



Grafham Water Sailability

Making Waves for Disabled Sailors

Spring 2012

UK CHALLENGER CHAMPIONSHIPS

Grafham Water Reservoir

1/2/3 October 2011

The organisers of this regatta had two extra worries. The first was a high pressure area over eastern England which was forecast to last until after the regatta. Would there be no wind? The second was that recent Challenger regattas had attracted few competitors.

However, twenty Challengers took part with helms from as far away as Hungary and Scotland. Also, the wind arrived and was constant in direction.

GWS was represented by Pauline Shaw, Ray Hopkins, Bob Bellamy, Ian Barrowman and Geoff Nichols. Four GWS sailors who were regatta novices took part, each sailing with a buddy sitting on a seat supported between the main hull and a sponson. Lynne Middleton sailed with David Campbell; Paul Kellett with Judi Figures; Andy Coy with Eric Joyce and Michael Hargrave with Roy Beard.

According to the sailing instructions each buddy could take over if their helm got into difficulties, but each helm did the sailing during each race. For some of them it was their first regatta and each sailed in the Bronze Class.

The wind-less conditions of recent days continued on the Saturday morning. However, in the middle of the afternoon the flags started to move and two races were sailed. The sailing was pleasant because of the sunshine but the light winds meant that racing was not the most exciting. Val Millward and Graham Hall, both of Rutland Sailability, were joint leaders at the end of Saturday with Zoltan Pegan of Hungary in second place. An outstanding sailor was Patrick who had

improved greatly despite being only in his twenties and sailing a relatively old boat.

On Sunday, the wind was medium strength – much more lively. Also, the sun was warm. Two back to back races were held in the morning and two more in the afternoon. Back to back races are races held one after the other without coming ashore. That means less work for the able bodied shore crew who help the disabled sailors. The shore crew are very efficient and often get 20 boats into the water in a very short time.

The wind was constant in direction and strength but with stronger gusts. By the end of Sunday, the popular sailor Val Millward had taken the lead.

Monday brought medium to strong winds with frequent gusts. Again it was warm. There were two back to back races. Val Millward was the regatta winner with Zoltan Pegan second, Graham Hall third and John Draper (Reading Sailability) was fourth. Pauline Shaw was the leading GWS sailor.

On Tuesday, the weather was back to normal Autumn conditions but the sudden arrival of wind replacing wind-less high pressure conditions had given an excellent regatta.

Ian Barrowman

REGATTA FROM A LANDLUBBER'S PERSPECTIVE

I would like to thank all who helped, in any way, at the UK Challenger Championships which were held in October.

The weather was, for that time of year, amazing and the atmosphere was that of a great party, good humour and hard work combined to make a truly memorable event.

Our visitors were highly complementary about the organization in general but particularly regarding launching and retrieval, and the cabin staff keeping everyone supplied with refreshments.

I was told on more than one occasion that they felt it was the best Regatta they had ever attended, praise indeed, and somewhat of challenge to see if we can do as well at our next regatta on 23rd and 24th June 2012.

LADYBIRD



This boat is called Ladybird and is the Water Wing of the St John Ambulance Brigade. She is 61 feet long, 10 foot 3 inches wide and weighs 24 tonnes. She can carry up to 20 passengers; if there are six wheelchairs then we can only have another eight passengers as a wheelchair counts as two!

At the base in Hertford Marina there is a ramp for wheelchair access to the boat. On trips it carries a portable ramp to allow passengers to go ashore. There is a fully accessible toilet on board. A water heater and microwave are available for passenger use in the small galley. Our visitors can bring their own picnic or arrange to dine ashore in St Ives or Brampton Mill.

Older people and those with disabilities or serious illnesses and their carers are invited on board to enjoy the river and the countryside. Although the trips are free of charge we do hope for generous donations as it costs around £30,000 to run the Ladybird for a year and we are expected to be self funding.

The boat is inspected, audited and fully licensed by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency and the Boatmasters are examined and licensed by the same agency.

Groups are invited to come on trips between April and October between typically 10 am and 3 pm. How about a Sailability day trip? Contact St John Ambulance HQ in Huntingdon, 01480 847300 for further details.

Annette Gray – crew member

GWS AGM

Our AGM was held on Saturday 7th January at GWC. It was attended by 30 members, most of whom also attended a very good lunch prior to the meeting and many of whom paid their subscriptions, for the coming year.

The AGM went extremely well. Apologies were received from Joan Hartley, Eddie Baker, Michael Hargrave, who had flu, and Pauline Shaw who fell and broke her hip before Christmas, has had a hip replacement operation, and is now at a rehabilitation centre in Hitchin giving the staff grief. Hip replacements seem to be all the rage at the moment with several of our members joining the Hip-op Club.

The introduction was given by Chairman Wendy Hopkins with reports by Commodore Judi Figgures, Sailing Secretary Vanessa Weedon-Jones, Fund Raising Secretary Eric Joyce and Treasurer Roy Beard.

There were lively discussions, firstly on banking issues which we are looking into and which Tony Gilchrist, an experienced Treasurer of many years standing with other charities, has offered his help and secondly whether or not the Hobie Tandem Island was a sailing vessel. I have been told that GWC had previously banned a canoe which Annette Gray was helming and which seemed to be a lot of fun. I believe this was due to it having no sail and not being a training craft!!! How sad.

After much discussion it was made clear, and accepted by all, that the Hobie Tandem Island is a sailing craft and has been accepted by GWC as such.

Our Summer Racing series was won by Pauline Shaw with Geoff Nichols second and Judi Figgures third. Well done to all and please take part again this year, to keep our sailors who were not successful in being placed in the first three, something to aim for.

We have all been asked if we would contribute to the Newsletter, so if you have anything that might be of interest, including anything not sailing orientated, please let Tony Gilchrist know.

**Wendy Hopkins
Chairman**

THE DAVID CAMPBELL MEMORIAL RACE

As you know our Commodore of many years standing David Campbell died, unexpectedly on the 15th October last year at Highclere Castle.

David's father was one of the first injured soldiers to be taken to Highclere Castle, the setting for the TV series Downton Abbey, and David has written a book from his father's memoirs called, "Forward the Rifles: The War Diary of an Irish Soldier". You can clearly hear David's voice when reading this book, which is available through Amazon.

His death was a great shock and deeply felt by all. He will be sorely missed for all the help he gave so freely, sailing the Drascombe, a boat he loved and a task he thoroughly enjoyed, buddying Challengers, which he came to enjoy, towing Challengers to Regattas for others, fixing anything that he could, cutting the grass, removing rubbish bins and so much more. He gave advice freely, would apologise immediately if he thought he were in the wrong and would forgive even those who reversed into him at regattas. He left, as I remarked at the AGM, his mark on our hearts, the committee boat, the concrete and several other challengers.

So we put together in 5 days the David Campbell Memorial Race. What a fantastic event to come out of something so very sad. It just happened, no great planning or organizing, just everyone came together to make it a truly memorable afternoon. From Judi Figgures obtaining the beautiful trophy, Norman Griffin suggesting a minutes silence, Errol Brackstone setting the course round the Tower, Lynn Middleton sailing with an empty buddy seat, she had sailed with David buddying in the above mentioned Regatta, to all those who attended, and some of whom read poems in memory of such a great orator.

I felt proud and privileged to part of such an amazing gathering, so much love, affection and huge respect for one of life's true gentlemen.

He will not be forgotten.

Wendy Hopkins

Chairman

IN MEMEMORIAM DONATIONS

£1,289.13 was donated by Andy Palmer's mourners and £800.00 by David's.

THURSDAY SAILING

GWS sailing takes place at Grafham Water reservoir, Perry, Cambridgeshire just off the A1 at Buckden from April to October inclusive. We start at 1.00 pm on Thursdays. You can sail Challenger or Hobie Tandem Island



trimarans. Both are very stable and so suitable for the disabled. You can sail with an instructor and later possibly sail solo. More disabled persons can sail in a large Drascombe lugger with an expert sailor and 5/6 others. Racing under formal conditions takes place once per month. If you are able bodied then your help will be very welcome. You do not have to be an expert sailor but if you are then you will probably be able to do some sailing.

EDITORIAL

It gives me great pleasure to take over as Editor and distributor of the quarterly GWS Newsletter. Our thanks go to Ian Barrowman who has carried out this task in the past. I would love to hear from you with snippets of news, hilarious happenings or details of forthcoming events. I can be contacted by e-mail at: grafhamsailability@gmail.com If you know someone who should receive the Newsletter but isn't at present, please let me have their details.

Tony Gilchrist

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions are due on the 1st November annually, so it is time to start considering sending them in, if you haven't done so already. I will be accepting subscriptions at our second lunch of the season at Brampton Park Golf Club on 2nd February 2012, so hope this does not put you off!!!

GWS Diary Dates

GWS sails every **Thursday** from **April to October inclusive** starting at about 1.00 pm **subject to weather conditions**.

2012				
Day	Date	Month	Time	Event & Location
Thursday	19	January	10.30 am	Winter Racing at Grafham Water Sailability.
Thursday	2	February	12.30pm	Lunch – meet Brampton Park Golf Club
Thursday	9	February	1.30 pm	GWS Portakabin for a practical session.
Thursday	16	February	10.30 am	Winter Racing at Grafham Water Sailability.
Saturday / Sunday	25 - 26	February		RYA Scotland Big Weekend, Inverclyde, Largs
Thursday	1	March	12.30 pm	Lunch – meet Brampton Park Golf Club.
Thursday	8	March	1.30 pm	GWS Portakabin for a practical session.
Thursday	15	March	10.30 am	Winter Racing at Grafham Water Sailability.
Thursday	29	March	1.00 pm	Preparation and cleaning of boats.
Thursday	5	April	1.00 pm	2012 sailing season begins.
Saturday / Sunday	5 - 6	May		Scottish Open Challenger Championships, Strathclyde
Friday / Saturday	11-12	May		Burghfield Regatta
Friday / Saturday	25 - 26	May		Oxford Regatta
Saturday / Sunday	26 - 27	May		Helensburgh Regatta
Saturday / Sunday	23-24	June		Grafham Water Challenger Regatta
Friday - Sunday	20 - 22	July		Rutland Multiclass Regatta
Saturday / Sunday	18 – 19	August		Duncans Regatta, Bardowie
Saturday / Sunday	20 - 21	October		Ogston Regatta

Challenger Class Association subscriptions are due now.

Membership runs from 1st January to 31st December regardless of when you joined.

Adult £15.00 Junior (under 18) £ 7.50 Family (Member plus 1 other only - husband/wife/partner) £22.50

Huntingdon Male Voice Choir and Friends - Singing for You

All Saints Church, Sawtry

Saturday 18 February 2012 at 7.30 pm

Tickets £8.00 from 01778 347381

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