



OVER THE WINNER

Name: Claire Davis

Boat(s) currently sailed at HISC: Fireball 14893



Claire Davis

What got you into sailing?

Guess who... my Dad, he was a passionate sailor all his life. Starting in dinghies and moving into cruising once he retired. But I was also super lucky to have a passionate school teacher, Mrs Hart who ran the school sailing club every Thursday night too. Nothing like the youth squad opportunities available today but it was super fun.

Where and what type of boat did you first sail?

My Dad built a Mirror dinghy in our garage as a 'winter project'. The whole family joined in to paint it yellow and we launched it at Stewartby Sailing Club, a nearby gravel pit in Bedfordshire.

We joined the Club when they had a split single decker bus as a changing room and no catering facilities, but my Mum always prepared packed lunches with her signature ham and cheese sandwich and Mars bar - Now the club has transformed there's a new club house, bar, kitchen and showers and changing rooms.

Why do you sail the class of boat you currently race at HISC?

Right now, I crew a Fireball with my partner, Mike Partridge. Why, because it's a supported HISC class so there's always some other boats to race against. The HISC fireball team have some great sailors to gauge our improvement and they are really helpful to share their knowledge too. We're also about the right weight and it's not an 'arms-race' class. Our boat is 20 years old, and we've learnt tonnes so far even winning a plate in Fed Week this year. Maybe we'll upgrade our boat soon.

I was massively impressed when I first sailed a Fireball, after thinking it was an 'old-fashioned' boat it didn't feel a very on-trend class to join. I'm so surprised how much I enjoy sailing it, it's a super boat especially in 15-20 knots.

I love the big mix of sailors who turn out regularly. Ladies, men, old, young, families and friends a great bunch who are really open to share their technical knowledge and techniques to help make our boat go faster too.



What other boats/classes have you sailed?

Quite a few... Merlin Rocket, B14, Tasar, RS200, RS400, RS800, Laser, Flying Fifteens. After an injury in the RS800 I couldn't bend my knee for 12 months, needed an operation and changed to a Flying Fifteen.

During my adult life I haven't always had sailing as a pastime. I sailed lots as a kid and while at university but then my career started taking over my focus, London had so many other experiences to absorb me and sailing went on the back-burner. I still shared weekend trips with my Dad on his cruising boat and dabbled at windsurfing, and marrying a person who had never sailed pushed sailing further into the background.

Since meeting Mike (we met racing a Hansa in Cowes Week and won our Class), it works well for us to sail together (most of the time). We've both had to learn to separate on and off-water conversations and become open to constructive criticism which was particularly hard for me as a non-confrontational personality. But for me, it is worth being persistent, I really love working together to improve and it's great to share the experience's we get when we're on the water, the places sailing takes us to and the people and friends we meet on this journey.

What class of boat have you never sailed but would want to?

A Sail GP F50 boat. I'd love to try this experience; I imagine I'd be so scared and exhilarating at the same time.

What do you enjoy most about sailing at HISC?

Hayling Bay sailing, it's amazing. I know it's loads more effort and resources for the Club and a race committee to make this happen but in my opinion it's so worth it.

What are your favourite sailing moments?

Ask me in 10 years' time. I've still not travelled to a Fireball Nationals and we've just starting an exciting journey with a big-ish cruising boat, who knows what I'll be able to share then?

