



DRAYCOTE WATER SAILING CLUB

SOLO FLEET NEWSLETTER SPRING 2008



WELCOME!

Welcome to your new Solo Fleet newsletter! When I was elected Fleet Captain, I promised an increase in the communication and so this is really the first tangible demonstration of that.

I'm not sure how often it will come out. I suspect the main edition will come out yearly, at around this time, giving all the details and dates for the year. Then there will be one or two smaller "reminders" about events as we get closer to them. We will see!

But, as always, feedback is very welcome. I'm up at the Club most Sundays (now in that unmissable green boat!), and always contactable by e-mail or telephone.

2009 CALENDAR

Together with this newsletter is our 2008 calendar, in a form which you can keep separately, pin it up or fold into a paper aeroplane and fly through the air! But don't tell me I haven't given you the dates of everything.

There will also be a copy you can get to on the club website (www.draycotewater.co.uk) from the Solo page in the Fleet section.

I will be trying to put more things on the website, but will not be excluding those who don't have access to the internet, or have access, but can't work it (you know who you are!!).

PRIZE GIVING DINNER

Once again, we will be having our prize giving dinner at the Club, jointly with the Miracle Fleet. We've done this for the last 2 years, and it has proved to be a fun event.

This year there is a brand new caterer and it promises to be gastronomically enjoyable as well as socially! Solo attendance was down a bit last year, and I am hoping for a return to the sort of numbers we had in 2006 this year.

As always, partners are most welcome!

The details are:

Date: Friday 4th April
Time: 7.15pm for 7.45pm
Venue: Draycote Water Sailing Club
Cost: £15 per head

I need applications for tickets and payment by the end of February, so please give me your money at the Club or post it to me. Make cheques payable to Jeremy Atkins.

Prizes will be presented to the top 3 in all our series (listed later) and the ubiquitous Capsize Trophy will be presented to a worthy recipient!

The date also happens to be the birthday of one of our prize winners, so come prepared for a double celebration (and ready to sing "Happy Birthday!")

OTHER KEY DATES

The calendar is attached, but other key dates for the Draycote Solo year are:

Sunday 8 th June	DWSC Interfleet Championships
Saturday 9 th August	Solo Fleet Training Day
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

I apologise that so many of the events are in the latter half of the season. This is partly as a result of only picking up the organisation right at the end of last year, and partly because the Club and Solo calendars are so crowded. Feedback when you would like things and I will try to do better next year!

QUESTIONNAIRE

Thank you to those who returned your questionnaires – 19 of the 34 were returned (56%) which I suppose I was a bit disappointed with. But the main thing is that fleet members have been given the opportunity to contribute to the plans for the fleet.

As a results of this exercise:

- I have confirmed contact details for those people that replied.
- I have e-mail addresses for most of them, and most want to receive communication through e-mail, saving money and time.
- There was almost universal interest in a training day and a handicap day, so those have been organised.
- I now have clear guidance as to the format the majority would prefer for the Fleet Championships.

GENERAL CLUB CHANGES

The Club's Sailing Committee has been fairly active recently, experimenting with different formats and ways of doing things. Clearly some of these things will be a success and some won't, but I think it is good that they are being so pro-active to try to improve what happens.

Changes that will affect the Solo fleet are:

Start Times

As requested at the Solo fleet AGM, the start times have been adjusted from the start of the Summer Series (30th March):

- In Sunday races 1 and 2, the Solos will now be start 5 – one after the Medium handicap (Lasers etc) and two after the Flying 15s. This is 3 minutes earlier than previously, so remember to leave the shore that bit earlier!
- On Wednesday evenings we will be start 4 – again one after the Medium handicap (Lasers etc) and two after the Flying 15s.

Sunday Third Race

In an attempt to encourage participation, the third race on Sundays from 30th March will be a Club handicap race with **one** start.

The whole series will go towards the DWSC Handicap Trophy, and, in addition, there will be a prize awarded every month. Initially this will run till June and then be reviewed.

As a fleet, we will continue to have a series for this third race, using the results from this handicap race. But also, with the wind typically dying at the end of the day, we should be in a good position in the Club handicap series as well!

OOD DUTIES

The Club is introducing a new approach to OOD duties and has developed a new computer program to facilitate this.

Perhaps the biggest change is that duties will no longer be exclusive to particular fleets. The reason for this is that some fleets (like ours) have many people capable of being Chief OOD, but other fleets do not. So those people in other fleets were really being stretched.

There will still be "Solo duty days" where the Solo fleet will be providing the Chief OOD and usually one assistant, but fleet members may be called to assist on other days.

The new computer program records when everyone does duties (when they turn up!) and allocates duties to those who have done them least recently.

So it is not up to the Fleet Captain to allocate duties anymore, although I do have an input into what the system churns out, so it is still important for me to know your preferences etc (even if it may not be as easy for me to accommodate them as before).

The list as it has been published so far (there will be more duties coming) is as follows. If you can't make your duty, please try to swap with another member of the fleet on this list and let me and the Club office know. It is your responsibility to turn up or swap!

Day	Chief OOD	Assistants
Sun 30 Mar	David Eales	Barry Green, Simon Wickes
Sun 6 Apr	Mick Clay	Brian Thomas
Wed 30 Apr	Robin Warren	Hamish Brown
Sun 25 May		Bill McCutcheon
Wed 4 June	John Coleman	Lance Evans
Sun 29 June	Mike Partington	
Wed 23 June	Pete McCrea	Nigel Pybus
Sun 27 June	Greg Irish (TBC)	
Sun 10 Aug	Jeremy Atkins	Dennis Slack
Sun 7 Sept	Jonathan Hughes	
Sun 26 Oct	David Eales	Paul Emery
Sun 14 Dec	Mick Clay	Tony Jenkins

The Club is running an OOD Training Course on Saturday 15th March (re-scheduled from 2nd February). If you are interested in getting better and getting a certificate to prove it, contact the club office to see if there are still places.

INTERFLEET CHAMPIONSHIPS

After last year's successful inauguration of the DWSC Interfleet Championships, this is being held again on Sunday 8th June. It will be held in Picos, Vagos and Fireflies.

This was a fun event at the Club last year and resulted in a larger number of people participating and attending than I have ever seen before.

As last year, I hope the Solo fleet will have good representation from throughout the fleet, involving sailors of all standards.

I am looking for people to be part of the Solo "team" and also for someone to take responsibility on the day, since I am likely to be elsewhere. Please let me know if you fall into either of these categories.

SOLO SERIES

Richard Pye increased the focus on the Solo series by re-introducing the trophies that had not been presented for a number of years, and I would like to build upon this.

While I think it is fair to say that the results of the series will never be top of most people's minds, I am keen to encourage greater interest in them and competitiveness about them (which will hopefully encourage even greater attendance!).

As also requested at the Solo fleet AGM, I am keen to spell out exactly what the series are and criteria for them.

The series will run for the dates and races indicated below, and the results will be calculated by taking your best finishing positions from a **third** of the total number of races completed (rounding down where necessary). To qualify, you have to complete at least the number of races to count. Races you do not finish do not count towards qualification or points.

Series	Dates	Maximum* number of	
		Races	To count
Sunday Summer Race 1 (am)	30 Mar – 19 Oct	28	9
Sunday Summer Race 2 (pm)	30 Mar – 19 Oct	27	9
Sunday Summer Race 3 (pm)	30 Mar – 19 Oct	28	9
Wednesday Evening	2 Apr – 10 Sep	24	8
Sunday Winter Race 1 (am)	26 Oct – 29 Mar	23	7
Sunday Winter Race 2 (pm)	26 Oct – 29 Mar	23	7

* Likely to be reduced, with races not completed.

SOLO FLEET CHAMPIONSHIPS

Following the "voting" on the questionnaire, this is going to continue largely in the format used over the last 3 years:

- Held in normal club racing over two Sundays (28th September and 12th October – NB **not** consecutive weekends), and consist 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.

HANDICAP DAY

There was an overwhelmingly favourable response to Nigel Pybus' suggestion for a Handicap day. This will be held on Sunday 31st August and consist of Races 1 & 2 (both to count), which will not count towards the Summer Series. (Race 3 will count as normal).

They will be run as pursuit races, with sailors starting in reverse order to their normal finishing positions / times, with the theoretical idea that everyone will cross the finish line at the same time.

This is an approach the Fireballs use, and who can forget the day that their handicap system worked perfectly and virtually the whole fleet rounded mark J together with a short beat to the finish line. Unfortunately Mick Clay also happened to be rounding mark J at the same time and you can guess (and probably heard!) the reaction!

It won't be perfect, and setting the handicaps will be a bit of a political nightmare, but my intention is to use empirical data to do this rather than judgement, so, hopefully, I won't get too much flack! But the main thing is that it is a fun day, intended to give more people a chance of winning a Solo race or series.

SUMMER BARBEQUE

In order to emphasise the fun nature of the Handicap Day, I intend to host a fleet Barbeque at my house in Long Itchington on the Saturday evening beforehand (Saturday 30th August). The handicaps will be announced that evening.

All fleet members (whether or not they will be sailing in the handicap day) will be very welcome. Also, importantly, their partners are most welcome, whether they have any interest in sailing or not. (My wife Barbara will be looking for others to talk to who don't realise that running and reaching are finer points of sailing, but think they are things their husbands experience after a boozy night at the curry house!).

There will be a cost (probably about £10), but we will keep it as low as possible, and it will include food and drink! More details nearer the time.

TRAINING DAY

Again, Nigel's suggestion of a Solo Class Association run training day was warmly received by those who completed their questionnaires – in fact 18 said they would like to attend!

Fixing this up has been a bit of a nightmare – fitting in with both the trainers' availability and the club's calendar. But it is now fixed for Saturday 9th August. I know this is slap in the middle of holiday season, but it really was the only Saturday in the year which worked!

We will have 2 trainers who can each deal with up to 8 sailors, so numbers are limited to 16 on a first come, first served basis.

The cost will be £10, and to register you need to give me a non-returnable deposit of £5. This cost is paying for the use of the club motorboats in exactly the same way as we do for an open meeting.

The Solo Class Association provides the trainers free of charge, but you have to be a member of the Solo Class Association to benefit from this. If you are not, I strongly recommend you become one – it is very good value (£16 - £11 for renewals by the end of January each year) and provides you with lots of information, news etc.

BOAT PARK

One of the problems with being such an active fleet is that space in the boat park can get a bit tight. We can make space for more boats – those on the top level can be "organised" a bit better so that they are all facing the same way and closer together, and I have been promised that more space will be created for us when we need it.

BUT "when we need it" does not mean overnight! So:

- Can those who have taken their boats away for the winter and had their berths temporarily occupied by someone else make sure that person knows well in advance when you are expecting your berth back.
- Can those in "borrowed" berths ask their landlords when they will be bringing their boats back and reclaiming their berth.
- Can those people who will be needing a new berth because of this or because of the arrival of a new boat let me know well in advance.

We are going to have to have a fleet working party of volunteers to help "organise" the top level and so I need time to arrange this and get volunteers BEFORE we run into problems, so please make sure you let me know well in advance of you needing a new berth.

I would hope / expect that those on the top row and those wanting a berth will be part of this working party, as well as other fleet members.

OTHER ASSISTANCE

And, while on the subject of volunteers – as most of you know, we have reciprocal arrangements with other fleets for the running of open meetings.

This year we have teamed up with the Flying 15 fleet – they will run our 2 one day opens, and we will run their 1 two day open (18th, 19th October).

Richard Pye has kindly agreed to be Chief OOD for this event, but we will need at least 5 volunteers to help run it (ideally with some having Level 2 Powerboat certificate – but don't let this put you off volunteering).

I would really appreciate volunteers for either one day or both days. While I appreciate that most would prefer to sail themselves in the Club racing on the Sunday, I would hope that those who sail in our open meetings realise that this is the quid pro quo for us being able to have our own open meetings.

AND FINALLY

And finally, it only remains for me to wish you great sailing in 2008 and to congratulate our prize winners in the 2007/8 series, who will be presented with their awards at the Prize Giving Dinner on Friday 4th April – be there!

Series	First	Second	Third
Winter	Mike Burgoine	Mick Clay	Richard Byne
First Summer	Mike Burgoine	Jeremy Atkins	David Eales
Second Summer	Jeremy Atkins	John Coleman	David Eales
Summer 3 rd Race	Jeremy Atkins	Lance Evans	Pete McCrea
Wednesday Evening	Richard Pye	Robin Warren	Pete McCrea
Fleet Championships	Nigel Pybus	Jeremy Atkins	Pete McCrea

And, of course, there is the Capsize Trophy to be awarded – will it go for quantity (as last year) or artistic merit (as the year before) or another pinnacle of capsizing endeavour?

Jeremy Atkins
DWSC Solo Fleet Captain

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