

32 things you never knew about Datchet Water Sailing Club (DWSC)

1. 2008 is a birthday year for Datchet Water Sailing Club (DWSC). The club was officially formed on the 29th February 1976. So there is a birthday only in a leap year. Even though it has been going 32 years, it's only its eighth birthday! The year is being celebrated with a number of high-profile club racing events, with sailors from all over the UK participating, and an open invitation to local schools to find tomorrow's sailors today by participating in the "RYA Onboard" scheme.
2. Datchet Water Sailing Club offers one of the largest inland waters for sailors near London. It is the perfect "one-stop-sailing" arena for everyone, to learn sailing, buy or rent a sailing boat, and become a member of one of the largest club's in the UK, and participate in racing.
3. In 1975 would-be members were invited to 'donate a fiver' to 'prime the pump', raising 650 pounds, and there are still quite a few of these 'Founder Members' at the club.
4. The reservoir was officially opened in 1976 by HM The Queen Mother. Her signed picture hangs in the club room.
5. The club proudly continues to uphold its royal traditions: the committee boat is called Lillibet.
6. The club's first Junior Fleet was called The Queen Mother Optimist Flotilla, a title approved by the Queen Mother in a letter from Clarence House.
7. Princess Anne flew out by helicopter from the reservoirs car park after presenting the prizes at a youth event.



8. The direct views of Windsor Castle from the club rooms are truly majestic. Companies like Microsoft and Vodafone have already held corporate events, and there is room for up to 150 people.

9. The club rooms have just undergone extensive renovation costing around 100.000 pounds.

10. For Londoners, the club is (on a good day) only 25 minutes up the M4 away from Hammersmith.

11. Big is beautiful. The water offers the longest uninterrupted “run” of any reservoir in the vicinity of the M25, according to Thames Water data. For the uninitiated, this sailing term means a longer sail without having to turn the boat around, or in other words, much more fun.

12. Members refer to the reservoir also as the “Inland Sea”. It holds 8300 million gallons of water in 475 acres, an area greater than London’s Hyde Park!

13. The reservoir is as high as it is deep: nearly 30 meters! Making for ‘clean winds’, which sailors love.

14. The water level could be raised by 2 vertical meters per day, if the inlet pumps were fully turned on.

15. Construction of the reservoir took five years. All materials for building the embankments were excavated entirely from within the reservoir, almost eliminating the need to transport material through the countryside. There are 3,5 miles in circumference. Some walls are 20 feet thick.



16. Undecided whether to go sailing today? DWSC has a brilliant website, which includes an instant live weather cast. www.dswc.co.uk

17. One of the maximum gusts speed recorded by the DWSC weather station was 68mph with a 10-minute average high of 55mph in January 2007.

18. Never sail on an empty stomach: The Barbecues in 2007 broke all records: 500 Hamburger and 500 Chicken Portions were grilled for our members and visitors enjoying their meals outside in the balmy summer evenings, together with a pint or two from PJ's bar. The menus ranged from caramelized Belly Pork with apple sauce, celeriac mash and spinach to Jamaican Jerk Chicken on a bed of chillies, gunga peas and rice. New caterer Gerry Palmer will expand on this tradition.

19. The upstairs of the club house was the "Queens Night Club" in a previous incarnation.

20. The doorman of this former Club was one Dave Courtney, who wrote the book "Stop the ride, I want to get off", and was the original behind the Vinnie Jones character in "Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels".

21. Producers Guy Ritchie and Matthew Vaughan also used the reservoir as a movie location.

22. Member Jamie Cox did not only celebrate his 30th birthday with a party in the upstairs party room, but he also proposed to his girlfriend on the night. She said yes.



23. The club is particularly youth oriented and family friendly. Mike Beckett, who sailed single handed from the age of 14, recently introduced his son Tristan, now ten, to sailing, and the youngster has already won his first race.

24. Tomorrow's sailors sought! For the first time, Datchet Water Sailing Club is inviting local schools to participate in the "RYA Onboard" scheme. This is designed to give children and teenagers a taste of sailing. If they like it, they can become members of the Junior Youth Scheme (JYS), which is professionally run according to RYA guidelines by the resident youth teacher throughout the summer.

25. Windsurfers welcome! 60 of Britain's best young windsurfers, including 15-year-old World Champion Ali Masters spent a weekend training at DWSC.

26. The Club has over 20 Club Boats to hire for new members, amongst others six world race Toppers to one Xenon, one Mango etc. This means that you don't have to buy a boat, but can try and find out what you like.

27. Class Racing: With the diversification of classes the traditional fleet structure has changed, and the racing is now organized into groups of classes based on type and PY number. This has been a very successful move. Individual classes still run their own championships at the Club, and there are major championships. The Optimist Inland Championships attracted 260 boats. To the uninitiated, this means that small boats can race against big boats, and still win!

28. The electronics of the all important committee boat are run on solar power.

29. Sailing is taking place all year round: Unlike many other clubs, Datchet is particularly busy in the autumn, from September to November – and again in the early part of the year from February to May.

30. Datchet Water Sailing Club (DWSC) boasts about 600 members, making it one of the largest clubs in the country. "DWSC is a modern, friendly club providing a complete package for every type of sailor, from absolute beginners to the world's best sailors. Everybody will feel welcome here", explains Commodore Tom Gradon.

31. The entrance to the reservoir is not in Datchet, but actually in Horton Road, in the village of Horton.

32. Datchet is the perfect 'one-stop'-sailing site: The club ([www. www.dwsc.co.uk](http://www.dwsc.co.uk)) works in close co-operation with the Datchet Watersports sailing school (<http://www.datchetwsports.force9.co.uk>), which teaches the entire RYA syllabus for sailors of all ages, windsurfers, and yachting. The famous Purple Marine (www.purplemarine.com) is the professional on-site chandlery, and Topper boat dealership.

Compiled 2008 by Tom Kaehler with the invaluable help of Gabrielle Boase, Mike Rogers and Peter Short.

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