



Dee Sailing Club review of the year 2021



Good bye 2021, a definite improvement on 2020, but tricky non the less!

I think most of us would agree, the pandemic has had less of an impact on club life this year and on the whole things have definitely started to feel far more normal, despite the current wave. Fingers crossed we will be able to hold the AGM in person this year, which as you will have seen is scheduled for Sunday 27th February, as while last year's remote meeting was particularly well attended, it's definitely better to do these in person, at the club.

When looking back at this year's socials, it was great to be able to hold our Christmas party this year. It was definitely my 'off the water' highlight of the year. Sue and the team put on a great night, the club was full, it looked great and the conga was epic!



This was quickly followed up by another key event that we weren't able to hold in 2020, our annual prize giving! Thanks to Jon Hayley for organising the prizes; as you can see, it was another really well attended event.



Relaxing of restrictions also meant that a few of us managed to finally tie the knot, with Will and Ann-Marie, as well as Chantelle and I being able to enjoy our rearranged big days!





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The General Committee saw some changes this year and it's been great to see the new team come together to move the club forward. It's the first time for a number of years that we have had a full compliment of general committee members, which is a great indicator of the health of the membership and people's commitment to stepping up to help out with the running of the club.

In terms of membership, David Harris continues to do a great job keeping us on track and managing all things membership. Webcollect continues to be a great way for us to manage our subs, so thank you everyone for fully adopting it. Overall membership numbers remain ahead of where we were before the pandemic, which is encouraging and sailing participation is also strong.

Then from a finance point of view, huge thanks to Emma Thomas, who took over from Jonathan this year as Treasurer. As you will have seen from this year's report, Emma has done brilliantly keeping track of club expenditure, always ensuring we get the best value for money possible delivering the different projects and the day to day costs of keeping the club going.



A number of work parties have been held throughout the year, enabling us to come together to complete some bigger jobs, from a big tidy up of the top field, to spartina removal to filling of gabians. The adage of more hands make light work, very appropriate!

Projects interrupted by the lock downs were able to be picked up again, for sure Captain Andy has been busy, not only with the kitchen refurbishment completed and looking smart, it was also exciting to see the arrival of the Mini-tractor, adding to club resources and capabilities.





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The Dee Cruiser fleet continues to go from strength to strength. To best share their adventures, I asked Class Captain Noel for his account of 2021.



Perhaps it was lockdown, with many sailors choosing not to holiday abroad, but 2021 saw a record number of cruisers launched from DSC. With more than 30 yachts swinging at the Thurstaston moorings by the end of May, the sailing season promised to be busy. And the promise was more than fulfilled.

Spring sailing started with 2 well attended Man-Over-Board training sessions, the Coronation Pursuit where yacht Atlas performed remarkably over 4 other boats and also the beginning of the 'To-Be-Named' series of races. In the series, yachts gained points both for completing and winning races. The winning boat would have the series and the trophy named after it at the end of the season. Captains were keen to have the new trophy named after their boats and many cruisers were attracted to start racing actively.

In June, racing paused briefly for Solstice cruising week which saw 2 flotillas set out. Five yachts headed for Anglesey and explored the Menai Straits past Caernarvon and beyond to Pilot's Cove.

A smaller flotilla explored the Dee Estuary and surrounding waters with cruises to Rhyl, Llandudno, Llanerch-y-Mor and Hilbre.

Outside of Solstice week, cruising continued throughout the summer with return visits to Llanerch-y-Mor for the inaugural Fun Ship festival and numerous cruises to Talacre, Hilbre and Rhyl.





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The Commodore's cruise on 3rd July was attended by over ten yachts and the long distance challenge race to D1 was won by Tarka.

The most tense races of the season occurred in June and August. June saw 8 yachts cross the start line for the DSC regatta which because of extremely gentle winds required captains to make use of every breath of wind to gain position. Finally, Baby Jane narrowly lifted the trophy after catching an offshore breeze as the finish line approached.



Conditions could hardly have been more different for the inaugural Chris Weston Memorial race in which strong south-westerly winds of over 20 knots saw boats fly around a three-point course at speeds of over 6 knots with the cup narrowly won by Wild Magic.



Sadly summer always comes to an end and, as the weather became more unsettled in late September, the finale of the 'To-be-Named' series had to be re-scheduled twice. However, the finale eventually went ahead on 26th September with 7 boats crossing the start with 4 boats still in the running for the trophy. Wild Magic completed a successful year's racing by crossing the line with both the fastest actual and adjusted time. However, she was only seconds ahead of Cordelia once handicaps were calculated. So, in tune with an exciting year's sailing the final race ended with a dramatic finish.

Once all boats were safely laid up in the boatyard in October, cruisers came together at DSC clubhouse for a laying up lunch to share stories and photos of the year.



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The Dinghy and Catamaran fleets have had an active year as well, whether that's open meetings at Dee, inter-club racing, travelling to events, to more estuary escapades, overall participation has been encouraging.



First up was the Blaze Northern Championships, this event was truly a testament to Blaze leader Ian McLeans tenacity! After limited commitment in the run up to the event, a fleet of 7 Blazes & some Lasers took to the water, which included the introduction of some guy called Leroy Matthews to the Blaze fleet. Two days of racing ensued, with some lively conditions on the Saturday, followed by more light and shifty winds on the Sunday; competitors and the race team were kept on their toes! Well done to Ian for making it happen.

Then Dee's annual Dart Open was held at the end of May, with 24 boats entering, 13 of which from Dee SC. Racing was fierce and the Goose was cold! In terms of results, James & Alison came out victorious, beating previous Nationals winners Rob Garca & Fi Goegebeur into second place. Then in the Handicap Prizes, Billy & Tom were winners, with Glen & Rosie second.



Other particularly notable events included Chris Weston's Memorial day, a fitting tribute to a such a well loved Dee stalwart. Well done Pete & Max Spedding for winning the dinghy & catamaran racing.



We also had the regatta, which was great success; equally great to see Sam Newton & Christina Churchman coming out on top in the Dart fleet. It was also a great club social; a perfect Dee afternoon on the lawn, with the first live entertainment since before the pandemic – no one would have guessed???



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This year the club was well represented on the national circuits, in particular was brilliant to see James & Alison winning the Bridlington Dart 18 TT; we also had members attend both the Blaze & Dart Nationals.



We were also represented in local competitions organised by kindred clubs, with entries in the Liverpool YC's Commodores Cup and WKSC's Match Racing competition.



One project that has been ongoing for a number of years has been to set the club up as a RYA training centre. The primary objective being to enable us to run our own Power Boat Courses, with the potential to lead on to other areas such as Day Skipper, VHF,.... Thanks to President James Douglas for his perseverance and kicking this over the line, with support from Jon Hayley, Andy Nash & Chris Hoppins. Exciting to see that we have 2 weekends of PB2 course coming up in March, both of which are fully subscribed and will hopefully help us to bolster our rescue team which is increasingly relying on fewer volunteers to provide support.



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This years Commodores Cruise took place on the 23rd July.

Another fairly grim morning met us at the club, however as the cruisers had already set off, we were all committed and off we went!

With support from our salty seadogs Glen & Gareth, the flotilla made it safely to the West Hoyle sandbank.

While we hadn't managed to co-ordinate diaries with WKSC, it was great to find Jean Louis on his Fin & Jon Atkinson with his cruiser had braved the elements to join us. For 2022, I'm confident that our dates are aligned with WKSC for the 11th June and we will hopefully be joined by our friends at Wallasey YC .



Fun was definitely had by all (even Gareth), the rain held off, we were treated to freshly caught mackerel off the BBQ and Dart joy rides were enjoyed by a number of the cruising fraternity.





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I hope you have enjoyed this report and agree that 2021 has been another successful year for Dee SC, now set for what should be a great 2022. The sailing program has just been published, so look out for that, it should be cracking season all round!

Also as you will see in the AGM notice, there are relatively little changes to the make up of the General Committee this year. Although of course I will be stepping down after my 2 years, handing over the reigns to Andy Potter.

For those of you who don't know Andy, he's a hugely experienced sailor, regularly seen out blasting around the estuary on his A Class catamaran! Having served on the Sailing Committee as Sailing Secretary and then as Rear Commodore Sailing, since I joined the club back in 2011, he's always been heavily involved behind the scenes ensuring sailing runs smoothly. I wish Andy all the best of luck and hope he receives the same support shown to me by everyone.



Finally, I'd just like to say a massive thankyou to all the committees and members for your support over the last 2 years. I can certainly say it has been an interesting time, while at times hard work, it's also been a lot of fun. I think I will look back on my time as Commodore with a sense of pride and achievement, in doing what I set out to do on the 2nd February 2020; leaving the club in the good order I found it in when I took over from Will!



Regards

Lee Matthews, Commodore Dee S.C.