

Dee Sailing Club review of the year 2020

Well what a year to pick to begin as Commodore!!

Things seemed to start well at the AGM on the 2nd February, the transition to a new team on track, with a well attended

'Pre-season Drinks' on Friday 21st February, seeing a great turnout, boding well for a great year of socials and fun, with our Vice Commodore even showing 'out side the box' thinking with a new way to traverse the beams!

However, a week later mother nature began to interfere with our carefully planned 2020 racing plan, as gale force winds resulted in the cancelation of the Dee & West Kirby combined Winter Series races.

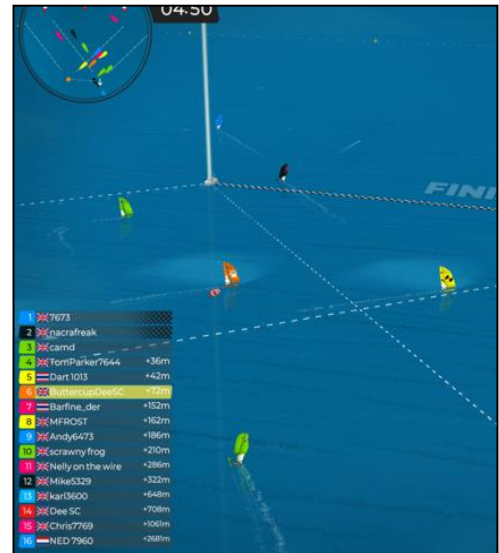
Then came the Covid-19 outbreak and on the 14th March the General Committee issued the first of many Covid related statements, initially advising members that the club would remain open, then on the 25th March the difficult message that the club and grounds were closed to all members, was sent out and the start of what turned out to be 7 weeks of lockdown began.

Despite the difficult situation the club continued to operate remotely, from General and Sailing Committee monthly meetings moving to Webex, to Weekly Cruiser Newsletter's created and shared, on-line training and Tuesday Gang sessions arranged.

Also a virtual Dart Open meeting was held, the brainchild of James Douglas, it was a great event, with many visitors entering the 42 strong fleet for on-line catamaran racing! Our very own Mat Pollock the victor after 2 days of racing!

Many thanks to everyone who was involved in keeping things going during this difficult period.

Then on the 12th May, easing of the restrictions started and we were finally able to make use of our boats and the 2020 sailing season began!



Dee Sailing Club review of the year 2020 (2)



During May, activity at the club started to build, as cruiser members completed boat fettling ahead of launching and catamaran / dinghy sailors enjoyed the freedom to get out on the water. The weather remaining unusually fabulous, assisting in getting things back on track, with cruisers launching soon after the lock down was eased.

An adhoc visit to West Hoyle Bank was also undertaken, with cats supported by big James in his new cruiser; it was a great day to escape for a socially distanced adventure!



During this time a new phenomena arrived at Dee S.C. A new fleet of high performance monohulls! Macca's Blaze gang!! Inspiring Andy & Paul to follow suit, it has been great to see monohulls back on the Dee S.C. race course! This also spurred us on to hold the Monohull Madness, dinghy Open Meeting in August!

Dee Sailing Club review of the year 2020 (3)

It is very evident that as soon as it was possible, the rapidly growing Dee Cruiser fleet were determined to get out on the water at every opportunity.

Over the summer Solstice, DSC flotillas thoroughly explored the estuary with cruises out to Hilbre Island, around Hoyle Bank and over as far as Prestatyn. Some boats even took the opportunity of friendly relationships with the owners of the Duke of Lancaster at Llanerch y Mor to stay over and enjoy the summer nights under the stars.



With lockdown restrictions eased in July, flotillas took the opportunity to sail into the beautiful waters around Conwy Bay and Anglesey. With temporary berths at Conwy and Deganwy marinas flotillas sailed to Puffin Island, Red Wharf Bay, Beaumaris and Bangor.

To quote fleet captain Noel '*Never has cruiser sailing in the UK come so into its own since the restrictions foreign travel*'.

For sure our Cruising fleet goes from strength to strength, well done to everyone involved in encouraging, organising and supporting the new members.



Dee Sailing Club review of the year 2020 (4)

The Dee Dart fleet is also building momentum, with a number of new and past members joining us this year, at the last count we have 34 Darts in the boat park!!

Dee's annual Dart Open Meeting is a long standing fixture in the UKIDA racing calendar and everyone was disappointed that we couldn't run the event as planned in May, but hosting the virtual regatta instead. However, as lockdown eased, we saw an opportunity to reschedule the event for August, ensuring Dee's run of hosting a Dart Open remains unbroken!



A strong turn out from our fleet, supplemented with some travelling visitors saw 20 boats enter. Racing was especially close at the top of the table, with James & Alison Douglas tied with David Lloyd & Jojo Trafford on 4 points, however Davids decision to not compete in the last race saw James & Alison clinch the overall win.

Again generous support from sponsors Deva Sail Racing and Indigo Art, was fabulous, helping us put on a great event. And from rescue, race committee, captains team, social team to the bar, thanks to everyone involved in making this happen.



Dee Sailing Club review of the year 2020 (5)

The rescheduled Commodores Cruise took place on the 29th August.

A fairly grim morning met us at the club and after some debate as to whether we should go, a fairly favourable forecast gave us the encouragement needed to crack on!

A great day followed, with our friends from West Kirby joining us too, we were treated to a wonderful sunset when we got back!



Dee Sailing Club review of the year 2020 (6)

For me, the closest we got to a real Dee S.C. event this year was our regatta, held on Saturday 19th September.

It had everything, from a tricky breeze off the land, cats blasting round avoiding West Kirby's more sedate tidal fleets and the cruisers enjoying their racing, all followed by a great afternoon on the lawn in the sun with burgers and a few (?) cold ones!



Oh Mat & Liz broke another boat!

Dee Sailing Club review of the year 2020 (7)

I hope you agree the previous reports illustrate what an impressive amount of sailing we managed to squeeze into the condensed 2020 season. I think this can only bode well, for when we emerge from this lock down and can get on with projects stalled and bring everyone together as one club.

I would also like to thank all the members who have volunteered this year to ensure the club can operate. Indeed it is a great shame we had to postpone our prize giving this year; not only to celebrate success on the water, but also the significant contributions from so many of you.

So in no particular order, a personal thank you from me for your support this year, whatever group you are involved with:

Sailing Committee, Rescue Team, Captains Team, General Committee, Tuesday Gang, Cat Coaches, Race Officers, Website & Tech Support, Angie & the Bar Staff and the Flag Officers.

Also as you will see in the AGM notice, a number of people will be stepping down this year after serving on the General Committee. So I would also like to say thank you to Liz Morris, Chantelle Neighbour and David Goddard, for their service on the Committee. Ian McLean also steps down from his role of President; thank you Ian for your support and service to the club since taking over from Chris in 2014. And finally, Jonathan Waddington is also stepping down as Hon Treasurer, after taking over from Greg in 2016. As you will see from Jonathan's annual accounts and report published with the AGM notices, the club is in a strong financial position, a large part of that down to Jonathan's careful and meticulous management of our accounts. All of your contributions will be missed.

Likewise I look forward to being able to welcome a number of new members to the General Committee, who have been proposed to take over the now vacant positions.

Finally, I'd just like to say fingers crossed this lock down is soon eased, then we can get back to what we all love; pottering with our boats, sailing our boats and socialising at our club!

Thanks again for your support

Regards

Lee Matthews, Commodore Dee S.C.