



DRAYCOTE WATER SAILING CLUB

SOLO FLEET NEWSLETTER AUTUMN 2008



WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

As a result of reading this newsletter you need to:

1. Tell me if you will be coming to the Fleet Barbeque on Saturday 30th August.
2. Put the dates on your diary for the Handicap Pursuit Race, Solo Open, Fleet Championships and End of Season Championships and compete in them!
3. Tell me if you are willing to provide any of the help required over the next few months (see page 3/4).

AN ACTIVE FEW MONTHS COMING UP

The next few months see a great deal of activity for the Draycote Solo Fleet, and so this edition of the Fleet Newsletter is primarily to remind you of all the events that are happening and encourage you to take part.

Saturday 30 th August	Solo Fleet Barbeque
Sunday 31 st August	Solo Fleet Handicap Pursuit Race Day
Saturday 6 th September	DWSC Solo Open Meeting
Sunday 28 th September	Solo Fleet Championships Day 1
Sunday 12 th October	Solo Fleet Championships Day 2
18 th / 19 th October	DWSC Flying 15 Open (Solo's running)
Saturday 8 th November	Solo End of Season Championships
Sunday 7 th December	Solo Fleet AGM

Fleet Barbeque & Handicap Pursuit Racing

This is, I believe, a first for the fleet and it will be great to see many involved.

The weekend's events start off with a **Barbeque** at my house in Long Itchington on the Saturday (30th August). Fleet members, partners and children are all invited to what should be an informal, fun event, starting at 7pm.

The cost will be £10 per adult and £6 per child (payable in advance). This fee will cover food and drink (wine, beer, soft drinks). I have to admit, I have no idea whether this will cover the cost or not – if it does not, I will make up the difference, if it does, any surplus will go into fleet funds. Life is too short to worry any more than that, but I reckon, with drink, it is fantastic value!

Long Itchington is south of Draycote on the A423 (Coventry – Southam road). For those with sat nav / internet access, the post code is CV47 9PF; for those without, Long Itchington straddles the A423. We are on the west side of the village. From the green / pond area take Church Road towards the Harvester pub (note the name – there are 7 pubs in Long Itchington!). Between the Harvester and the Church there is The Square (which is not square). From this leads Thorn Way and we are shortly after the first right angled bend, in Thorn Villa (but every house is called Thorn something!) – I will try to make sure there is suitable nautical regalia to indicate it.

There is limited parking at the house, otherwise please park in The Square, rather than on the pavement in the narrow road (it is less far to walk from The Square to our house than it is from the Windsurfer car park to your boat!!).

Please let me know, and pay, by Sunday 24th August if you are attending (and numbers), and any dietary requirements which means that the normal Barbeque fare (sausages, burgers, chicken, etc) does not suffice.

At the barbeque, the handicapping for the following day's racing will be announced. Hard work, determination and computing power to rival Bletchley Park, together with Gerry's time keeping, have been put into calculating the handicaps based on actual performances in racing over the summer.

The actual **handicap racing** will take place in the first two races on the Sunday (31st August). We will start from the shore (by the Solo dinghy park), at different times, with the slower competitors starting earlier than the faster ones. From there we will join in the course that has been set for club racing (not going through the start line, but joining at an appropriate mark).

In theory, if the handicaps work, everyone should cross the finish line together, but we will see!

If you are not going to be at the barbeque, but will be competing in the handicap racing, and want more information, please give me a call in the week before.

But please note that everyone but the fastest will be starting EARLIER than they normally do (possibly up to 10 minutes), although you won't have to sail to the starting area. So please arrive in plenty of time!

Mike Burgoine is kindly presenting a trophy for this event, which will be scored taking into account both races (1 point for 1st, 2 for 2nd etc), with the standard tiebreaking rules (number of 1sts, number of 2nds, etc, then last race results).

And finally, a health warning – this is a fun event, and no claim for the accuracy of the handicapping is made – in the end, it will be down to the conditions on the day, which is not built into the handicapping!

The two handicap races will not count towards the Summer Series. For the third race of the day, people can join into the normal Club third, mass start, handicap race if they wish.

Open Meeting – Saturday 6th September

The following weekend sees our Solo Open Meeting (first start 11am, briefing 10.30am), and I hope that as many of the fleet as possible will compete. It is a good opportunity to sail against some new competition in a slightly bigger fleet than normal (but not an enormous fleet).

Please make every effort to attend. (See also the section on "Helpers Required").

Draycote Solo Fleet Championship

This will take place over two Sundays: 28th September and 12th October, held as part of the normal club racing. The details are, as reported in the Spring Newsletter:

- Consisting of 6 races.
- To qualify, you need to complete 4 races.
- Your best 4 finishing positions will count towards the results.
- If only 4 or 5 races are completed, 3 will count.
- If 3 races are completed, 2 will count.
- If 1 or 2 races are completed, all will count.
- These races will also form part of the Summer Series.

Over the last few years, a disappointing number of people have qualified for this premier event in our fleet's club racing, so I hope more will battle it out for the "Fleet Champion" crown this year.

National Solo End Of Season Championships – Saturday 7th November

We are really privileged to host this national Solo event at Draycote, when we attract around 70 boats, including the best Solo sailors in the country.

Again, it is great to have a good home fleet competing at this event, and I do encourage you to enter. There will be 3 races.

Solo Fleet AGM – Sunday 7th December

Please make a note of this in your diaries. It will be held after sailing in the clubhouse wet bar. No further formal notice will be provided.

It is your chance to voice your opinions (although, please don't feel you have to wait till the AGM to do this – most people don't!) and appoint a new fleet captain (or give me another year to badger and cajole you!!).

HELPERS REQUIRED

With so much going on, I do need to make an appeal for help to make some of these things happen. It is far better if all members of the fleet can contribute a bit, rather than the bulk of the work being left to a few.

Please look at the following list of things and let me know which you can help at.

Solo Open Meeting & End Of Season Championships

For these events we need to:

- Man the reception and take entries
- Supervise the arrival of visiting boats and control car parking at the open meeting boat park

Pat & Gerry Walters have kindly volunteered to do the reception, but we do need 2 people at each event to do the "car parking" duty. I have done this for the last 3 years at both events and wouldn't mind someone else having a go! (You can still compete, you just need to get your boat ready early and then "be on duty" till the briefing).

Flying Fifteen Open Meeting

The Flying Fifteen fleet are running our two, 1 day, open events, and we are running their 2 day open meeting in October (18th / 19th).

Richard Pye will be Chief OOD and Jonathan Hughes and myself have volunteered to help all weekend. We need two other helpers – ideally for the whole weekend, but we could cope with different people on individual days.

Promoting The Solo To New Sailors

In an effort to encourage people who have learnt to sail in the club's training courses to join the club and become active members, the fleets are being asked to provide someone to talk about their class at the end of the RYA Level 2 Training Courses.

I have done this recently and all you have to do is be up at the club for a few hours in the afternoon, rig your boat and talk to a few people about the Solo class.

I feel, as a fleet, we have quite a good track record of encouraging new sailors and I see this as a good way to continue and expand on this.

There are lots of sessions which are detailed in the grid below.

Summary Of Help Required

The table overleaf summarises all the opportunities to help. Please let me know where you would like to offer your services.

Date	Event	Help Required
Sat 17 th Aug – pm	End of club training course	Talk to people about the Solo
Sat 6 th Sept – am	Solo Open Meeting	Visitor car park control
Fri 19 th Sept – pm	End of club training course	Talk to people about the Solo
Sat 27 th Sept – pm	End of club training course	Talk to people about the Solo
Fri 17 th Oct – pm	End of club training course	Talk to people about the Solo
18 th / 19 th Oct	Flying 15 Open Meeting	Help on race team
Sat 25 th Oct - pm	End of club training course	Talk to people about the Solo
Sat 7 th Nov - am	End of Season Champs	Visitor car park control

LOOKING BACK

While the primary purpose of this newsletter is to remind you of forthcoming events, it also provides the opportunity to make sure everyone knows what has been going on since the last newsletter – so here goes!

Draycote Inter-Fleet Championships

A noble team of Solo sailors flew the class's flag at this event. I am very grateful to all who participated, some not very willingly (!), and to Richard Pye who captained the team.

There were the normal classic errors – sailing the wrong course (this time, Richard Pye when miles in the lead!), getting a Vago stuck in irons at the start (how I laughed at Mick Clay doing this, till I did it myself a few races later!), not covering the opposition and breaking the boat.

But we performed adequately, coming 6th I believe, although rather disappointed to lose out to the Flying 15s! It could easily have been so much better, but, for me, this event is all about getting the whole fleet competing and not about focussing on our best sailors.

Nationals

Three members of our fleet – Jon Clarke, Barry Green & Nigel Pybus – attended the Solo Nationals in July. All had some excellent races, with all getting at least one top 10 place, which is a good achievement in a top quality fleet of 84 boats. But all had to count a maximum score (did not finish / compete) in their results so this put them down in the overall results a bit.

However, Nigel went one better on his normal practise of winning a prize at every Solo event he competes in – this time he won two! Nigel won the Plate Series and the Buddy prize – well done!

However, we had almost as many fleet members competing in the Miracle Nationals in August in what was an amazing event for Draycote sailors. Draycote took the first 2 places (Paul & Callum Huett retaining their National title), and a Draycote boat won all but one of the 10 races! Our own Richard Pye finished 5th, with Harrison providing the added skill. Our other fleet member, John Tippett, came 16th in the 50 boat fleet.

Open Meetings

Richard has also been sailing Solos, with wins on the open circuit at Peterborough, Middle Nene and Ardleigh. Jon Clarke has also put up some impressive performances, and there was a stage when Richard was leading the Eastern series and Jon was leading the Western series!

Richard had an excellent Inlands, finishing 3rd, although he was unlucky not to do better – if only the fourth race had been held! But this supplements his 3rd place at the Winters – we are lucky to have one of the top 3 inland sailors at the Club, even if he only comes out to challenge us occasionally!

However, for me, pride of place goes to Andrew Smith's 3rd place at Hollowell in very strong winds (Jon came 2nd). We expect Richard and Jon to do well, but Andrew's performance was a delight!

The Summer Series

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, we have been having some great racing over the summer (even if it hasn't been a great summer for racing!).

I am afraid I have taken a leaf out of the previous fleet captain's book and tried to lead from the front, but most of the series are still there for the taking, and a few more results could transform quite a few people's results, and the leader board.

Unofficial, and provisional, results and points, up to near the end of July are as follows (for those who are currently qualifying, having completed about a third of the races):

	Sunday am		Sunday pm 1		Sunday pm 2		Wednesday evening	
	14 races, 5 counting		13 races, 4 counting		12 races, 4 counting		17 races, 6 counting	
1	Jeremy Atkins	5	Jeremy Atkins	4	Jeremy Atkins	4	Jeremy Atkins	6
2	Greg Irish	6	Mick Clay	6	Lance Evans	8	Richard Byne	12
3	Richard Byne	11	Lance Evans	9	Pete McCrea	10	Andrew Smith	13
4	Robin Warren	12	John Coleman	9	Mike Partington	12	Robin Warren	16
5	Lance Evans	15	Richard Byne	10	John Coleman	13	Pete McCrea	17
6	Mick Clay	18	Robin Warren	16			Mike Partington	22
7	Pete McCrea	23	Hamish Brown	18			John Coleman	25
8	John Coleman	25	Pete McCrea	18				
9	Jon Hughes	37	Mike Partington	20				
10			Jon Hughes	28				
11			Graham Marshall	32				

But there is still a lot of time to play for! In all but the Wednesday evening series we have close to a third of the races to go, so even if you are not listed above, you could still qualify and even win the series!! So this is an encouragement to get on the water and compete. To qualify, you have to finish in a third of the races completed. The top 3 in each series win prizes!

I am pleased to say that Lance and I are still top two in the all-in Club Handicap series for the final race on Sundays (which also goes into the above Sunday pm 2 series).

Training

On a windy, cold and rainy day (felt like winter, not a Saturday in August), 15 fleet members of the fleet took advantage of the coaching provided by the Solo Class Association. Andy Fox came down from Liverpool and Paul Keemens up from the Cotswolds to give some really helpful and personal tuition.

After an initial session in the wet bar, we were on the water, doing exercises and short courses to fine tune our skills and find out where we were going wrong. While the wind was stronger than ideal, most people coped really well with the conditions.

We had a short break for lunch, followed by a talk round the mysteries of tuning a Solo in the dinghy park, and then back on the water for more short races and the dory approaching you, telling you what you should be doing differently.

A final debriefing session in the bar allowed a few final topics to be covered off before we took our rather weary bodies home! (Not surprising that no-one on the training course raced the next day!).

The handicaps for the pursuit racing will all be calculated on results **prior** to the training day, so the Handicap Trophy may well go to the person who learnt the most at the training!!

OOD DUTIES

My reading of the OOD list on the website are that the following duties are coming up, but please check for yourself – this list is not necessarily exhaustive, particularly if you are also a member of another fleet.

You will get a letter from the office warning you.

Day	Chief OOD	Assistants
Sun 7 Sept	Jonathan Hughes	
Sun 26 Oct	David Eales	Paul Emery, Simon Orton
Sun 9 Nov		Simon Wickes
Sun 16 Nov		Dennis Slack
Sun 14 Dec	Mick Clay	Tony Jenkins
Sun 4 Jan	Robin Warren	Richard Munday

If you can't make your allocated date, ideally find someone on the above list to swap with and then tell the Office (it would be helpful if I knew as well). Alternatively just let the office know (but they will then ask me to identify who to swap you with, so it would be much easier for me if you did that!!).

Thank you to all those Solo sailors who have done duty recently – it is much appreciated!

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