternoon.

Our Dash also forms part of the Global Sailjuice Warm-up Series. Instead of being the first in the five-leg series, it will now be the last, so we can expect a turnout that includes a number of top racers from a range of classes.

There will be a small charge for Draycote members entering both days, but no charge for Sunday only, and results will be extrapolated to go into the usual fleet series.

With food available on Saturday and a late bar, it will definitely be an event worth turning out for.

Inside this edition ...

News from the fleets: Updates from the Fireballs, Flying Fifteens, Fast Menagerie, Lasers, Solos, Laser 2000s.

We also have a rundown on the successes of our young sailors making their mark in a number of different classes.

Also, on the website only (page 9), a report from Lee Mars, one of our keen young windsurfers set to make waves on the national scene.

INTERFLEET CHAMPIONS



Fireballs claim the Interfleet trophy after other teams' tactical efforts failed to gain an advantage over old-fashioned speed on the water.

Light winds, almost non-existent in the morning, were not enough to stall the competitive but friendly instincts of the fleets to compete again for the Interfleet Championships in July.

To give an indication of how light the winds were, paddles were prepared just in case a canoeing contest offered more potential. Five teams took part: Fireballs, Solos, Lasers, Youth and Junior, and a Motley fleet comprising windsurfers and other stragglers.

The battle for first and second places was tense all through the afternoon session with no more than a few points separating the Fireballs and Solos. The Solos resorted to ever lighter and smaller crews in a desperate attempt to hold onto the trophy they won, surprisingly, last year.

This had followed a stringent selection process for a place on their team, with bulkier Solo sailors relegated to the sidelines. This was all to no avail as the Fireballs prevailed using careful placement of weighty crew on the foredeck to minimise waterline length and carried off the trophy for a second time.

The event was well attended and enjoyed by all, with prize-giving and a barbecue to round off the day. Many thanks to Tom Vian, Rear Commodore Sail, for organising the event with the help of members of the Fast Handicap Fleet, who would otherwise have doubtless been giving the Fireballs a run for their money. Thanks too to Onboard for a varied selection of raffle prizes.

A Note from the New Commodore ...

First, I would like to thank members who have stepped down from the committee this year for all their hard work in their tenure as committee members; in particular Andrew Blee, who was determined to remain as Commodore until the lease was finalised, which could have been a considerable amount of time!

By the time you are reading this, hopefully the 6 week program of improvements to the site by Severn Trent's contractors will have been completed.

While the works around the visitor centre have reduced our free onsite parking we have retained a dedicated free car park at the lower end of the site and we have planning permission to create another 20 spaces past the windsurfers' car park.

The new trailer park has been surfaced and chains have been installed so you can secure your

trailer. A pay and display scheme will operate for all of the STW-controlled car parks and an annual parking permit scheme will be available from Severn Trent.

The STW visitor centre is due to reopen by the end of November. Severn Trent is considering hosting a visitor centre launch day in April and we are discussing holding a joint event to also promote the sailing club.

Now that we have certainty of occupation on the site we are carrying out overdue essential maintenance to the clubhouse and modest improvements. Already, we have replaced windows at the back of the clubhouse, using easily maintained PVC and the front doors to the club are being done soon in the same material. The male changing rooms will be refurbished in the spring.

On-board are still our retained training partner and we are all

looking forward to a positive and successful new year.

The new committee have taken steps to address the concerns raised at the AGM and a working party has been set up to review the membership structure. Due to the lack of rain, the water level at the present time is still receding as STW have to pump water from the lake to maintain water levels in the adjoining river under instruction from the environment agency. We are not the only reservoir sailing club having to endure low water levels and hopefully this will only be a short-term hindrance to the enjoyment of Draycote.

I learnt to sail at Draycote Water many moons ago. I am proud to be a member of the elected committee which will always put the long term future of the club and its core values first. Happy sailing!

– **Phillip Hunt** Commodore

The Oppies are Back in Town!

The launch of a new Optimist fleet at Draycote Water has seen the next generation of young sailors at the club making the most of the Indian summer.

Thanks to the unseasonably warm autumn weather the fleet has managed to get on the water a number of times during October and November, with some great sunny days and light winds, helping to inspire the children ahead of next year.

The fleet currently has six boats out regularly and all of the young sailors, aged seven and upwards, have been having great fun making friends and learning about sailing.

If you would like to find out more about Optimist sailing or the fleet, email Paula Irish at paulairishpr@aol.com or call on 01788 819959.



Flying Fifteen Fleet

ENOUGH WATER TO LAUNCH AND RACE IN

So, as I am sure Kenneth Williams must have said at some time: "Winter Draws on". The summer series are over and the results were:

Sunday am:

- 1st G Huett & K Snow
- 2nd P Slater & T Case
- 3rd B Tavender & B Bennett

Sunday pm:

- 1st S Patterson & S. Thompson
- 2nd B Tavender & B Bennett
- 3rd K. Snow & G Huett

Wednesday Evening:

- 1st B. Tavender & B. Bennett
- 2nd P Slater & Various
- 3rd K Snow & G Huett.

Well done to all. At this stage I haven't seen the points table in detail but I can say that Brian T & Bill in particular coped with the vagaries of the new Wednesday night start sequence better than the rest of us!

Congratulations Geoff and Keith for their Sunday AM success and to S & S for the PM, Pete Slater and various crews is always there or thereabouts beating much younger boats in the process (damn him!).

For the new season Richard Hope has a new boat and crew and will, no doubt, be putting the front-runners under pressure. Several other boat changes and comings and goings bode well for a good winter's racing. There



was good close racing all the way down the fleet in the Summer Series and the Winter Series has got off to a similar start with eight or nine boats on the start line in the last couple of weeks.

Despite rumours to the contrary, there is enough water to launch at the moment with care and a bit more time, and plenty of water to race in for most of us! (no names, no pack drill).

We now have our own website

www.draycotef15.org so keep your eyes on that and please contribute!

As many of you will know, there is a debate going on as to modifying the rig; if you don't like the idea of a rig change, or if you do, you won't be able to vote on it if you are not a member of BIFFA. Check out the BIFFA website for up to date info www.flying15.org.uk/.

As things stand, at the time of writing, we can still launch and race, and it is raining! I hope to see you all out on the water, from in front of you I hasten to say!

– Rodger Webb Fleet Captain
draycoteff@gmail.com

Laser Fleet

LARGE FLEET TURN-OUTS

What a year! This has been the most successful year for the Lasers in recent times, with a large participation both on Wednesdays and Sundays. The Wednesday series has seen the largest fleet numbers, with regularly 13 or more boats on the water each week.

If only the same people turned up each week then we would have easily over twenty boats on the water, this is the aim for 2012!

These numbers have started to be replicated on Sundays with six to eight core sailors turning out for the first race on a Sunday and some staying for the second race in the afternoon.

The reason for the growth? Well many will say it's not for the fun of sailing a Laser – but that's exactly what it is! Not many boats give such a

level playing field as a Laser. The boats are cheap, quick to rig and low maintenance, all the things that a modern lifestyle demands of a time consuming sport! This linked to the fact many in the fleet are new to the club and are made welcome allows for a great spring board to other fleets.

So what about the racing? Well it's been close and unpredictable which shows the strength in depth of good sailors plying their trade in the fleet. Many sailors have developed and becoming increasingly more competitive on a regular basis. This has been particularly true of Marcellus Prior and Mark Dannatt. Let's hope this improvement and increased numbers continuous into 2012!

– William Whittaker Fleet Captain

YOUR COMMITTEE

Commodore

Phillip Hunt

Vice Commodore

Richard Le Mare

Rear Commodore Sail

Richard Botting

Rear Commodore House

Mark Dannatt

Treasurer

Rodger Webb

President

Harry Sayers

Committee Members

Chris Gandy

Stuart McBeath

Gill Pearson

Edited and Produced by
Ian Macwhinnie/Scriptographix
Printed copies by
Claridges of Warwick

Fireball Fleet

STILL CHARGING AROUND WITH THE KITE UP



Well there's no doubt that this has been a tough year for sailing generally. Last winter was Siberian, the current economic climate is similarly chilly, and to top it off the lake is half empty. But our glass is at least half full, and I'm pleased to report that the fleet is still going strong.

The summer was mostly fabulously windy and offered excellent potential for charging around the lake at high speed with the kite up, which is what we like best. And although we lost a couple of boats in April, we're pleased to welcome new members Rachel and Steve in 14870, Dave and Josh in 14336 and Paul and Julia in 14876. We also have high hopes for seeing a few old friends return to the fold in 2012.

Back in May/June we had our Firebowl event, which was won by Gordon and Richard in spite of the fact that Richard fell onto their boom sufficiently often to ruin it. Over the course of the summer, Pete Slack and Serena battled it out with me and Paul Roe for honours in the Wednesday evening series, which provided some pretty epic battles and a victory for the boat with the less attractive crew. The Sunday race series are ongoing, and at the time of writing it's too close to call who will be getting the shiny things for those.

Our open meeting in September was small but perfectly organized by the Solo fleet. Thanks guys. Fewer boats, warmer weather and mostly light airs gave the event a more relaxed and laid-back feel than the usual high-octane massacre, and Pete & Serena were top-placed Draycote boat, coming 5th (cheers cheers).

The Marriott Bucket event was possibly the most postponed thing ever, and finally took place in November. Day 1 provided near perfect conditions and saw the usual levels of randomness and incompetence from all concerned, leaving it all to play for on day 2. To cut a long story short, Dave and Josh managed to win the last race, but Jane and Pat held on for 2nd place which was enough to clinch the series. Helen and Paul were a close 3rd overall - well done to all concerned!

Next up we have the two winter series, which run from November until the end of March or until the water runs out or goes solid. We like to keep



"Starboard!" - more close fleet racing. Photo: Sue Ann

sailing through the winter as a good alternative to metamorphosing into couch-potatoes...

If you were considering buying a Fireball and joining in with the silliness, the next few months should be a good time as resale values are always a bit depressed during the

chilly months. Look out for white Winders for £4K or less, and composite Winders for less than £1500 - they're all well built and generally limited only by the person doing the steering. If you need any help with finding one, get in touch.
- Mike Deane FB 14778

ARE WE "SHACKLED" TO THE PAST?

Having joined the General Committee as Treasurer this year and since forgotten what my home, wife and work looks like, I was sat at the club on a gloomy November day looking through the club accounts.

After a while I could not cope with the excitement and my thoughts started to stray; looking around the club I thought how much of it is still very 1970s looking, not to say that there was anything wrong with the 70s,

I am sure I still have a pair of rather dashing bell bottomed jeans, which, given my girth these days, would fit me upside down! Anyway back to the point.

I feel that the club needs a bit of a facelift, something the Commodore and Committee are committed to, now that the lease issues are over with. The starting point for me is the club logo, the dreaded Shackle! Half the sailing clubs in the UK use the shackle! There never has been a proper club logo, just the shackle and

the name. I think that we need a bright modern logo to then be used on all signage, website, letter headings and leaflets etc. to start giving the club a more modern, fresher appeal.

My proposal is shown. I think it fair to say that having shown it to other committee members some want to retain the shackle, It goes without saying that they all wear bell bottom jeans and mullet haircuts! The more enlightened agree with me!

So let the debate begin; I say cast off your shackles and be free, you have nothing to fear but fear of the shackle itself; cry, God for Harry, and a shackle-free England! Oops Nursey is just coming to take me back to the home.

Let me/us know your thoughts and alternative ideas. After all this magazine is called Unshackled!

- Rodger Webb
Treasurer DWSC
treasurer@draycotewater.co.uk
Chairman of the Society for a Shackle Free Club



Laser 2000 Fleet

FLEET NUMBERS GAIN A SLIGHT BOOST

In common with most fleets we lost one or two members at the end of last year but extend a warm welcome to two new arrivals which boosts the fleet number to seventeen.

In September it was good to hear that John Wilkin was rejoining the club with 'Bagsy', number 22085. John has been an active attendee at many of the class's open events and Nationals over the past few seasons and is pictured taking part in the last open meeting held at Draycote in 2009. We look forward to seeing him on the start line as well as making full use of the water midweek.

October saw the arrival of 21362, recently acquired by Edward Pither and Rebecca Austin as their first sailing dinghy. We hope they have many happy hours sailing at Draycote and are only sorry that the water level has been receding since they joined.

The class has had another successful season albeit with lower attendances at events than last year but is not alone in this. Several visitors were intending to come to the



Draycote Dash this month and were disappointed it had to be postponed.

The Class Association is keen to assist fleets at club level and work alongside the RYA's 'Activate Your Club' scheme. If anyone is interested in any training whether sailing, rigging or racing or simply just getting together, then please get in touch and we will be happy to make

arrangements. There is a good Laser 2000 coach within the area.

Next year we look forward to hosting the Inlands at Draycote and it would be great to see a good turnout from the club.

– Tim & Elizabeth Fillmore
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DRAYCOTE DASH!
2012

25th/26th February

All classes welcome

SATURDAY: Series of short races.
SUNDAY: Long handicap race followed by 100 min. pursuit race

Pre-entry available online. Follow the link at www.draycotewater.co.uk

The Draycote Dash is the last event of the Sailjuice Global Warm-Up Series incorporating the UK's five biggest winter handicap events.

www.draycotewater.co.uk

DRAYCOTE WATER SAILING CLUB



Children's Christmas Party

Sunday 18th December, 2011
3:30 pm onwards

Magic Show

Balloon Modelling

Games Tea Party

Visit from Father Christmas

Tickets available from the office no later than Tuesday, 13th December as Father Christmas needs to set his elves to work!

£6.00

Fast Handicap Fleet

GOOD TURNOUT FOR WEDNESDAYS

The new average lap format for Wednesday evening racing has been a great success as far as boats in the menagerie are concerned, the biggest fleet in the club.

In the Spring series, 45 boats joined in one or more of the races with 42 boats participating at least once on Summer Wednesday evenings.

The Spring series was won by Richard LeMare (RS300) with David Barker (RS300) second and Colin Newman (Solution) third. Richard again won the Summer series with Stuart McBeath (Supernova) second and Peter White (RS700) third.

On Sundays turn outs were approximately half that of Wednesday evenings and a podium finish in the series depended more on 'just being there' and pointing the boat between OL and the race box in the right direction at the end of enough races. Several individual races were keenly fought with just seconds separating the finishers on corrected times. Series results were as follows:

Spring Sunday Morning

Roger Pratt (Supernova)
James Ruddiman (RS300)
Richard LeMare (RS300)

Spring Sunday Afternoon

Richard LeMare (RS300)
Ian Clarke (Rooster 8.1)
J. Hughes (RS300)

Summer Sunday Morning

Roger Pratt (Supernova)



Fleet captain Stu McBeath takes it easy in his Supernova.

Photo: Chris Gandy



Tom Lambert was Junior European champion in his Moth. Photo: Chris Gandy

Stuart McBeath (Supernova)
Colin Newman (International Canoe)

Summer Sunday Afternoon

Richard LeMare (RS300)
Stuart McBeath (Supernova)
Colin Newman (International Canoe)

What could possibly stop any enthusiastic dinghy racing sailor from turning up to race at Draycote Water? It could only be that the alternative summer attraction – Class meetings on the open circuit – could enrich the parts others don't reach.

Richard LeMare distinguished himself by finishing fifth in the RS 300 Nationals and could well have made the podium had it not been for too much swimming in the final race.

Richard also finished second in the RS300 Travellers series including winning the Aldenham open and second at Brightlingsea. David Barker was 19th in the 2011 series.

In a numerically smaller class, Colin Newman finished third in a windy International Canoe Nationals when the much lighter new rules boats, that are turning out to be harder to sail than the now classic, one design IC Colin still races, were mostly upside down. He also went off with the Vintage trophy as best over 55, for his eighth time! (What explains those five missing years?)

In the foiling, International Moth Nationals, Colin finished a modest 41st out of 56 entrants but went home with the Grand Masters prize (best over 55) introduced by the class for the first time this year.

Coventry Uni student Tom Lambert finished 27th but for him it was just a warm-up to being crowned 'International Moth Junior European Champion' in Germany later in the year.

Jenny Jones is a Solution sailor who probably sailed 'away' more often than at 'home' this year, to finish fifth in the Solution Travellers series. Colin Newman had some satisfactory results at Solution Opens (3rd at Northampton, 2nd at Rutland, 4th in the Inlands on Hikling Broad and 5th in the Ovington Inlands at Grafham Water) but did not enter enough events to qualify for the Travellers series.

He had to miss the opportunity to defend the Solution Masters Trophy he had won for the last two years (best over 55) as the Solution Nationals clashed with the Moth Nationals. Jenny Jones finished 8th in a windy Solution Nationals.

With apologies to any of the 'away' crowd whose adventures elsewhere I did not know about to mention, but what does the future hold? It may not always still be orange, but if we get our water back in the lake this winter it should be great.

Newcomers are constantly joining the fleet, some coming through the club's training programme run by On Board which is providing a fine service for the club.

The short course racing on a Saturday provides a great way to start racing, though no-one should feel intimidated by Sunday racing (most of the Solo fleet are polite and the Lasers are a joy to start with on Sundays, even if the sentiment is not mutual!)

Come on in: the water is lovely even if the bank right now is like the 'slough of despond' in Pilgrim's Progress and the bottom of the lake a bit close, too close at places! Please let it rain.

– Colin Newman (delegated as 'scribe' by the fleet captain, Stuart McBeath: may be a one-off choice!)

Youth and Junior Fleet

MAKING A SPLASH ON THE NATIONAL SCENE

DWSC is proving itself to be an excellent training ground for youngsters coming into the sport and then going on to achieve success at regional and national levels. Here are some of the achievements of our young sailors over the past year:

Tim Walton has recently joined the 49er Skandia GBR Olympic training squad, having sailed the 29er here for many years and taking first place in the 2011 29er Draycote Grand Prix last May. Earlier in November Tim was named Warwickshire under 18 Sportsman of the Year.

Rebecca Lewis became Ladies World Champion in August 2011 sailing the RS Tera Pro. She is in a Tera Squad but also finds time to sail her RS Feva in the East Coast Squad.

Serena de Nahlik and **Callum McCullough** have recently been selected to join the British Keelboat Academy. Serena sailed a Cadet, 420 and Fireball before going to University and qualifying for the GBR keelboat squad. Callum sails a Laser and sometimes crews a 49er when he's here. **Neil Payne** is also a member of the British Keelboat Academy and has taken part in the famous Fastnet race and won a short offshore series overall from 90+

boats. This has all led to him working on the refit of the Volvo Ocean Race boat 'Team Sanya'. Neil enjoyed Fireball and 29er sailing at Draycote before going to University.

Ian Payne, Rob Loveridge, Emma Loveridge and Joan Furness are all members of the 29er National Youth Squad. Ian recently won the 29er Inland Championships at Grafham, the 29er End of Season Championships at Northampton and was 4th in the Italian Euro Cup. He also sailed for GBR at the Eurosaf event in August.

Lee Mars, an RSX windsurfer is an Olympic hopeful for 2016. He finished 2nd in the UK this year and is training to join the Olympic Development Squad (see p10 web version).

Immi Slinn, Ruby Griffin, Ellie Walton and Abi Riley are all members of the RYA North Zone Squad sailing RS Fevas.

Dominic and Jonathan Hall are sailing the RS Feva in the RYA South Zone Squad.

Daniel and Jack Lewis did brilliantly in the RS Tera Sport World Championships in August, coming 11th and 22nd respectively. They are now sailing in an RS Tera Squad.



Photo: Mike Shaw/fotoboot

RS Feva Inland Championships held at Draycote in June.



Youth and Junior Championships in September: The Gladys Church Memorial Shield for under-12 year-olds, first place went to Daniel Lewis, followed by brother Jack with Harry Jones in 3rd, all sailing RS Teras.



Rebecca Lewis became RS Tera Pro 2011 Ladies World Champion in Denmark.



The Junior Monteyne Shield for 12-14 year olds was won by Feva pairing Benedict Aveyard & Jonny Hissen, 2nd was Elliott Marshall (Tera) and 3rd Joshua Merritt (Pico)

Solo Fleet

LIFE IN THE SO-SLO LANE

While the excitement of speed captivates those who are limited to reaching back and forth or doing windward leeward courses, there is a group that take their sailing a bit slower and manage to cope with beats, reaches and runs. This approach provides them with close, tactical racing in a reasonable sized fleet – and a lot of fun.

In this time we have welcomed Jason Hughes to the fleet from his tippy (and faster) RS300.

Jason is putting in some good results, but so has one of our other recruits this year – Tim Davison. Tim managed to claim second place in two of the summer series, despite spending much of the time on his yacht in the Med.

While Tim was away for the Fleet Championships, held over 2 weekends, the other top sailors in the fleet were present and competing hard. Nigel Davies and Richard Pye had a slight edge (if you'll excuse the pun) over Jon Clarke, and took the championships down to the final sixth race. In the end Nigel claimed his first Fleet



Photo: Sue McCrea

Championships and got his own back on Richard who kept ahead of Nigel throughout this year's Wednesday evening series.

Sadly Richard Pre couldn't make the national End of Season Championships held at Draycote in October, but Tim was back for it (along with 56 others). Tim finished 7th overall and first Grand Master (over 60) – just as he did at the Start of Season Championships in April. Jon Clarke was 10th and Nigel Davies 13th.

On the circuit, Jon Clarke won the Eastern Traveller's Trophy and was third in the Midlands one. Andrew Smith came second in the national Grand Masters Traveller's Trophy – a great result for Andrew!

But the Solo fleet is not just about the faster So-Slo sailors. Good turnouts and competition throughout the fleet is seen most Sundays and every Wednesday throughout the year. If you want to have a trial sail in a Solo, please contact me.

– **Jeremy Atkins** Fleet Captain

A TALE OF TWO DINNERS

For me, sailing is about two things: competition and friendship.

Competition is important. When I decided to start sailing again after a 14 year absence of bringing up kids, I came to Draycote and chose the fleet which had the largest number of boats racing – the Solo.

But competition is transitory. I should know: I ran the Laser 2 Class in the UK for its first 10 years. We built it up to be the largest 2-man trapeze dinghy in terms of nationals attendance (yes, Mike, even ahead of the Fireball for a short period). But now the class is non-existent.

Friendship, however, can last forever. I am still in touch with a variety of nationalities whom I met at World Championships in the 1980s and 90s.

So, when two members of a very small yacht club I am secretary of invited me to their 90th birthday parties, there was only one answer I could give. There was, however, one

header in the breeze – the parties were two days apart and on different sides of the Atlantic!

The first was for someone you have probably never heard of, but Harry Anderson is almost "god" as far as sailing in the US is concerned. Among other things, he is a past Commodore of the New York Yacht Club and Chairman of their America's Cup selection committee for much of the 70s and early 80s – he sensibly handed over this baton before Australia won the Cup in 1983, and so can claim to have never lost it in his time as a selector.

Harry's party was at the NYYC's summer clubhouse in Newport, Rhode Island – the spiritual home of the America's Cup. As one whose early memories of sailing in the news were of the Americas Cup in Newport, it was a dream come true to visit its hallowed turf.

The trip was made even more special with a reminder of the Cup from days long past as I got on the

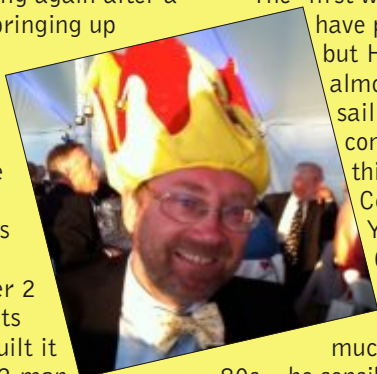
water to watch two of the enormous J Class yachts match racing in the bay. Many of the great and good of America's yachting were at the party, including winning America's Cup sailors and Olympic medallists. To get a special mention in Harry's speech when in such company was a true honour.

Then a quick flight back to the UK to attend Prince Philip's 90th birthday celebrations, with the maritime organisations he is involved in, in the presence of the Queen and Princess Anne.

It was to have started off with the Beating of the Retreat by the Royal Marines at the Tower of London, but organising it on the first day of Wimbledon was probably not the smartest move since no "roof" had been installed at the Tower. Just half an hour before it was due to start, the heavens opened, so we were treated to a tour of the covered parts of the Tower instead.

Then onto Trinity House for an excellent dinner, with 100 present. A very memorable occasion and a fitting end to four days of jet setting!

– **Jeremy Atkins**



Windsurf Fleet

FROM BEGINNER TO LIVING THE FAST LIFE

Lee Mars, from Coventry, is only 18 but has already achieved a tremendous amount in the world of windsurfing. Here he talks about how he has come to be a contender for the Olympic Development Squad.

I used to watch my dad windsurf but didn't start until I was 14 when I got my first rig and spent the whole of one Easter on the water at Croft Farm. I joined Croft Farm Team 15 and really enjoyed the competition and the challenge of sailing in different conditions.

After Team 15, went on to the Techno class and this is where my skills really developed. Competing abroad for the first time in the European Championships and in Weymouth for the World Championships.

I competed in the UKWA Sea and Inland series and every weekend I was either racing or training and I loved it!

I joined Draycote in 2009 to use as a training base especially over the winter months when squad training finished. The more time I spent on the water the better regardless of how cold the water was. I would have sailed on Christmas Day if my mum had let me!

I was lucky enough to be selected for the RS:X Transition Squad and learned more about tactics, reading the wind and all the technical stuff you don't normally bother with when out free sailing. My dad asks me for my advice now!

The Olympic Class RS:X 8.5m kit is completely different to the lighter Techno and required new skills but I loved it. I was able to hold down the kit in big winds and this is where I found I excelled. I've been out in some challenging conditions but always



Photo: Alliefat

managed to finish and get back with kit in tact

After Transition, I was selected to train with the Volvo National Youth Squad. I competed in Poland, Bulgaria and France in the year I was with the Squad and finished 2nd overall in the RS:X UKWA Sea Series.

In May 2011 I won the RSX North Sea cup with competitors from France, the UK, Netherlands and Belgium. I was also Class Winner of UK RSX fleet at Minnis bay & Bridlington

What next? I have now moved to the RS:X 9.5 fleet. I raced in France in 2011 on 9.5 for the first time against seniors and learned so much from the experience. It's a tougher field but I'm up for the challenge.

Because of my age, I finished my term in the Youth Squad in October. My next ambition is to be invited to train with the Olympic Development Squad. To do this I still compete and attend RYA Open Training events as an individual. I train at Draycote whenever I can to practise my skills.

The aim is to continue to compete in 2012, achieve the results I need and be invited to move to the ODS.

I love windsurfing! Freestyle to racing, it doesn't matter as long as I'm on the water. If there's a good wind blowing it's even better. There's no such thing as not enough or too much wind – just the wrong kit. I've raced in lots of fantastic places and met some great people. It's only been 4 years but man, they've been great!



Photo: Alliefat

BRANFIBRE Glass Fibre Repairs Tel: 01295 711200

Collection and delivery from Draycote Water when your dinghy or board is in need of repair.

Simply forward photograph of damage via the internet and await instant quote.

Alternatively, telephone direct or see Max at Onboard

Les Bran of Branfibre has been in the Glass Fibre Repair Industry for over 17 years, 10 of which were spent running the Laser Centre Bodyshop

In 2008 Branfibre were pleased to be joint sponsors of the Inter-Fleet Championships at Draycote Water

CONTACT:

Branfibre
Jeffs Farm
Thorpe Road
Chacombe

Nr. Banbury OX17 2EW

Tel: 01295 711200

(20 minutes from Draycote)

www.branfibre.co.uk
Leading The Way In Glass Fibre Repairs