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Draycote Unshackled

www.draycotewater.co.uk

Spring 2018

CLUB TO CELEBRATE 50 YEARS OF SAILING

Next year, 2019, the Club celebrates its 50th anniversary and we are already planning events and activities to make the year go with a bang. We are also in the process of inviting one or two luminaries in the sailing world to share in our celebrations.

Dates and activities planned so far include:

April (date to be set): a gala dinner in the clubhouse with a guest speaker. We will also invite founder members and former commodores.

May: The annual Open Day will be branded with the 50th anniversary logo and we will make sure everyone knows we have been here for a long time and plan to continue in the same vein.

Saturday 22 June: a one-day Midlands Best of the Best Regatta. Reviving the Nathan Silver Salvors Race (see box), we will invite top sailors from clubs around the region to contest to be the best. This will be followed by an evening event with barbecue, and other entertainments. A

The Club has come a long way since a group of people led by philanthropist Sir Charles Barratt had the vision of a sailing club and called a meeting of interested local people in Rugby's Benn Hall. There was not much water in the reservoir at that stage but such was the enthusiasm that the founder members approached the Rugby Water Board and negotiated a lease in 1969.

For a long time there was no clubhouse or changing facilities, while the first members could enjoy an annual membership fee of as little as £5. There is more about the Club's [early history](#) on our website.

Printed copies available
from the Clubhouse and Shop



An early photo of the reservoir showing the now familiar island at S

day not to be missed.

Sunday 15 September: We will have a special 50th anniversary Interfleets Championships for a special celebration, again with barbecue and entertainments.

Other things are in the pipeline which we will let you know about as we get confirmed details.

None (or very little) of this will happen, however, without input from the members.

If you have skills, experience or plain old enthusiasm for putting

on events, party planning, or have contacts, or would like to get involved, we would like to hear from you. Please talk to Dave in the first instance.



The first Club Newsletter and, right, the first time it was called Unshackled, in 2003

The Nathan Silver Salvors, sponsored by Nathan the Jewellers of Birmingham, brought together the two best crews from each class of boat and Draycote also entered their two best crews to compete for the trophy. The winning boat received a Rolex Oyster watch. The event was popular up to the 1990s, with other sponsors, the last being Jaguar, often attracting 200 boats, among them 18-Foot Skiffs and Flying Dutchmen. Perhaps we can revive this tradition?



Saturday 8th March 1980

Commodore's Message



The Committee

At the AGM in November we were delighted to welcome Louise Craig and Andy Haslam to the Committee. With the

addition of Chris Silver and Neil Murray during the previous year the committee is now up to a reasonable strength and we have a Rear Commodore House for the first time in many years (thank you Chris!).

We were, of course, sad to lose Gill Pearson from the Committee at the AGM, but she has made a massive contribution over 9 years on the Committee and deserves a well-earned rest. Gill was presented with the Commodore's Cup for her outstanding contribution.

Chris Silver is taking the lead on GDPR to ensure we are ready for its implementation in May and the Committee has approved the objectives and targets for the Development Plan.

Finances

While we had to report a disappointing £7k loss for 2016/17, this was something we had predicted at the previous AGM and was not a major concern. We are anticipating a surplus in the current financial year. Training income is substantially up on last year as is commercial room hire.

One of the advantages of having a strong Committee, with a stable set of flag officers, has been that we have been able to review our key suppliers and move away from them where we felt we could get a better deal elsewhere. This has meant that we have ended some relationships which have gone back over 20 years, but we are convinced the new incumbents will meet our needs better. Most notably we have appointed:

- A new accountant, Bernard Rogers
- A new insurance broker, Gallagher
- A new bank.

We are working with the new accountant on the new trading subsidiary and are anticipating that this will be operational for the start of the new financial year (1st April).

Premises & Equipment

While we have held back from major expenditure on the site this year because of last year's loss and waiting

for our lease extension to be finalised, we have made significant, but low-cost, improvements including the lounge dividers, repaired lounge floor and renovated downstairs training room. We are working on a replacement plan for our training / hire boats and have trialled a number of options to replace the Picos.

Staff

Our Club Administrator, Andrea Halliman, resigned after 2 years to relocate to Cornwall with her family. We are delighted that Rebecca Owen has taken up this role and is already making a fantastic contribution to the Club. Her hours are the same as Andrea's: 9.30am-2.30pm, Mondays to Fridays.

We are still short of a second bosun and are looking to recruit someone for this role.

Some Gripes

The Club's staff and Committee work hard to ensure that your time at the Club is fun and safe. But none of us want to be car parking marshals or spend our time enforcing the rules and yet a minority of our members seem bent on requiring us to do so. So some reminders for the inconsiderate few:



Rogues gallery: Committee, Staff and Fleet Captain photos outside the office

Signing On

You all know that you need to sign on to go on the water and also to race. This is a requirement of our lease and it is also vital for our CASC (Community Amateur Sports Club) status (which brings us significant financial benefits). However, it is important that you can be identified from the signing on form – by our new Club Administrator. Unfortunately, while you may know who you are, Rebecca also needs to know who you are. Just writing down your first name, nickname or even "Crew" (all of which have been seen recently) gets us nowhere. So, full names please!

Safety

We have had a spate of safety issues recently that I am afraid need to be mentioned here to remind members to be aware of their responsibility to safety on the site and their fellow members:

- One way system: Some members have chosen to ignore the one way system through the dinghy park and take a short-cut down the "up only" exit to the dinghy park. This is not acceptable.
- Parking on slipways: Some members have chosen to park on slipways – this is against our lease and the Club regulations for the obvious danger of contaminating the drinking water. The only parking allowed in the dinghy park is in the small area marked out for parking on the up exit road. This is available on a first-come first-served basis. If it is full, you have to go to a recognised car park.
- Bicycling fast through the site: Many people (not all members) were hurtling through the site on bicycles, not slowing down as they entered the dinghy park from the west. We have closed the gap and introduced a chicane to stop this happening. Please be sensible about your speed on a bicycle.

In Summary

Your Club is having a good year and we are confident we can build on this with the Development Plan to ensure that the Club is on a more secure financial footing and we can celebrate the Club's 50th anniversary with confidence that we will be around for many years to come.

Thank you for your continued membership and support of the Club.
– Jeremy Atkins Commodore

The room divider has created a separate training space without disturbing members using the bar

Photos this page: Malcolm Lewin



Friday Evening Social Sailing & Barbecue

Youth & Junior Race Training
Learn tricks and tactics

New this year!
Owen's Friday Fun Club
for intermediate sailors

Club boats for hire
at discounted rates

Barbecue & Bar

CLUB OPEN DAY

Saturday 12th May

The Open Day is the one day in the year we throw open our doors to the general public. The last few Open Days have been very successful in attracting new members and people signing up for courses.

However, the success of the day depends entirely on the many willing volunteers who help out in all areas, from welcoming and greeting to helping visitors get kitted out and taking them on boat rides. We will be inviting members nearer the time to sign up, either for half or a whole day, so please respond when you see these emails. (There is a barbecue for all helpers at the end!)



YOUR COMMITTEE

Commodore
Jeremy Atkins
Vice Commodore
Ian Macwhinnie
Rear Commodore Sail
Will Whittaker
Rear Commodore House
Christine Silver
Treasurer
Rodger Webb
President
Harry Sayers
Committee Members
Louise Craig
Andy Haslam
Neil Murray

Edited and Produced by
Ian Macwhinnie/Scriptographix

HIRE OUT ONE OF THE CLUB'S 35 BOATS FOR TESTING OUT OR JOINING IN CLUB RACING

Laser, Hartley 12,
Flying Fifteen*, Fireball*, Solo,
Dart 16, (Laser) 2000, Pico

£15 single-hander,
£20/25 double-hander per half-day
Unlimited Use: £225 (single-hander)
£300/375 (double-hander) per annum

Contact Dave in the shop or
call on 01788 814418
* Contact Fleet Captain
(different charges may apply)

Italian Meseta Coffee IN THE BAR

Americano
Latte
Cappuccino
Espresso
De-caffeinated
Macchiato
Hot Chocolate

Don't want to drink coffee or alcohol in the bar? Tea and a range of soft drinks are also served

 Keep in touch with what's going on at the Club by joining the [Draycote Water members Facebook page](#)

Laser Fleet

LEARNING TO LOVE LIFE IN A LASER

I have very fond memories of my childhood, writes **Steve Jeffs**, where the skies were blue, the days never-ending and messing about in Gaffer, my Mirror Dinghy, on Bosworth Water Park, dodging pedalos and snagging fishing lines.

On my bedroom wall among the posters of the Tennis Player, a Lamborghini Testarossa and Peter Fonda on his easy rider was a tiny cut-out photo of Bruce Kirby's latest and sleekest sailing boat: the Laser.

I'd seen these Laser things at Bosworth, knew they were the fastest sleekest boats out there and one day I would be good enough to sail one, I'd also marry the tennis player, ride the great Southwest with Peter Fonda and race across the US with Burt Reynolds!

However, as I grew my priorities changed; Education, Family and Work took over and my boyhood dreams were updated by the reality of life.

Decades later, I found myself to be in the fortunate position of working for a company which believes that a "Happy Employee is a Productive Employee" and supports us in "trying an activity". I looked down the list: there Sailing at Draycote Water was an option, so I signed up for a training course.

As the day of my course approached I was nervously excited as I think we develop a sense of self-preservation and an understanding that we're not quite as agile as we used to be.

I still remember arriving at the Club and seeing, in amongst the row upon row of thoroughbred race sailing exotica, that the boat of my childhood dreams was still there, and seemed to be quite popular!

The course (RYA Level 1 & 2) took me through all the basics of launching, sailing in a straight line, tacking, gybing and returning to shore ... "in a controlled manner". The training team were great and very patiently taught me all I needed to know so I could finally achieve one of my boyhood dreams.

Whether it's things have changed so dramatically, or time has clouded my memory, but things are now very different from my memories of those sun-scorched days messing around in Gaffer.

My first close impression of the Laser was the simplicity of the rig, a stick to steer and a rope to make it go

or slow. What could be easier? Oh, how wrong I was!

It was now it started to really dawn on me the differences between my days in Gaffer and sailing the boat of my dreams at Draycote:

- I used to launch/recover from a pontoon which is very easy as you can get everything prepared and then sit in and cast off (well that's my recall anyway). At Draycote we launch and land from the shore which does take some practice when you're in a single-hander like the Laser. I developed a technique of wading out, then flopping on board like a landed fish which feels a bit undignified by comparison.

- While it is true there is one bit of rope to make the boat go/stop there's yards and yards of it, which I found very distracting as it always seems to get tangled around my feet!

- Unlike in Gaffer this rope is in the middle of the boat and not at the back!

- What looks like a nice smooth expanse of deck to sit on has been ruined by some annoying cleats which are exactly where I wanted to sit!

My boyhood dreams were slowly being eroded as I understood the practicalities of sailing a Laser but through loads and loads of practice I evolved my technique to try to get around these issues:

- In an attempt to improve comfort, visibility and to keep the yards of rope on the opposite side to me I developed the bad habit of sailing on the heel.

- My tacking technique was to leave the main cleated until I had gone through the turn. Mixed success there.

The training team were helpful and



Steve Jeffs

always there to offer tips, tricks and encouragement whilst the safety team were always on hand to pick me up out of the water and put me back in the boat in a cheery and caring manner. There's a great support package for new sailors like me at Draycote and one which I have definitely made full use of.

The Sunday Get Racing series for Novice & Juniors provided a really gentle way to ease me into club racing with Jeremy Atkins or Tim and Elizabeth Fillmore giving an explanation of the rules, notification of the course while on land and then helping us all get around the course. My woeful results confirmed I was sailing wrongly!

Friday evenings through the Summer, Ian Macwhinnie ran some adult social sailing sessions where a group of others like me all met at the Club and spent many happy hours on the water, learning together under his watchful eye. This was great as like all



Sunny sailing days ahead

Photo: Malcolm Lewin

support groups it made me realise "I wasn't alone in my pain" and I started to improve.

Ian also tipped me off to Steve Cockerill's training DVDs, from which I grasped the concept of steering the boat by the dent it makes in the water, and even an off-wind tactic called "the great escape" for which Mr Cockerill credits Steve Irish, whom I'd heard of as a fellow Draycote Laser sailor (for that is what I had become).

I also heard that Andy Whitehead, who sails a Laser quite well, went out on Saturday afternoons to practise and was happy for other Laser sailors to join him; his guidance, tips and tricks were fantastic.

Things then started to look up, the more I practised the more confident I became and the less often I went swimming. As my confidence grew I started talking to more members of the Laser fleet and found they were only too willing to offer words of support and share tips/tricks/stories!

Now I went for Sunday racing proper, where the most stressful task was getting the course from the committee boat from within a swarm of competitor boats. My fear of collision led me to improvising fenders from pipe insulation!

Clearly a good start to the race is all important, similar to speedway in that respect. Apologies to everyone I fouled in my effort to get to the gate.

My objective was incremental gain, stay in touch with the pack to 1st

mark, 2nd mark, 1st lap, only get passed by two Solos, one Solo, and so on looking for improvement race by race. Even when you are not competitive within the fleet you can always have a race against someone, and chat to them at the same time.

Wednesday evenings presented the opportunity to increase race time. On summer evenings it can be a fantastic experience. I was delighted to receive the improver's trophy at the end of 2017 evening series.

I really enjoy attempting the racing tactics: spotting gusts, tacking on headers and all that. Practising is fine but I think it takes the stress of a race to press the learning home.

The boat is even more uncomfortable because now I seem to be more often sitting on that deck cleat, and I still get the sheet hooked on the rear quarter.

Also, I still enjoy the physical challenge. Spring chicken I ain't, and my weight is borderline for full rig, so I hope to overcome these factors, or even turn them to my advantage.

Is this the Future for Windsurfing?



On cloud nine: Neil McLeod leads the way

I am really pleased to say that finally I have achieved one of my boyhood dreams; it may not be the Lamborghini, Easy Rider or the Tennis Player but, yes, I sail a piece of sailing exotica: The Laser.

– To find out more about sailing a Laser, contact [Marcellus Pryor rempryor@hotmail.com](mailto:rempryor@hotmail.com)



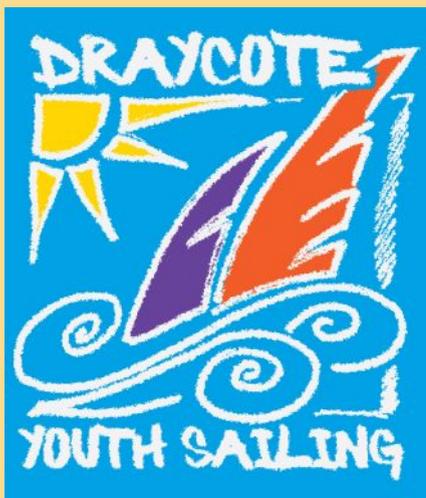
The Club plays host to a variety of visiting fleets and associations through the year, especially during the winter left, 29er association training; below left, the Warwick Turtle; below, Feva training; above, Steve Irish is running Optimist training on a regular basis.



Photos: Malcolm Lewin

Youth & Junior Fleet

BUSY YEAR AHEAD FOR YOUNG SAILORS



This past year has been a busy one for Youth & Junior sailors at DWSC. Winter training started on Saturday mornings back in January and, as the year warmed up and the days lengthened, we started our short course racing sessions on Friday evenings in April, with a BBQ after sailing every week. Saturday Youth Club was, as ever, a popular and well attended event.

This year our race training has started up again already, with some new faces coming along for the first time, which is great! Our Friday night sessions, starting again on 13th April, will be extended to offer sailing for

put their skills into practice in a monthly race series. This proved very successful. On more than one occasion, I think it was the biggest fleet start on a Sunday! This will run again in 2018, commencing on April 1st Easter Sunday, an ideal way to burn off the calories from all those Easter Eggs!

In addition to the weekly sailing sessions, we had a number of special events throughout the year. The highlight of the season was our team entry to a 24-hour race at Lakeside SC in Peterborough. Held in aid of the RNLI, teams raced for 24 hours non-stop, with sailors swapping over regularly. We came second overall and raised over £250 for the RNLI. We will be returning again this year, on the weekend of 14 & 15 July.

Everyone on the team really enjoyed themselves, both sailors and shore support crew so, if you did not come last year, come along this time!

Other events, which will be repeated this year, included the Soul Sailor Endurance Race, followed by a camp out and two opportunities to sail in our club SB20s, the big keel boats. One of these sessions also included camping. As the autumn set in, we held our Youth & Junior Championships. We had a brilliant turnout for this, with 27 boats competing across the various age and ability groups, and some good, close racing.

Beyond the confines of our lake, we were represented both nationally and globally by some of our members, with Draycote sailors travelling as far as Australia to compete, so for those just starting out in their sailing careers keep practising and who knows where it will take you!

You should, by now, have received a calendar of this year's events by email. We will send further details of each event in advance of the day. Please



There's more than one way to sail a boat!

Saturday Morning Youth Club

From April to October we run a Youth Club on Saturday morning. This is not a formal training scheme, but offers supervised sailing, coaching and fun on the water for young beginner and intermediate level sailors.

For those who have recently completed a course over the summer, this offers an ideal chance to get out on the water and gain valuable experience along with some additional coaching.

Activities include practising sailing skills; for some reason, everyone seems particularly keen on practising capsizing, and going on cruises around the lake. Usually we will stop off for a few Jelly Babies along the way.

those who do not feel quite ready to race yet, so come and join the fun, and bring sausages! Saturday Club starts on the following day, 14th April.

Throughout the year, from April to November, we extended the previous Get Racing initiative from a monthly event to a start every Sunday morning. Coaching was available on the first Sunday of each month, then for the remaining weeks, sailors were able to



Meeting up for Jelly Babies is an important part of the morning

Sailjuice Winter Series 2017/18

ELLIE AND RICHARD BATTLE FOR GLORY

On a normal Sunday at the Club, this duo are regularly seen racing a Fireball together, but for the Sailjuice series Ellie Craig raced her Laser Radial and Richard Botting his Blaze.

The series consists of races at the top seven inland racing venues in the country, starting with our own Draycote Dash, with over 100 different classes of boats taking part.

During the series our dynamic and intrepid duo have:

- driven nearly 2,250 miles
- replaced 1 kicker block
- broken a Laser launching trolley
- needed a new alternator on the car
- had trailer and car towed home on a rescue truck
- had sore knees after forgetting knee pads
- drunk 5 hot chocolates with Brandy and lost count of the cups of tea
- acquired an inch of ice on the deck of the boats whilst racing, and
- had frozen ropes and control lines.

Most of all, however, they have had a great and sometimes frustrating time racing and catching up with friends around the country!

This winter the series has been mostly raced in light winds of average 10 knots, the exception being the Tiger Trophy where the wind built to 25 knots gusting over 30 on the second day.

Big mixed fleet racing can be extremely frustrating when you have your wind taken by a National 18 and the trick to success is definitely to get good starts and get as much clear air as possible and not to give up when you are overtaken by the 49ers, for example.

Our two showed consistency throughout the series despite the



Photo: Tim Olin



Photo: Tim Olin

extreme weather that they had to endure at the Datchet Flyer and the Brass Monkey at Yorkshire Dales.

So results for their commitment:

- Ellie 11th and Richard 26th overall out of 360 boats
- Ellie 2nd Gul Top Lady; 4th in the Dynamic Rankings; 1st Laser Radial

- Richard 1st Allen Performance Challenge.

As a result of their efforts, Draycote finished 5th out of 55 clubs represented.

Congratulations to you both for your superb results!!

Louise Craig (Ellie's Mum)

also keep an eye on the Club website and do join our [Facebook group](#), called "Draycote Water S.C. youth & junior fleet" for regular news updates. This is a closed group, so you will need to ask to join, but we hope to make this one of our main channels for regular communication. You can find a copy of [our calendar](#) on the Facebook page for download.

Finally, we will soon have hoodies and tee-shirts available with our new logo on; keep an eye out in the shop for further information! Looking forward to seeing you all on the water this year!

– Jon Hughes Y&J Fleet Captain



Medal winners for the year's Youth & Junior Events

Women on Water

WORKING TO GET WOMEN ON THE WATER

Why do we need a special group for women? No-one would argue that sailing is still very much a male-dominated sport and that opportunities for getting the other half of our population interested may well be a tall order that is just, well, just too tall!

At the highest level, the International Olympic Committee no longer wants to see events with more men than women and is requiring gender-balanced quotas which are currently affected by a lack of Olympic-calibre female sailors.

However, most things in life begin from the bottom up – and starting at community and junior level is the best way of getting more women into sailing and getting more juniors to stay with it by providing specific opportunities to young women as they progress in their chosen sport and women only facilities to build up skills and confidence.

The RYA and other bodies are doing much more now to encourage role modelling with young female athletes in order to encourage girls to stay with it. The playing field for women is still not a level one and, as shown in this [Women in Sport Foundation](#) article, lack of accessibility, transportation issues and (as children get older) club activities and coaching is much more heavily focused on boys than girls.

We have a golden opportunity in our club to encourage more women into sailing and getting them to stick with it by providing a safe and encouraging place to learn, develop skills and be part of a sport that gets you outside in the fresh air as well as developing your technical skills and confidence on the water. Having a group of like-minded, keen and friendly people who know what it's like to be starting something new, to feel a bit unsure, to not want to look daft ... has worked for us here at Draycote.

That said, it should be irrelevant whether we are male or female but opportunities should be provided for all to take part and enjoy the sport. Having a female-only session could be viewed as a bit exclusive (and to be fair I have received light-hearted comments to that effect), but ... and there is a but ... in order for us to get to the point where we feel confident and competent then we just need a bit of a head start and this is where



Judith, Caroline and Hannah enjoy their all-female OD duty

Women on Water (WoW) comes in.

WoW is now about to enter its third season and hopefully attract even more women to get out and sail. As a women-only sailing group Women on Water@Draycote, meets every

Monday throughout the summer season from 5.30pm. Just turn up (no need to book) and sail for fun and confidence building.

There is a sub payable on the night that covers the boat/equipment hire and contribution towards safety cover and, of course, the all-important cake! Cost for this year is £8 (including boat and equipment hire) or £4 if you have your own boat. This goes towards covering on-water safety and refreshments.

Last year more than 20 women attended over the summer period, and we also ran an RYA level 1 course (funded by the RYA) and organised a women-only OD team. We had a much increased press coverage appearing in local and national press, Y&Y, and even had a slot on [Midlands TV](#).

As a focus for this year will be looking at attracting some funding to improve the technical skills within the group and possibly buy our own lightweight boat.

– Caroline Noel 07813 765864
caroline.noel@wecandobusiness.co.uk



Pete Slater tries to get two youngsters interested in joining the fleet



The Flying Fifteen is the Club's only keelboat class (this theoretically means it won't capsizel!) and is keenly raced on Sundays. The fleet also has its own fleet boat which can be used by anyone interested in exploring the potential of the class. Contact Fleet Captain Pete Slater peter.slater@uk.zurich.com.

Fireball Fleet

REASONS TO BE CHEERFUL IN A FIREBALL



The Fireball fleet has a ball, writes Mike Deane, and maybe some of you are wondering why Fireball sailors seem to enjoy themselves so much. To help that understanding we bring to you a new analysis:

SWOT Analysis of the Fireball Fleet

Strengths:

- Great boats, very well built for minimal maintenance
- Good turnouts all year round
- Very helpful top guys – lots of advice on offer
- Gold and Silver fleet racing
- Regular summer social evenings
- Swap-Sundays to grow our skills
- No need to be particularly fit, or hurt your legs hiking
- Forecasts of race weather each week from Mike's Bushes
- The most interesting post race analyses and photos on our Facebook page

Weaknesses:

- Fleet boat was in need of much work – just solved by buying a new one!!

Opportunities:

- Fireballing Dinghy instructor, Helen, encouraging new joiners

Threats:

- Martyn Lewis will turn up occasionally and make you look silly.

2017 was a good year for us with a busy calendar of events. Pete & Ellie won the Firebowl event, and Mike & Keri picked up the Marriott Bucket by a single point. Peter & Paul hoovered up most of the Sunday series Gold fleet prizes, with Silver fleet trophies going to Bob & Paul and Ellie & Richard.

The fleet championships was only settled when Martyn's rudder caused a short but critical delay to his progress in the last race of the series, and even then went to countback.

We also hosted a very successful Inland Championships in fabulous conditions, and it was so good that we get to do it again. New converts to the fleet in 2017, fresh from RYA L2 courses, included Nathalie, Mark, Ian, Dominic and Keri, and we were pleased to welcome back Thomas after a mere 15-year absence.

On to 2018 then, and as previously noted we didn't stop just because it got



John Tenney concentrates on the goal



Winter weather was not enough to stop close racing in the fleet

a bit cold in Jan and Feb. Fourteen boats are contesting the winter series at present, and this figure can only improve as the weather warms up. Mo & Holly are back and appear to have lost none of their legendary light-air speed, and doubtless Pete B will turn up in the spring again to show us how it's done.

This year we also have Swap-Sundays, where the best helms and crews are split up and put with lesser mortals for the first race of the day. The concept is to provide a bit of in-boat coaching to the latter and, who knows, maybe injure the former a bit to slow them down.

These events - one per month - will be advertised on the fleet Facebook page and should be good for a laugh if nothing else. This is a part of our inclusivity policy, along with the personal handicap race events in which we all start from the shore at

varying intervals, fastest teams going off last. And of course, the fleet now has a shiny white Winder to allow non-boat owners to sample the delights of the fleet.

This year's calendar is as follows:
25 March Fleet AGM and prizegiving
25 March to 21 October Early Bird and Winship Summer series every Sunday

13 May Firebowl personal handicap event

23 September Marriott Bucket personal handicap event

13/14 October Fireball Open meeting/ Inland championships

28 October Winter series starts

4/25 November Fleet championships.

If you want to join us or just have a go, get in touch. Contact Paul Anthony paul6anthony@gmail.com 07710981456 or come and chat to anyone in a Fireball any Sunday.

Photos this page: Malcolm Lewin

Menagerie Fleet

TO PROUDLY GO AS A MENAGERIE SAILOR

How does one become a Menagerie Fleet member, you may ask? If your sailing activities, either as a boat owner or crew, have not been covered elsewhere in Unshackled, then you can proudly consider yourself part of the Menagerie Fleet.

By all considerations, we certainly fulfil the definition of a motley crew, being "disparate, miscellaneous, diverse, assorted, sundry, varied, mixed, diversified and heterogeneous" (I'm not sure about the last one: in the current climate, that should probably be a fleet of its own!).

As photographer and erstwhile Fleet Captain Malcolm Lewin fondly claimed, we are the largest fleet in the Club. Simply in racing terms, with 45 boats competing in last summer's morning racing (15 of them double handers), that makes us the largest racing fleet (Lasers a mere 44). However, it may still surprise you to learn that there are still more Menagerie sailors not racing than there are racing.

While we are, of course, happy for you to keep sailing in your own disparate, miscellaneous and possibly even heterogeneous way, we are planning a new initiative which will, we hope, spark your interest.

Every Saturday afternoon, starting 14th April, we will run some very informal racing – no records kept, no pressure on the start line, simple windward/leeward course – for all comers to join in. And if the idea of "racing" puts you off right from the start, then look on it as "sailing in company" instead (which, to be honest, is what most of my racing



Photos: Malcolm Lewin

Things get a bit Farr-fetched for Dave Barker ...

tends to be anyway!).

Just meet up on the patio at 2.30pm rigged and ready and introduce yourself. After a couple of hours of sailing a number of short races (so we can all keep more or less together), we can repair to the bar for a pint or a cup of tea.

A next step on from these sessions could be to do the Windward/Leeward 3rd race on a Sunday afternoon. After a good first year in 2016, interest in this race fell off last year and there is the opportunity for the Menagerie Fleet to "colonise" it (in the nicest possible way) and make it our own. More suited naturally to boats with asymmetric spinnakers, it also makes for tactical racing for other classes and is the format used most often at open meetings, not to mention the America's Cup. Why not give it a try?

For reluctant or nervous racers, the

VERY INFORMAL
Menagerie Fleet Racing
Every Saturday Afternoon 2.30pm
Starting Saturday 14 April
Informal Starts, No Pressure,
Simple Courses
Bar Open Afterwards
Just Turn Up!!

coached Get Racing will continue on the first race of the first Sunday in the month with a coach boat, briefing and separate start. This will also continue every Sunday, but without the coach boat, as its own series, with a monthly prize.

We have a busy social calendar this year: Wednesday evening racing obviously, but you don't have to sail to come down to the club for a meal and a pint. There will be Women on Water on Monday evenings and barbecuing on a Friday evening. And of course, the water is open later during the week as the evenings lengthen (see the website for times), so why not come down for a relaxing sail then, when the water is not so busy.

As a last word, I'd like to thank Malcolm for continuing to keep the [Menagerie Facebook](#) page a lively, interesting and, at times, educational site to visit. It's worth joining the page or at least bookmarking it, as he not only shares his excellent photos but adds updates on recent and upcoming events at the Club.

– Ian Macwhinnie RS100 & RSVareo
draycotemenagerie@outlook.com

... especially when it's time to find out who's boss!



Solo Fleet

YOU'LL NEVER SAIL ALONE IN A SOLO

At the close of another busy and eventful year in the Solo Fleet, Jonathan Hughes finally managed to convince some other idiot (i.e. me) to take over the role of Fleet Captain, allowing him to concentrate on his sterling work with the Youth & Junior Fleet. The Solo Fleet has flourished under Jon's guidance, and we owe him a great debt of gratitude for all his efforts over the last four years. Thanks Jon!

Last season saw us kick off with Draycote hosting the Solo Association's Winter Championship in February, with 33 of the finest sailors from across the UK braving some seriously feisty conditions; not only excellent sailing, but some fine displays of swimming at the gybe mark, to boot. We were also proud to host the Midlands Region Open in April – a less tempestuous but thoroughly enjoyable day's racing.

The fleet's major club event of the summer was the Handicap Trophy in July, featuring an 'exciting' reaching start and an unlikely winner (me!). With John Siggers and Lance Evans taking 2nd and 3rd, this one-day series was a superb illustration of just what an incredible range of sailing ability the Solo fleet can accommodate!

The Fleet Championships followed over two weekends in October, with Mike Furner, Martin Scurrah and



Synchronised Solo sailing

Jon Hughes taking 1st, 2nd and 3rd in this four-race series.

Further afield, Draycote sailors Chris Brown, Ian Ingram and Nigel Davies took 1st, 2nd and 3rd in the Midland Series, with Chris a creditable 5th in the national Super Series as well as an impressive 5th at the Nation's Cup in Holland. Having this level of experience and talent in the fleet is both an inspiration and an invaluable resource for those of us with more modest levels of skill.

With year-round Sunday racing numbers regularly reaching the teens, and a healthy Wednesday evening turnout in the summer, the Solo fleet is a mainstay of Draycote's club racing scene. With such a diverse and numerous fleet there's always close racing to be had in this classic one-design.

Whether you're a seasoned sailor considering a change, or a newcomer fresh from your RYA2, feel free to contact me through the Club or drop me an

email directly if you fancy giving the Solo a go. Starting from as little as £2k for a viable club racer, there are options for all abilities, weights and levels of fitness, and members of the fleet will always rally-round to help get you started.

With boats you can hire and separate races for beginners at Draycote, there's never been a better time to try a Solo!

– Dan Fisher
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Sailing in company or close racing?



Photo: David Hope

Photo: Malcolm Lewin

YOUR SAILING CLUB – NOW & IN THE FUTURE

TEN YEAR DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Most of our members come to the sailing club and do their chosen activity and I suspect they are broadly happy. Yes, there may be some inevitable niggles, but, on the whole, I think most are content. Everything runs pretty well, the clubhouse is as solid as it's ever been, but better maintained and decorated. There is professional rescue cover every day and the racing runs well. It seems as if the Club runs itself and will continue this way forever.

The small percentage of members who attend the AGM or read the [slides presented at the AGM](#) on the website will know that the picture has not always been this rosy.

THE 6 CHALLENGES WE FACE

1. Our finances for the last 12 years have been unstable with more years making a loss than a surplus. I think we have turned the corner and, despite a small operating loss last year, we are on track to make a surplus again this year. But we need to put the Club on a more stable and secure financial footing.
2. Our membership dropped dramatically during the recession. While there has been some recovery, we are still a third behind where we were.
3. Our membership income only covers 83% of the cost of running the Club. We have to find the other 17%+ from elsewhere.
4. Until this year the number of committee members has declined each year. We need to make being on the committee less onerous to make the role more attractive.
5. Our training/hire boat fleet is well used, and we need to introduce a programme of regular replacement which will cost about £15k per year.
6. Our lease has less than 10 years to run and this prevents us applying for major grants.

THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Over the last 14 months, with the input from many members, the committee has been working on a Development Plan for the Club for the next 10+ years to address these challenges.

The outline and objectives were approved by the committee at their February meeting and we are now working on producing a final document, but I wanted to let all members know where we are going with this and what they can do to help.

What Are We Trying To Achieve?

Aim: Put the Club on a more secure financial footing & provide direction for the next 10-20 years.

Underpinning the Development Plan is the fundamental nature of the Club: *We are a members' sailing club*. This means that: *Everything we do should be for the benefit of our current and future members* (although not necessarily for them).

How Will We Achieve This?

1. Raising income through:
 - Increasing membership
 - Increasing commercial trading.
2. Enhancing the Club management to ensure the long-term viability of the Club through:
 - Ensuring the number of Committee Members remains around 8-10
 - Developing the right paid staff team
 - Improving the financial reporting, budgeting and forecasting

- Updating the Articles to reflect current company law & needs.
- 3. Addressing site & equipment issues through:
 - Securing a lease extension
 - Creating a training / hire boat replacement scheme
 - Keep working to improve and develop the site.

Raising Income

Membership: We are targeting an increase of a third over the next 10 years to get us to the level we were at before the start of the recession. This is an ambitious target and will be hard to achieve. We will need our members help to achieve this (see later).

Commercial Trading: We are targeting an increase of £40k in the next 5 years. This is necessary to enable us to deliver the training / hire boat replacement scheme and an additional member of staff to reduce the burden on committee members.

Commercial trading is not only income generating, it is also a conduit to membership. It splits down into 3 main areas:

- In-house RYA training: the largest element and a vital conduit for membership.
- Peak-time sailing activities, including open meetings and squad training: These can be disruptive to members and we work hard to minimise any disruption, including the self-imposed limit of 10 full weekend open meetings a year. This year we have turned away some major events which would have generated significant income because we had reached our 10-weekend limit.
- Non-peak-time activities, including corporate and private room hire, team building (using the SB20s) and parties: this is the biggest area for potentially increasing our income with minimal disruption to members. We are developing a separate identity (Draycote View) and [website](#) to offer a distinct offering to the business world.

HOW CAN YOU, AS A MEMBER, HELP?

1. Promotion of Sailing and Membership

Tell your friends, family and colleagues how wonderful sailing and the Club are. Invite them to the Open Day (Saturday 12th May) or invite them anytime as your guest so that they can experience sailing / get a feel for the Club.

The guest rules are:

- Each member (aged 18+) can invite up to 2 guests a day.
- An individual can only be a guest up to a maximum of 4 times a year.
- Guests cannot bring their own boats – they have to use yours or one you hire from the Club.
- You must sign guests in (vital for insurance), be present while they are at the Club and take responsibility for them obeying the Club's rules & regulations.

Please invite guests!

2. Promotion of Our Corporate Offer

Our corporate offer includes:

- Hiring out the Clubhouse for meetings during the week (the room with the nicest view in Warwickshire, with easy access from the motorway network and free parking).
- Running corporate team-building sessions using the Club's SB20 keelboats.

Full details will shortly be available on www.draycoteview.co.uk. Please tell your own organisations and your friends about these.

Jeremy Atkins Commodore