

A 'Sailing We Will Go

IT is a fact of simple geography, often bemoaned by local holidaymakers, that Northampton and its environs are just about as far from the sea as it is possible to get anywhere in Britain.

But a resolution passed at last week's meeting of the Mid-Northamptonshire Water Board means that no longer will this distance from the sea represent a handicap for those who would enjoy that away-from-it-all sport - boat-sailing.

For the Water Board, after many months of careful deliberation, have at last set their official seal of approval to long-laid plans for Pitsford Reservoir, now nearing completion, to become a venue for sailing.

Even before last week's announcement, scores of people have evinced close interest, in the possibility of sailing on the reservoir, and the organising committee, which kept matters going until the club could be properly constituted, have all the names carefully filed.

And now that the official go-ahead has been received, these people - and many more who fancy their chances at the helm of a boat on the reservoir - will be wondering just what the costs of this sport will be.

The facts are simple - and rather surprising. As Britain's leading sailing boat designer, Uffa Fox, has said : "If you can afford a television set, you can buy a boat and go sailing."

The enthusiasts behind the club make no secret of their determination to train their members to take their place with the country's best. Indeed, they believe that they have, at Pitsford, waters where some of Britain's international and Olympic helmsmen of the future may have their first introduction to the sport.

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Solo Fleet Richard Butterfield, Fleet Captain

Saturday 1st July brought disappointment for English football. The clash with the Solo Open at Pitsford may not have been among Sven's concerns but did worry the Northampton Sailing Committee. However a timetable which aimed to get everyone off the water before kick-off and prize-giving at half time attracted 18 visitors to join the 10 home boats.

Lightish easterly winds gave problems to Race Officer Mike York and competitors alike. There were many hard luck tales of holes and shifts, but the final results were more or less in accordance with the normal pecking order.

Stephen Denison and Chris Brown tied with a first and second place each, with

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50th Anniversary Celebrations

took place over the weekend 23 - 25 June. With nearly a dozen teams participating in the 8 hour race on Saturday, 120 plus at the evening 'do' and more great sailing in the fun races on Sunday, an excellent weekend was enjoyed by all those present.

Many thanks to John and Vicki for organising the event, Elaine for the excellent food, Will for the 8 hour race and everyone else who helped out.

Dates for the Diary

Mon 24th - Fri 28th July -

Children's Sailing Camp

Wed 9th - Fri 11th August -

British Moth National Champs

Mon 28th August

100 mins Bank Holiday Pursuit

Sun 10th Sept - Warwick Trophy at Cransley SC

Please remember - it is an Anglian Water rule that there is no swimming in the reservoir. It is particularly important that parents do not allow their children to swim.

Keep up to date with the latest results (thanks to Chris Harris) and news about events at the club by looking at our website - www.northamptonsailingclub.org

Dear Editor, I feel compelled to write the following, I am quite happy for you to publish, if you see fit:

Many more people would go racing if we got rid of this "handicap/pursuit racing" situation, it is dull, uninteresting and better suited to mathematicians than racers. People like to go home knowing their position in a race. We need fleet racing. The membership needs to vote to retain 8 to 10 favoured classes (something for everyone). It would be vital that the 8-10 classes should be decided by a temporary committee of members (social or full) each with at least twenty years of dinghy racing experience. When the classes are chosen, new members would have to sail one, existing members would have reasonable time to switch to a recognised class and remove their current boat from the site.

Failure to take action such as this will see the further demise of Northampton Sailing Club as witnessed at many, once great, clubs in the UK. On the other hand, by taking action, NSC should draw membership from clubs who are already beyond reprieve from problems caused by dilution and handicap/pursuit racing. There might be a mild financial pill to swallow in the short-term (some current members might leave to sail elsewhere) but beyond this, there could be financial gains in the medium/long term. Interestingly, I have witnessed smaller clubs (who are restricted by their water size as to the number of classes sailed), positively thrive over the last few years.

A phenomenon within the sport over the last 15 years has seen national dilution of fleets due to the so called "new classes" appearing and often failing. Frankly, as a social member, I walk around the boat park and see dozens of classes, some of which I don't recognise, nearly all of which are rarely sailed. The majority of boats at NSC sit in the boat park, a very sad sight indeed.

Fleet racing breeds enthusiasm, it also encourages healthy transfer of knowledge, equipment and expertise within each fleet. Handicap racing encourages people to sail a boat with a favourable PY number.

In the days when classes were limited at NSC, the club was a great club, probably one of the best in the country (I've been a member of NSC, on and off since 1975). The obvious argument to this is that "dinghy sailing has diminished in the UK". Wrong, it has become more popular in recent times, more participants than before, unfortunately being diluted into too many classes.

I for one will not join as a full member until a vote/action as described above is instigated.

Northampton Sailing Club needs to wake up !

Regards

David Scott (social member and ex Fireball World Champion)

Ed: Well, what do *you* think? The Sailing Committee has discussed this recently and would value *your* opinions. Enclosed with this newsletter is a brief questionnaire. Please fill it in and send it back to NSC for the attention of Ian Castle, Rear Commodore Sailing.

Vice Commodore's Comments

We had the Blue Committee boat checked and it looks like the cockpit floor is beyond economical repair. I remember about ten years ago replacing the "keel hog" with Chris Wright and fibre-glassing the hull up, thinking it might last a few more years! She is still floating but not a great place to run a race from.

Cockpit floor, windows and foredeck all require replacing. Because of this, we are planning to replace her with an "Estuary Launch" style boat, with inboard engine and cabin for those cold winter days.... What we now need to do is raise some funds - approximately £6000 would buy a good boat. Fund raising plans are being drawn up by the General Committee.

We are also looking for more ideas on improving our sailing club, be it on the water events, off the water socialising or even how the club structures its membership. Please pass your thoughts and ideas on to Carol Travers, Ian Castle, myself or any Committee member.

We are still struggling with lack of boat spaces so we intend to do an "Un-seaworthy" boat review. Members with "wrecks" on site will be asked to remove them. So if you have one please take it away before we get to inspect it! Remember it is a club rule that all boats on site must be able to pass a buoyancy test and if any fail they will have to be removed. Safety first....

John Wayling (Phantom 1100, RS600 647)

The Laser Fleet Don Breen (Recently Elected Fleet Captain.)

I would thank you all for electing me as your Captain and I look forward to meeting you and addressing any matters that you may have concerning our Fleet. On behalf of the Laser Fleet, may I extend our thanks to our previous Captain, Jim Lowbridge for all his commitment, work and efforts. Thank You Jim.

The season is well under way so I have had to quickly catch up on what is happening. As I write, the next big Laser event at NSC is the Laser Open to be held on Saturday 1st July. The Open benefits both the club and the fleet. Competition from our own Club helps to generate interest and goes a long way to making the event a success. You will find me at the Club on most Sundays. Please come and find me if you have anything that you feel requires my attention. Naturally, any new members to the fleet can be pointed in my direction and I shall do my best to assist them.

See you at NSC, on land and on water. You can contact me by e-mail - laserfleet@northamptonssailingclub.org

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Those who may be wondering whether Pitsford is to become a sort of cheap holiday centre, attracting rowdies, litter louts and other social pests can be reassured. The sailing club is intended for the sailing enthusiast alone although, of course, it hopes to develop its social side. Strict discipline both on water and ashore will be maintained - as, indeed, it must, if full safety standards are to be observed.

Extracts from The Northampton Independent, 10th February 1956
See this plus other articles and photos on our web-site.

Boats for sale

Enterprise wood, needs some TLC. One set of sails good condition. 2 masts 2 booms, very worn cover, launch trolley, no road trailer, kept at NSC. £250 ono Adam Sonn 01536 511356

Lark 2165 Parker Mk2 - blue deck on white hull. Overall, the boat is in good condition for its age, everything works and the boat sails well. It is fully kitted out for racing. Combi trailer in excellent condition. £1150 Steve Taylor snstaylor@mail@btinternet.com

More boats advertised on the Boats for sale page on our web-site

Open Day in May was very successful, with numerous visitors on site and more than a dozen new members joining up on the day.

HRH The Princess Royal visits Northampton Sailability,

Back in November, the Lord Lieutenant of Northamptonshire, Lady Juliet Townsend, wrote to me, asking if we would like to be considered for a visit by Princess Anne. Would we? Of course we would; we leapt at the opportunity! And so, the well-oiled machine that is our committee broke into a walk and started organising an 'ordinary' Sailability day out of season.

Tuesday 14th March dawned, presumably, but there was no sunshine and the rain that was forecast arrived at the same time as HRH. Her arrival was 50 years after her Grandmother, HM The Queen Mother, had opened Pitsford Reservoir and Northampton Sailing Club.

Despite the bad weather, Princess Anne brought the sunshine with her. 96 people had accepted the invitation and were there to meet and talk to her. Jenny Jeffs, Principal of our RTC, had organised a display of radio and navigation courses and HRH joined Mohammed Ameripour in playing with one of the new interactive CDs.

After circulating the groups of members in the lounge and galley, it was time to go outside to look at boats and sailors in action. Knowing that The Princess Royal is President of the RYA and that she knows a lot about Sailability, it was at this stage that I handed over to Georgina Taylor to discuss the boats we use and the activities in which we are involved. It was also raining quite hard!

I was privileged to ask HRH to name our second Martin 16 'Free Spirit'. This was bought with funds generously provided by a local charity, The Phillips Trust. Don't be confused by the photograph. 'Freespirit' was a typo by the name putters-on!

Phantom Open 17th - 18th June 2006 Will Gulliver

Saturday dawned sunny with a thermal breeze the racing started promptly at 1.00pm and almost immediately most of the fleet wished they hadn't bothered. As the thermal breeze fought for supremacy, at some point in the race almost all of the fleet would consider themselves in the lead as the fleet sailed from one calm patch to the next. In the end Will Gulliver was first across the line followed by Daren Pike & Simon Cowood.

The fleet spent the next couple of hours ashore watching the wind first fill in from one side of the lake followed by the other until thankfully racing was abandoned for the day.

Sunday started early to catch up with the program with a nice force 2 breeze. Andy Couch started well in the 2nd race and pulled away for a comfortable lead followed by John Wayling and a rapidly improving Gulliver.

The third race was sailed on windward leeward course and was led from start to finish by Will Gulliver followed by Andy Couch followed by John Wayling.

During the fourth race sailed directly after the previous 2 in a pleasant force 2-3 with occasional planing on the reaches. Gulliver led at the beginning but was passed by Couch downwind who went on to win however continually pushed by Gulliver all the way to the line, The ever consistent Wayling finished 3rd.

The final race started after a break for lunch both Gulliver & Couch had 2 first places & a second so the overall victor would be decided in the last race. It started in a similar force 2-3 breeze of the morning. Gulliver got away well and had a 30 meter lead at the first mark, with Couch in 3rd as the breeze started to drop steadily Couch reeled Gulliver in and by the third lap the 2 were neck & neck, somehow Gulliver held on downwind to lead round the final leeward mark only 100 meters from the line, in the tacking battle to the line Couch skilfully managed to put a club Solo between the warring parties, the final verdict from the photo on the line was that Couch had beaten Gulliver by 4 inches. Wayling again came in third after pulling through the fleet from an indifferent first beat.

Overall Results:

Pos	Sail No	Helm	Club	Pts
1st	1211	Andy Couch	RYA	5
2nd	1216	Will Gulliver	Northampton	6
3rd	1100	John Wayling	Northampton	11
4th	1183	Daren Pike	Rollesby Broad	11
5th	1229	Eddie Brooks	Elton	14

The visit closed with our young member, Michelle Blunden, presenting Princess Anne with a posy of roses.

I have had nothing but positive comments from those who attended this very special day for us: very special, in fact, because we were one of only two establishments visited in Northampton that day and we received excellent press coverage as a result.

The day would not have worked without the hard work put in by the committee and helpers, who all have my sincere thanks on behalf of the members.

Harry Cockburn, Chairman

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Stephen winning on sailing's equivalent of a penalty shoot-out. Andy Miles was only one point adrift and David Liddington was his usual consistent self, even having a fourth place discard.

Gary Ireson entered the the P&B works boat from Hollowell SC, although he is also a Northampton member and came in fifth. Jon Clarke looked short of practice. Brenda Houlton brought a touch of much needed glamour to the front of the fleet, but retired from the last race to relieve husband Simon of child minding duties.

Best of the home Solo Fleet was Graham Wilson in a creditable 9th place.

The winners on a hot day were Portugal, Stephen Denison and the sport of Sailing. Pros and amateurs together, disputes amicably settled and soon forgotten. No red or yellow cards, not even any diving, though it was tempting.

Overall Results:

- 1st 4327 Stephen Denison (Hollingworth Lake) 3pts
- 2nd 4672 Chris Brown (None) 3pts
- 3rd 4598 Andy Miles (None) 4pts
- 4th 4605 David Liddington (Rugby & Daventry) 7pts
- 5th 4691 Gary Ireson (Hollowell) 8pts

Gary's new Solo 4708 arrives at last!

After naming and launching his new Winder Solo, Gary Livingstone took first place in the Solo Fleet Early Summer Trophy (18th June) plus good results in the Club Pursuit and Handicap races to win both Series overall. Well done Gary!

Pitsford Pirates Young Windsurfers News by Donna Tailby

On Sunday 25th June a group of youngsters from Pitsford attended a Midland Region Windsurfing competition at Carsington Reservoir which was combined with an RYA T15 junior windsurfing event, and all raced with outstanding skills and results.

Pitsford Pirate's representatives for this event were Sophie & Victoria Archer, Riley Harber, Ollie Brett, Matthew Brown and Jason Clarke. Jason, Ollie and Matthew were representing the club for the region, and Sophie, Victoria and Riley, who are newcomers to the sport, were competing in their first ever T15 event and together with Matthew, formed the Pitsford Pirate's team.

Carsington, was pleasantly windy and warm, so all being well it would be a full day of racing without too much pumping, and with everyone registered, kit rigged, and all courses set, the briefings were held, and the racing began around 11:15. The Pitsford group were sailing in 4 different fleets, so that meant that there were 3 courses to watch, as Jason, Ollie and Matthew were on the main course, competing in the Bic Techno 293 One Design 7.8 and 6.8 fleets, Riley on a course in the T15 5.5 open fleet, and Victoria and Sophie on the T15 3.5 open fleet course.

After some very entertaining races, the following results were achieved:

Bic Techno 293 One Design 7.8 fleet - 2nd Jason Clarke, 3rd Ollie Brett

Bic Techno 293 One Design 6.8 fleet - 1st Matthew Brown

Team 15 Bic Techno 293 One Design 6.8 fleet - 1st Matthew Brown

Team 15 3.5 Open fleet - 3rd Sophie Archer

The next regional event, and this will also combine with T15 racing is on Saturday 15th July at Notts County Sailing Club, and registration will be on the day. Anyone who would like to attend and have a go, is always welcome, the only necessities are for the T15'ers to be members of the RYA and to have a board with a centre board, and the adults should be members of the UKWA.

Also congratulations to Ollie Brett and Matthew Brown for their achievements at the RYA Eric Twiname Regatta held at Rutland Sailing Club on the 6th and 7th May 2006. With Ollie taking 1st place in the Bic Techno 293 One Design 7.8 fleet, and Matthew taking 2nd place in the Bic Techno 293 One Design 6.8 fleet, together with one other North Zone team member taking a top place in his fleet, ultimately winning the Windsurfing Zone trophy for the North Zone Squad.

Jason, Ollie and Matthew, are currently also taking part in the National Racing events, which involve course racing on the sea, various inland course racing events, slalom racing, and RYA regattas, and are doing very well in the most competitive junior fleets in the country.

Anglian Water Series by Fred Reading

On Sunday the 4th June we took two boats to the Hollowell Regatta. There would have been more of us but it was right in the middle of exam time and several members of our team were off revising. Hollowell Sailing Club is in a lovely spot on a reservoir only 8 miles across the A5199, so we had no problems getting there from Pitsford, and we had a friendly reception. The only problem we had all day was the lack of wind. Hollowell reservoir is situated in a wooded valley so it is quite sheltered and only the very experienced sailors managed to pick up the faint breezes that gently brushed across the water.

There was a good selection of boats. A Topper fleet, a fast fleet with some very nice 405s, then a slower fleet made up of Picos, Optimists and a Mirror. After our morning briefing we had three races. The first race was the slowest of them all. It took us 10 minutes to get to the first mark. The Rest of the races were easier, but there was still a lot of moving about to get the boat going as fast as it could in the slowest wind speed ever. After the races we put the boats away, and got changed. Hollowell Sailing Club had laid out a table full of free cake and ice cream. We then had prize giving. Unfortunately none of us got a prize, but we had a good time.

For more information about this series, see the NSSCA web-site : www.nssca.org.uk



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Learn to sail! For details of courses and other activities, please contact *Isolda Marroquin*, Centre Manager, Tel: 01604 880248, e-mail: info@northamptonwatersports.com or look at our web-site: www.northamptonwatersports.com

Articles and ideas for the Newsletter are always welcome.

Please send them to The Editor at NSC or e-mail to newsletter@northamptonclub.org