

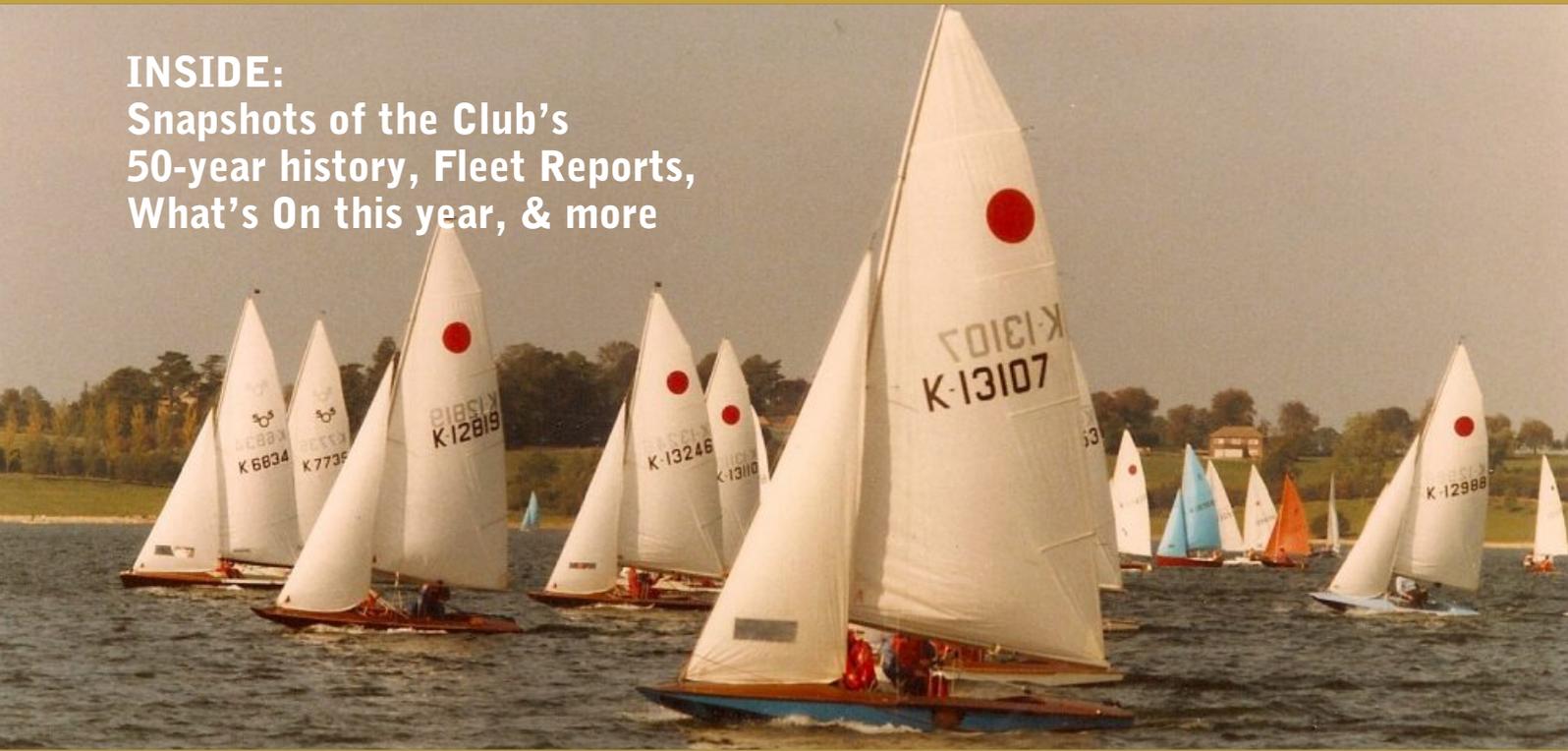


# Draycote Unshackled

[www.draycotewater.co.uk](http://www.draycotewater.co.uk)

Spring 2019

**INSIDE:**  
Snapshots of the Club's  
50-year history, Fleet Reports,  
What's On this year, & more



# Commodore's Column



**What a special year – the Club's 50th anniversary! I hope you will all enjoy participating in the special events we have lined up.**

It is wonderful that we have so many founder members of the Club still involved, quite a few of them still sailing at the Club! We are looking forward to welcoming more of them back for our 50th birthday party on 6th April. Compared to them, and many other members, I am a comparative newbie – I have only been a member of the Club since 2001 – just a third of the Club's life.

But I have known the Club as a visitor for nearly 20 years before that. I first sailed at Draycote in September 1983 and still have the Inland Championship trophy we won that weekend.

I have just found the results of this event and am delighted to read that a certain Steve Irish finished in 3rd and an Andrew Blee finished 5th! Both members of the Club today.

We were regular visitors during the 1980s and always received a warm welcome from the Club – usually being presented the prizes by a Harry Sayers! I also recall being served at the bar by Roger Hadlow, but this might not have been at this time. My recollections of one Nathan event from this period appear later in this magazine.

During this period, the Club was very active, with an enormous membership but we all know that the Club faced quite a significant down-turn in the late 00s and early 10s. I am pleased to report that the Club arrives at its 50th birthday in a very healthy state, although rather different from the 1980s' Club I first experienced.

Racing is still an important part of the Club, but not the dominant element it once was. Nevertheless, we still manage to maintain fleet racing for our 4 recognised classes which is the envy of many other clubs who just host handicap racing, which we, of course, also run for our active menagerie fleet.

Saturdays are now busier than Sundays with masses of activities going on, including a marvellous Youth & Junior fleet. Again, we outshine many other clubs with this.

Another difference from the 1980s,

and many other clubs today, is the number of volunteer duties required of members (and their families, if we are talking about the 1980s!).

At Draycote we have less than 300 volunteer duties a year that we ask our members to fill (and only those who race). At Rutland that number is over 2,300 with (for example) all rescue cover provided by members! It is easy to forget how different our set-up is to other sailing clubs (even bigger clubs) and how little we call on our membership as volunteers.

That is, of course, in no small part due to our magnificent staff team, lead by Dave Rowe, who do so much to ensure the smooth running of the Club for its members.

A final difference I will mention is the size and scope of our commercial operation. This covers running open meetings, RYA training, acting as a venue for class association training, hiring out our facilities to companies during the week, private events and organising corporate team days including sailing and dragon boating. To this list will soon be added a pay and play Stand Up Paddleboarding option.

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**“I am pleased to report that the Club arrives at its 50th birthday in a very healthy state, although rather different from the 1980s' Club I first experienced.”**

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This commercial operation is vital to the Club. Club membership income does not cover our running costs and the commercial activity not only covers this shortfall, most of our staff wages and provides a surplus for the Club to invest in the future.

We have a fantastic Club – thank you for being a member of it!

But we have to keep moving forward: improving our current activities and facilities and developing new ones, increasing our levels of participation and improving our communication. I will mention a few things we are looking to do:

## Communication

- **New member welcomes:** We are setting up monthly meetings with the committee for new members over the summer: the last Sunday of each month from April to September at 3pm. (Not a new idea, I know, but something that hasn't been done since

I have been a member.)

- **Comment to the Committee:** We are setting up occasional meetings where members can raise issues and discuss topics with the Committee. While I hope all our members know that they can raise issues with me, other Committee members and staff at any time and don't have to wait for the AGM or a meeting like this, we thought we would try this. The first will be held at 3pm on Sunday 14th April.

## Membership

While we do not expect to return to the dizzy heights of the 1980s, increasing our membership is absolutely vital for the continuing well-being of the Club.

Please do not forget the contribution that you as a member can make. If every member invited a friend to the club and half of them signed up as members, we would exceed our target!

Don't forget that you can invite people as your guest to the Club at any time to experience our wonderful facilities and take them sailing!

The only rules are: no more than 2 guests per member in a day, an individual can only be signed in as a guest 4 times a year, they cannot bring their own boat and you must sign them in the Visitors Book.

Please think of who you could invite!

## Governance

This year sees us implementing some major changes to the Club's governance to make it fit for purpose

Continued on page 15

## In this Issue

This issue focuses mainly on the Club's history over 50 years. Inevitably this is only snapshot of all that has happened. To see many more photos, as well as news clippings and other memorabilia, come and view the Memory Display which we are launching at the Birthday Party on Saturday 6 April. Last few tickets remaining.

See the online version on the website to follow links

# IT'S YOUR CLUB!!

## Wondering how to get more out of your membership of the Club? Here are a few suggestions:

**Step 1:** Come down to the Club and talk to us! Dave, Matt, Owen and Mark are qualified, knowledgeable and friendly. They are here to help and ready to talk through with you your plans or hopes for enjoying your sailing. They can advise on boats, equipment, courses whatever you need to get your sailing to the next level of skill and enjoyment.

**Step 2:** Come and join in with the social and sailing activities that are mentioned on this page and elsewhere in this issue.

This year is our 50th anniversary and we plan to make it one to remember, so there will be numerous events through the year in addition to the major ones that have already been announced.

**Step 3:** Keep tuned in to our Facebook page and the monthly Enewsletter to make sure you find out about short notice/impromptu events (there's sure to be a barbecue or two in there as well!).



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

**WE'RE STIRRING THINGS UP!**  
THE BAR HAS HAD A REVAMP AND A NEW SUMMER SOFT DRINKS MENU IS COMING SOON!



## CLUB OPEN DAY

**Saturday 18th 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!)

## Friday Evening Social Sailing & Barbecue

**Youth & Junior Race Training**

Learn tricks and tactics

**Owen's Friday Fun Club for intermediate sailors**

**Club boats for hire at discounted rates**

**Barbecue & Bar**

## 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

## Hire out One of the Club's 35 Boats for Trying out or Joining in Club Racing

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

**£15 single-hander,**

**£20/25 double-hander per half-day**

**Unlimited Use: £175 (single-hander)**

**£250 (double-hander) per annum**

Contact Dave in the shop or call on 01788 814418

\* Contact Fleet Captain (different charges may apply)

## Youth & Junior Fleet

# GET INVOLVED ONLINE AND ON THE WATER



Spring is almost in the air! The days are getting longer and before long, the 2019 season will be kicking off. We have a packed calendar of events for

2019. This should have already reached Youth & Junior fleet members via e-mail, but the latest edition will always be available on our [Facebook page](#) and the Club website. If you are not a member of the Youth & Junior Facebook group, please do sign up as this is where up to the minute information on goings on will be posted.

Also, keep an eye on the club website where details on our Youth & Junior programme and other club events will be available! New for this year, we also have an app which we are trialing. Please sign up to this (it is free) to keep abreast of our latest information on the go. Download it from here: <https://teamapp.com/app> then:

Launch Team App and...

1. Sign-up to Team App. You'll be sent an email to confirm your registration.

2. Log in. Then search for Draycote Water Sailing Club and request access to group(s) that apply to you.

If you don't have a smartphone, you can access TeamApp via their website and follow the same steps above.

Our summer season starts in earnest in April with our Friday night

## Saturday Morning Youth Club

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

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.



So that's how you do it!

Photo: Malcolm Lewin

racing and BBQ on 12th April and our Saturday Youth Club the next day on 13th. Throughout the summer, we have a variety of special events and competitions. Further details on each event will be available nearer the time, so keep an eye on Facebook and the website.

One of the great benefits of our Club is the professional organisation, training and safety cover. Our staff are always ready to help when you are at the club. Most of our Youth and Junior events are delivered by parent volunteers.

We always welcome more help, so if you are interested in lending a hand, and perhaps learning some new skills and making new friends as you do so, please get in touch. You do not have to be a sailor – help on shore is just as valuable as help on the water. The more help we have, the more we can offer to everyone!

Finally, don't forget, our club is open for sailing 364 days a year, with

racing every Sunday and Wednesday evenings in the summer too. You can come and sail any time, not just when we have organised Youth and Junior events running. It is going to be an exciting and busy 2019 season, I look forward to seeing you all at the club and on the water!

– Jonathan Hughes Y&J Fleet Captain



Go to page 15 to see how our Topper Tribe is getting on!

**Pirate Parties**

Have you and your friends got what it takes to be a real pirate? Can you follow the Pirate code, handle a sailing boat and fire a water pistol to gain the lost treasure of Captain Weird Beard the pirate legend? For groups of 6 - 12 children, aged 8+, £18 per child. We provide all sailing & safety equipment and clothing, except for footwear.

## Fireball Fleet

# THE FORGIVENESS OF FIREBALLS



A dinghy for all, from the keen youthful beginner to the seasoned old veteran. An exciting and yet forgiving two person trapeze boat with a long history at Draycote. We enjoy amicable close racing on the water and plenty of banter off it.

There have been Fireballs at Draycote since 1969. This was back in the days before the clubhouse was built, when the lake was still being filled up for the first time, so we've been a part of the club pretty much since the beginning. But the boat has evolved over the years and is now built of modern materials, super stiff and bomb-proof, so you can spend your time sailing it rather than maintaining it.

To share the love of Fireball racing, we have a Fleet boat, a competitive, reliable White Winder, available to hire to club members. Ask Dave in the shop or any of the fleet about hiring it for a day. Race it or just take it for a test drive, it won't disappoint.

We race every Sunday, with turnouts of 10 or more boats on the better days. Our Summer AM & PM and Winter series give you something to aim for all year round. And to keep it interesting and stop Peter & Paul winning everything, we hold a number of special events each year, including the ever-popular personal handicap races. Fleet guru Mike Deane consults his garden bushes for an accurate weather forecast then sets the handicaps accordingly. Last year saw Pete Badham and Steve Digby win the Firebowl and Jane and Pat clinch the Marriott Mug. Well done guys.

We don't travel to events in the



Eleanor and Richard in Carnac. Looking good ...



... then not so good. Can you spot them in this picture?

numbers we used to, but Jane & Pat flew the DWSC flag at the nationals in Penzance and had a great time sailing on the lumpy stuff. Pete and Steve and Eleanor Craig and Richard Botting joined a fleet of 100 boats at Carnac, Brittany for the Fireball Worlds.

Last year we hosted the UK Fireball National Inland Championships, allowing the national fleet to come and join in the fun.

Day 1 saw enough wind to keep a few people ashore spectating and of the twenty brave starters only seven managed to finish, a massive well done to our Iain & Tom. Day 2 was much more sensible and the nine local boats got to chase the really good guys around and even win some of the rather splendid prizes donated by Hyde Sails and

Pinnell & Bax. The visitors enjoyed themselves so much they're coming back for more of the same later this year.

The open meeting may have ended the 2018 UK Fireball calendar, but we don't pack up for winter, just wrap up, and sail on with our winter series and fleet championships. The fleet is healthy and still growing – this year we welcome Jeremy, Jon and Izzie to our ranks, and there are rumours of another new member poised to join us in the next few months.

Prizegiving for the year is on the 31st of March, with proper silverware for Gold and Silver Fleet series winners and rubber ducks and plastic homing pigeons for those who swim too much and get lost on the race course. If you'd like to join us, check out our [facebook page](#), email [colinsnowdon3@gmail.com](mailto:colinsnowdon3@gmail.com), or just catch us on Sundays at the club.  
– Colin Snowdon Fleet Captain



Paul & Mark winning the Inlands Bronze Fleet prize

## Laser Fleet

# MY FIRST YEAR OF BOAT OWNERSHIP

As a youngster I used to sail with the sea scouts. We had some decent boats that I enjoyed sailing a few times a year, but never competitively. Perhaps my memories of those times were rose tinted or I had embellished my own ability but, from the time that I started sailing with the club, I realised that there was a lot more to this game

sail. Everything worked perfectly as it was supposed to, but the ability to sail quickly did not get transferred from old to new owner of the boat, unfortunately. The big plus however is that the boat is just as you left it and everything is present and correct.

I then started to come down on Wednesday evenings when there are

- It is possible to fall out the side of the boat without capsizing. Best hold onto something or the boat will sail off without you. I managed to do this before the start of a race, but I am hopeful that no-one saw
- If you do capsize & fall off the back of the boat, don't hold on to the tiller extension, it doesn't take kindly to supporting the weight of a person
- If you leave your boat rigged on the shore on a windy day, the battens can catapult themselves out the end of the sail at quite a speed, not always ending up on the land, meaning you have to fork out for a new set.

So, on reflection of my first year of boat ownership, there have been plenty of times when I have been frustrated and swearing at myself out on the reservoir: sat in irons going nowhere; trying to bear away in a strong wind and the boat goes straight on; capsizing for the umpteenth time, wondering how to keep the thing upright. There is also a lot to learn on how to go fast, there are no short cuts (like buying a fast boat) and there is no substitute for learning and practising.

But there have also been many really enjoyable times; a warm, sunny summer Wednesday evening with decent wind, lots of boats out and an exciting, competitive race, followed by post-race analysis in the bar – it doesn't get much better than this. The big question is – will all of my Sunday racing practice over the winter have moved me up the fleet in the Wednesday evening racing – I'm really looking forward to finding out!  
– Adam Hallard



than I had imagined! As I didn't own a boat initially, those first few months as a member saw me hiring out a club Laser.

Although the club boats are a great start and allow everyone to go sailing without having to commit to the expense of buying a boat, there is always some trepidation as to which bits of the boat will actually be there. This means that if it's a busy day, you have to be in competitive mode long before the hooter sounds at 11am, as first out of the preparation blocks gets to bag the boat with the most parts, battens in the sail, a kicker and the straightest mast.

This borrowing of a club boat continued for about a year, then on a March morning, after I had been denied a Laser race because all the boats were already out, I found that there was a fellow club member selling theirs, so I asked Dave to show me the boat. In my naivety I walked around it, did the equivalent of kicking the tyres, tried and failed to ask a sensible question, then said that I would think about it.

It belonged to William Whitaker, so could regularly be seen towards the front of the fleet. This all sounded good and I have to admit that in the back of my mind I had the idea I was going to take a giant leap towards the front, and maybe it was just the club boat that was holding me back!

The following Sunday was my first

20-25 Lasers taking part. With sailors of a wide range of abilities, I was able to have a great, close race with a number of people around me, which certainly made the sailing more exciting.

Once I had done one Wednesday evening it was an absolute must to do as many as possible. Even if you don't do well out on the water there is always a great gathering in the bar afterwards – not sure if it's the sailing or the post-sailing drinks that attract so many Laser owners, although I suspect the latter.

There have been a few things I have learned during my first year of boat ownership:



**Congratulations to**  
**Greg Irish**

**Club Champion 2018/19**  
**Winner of the Club Pursuit Series**

**1st Greg Irish (Laser)**  
**2nd Marcellus Pryor (Laser)**  
**3rd Jonathan Hughes (Solo)**

# LOOKING BACK OVER 50 YEARS

## From Small Beginnings

Almost as soon as the building of a reservoir had been planned, a group of committed individuals, led by Sir Charles Barratt, began the process of setting up a sailing club on the site. Following a series of public meetings in Rugby and surrounding villages in early 1968, the Club was officially created and opened to membership. Before there was even enough water to launch a boat, the Club had 1,200 members and the list was closed to new entrants.

Sailing first took place on the Whitsun Bank Holiday in 1969. From then on the Club was open for sailing and racing on Saturdays and Sundays as well as Wednesday evenings.

By the following year, a variety of boats were being sailed, including the Mirror, GP14, Enterprise, Fireball, Finn, Merlin Rocket, Lark and Kestrel. Other fleets were added in subsequent years: Flying Fifteen in 1972, International OK in 1973, Lasers and Wayfarers in 1975, and in 1977, Solos and 505s.



**Sir Charles Barratt was Town Clerk of Coventry and was a major force in the rebuilding of the city after the Second World War, for which he was knighted. He was a leading force in giving Coventry a university, the University of Warwick which opened in 1965. He was also closely involved with the Coventry School of Music and the Sir Charles Barratt Memorial Foundation still helps fund the studies of young musicians.**



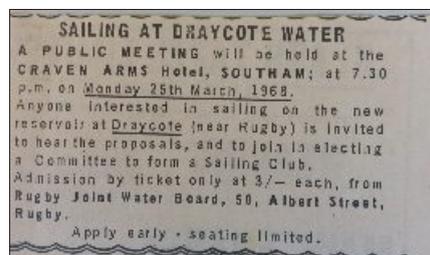
The clubhouse c1990

January 1970 saw membership open again as some did not renew and the number then grew to 1,650. Around this time, plans were drawn up to build the clubhouse in much the form that it is today and concerns were expressed that "the clubhouse would be too big for the number of members"! The committee managed to secure a grant of £10,000 towards the estimated £45,000 cost of the building. Much of this was raised from interest-free loans in units of £25.

"The provision of a permanent clubhouse with proper changing and toilet facilities is quite urgent," Sir Charles said.

Tragically, Sir Charles Barratt did not live to see the opening of the clubhouse, dying after a short illness on 10 February 1971, aged 60. The clubhouse was officially opened by Lady Barratt on 26 June that year and the inaugural Sir Charles Barratt Memorial Trophy race was held that day. Lady Barratt remained a stalwart supporter of the club and appears in many club photographs presenting club trophies.

Pumping of water began in October 1969 and, 12 months later, members were being advised to move their boats above the rising waterline.



## Membership Fees

1970

Entrance Fee £10;  
Single £8; Family £12; Crewing £7;  
Junior £2.2s; Boat £5.5s

1976: Entrance Fee: £16.20;  
Single: £15.12; Family £21.60;  
Crewing £10.80; Junior £3.24;  
Boat £7.50

£10 in 1970 equivalent to £150 now!

## Mud Glorious Mud

"In 1969, I was just 13 years old when Dad told me that our family had joined the club, and I would be crew for him in Lark 683. I remember stepping through mud as the water level wasn't as high as it is now, climbing into the boat, before shooting off across the reservoir towards the water tower at great speed ... packing the boat away with other Larks before retiring to a wooden hut (no smart clubhouse then) in a car park to chat before driving home ... The clubhouse had live-in stewards, Helmut and Sylvia Spencer, who did an amazing job, running the bar and providing meals after sailing in the evenings so sailors could return home, satisfied after a great day's sailing on a massive piece of water." – Cathy Toone, whose father Mike Pearce was Commodore 1979-81.

# The Nathan Silver Salvors

The single most important event in the Draycote sailing calendar, and which probably did more than any other in establishing the Club's national reputation, was the annual Nathan Silver Salvors which started in 1975 and continued till 1999. Other sponsors, including Severn Trent, Laser and AutoCIM, took over from Nathans, a Birmingham jewellers, after 1985, after which it became known as the Draycote Silver Salver. Severn Sailboats offered an annual prize for the first "single-handed unassisted dinghy".

Each class association around the country was invited to send two of its top competitors to the race, a 200-minute pursuit, with Draycote also able to enter two from each of its home classes. There were consistently more than 120 boats sailing, the highest number, 160, recorded in 1998, when entry was opened to four boats from each class.

"One year at the Nathan, near finish time we were sailing alongside my old friend Nigel Vick in a Laser. In those days a firework was let off to signal the end of the race. The remains of the firework (a large 2ft long stick) fell into the water between us. A yard either side and one of our boats would have been severely damaged and possibly the sailors killed – amazing I came back really!" Jeremy Atkins

Regularly as many as 30 National champions, as well as World and European champions and at least one Olympic silver medallist (Keith Musto in the Flying Dutchman) took part. It became a major spectator sport locally as well, with up to 700 spectators gathering on the banks.

In the 1984 event, with 138 boats from 48 classes, Draycote sailors Mark Rushall and Jame Baxter were

**Briefing before the start of one of the Silver Salvors**



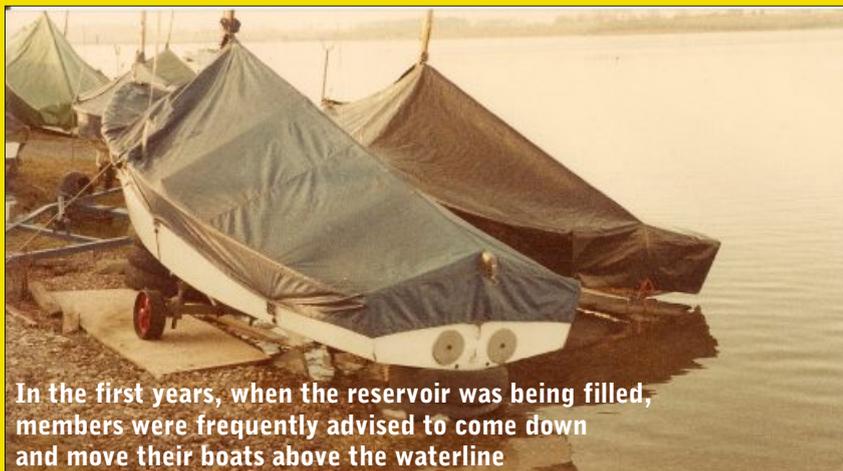
**The Silver Salver was won four times in a row by R Angell in an International Moth**

first over the finish line, but had to retire as their new Fireball did not have a valid measurement certificate.

Winning boats came from a wide range of classes over the years, including 420, 470, Flying Dutchman, International Moth, International 14,

505, Fireball and even Toppers (twice). Winners received a Rolex oyster watch. A board in the clubhouse shows all the winners.

"I remember a cold and hugely windy Nathan Silver Salvors pursuit race when 160 boats turned up and only 22 finished. We beat our rivals in the other Mirror when the massive waves filled their boat up and they basically sank. They were taken away with mild hypothermia. A visiting 505 lost its entire rig, mast and all when a gust hit them while they had the kite up – I don't think we even launched ours. We eventually reached a Club-OL finish line 5 mins before the end of the race, and hung about there rather than sailing through and on back down to H, where it was really scary. The flags went up and we finished at OL in 21st!" Mike Deane



**In the first years, when the reservoir was being filled, members were frequently advised to come down and move their boats above the waterline**



**Team changeover at the Southport 24-hour race, 1990**

## Southport 24-hour Race

A highlight of the club's calendar was participation in the Southport 24-hour race. Every year from 1973 until 1990, the Club sent a team of 40 or so people to take part in the race hosted by West Lancs Yacht Club.



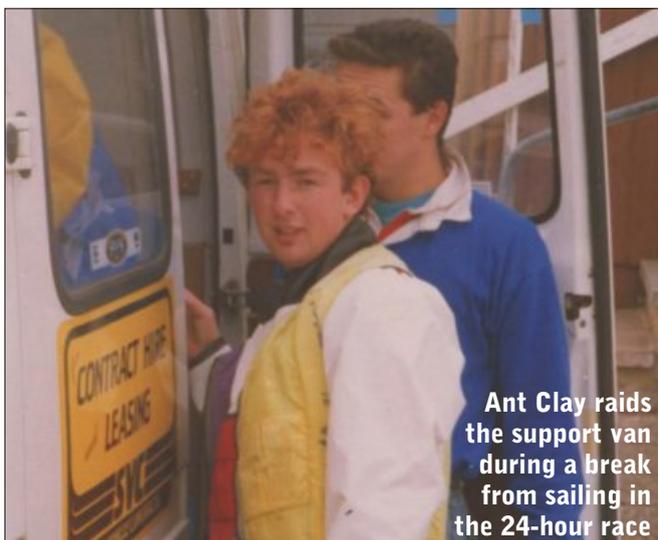
Each club was allowed one boat, either a GP14 or Enterprise, and with any number of crews sail the boat for 24 hours around a course, with the shortest average lap time winning. In a field of more than 100 entries, we threatened to win on any number of occasions but never quite managed it.

The Draycote team consisted of 6 pairs of sailors with the others taking up logistical support of one sort or another. After the first year in a GP14, Paul Langley's Enterprise "Hairy Fairy" was used for the next several years. Regular crews included Alan

& Sue Carter, Bill Andrews, Julian Kay, Ted Wilson, David Toone, Mark Harrison, Tim Howe, Tony Willets and Peter Nutt. The Prior family, with Gwen & Ralph Toone, Ken Currie and Dennis Slack provided the logistics (mainly involving sausages!).

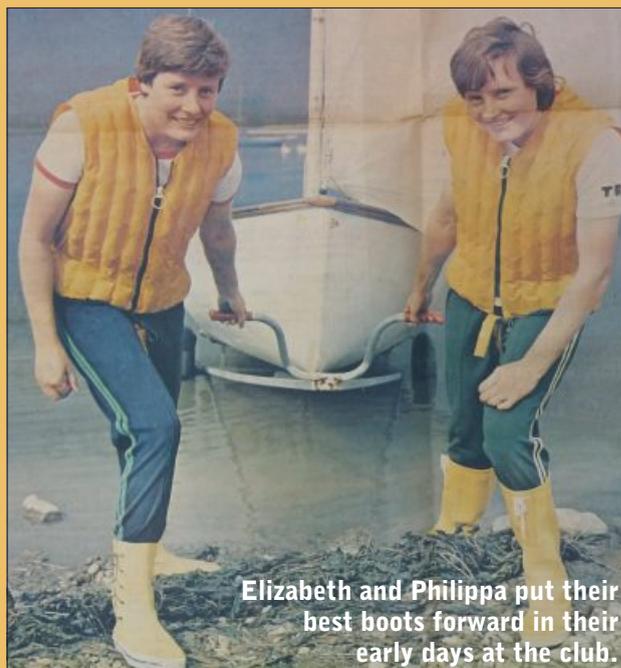
The 1992 event was marked by the appearance of a whirlwind scything through the course and causing a large number of "violent capsizes". Two boats were hit with such force their "masts buckled like drinking straws". Despite (or perhaps because of!) this, the Draycote team managed its best ever 2nd place.

The sailing team that year was Ian Walters, Steve & Greg Irish, Bethan Raggett, Steve & Jeannette Hunt, Tony & Julia Prior, Andy Parkinson and Rachael Stevens.



**Ant Clay raids the support van during a break from sailing in the 24-hour race**

## A Marriage made at Draycote



**Elizabeth and Philippa put their best boots forward in their early days at the club.**

Tim and Elizabeth Fillmore have been members of the club for longer than almost anyone and in fact met at Draycote in their youth. Elizabeth and her twin sister Philippa were sailors from their teens and it was here that they met Tim and his best friend Neil "Captain" Cook. Tim was to marry Elizabeth and Neil married Philippa.

Tim and Elizabeth both served on the Committee for many years (Tim did a turn as Commodore – it used to be two-year stints – and Elizabeth was Treasurer for four years). Tim was on the Olympic Finn squad for the 1970s and Elizabeth represented Britain in the Ladies European Championship in 1976.



**Tim battles with the Finn at Draycote**

## Draycote Olympians

**1970s:** Tim Fillmore Finn Squad British Sailing Team and Olympic indicators

**1980:** John Siggers Finn squad. Unfortunately, this was the Russian Olympics boycotted by Britain, so John was unable to compete

**1988/92:** Debbie Jarvis with Sue Hay-Carr in the 470 came 15th in the Seoul Olympics, 12th in Barcelona.

**2016:** Matt Gotrel, after a distinguished sailing career, won gold in Rio in the Men's Rowing Eights. He is now back sailing with the Great Britain SailIGP Team.

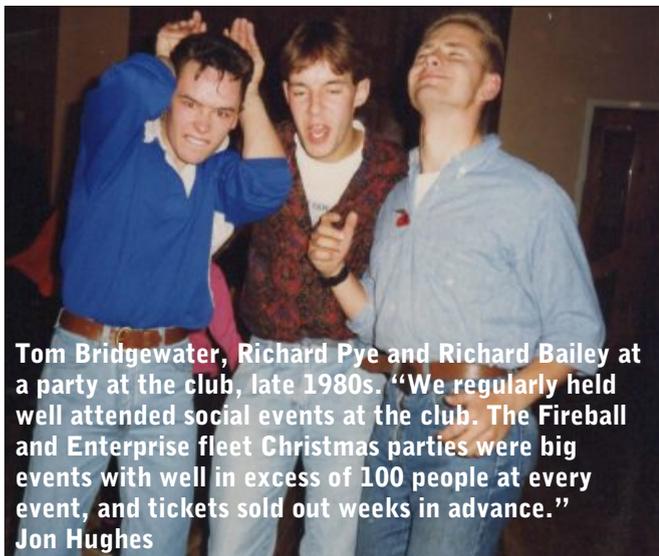


Steve & Greg Irish with one of the many awards they have won at club, national and international level



The Oppie fleet was one of the largest in the Club for many years and every summer there was a specialist Oppie training camp which was very popular.

"The UK sent five sailors each year to the World Championships. Drawn from all the clubs in the country, Draycote still managed to have two representatives in the five for many years, including some still racing such as Steve & Greg Irish, Jeremy Davy, Richard Pye and Antony Clay as well as others who have left: Rob Langley, Jeremy Reed and Ian Walters." Richard Pye



Tom Bridgewater, Richard Pye and Richard Bailey at a party at the club, late 1980s. "We regularly held well attended social events at the club. The Fireball and Enterprise fleet Christmas parties were big events with well in excess of 100 people at every event, and tickets sold out weeks in advance." Jon Hughes



By the 1990s, training had become an important feature of the Club. Training was run by dedicated part-time staff who were qualified instructors and also skilled handymen able to maintain the boats.

The Club became an RYA-recognised teaching establishment and developed courses for windsurfing and powerboating.

**The Club quarterly Newsletter (not called Unshackled till 2003) carried at least two pages of regular advertising, including, for several years, Coca Cola!**

## Kit and Caboodle

"We made our first wetsuits. We cut them out of neoprene (kit form) before gluing and stitching the pieces together, first the trousers, then a jacket, with jock strap and finally booties. No neoprene gloves just warm gloves and washing-up gloves on top!!" Cathy Toone

"Wetsuits were ill-fitting and rubbish at keeping you warm, and they looked rubbish too. In the winter I used to wear everything I owned under all-encompassing waterproofs, so when I fell in it would take 30 secs for the water to find its way through it all. Moving was difficult though. The best way to keep fingers warm was to wear woollen gloves under washing-up gloves." Mike Deane

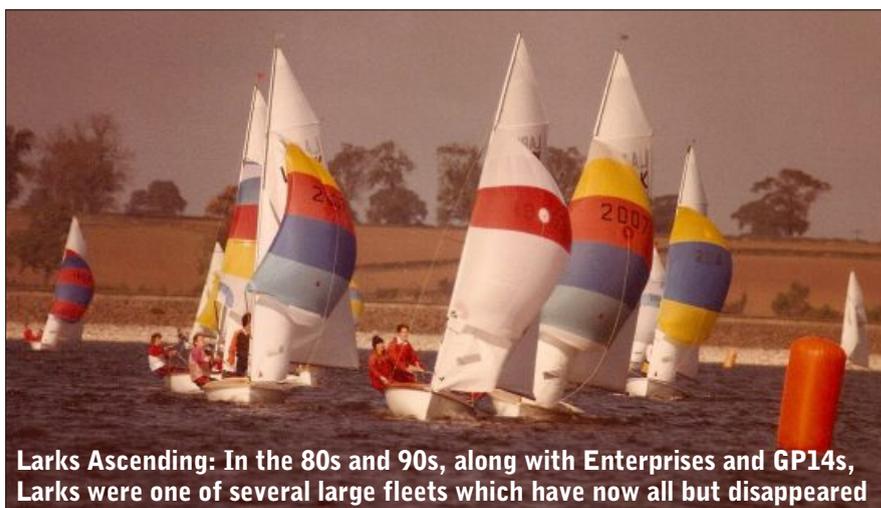
"Home-made kit wetsuit, one piece oversuit with tea-towels sewn into the bum where the non-slip gunnel had eaten it and my wetsuit. Then I went to a Javelin Longjohn and bolero jacket, with loop pile lining." John Rohde

"Just old clothes and a lifejacket that was made out of Kaypok and, in time, we made our own wetsuits and, for keeping warm, a woolly hat." Dennis Slack

"Very basic in the 70s. The modern wetsuits started coming out in the mid 70s. Before then, it was glued together kit wetsuits; clothing was a lot bulkier and you had to wear many layers." John Siggers

"My first winter I sailed wearing a thick very itchy wetsuit glued together from a kit by my Dad." Richard Pye

"Wetsuits in the early 90s had lime green or bright pink panels! Everyone thought they looked great!!" Pete Blakey



**Larks Ascending: In the 80s and 90s, along with Enterprises and GP14s, Larks were one of several large fleets which have now all but disappeared**

## Some Milestones

**1973:** Race marks set

**1975:** Boats accepted: Fireball, Flying Fifteen, Enterprise, GP14, Merlin Rocket, Lark, Mirror, Fleetwind, Kestrel, Wayfarer, Optimist, Miracle, 470, Finn, Minisail, OK, Solo, Laser, Contender

**1976:** Olympic selection trials held for 470 and Finn classes

**1987:** Foreshore and slipway reconstruction to what it is now

**1988:** Severn Trent began dam wall modifications and warned that low water levels could be expected "for several years"

**1991:** Severn Trent begins pumping to bring "water levels to full"

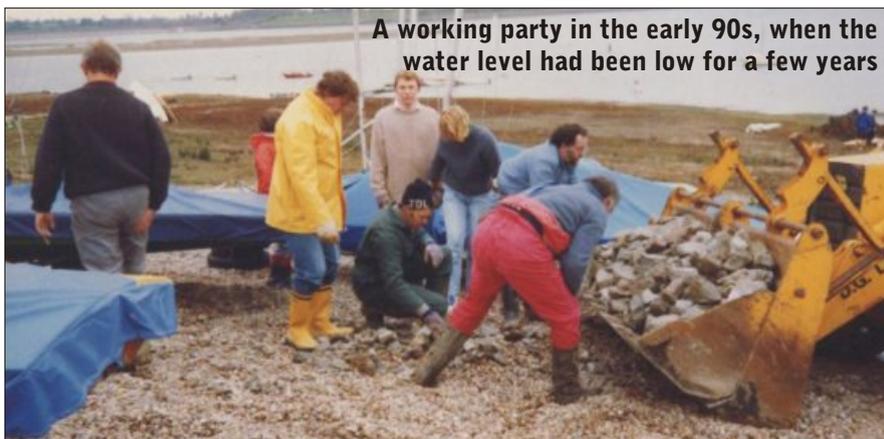
**1995:** Water is open every day (except Christmas Day) with rescue. Up till then anyone wishing to sail midweek had to provide their own rescue cover

**1997:** After trials, winter membership was offered to catamarans as part of an effort to widen membership. However, none showed!! So the experiment was extended to the summer

**2003:** Additional race marks added: M (for Z), N, P, S, T.

## Dinners & Dances

Throughout its first decade, formal and informal social activities were a highlight. These included an annual Dinner & Dance at venues such as the Manor Hotel Meriden, Benn Hall Rugby, The Leofric Hotel Coventry and a Fancy Dress Ball on New Year's Eve at the Club.



**A working party in the early 90s, when the water level had been low for a few years**

## Recollections

# IT'S MY STORY AND I'M STICKING TO IT

It was early in 1975 when I approached a chap at work, whom I knew to be a founder member of Draycote Water to ask about the Club. "I will not only tell you about the Club but I'll take you sailing too, I'm looking for a regular crew," he said.

So I started sailing with Arthur Horler in his Enterprise. We raced in the Saturday Series, as part of the Enterprise 'B' Fleet; we must have done quite well as I still have a couple of prizes from that era.

Arthur told me of the early days at Draycote when the water was just a muddy puddle in the middle and sailors got changed in what had been the contractors' wooden hut located in what is now the top end of the visitors car park. He also

Obviously one of the first things I had to do was fit a spinnaker; it had only just been agreed as a modification by the Association, and there was, surprisingly, quite a lot of opposition to this at fleet level – some thought the Miracle should remain a simple design suitable for cruising. Nevertheless I had caught the racing bug and bought a kit comprising chute, templates, a Dolphin spinnaker, and ropes and blocks, etc.

Oh! the trauma of taking a keyhole-saw to the nice varnished decks and bulkhead, but it worked. This was nothing compared to the trauma involved in getting the kids to launch and fly the kite, whilst the other Miracles in the Fleet sailed gaily away (their Dad



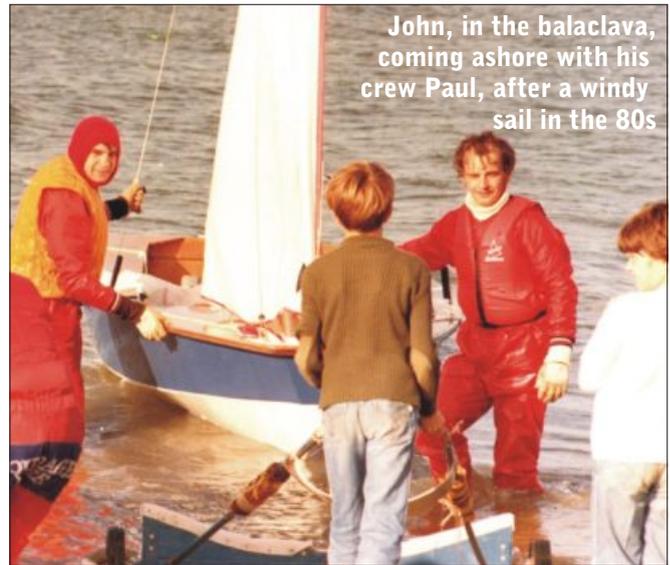
told me that the Flying Fifteen slipway goes all the way down to the middle of the lake

My young family were getting older and I started thinking of sailing with them. The obvious choice was the Miracle; at that time the numbers were increasing exponentially and other families were trading up from the Mirror Dinghy, so in 1979 I bought my first Miracle, no. 1622. The chap assured me it could outsail an Enterprise despite the fact that it didn't have a spinnaker. I wasn't that gullible, but the price was right!

not knowing how to do it either, no spinnakers on an Enterprise, you see). We then went on a race training course run by Mike Deane's Mum, Joyce, to find out where we were going wrong.

The next year my daughter, Judith, then nine years old, sailed with me in Plymouth where we had been warned that Portuguese men-of-war jellyfish had been driven into the Sound by the wind.

On the way out to the start, we capsized, and I have never seen a crew get back in the boat as quickly as Judith did that day. She was awarded the City of



John, in the balaclava, coming ashore with his crew Paul, after a windy sail in the 80s

Plymouth Cup for the Youngest Crew, the first girl crew to win it too. It seemed to dwarf her at the prize giving.

I had of course by then joined Draycote as a Family Member and the Fleet Captain made it clear where our family duties lay – a bit like a three-line whip. On days when the Miracle Fleet had OD duty all the family, even the non-sailors, had to turn up: sandwiches and cobs had to be made and filled and cake and scones cut up.

Sylvia and Helmut were Club Stewards, Helmut looked after the bar and Sylvia did the catering side. She decided how many rolls to fill, etc., bearing in mind that back then we had upwards of 120 boats on the water on a summer Sunday.

The food would, when ready, be loaded onto a "dumb waiter", a kind of rope-operated lift, located in the corner where the wet bar sink is now, and lowered down. No hot food then but tea or coffee and maybe soup on a winter's day

We had a small shop too. Derrick and Betty Shave ran a proper chandlery in Union St, Rugby and on race-days opened a small shop on the ground floor in what is now a training room, with a

small selection of hardware, ropes and clothes.

Many more people were involved in the OD duty back then; the start sequence was at five-minute intervals with individual Class Flags coming down to start as the next Class Flag went up. So we needed two people for the flags, one to do the timing and the Chief OD to set the course and watch the line, plus two water watchers in the OD box. The said Derrick Shave did much to improve this sequence, reducing the number of members involved and the overall starting sequence.

We had separate courses for the Slow Boats e.g. Optimists, Mirrors and maybe Toppers, and the Fast Boats. Eventually I got to be OD and one Sunday, and under pressure and without thinking clearly, I set courses with all the fast boats going round X to starboard and all the slow boats going round X to port.

This wasn't pointed out to me until after racing had finished. But much to my relief and probably to the sailors too, no boats from either of the fleets rounded the mark at the same time. Phew, I had nightmares about that for weeks afterwards!

– John Tippett

## Interfleet Championships

# INTERFLEETS FORMAT SET FOR REVIVAL

This very popular event started as a kernel of an idea in early 2007 that was discussed at Fleet Captains meetings and was taken forward by Tim & Elizabeth Fillmore and myself, plus an army of willing helpers.

The idea was to have all the fleets, Fireball, Flying Fifteen, Laser, Solo, Miracle, Menagerie and Youth & Juniors, competing against each other on short courses directly in front of our clubhouse.

Of course there had to be sailing at a sailing club (!)

own fleet of Laser Picos, with six of each class making 18 boats in total. The racing was continuous with superfast changeovers after each race. Most years there were about 95 races completed between 11am and 4pm.

The course was S-shaped, so beat, reach, run, reach and beat to finish. A committee boat was situated at both start and finishing lines with the finishing boat giving the results to a RIB driver who quickly took them ashore where a board



many spectators and the entertainment that was provided for them. This changed each year and

made sure that every competitor had a memento of the day in the shape of mugs with our name and



but the emphasis was strictly on a fun day with families and friends coming along, and for youngsters of all age groups being entertained on the shore as

was set up to give 'live' running totals of the event as the day progressed. (I suspect that nowadays devices and wifi would be used!) Onshore the activity



included a magician, stilt walkers, bouncy castle, fighting sumo wrestler outfits and cushioned play area, miniature bicycles, face painters, water bombs and jugglers.

drawings of sailboats printed on them.

The Interfleets ran for seven years from 2007 to 2012 before Bart's Bash became the Club September event.

–Malcolm Lewin



well as competing in the races.

Three types of boat were used - Firefly (loaned by Warwick Uni), Vago (loaned by Rugby School) and our

was feverish with team captains ensuring that they had their complement of sailors ready to go for their changeover.

Also onshore were the

The area in front of the containers was the setting for varieties of 'circus'-style entertainment and the Youth & Juniors enjoyed on-the-water balloon games during the lunch interval using Picos, as well as raft-making with wood, rope and blue buoys provided.

At the end of the day there would be prizegiving, and it was noticeable that very few left the site until this had been completed. We

As part of the 50th Anniversary celebrations, we will be reviving the Interfleets this year. It takes place on Sunday 15th September and will be again be a day for all the family, with fun, entertainment and racing. Further details will be circulated in the Club monthly Enewsletter and on Facebook.



# NOT THE ONLY 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY IN TOWN

2019 will be a wonderful year celebrating our great Club's 50th anniversary. But we are not the only ones celebrating such a birthday. One month and two days before our Club held its first race, a young merchant seaman completed another race. It was also the first race of its kind, but instead of sailing around a half-filled reservoir, he had sailed single-handed, non-stop around the world – the first person to have done that.

Falmouth.

After launching the book, we all went to a party at the Royal Cornwall Yacht Club where we were introduced to the skippers who were taking part in the 50th anniversary Golden Globe Race – using only the types of boat and equipment that Robin had available 50 years before (for example, for music they had to take cassette tapes!). They were an impressive bunch and in different states of preparation. I remember



**The Treasurer, master of all he surveys; his other boat is a Flying Fifteen**

His name was, of course, Robin Knox-Johnston and I have had the pleasure of knowing him for about 30 years. Last year, four DWSC members went down to Falmouth to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Robin's departure from Falmouth on his epic voyage.

Most of us were down there for work (we published a book by Robin that week and there were queues down Falmouth high street for the book signing!) and we were joined by Treasurer, Rodger Webb, who happens to keep his motor cruiser in

chatting to the eventual winner, Jean-Luc Van Den Heede, on the dock one evening as he was pacing his boat. He was ready and just itching to go!

On Thursday 14 June there was a parade of sail from Falmouth to St Mawes and then to the start of the 50th anniversary race. Robin led the procession in Suhaili (the boat he sailed 50 years previously) and there were boats everywhere! For the most part, Rodger sensibly kept his ship well clear but then suddenly, while in the



**Up close to Suhaili as Robin sorts out his cannon**

confines of St Mawes harbour, he spotted a gap and went for it. (If only he showed such determination in his Flying Fifteen, his results would improve!) There we were, right next to Suhaili which was being helmed by my friend Dilip Donde (the first Indian to sail solo around the world) while Robin was desperately sorting out the gunpowder for his cannon so that he could signal the start of the race!

After the race had started, we accompanied the yachts as they sailed away, shortly to be followed by Robin in Suhaili – recreating his departure 50 years earlier. It was a



**British sailor, Susie Goodall**

memorable week for all of us. I am fortunate to have been invited by Robin to join him when he recreates his return on 22nd April this year.

– Jeremy Atkins



**Robin sails Suhaili out of Falmouth, 50 years after the first time**



**Queuing down Falmouth High Street for the book signing**



**2019 GGR winner Jean-Luc Van Den Heede picks up some light reading**

## Join the Draycote Topper Tribe!



The Topper, designed in 1977 only a few years after the opening of Draycote, quickly became a popular boat at the Club and had fleet status (when it was sailed mostly by adults) for a number of years.

Two years ago however, with only a handful still resting in the dinghy park, we didn't see Toppers out on the water as much but, with support from Topper Sailboats themselves, a resurgence has begun.

Nearly 50,000 Toppers have been sold to date which means, as with the Laser, there is a used boat market

to suit all budgets. Word spread around the Club and now the Topper seems to be the new youth boat to have. Draycote has quickly gained 20-plus Toppers sailing regularly at the weekly Youth & Junior sessions and racing both at home and away.

There are plenty of winter race training options available, with Class training and the RYA Zones squads, but these do involve a lot of travelling and commitment from parents, so isn't always an option.

We have got round this at the Club by launching our own training sessions at home with supported travel



to nearby race venues.

This winter, we have had up to 10 sailors signed up for the monthly training sessions run by external Topper coach, Lizzie. We have enjoyed a range of conditions, with plenty of

fun and improvement to be seen, so we will continue supporting all Topper sailors with their sailing over the summer, including travelling to local opens and developing the fleet at home.



### Commodore's Column Continued from page 2

for our 50th year. The Club's new Articles (Constitution) were approved by members at the AGM in November and come into operation for the start of the new membership year. Alongside this will be a new set of Regulations (Rules) – again coming into place on 1st April.

In order to meet our obligations as a CASC (Community Amateur Sports Club) – which require over 50% of our members to 'participate' at least 12 times a year – we have set up a Supporters' Club which allows our Social Members (previously Associate Members) and non-sailing Family Members to be affiliate members of the Club, with all the same rights as they had before, but not preventing us from meeting our participation requirement.

The new Articles, Regulations, Supporter's Club Constitution and Agreement with the CASC are all available to see on the Club's website (in the Articles & Memorandum section of the About tab).

The Regulations are also on the Club noticeboards. As always, if you have any comments or questions about any of this, please do not hesitate to talk to me, other members of the Committee or Dave Rowe.

The Regulations are the Club's rules and so are the go-to document for finding out about what can and can't be done at the Club and members are expected to abide by them.

But that's enough of governance!

I hope you have a wonderful year sailing at Draycote Water Sailing Club in our 50th anniversary year!

– Jeremy Atkins Commodore

**STAND UP PADDLEBOARDING**

Discounted rates for club members: £2 launch fee with your own board ~ £10 to hire club boards.

A fantastic alternative activity for non-sailing family members & no wind days. A 1 hour introduction session is required first to cover safety points, learn basic techniques & paddle with instructor guidance.

**LAUNCHES 18TH MAY AT THE CLUB OPEN DAY**



**DRAYCOTE WATER  
~ SAILING CLUB ~**

Join us through 2019 to celebrate our 50th birthday

Saturday 6th April  
**50th Birthday Party**

Saturday 18th May  
**50th Anniversary Open Day**

Saturday 22nd June  
**Midlands Champions Race**

Sunday 15th September  
**Interfleet Championships**

Sat/Sun 23rd/24th November  
**Draycote Dash**

[www.draycotewater.co.uk](http://www.draycotewater.co.uk)



**DRAYCOTE WATER  
~ SAILING CLUB ~**

## MIDLANDS CHAMPIONS RACE



Join us to celebrate 50 years of Draycote Water Sailing Club

**SATURDAY 22nd JUNE 2019**

Open to competitors from Midlands sailing clubs & no entrance fee!

Full day of sailing – Commodore’s race – multiple category prizes

Barbecue & Ceilidh entertainment in the evening (tickets/fees apply)

Visit our website and Facebook page for updates & full details

[www.draycotewater.co.uk](http://www.draycotewater.co.uk)

office@draycotewater.co.uk 01788 811153



Meeting Rooms & Venue Hire  
**Draycote  
View**

[draycoteview@draycotewater.co.uk](mailto:draycoteview@draycotewater.co.uk) - 01788 811153

[www.draycoteview.co.uk](http://www.draycoteview.co.uk)

## Draycote View

Meeting Rooms & Venue Hire



Be inspired in this unique setting offering panoramic views over Draycote Water, with full conference and meeting facilities and a capacity of up to 120 delegates. Meeting rooms for groups of 2-12 people are ideal for small meetings, interviews and training sessions. Add an exciting team event to your day with our Sailing and Dragon Boat activities!