

Fairy Class Season Commentary – 2023

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10th September – Great bit of class action and teamwork. With the able assistance of Cham in the launch and Craig driving the tractor we had all seven remaining boats out of the water, washed and on their cradles in 2 hours and fifteen minutes. Another season draws to a close, maybe see you at the quiz!

9th September evening – Menagerie dinner – A great crowd in the dining room enjoyed the traditional fayre of steak and kidney pie and chicken and ham pie. Some of the revellers were still there at midnight!

9th September – Menagerie race. Great turnout from the Fairies with 10 boats starting. We were only 5 minutes behind a single Topper dinghy. We were 10 minutes ahead of a single Squib and 20 minutes ahead of a single 505. Handicaps for everyone were about right except the Topper who will need more time next year. The Squib was in the middle of the fairies at the finish and the 505 was pipped on the line by Lorelei with Snipe in the same photo-finish. Reasonable sunny day, with some heavy squally showers testing the foredecks who had an interesting spinnaker gybe in the middle of one the big squalls. In the sunny spells there was little or no wind testing everyone's patience. Immediately after racing we were able to get the first four boats out. Psyche, Fiend, Banshee and Maimoune all lifted out and placed on their stands.

7th September – Magnificent finish to the season from the class with all eleven boats answering the gun for our last points race of the season. Well done everyone. It was a shame for the two boats who did not answer the second gun and did not come home and were scored OCS, Sheevra and Finvara. D'oh. Light winds from NE again sent us to 6-5-home. Lorelei got away well as did Snipe both on the outside, Fay and Banshee were trying the inside track. When it came to the first cross Lorelei were leading from Pixie and Snipe. That remained the case as the fleet rounded Dunratho and then Killymard. Psyche were also in the hunt trying to secure the overall trophy. On the run home in dropping breeze, Lorelei repeated her HYC regatta performance and found a hole and unfortunately slowed down which allowed Snipe, Psyche and Pixie get through. She did recover to 4th. Maimoune and Banshee had a good recovery on the run to gain a couple of places. Snipe, with guest helm Simon Brien, won from Pixie and Psyche. This gives Psyche overall honours with Pixie picking up the late season and the Firsts and Lasts.

5th September – More sunshine and a wee sea breeze encouraged all eleven boats to hit the water. An X-flag greeted the early starters and at least three went back. The course was 6-home only one lap in a failing breeze. Wind was 5kts from NE. The port of Belfast was very busy and lots of shipping traffic made for a lumpy swell. The inner end was crowded but favoured and Pixie and Snipe were early to show. Lorelei and Fiend were on the outside and going well in better breeze. At Dunratho, Fiend just made it in front of Pixie, Maimoune nudged the mark and had to do a wee spin. Snipe and Sheevra were up there as well. The run home saw several luffing matches, Psyche made several places and Pixie and Snipe had a great tussle at the front. The short beat between the lines saw Pixie hold off Snipe and the recovering Psyche. Fiend got fourth from Lorelei and Sheevra who just managed to nip in front of Maimoune.

2nd September – Hollywood Yacht Club Regatta – Great turnout from the fleet with 10 Fairies making the short trip west to Hollywood. It was very light and the we set off across a short line on a long beat to a mark laid just beyond 'our' Hollywood East No2 mark. In the very light conditions as different

boats caught different patches of breeze the lead changed many times. Lorelei, Maimoune, Minx, Psyche, Snipe and Fiend all held the lead at some point on the beat. Pixie and Sheevra got a bit stuck on the line and were in recovery mode trying to catch the leaders. At one point on the beat, the dinghys were catching the back markers and were in downwind mode with booms fully out as they caught us we were still close hauled. That change in breeze did hit the right side of the beat and at one point Fay and Banshee were both flying kites on the beat! Lorelei rounded first and set off back towards the harbour, opposite HYC clubhouse she ran out of wind and the rest of the fleet closed up and went past her.



Lorelei just as she 'stopped'

It was then a scramble for breeze and Pixie and Psyche found some on the right side and Maimoune found some inshore, at one point it looked like Maimoune had it, but a horrible shift slapped her in the face and she finished 4th. The right side paid and Psyche came through with Pixie on her stern for the win with Snipe getting the last step on the podium. A frustrating shifty day for racing, however a lovely day for a picnic, Sheevra's mojitos and Fiend's date and blue cheese sandwiches sounded like the highlights. As this was the last regatta of the season, overall regatta plate prize was decided and won by Snipe.



Fiend – (Post sandwich) in the sun

31st – At last an evening with a pleasant breeze for sailing. Breeze was SSE 10-15kts, very flukey coming back towards the shore. Course set on the water as no OOD appeared was 4-3-home 1 lap. Sheevra led from the start with Pixie and Psyche in close attendance in the outer limit. Fay also on the line but a bit closer to the shore. Pixie flogged her kite for a fair part of the leg, however as we approached Dalchoolin their persistence paid in spades as they overtook Sheevra and rounded in the lead. Lorelei and Minx were up there as well. A large cluster of Fairies arrived together and Finvara lost her overlap as she entered the zone and had to do a wee turn or two after an infringement and she lost several places. On the beat home, Going right paid in the early part of the beat and Sheevra lost a few places by going left, Pixie tried to cover the fleet but boats were spread far left and right. Right side paid for Minx and for Snipe when they came back across the fleet. In the very light and flukey conditions inshore Snipe held on for her maiden victory. Pixie got a second and Minx a third.

29th – Gosh! What a surprise, as sailors prepared to go afloat, a heavy squall blew in from the NW, wind and rain made it look like a less than inviting scene. Several crews did not leave the shore and there was at least one two-step. Wind was gusting and switching from W to NW and 10kts with heavy prolonged gusts up to 15 kts. Course was E-W-3-4-home. With light failing under the heavy skies there was only time for 1 lap. Maimoune led off the line and was first to get past the west line. She lost out on the one sided beat as the wind clocked left. Pixie led at the weather mark and had a good hoist on the way to Dalchoolin. She was followed by Fay and Snipe. At the back of the fleet Psyche got through Maimoune to relegate her to last. On the fetch home, it was too tight for the coloured stuff, Pixie held on to her lead and was under some pressure in another of the gusts as she finished. Fay held off Snipe and Lorelei came in 4th. Psyche improved further and got through Banshee.

26th – It is the season of the squall! Oh my goodness what a squall it was. Nine boats out for our (unbelievably) third, and final Saturday race of the whole season. Course was 5-4-home, 4-3-home. Three boats were on the 'B' of the BANG on the line, according to our stand-in RO (Thanks to Peter

Bates) Fiend were closest and were only a few inches from a false start. Sheevra were on the favoured end of the line and led up the beat from Psyche. We were punching into a horrible sloppy sea, Psyche managed the conditions well and rolled over Sheevra to lead at Killymard. Snipe and Fiend were close behind them. After the fetch to Dalchoolin, the lead boats gybed in relatively benign conditions and Snipe and Psyche hoisted kites on Port gybe to head back on the dead down wind leg home. Sheevra stayed a bit higher and then gybed onto starboard. Then that squall hit the back of the fleet. White horses everywhere, hugely scandalized mainsails and big angles on the gybes. By the end of the leg the torrential rain was spewing off the mainsail like a waterfall. On the second beat out to Dalchoolin, the sea was even more turbulent and any boat trying to point was doomed to stop dead. Sheevra briefly led on the left side of the beat, but Psyche overhauled her and re-took her position at the front. The run home was a polar opposite of lap 1 with a dropping breeze and the fleet closing up like a concertina. Psyche held on to the lead and Sheevra held off a late charge from Snipe. Pixie had a good last leg and overtook Minx between the lines.



24th – (Edited thanks to some info received from Simon on Maimoune) - Another squall, horrible lumpy seas and stiff Westerly wind put off several crews. Some did not venture out at all. Lorelei, Fay, Banshee and Sheevra did the Fairy-two-step. That left 6 boats out there in the pouring rain and lumpy seas. Those of us back in the bar were sniggering in our pints watching the rain streaking down the window..... then the boot was placed very much on the other foot, as the sun came out and the water calmed leaving a nice westerly breeze of 8-10kts for some nice late summer sailing. Course was 1-6-home, 1-2 home. Fiend led off the line, tacked and went out. Pixie came much further in along with Maimoune and Snipe. After the cross, Pixie led from Fiend then Snipe. Pixie extended the lead through the tidal gate at Pump Point, and although Snipe gained a bit of ground on the run, no places changed. The beat back to the lines was about staying in out of the tide, but

the same order was maintained. On the second round, in the middle of the fleet, Maimoune and Psyche had a close battle, finally, Psyche got through on the broad reach back home from Holywood East, in an attempt to regain the place, Maimoune hit the West line limit and had to treat the spectators on shore to a 360 between the lines, Maimoune was followed home by Minx.

22nd- Big squall blew through as the first boats were rigging then the weather settled into the forecast direction and strength. NW 8-12kts. The direction did vary a lot out there. It was almost impossible to cross the East line on starboard to head for the first mark. Course was 1-6-home, 1-2-home. Fiend, Snipe and Psyche were early to show. Lorelei led the charge inshore and was followed by several others getting out of tide. Boy did that pay, they came back from the shore on port with a huge advantage. Fiend led the boats who had stayed out and she rounded second behind Lorelei. Long run to Dunratho saw Lorelei extend her lead at the front and Sheevra to get from last to 9th. Really close racing saw a busy leeward mark rounding with 6 boats all in close company.



Some indiscretion at that mark (I was too far behind to see!!!) saw Pixie doing some turns and also in that rounding, Finvara gained a couple of places. The beat back through the line to pump point saw close tacking and counter tacking through the fleet, really close racing. Minx, Psyche and Sheevra cross tacking all the way up the beat. The return was a fetch and I think places were maintained. Snipe had got through Fiend and finished in second place, however an indiscretion on the start line caused them to retire. Pixie made a great rounding of the East line at the finish to pip Sheevra to 6th place. Lorelei held on to the lead for a great win.

19th – CSC regatta – and storm Betty. Overnight on Friday a large Atlantic low pressure system swept across the UK. Winds overnight were recorded at 49 knots in Carrickfergus. Thankfully there was enough south in the easterly flow to protect the boats on the moorings. Barring a few minor issues,

the Fairy fleet survived the storm really well. A few sail covers and cuddy covers flapping and one collapsed boom crutch were the only signs of damage. A few members of the class gathered on Saturday morning in a strong breeze and swell. A couple of Elites were recovered from the moorings and the two Marks from Snipe went out to inspect the fleet, baling where required and tying down the flapping covers. Thanks to them and to Frank for getting them out on the rib. Squalls continued to blow through all afternoon and very wisely, no-one went to CSC.

17th - Another race lost to the weather in this increasingly frustrating season. Strong SE wind blowing. 12-15 kts when steady, however in the prolonged gusts it was considerably stronger. Thankfully there was enough south in the direction to keep the boats in flat water. The Squib fleet did sail and got three exhilarating laps in.

15th August – Another frustrating night lost to the weather. Very little breeze all day. Light Southerly filled in 10 mins after the start and gave us enough interest to keep going. All in vain however as the shore team abandoned the race about 2030, with the lead boat only part way round. A breeze did fill in but it was too late. 10 boats were out breeze was from pretty much every direction at some point.

12th August – RNIYC Regatta – Stiff SW breeze with heavy and prolonged gusts welcomed the fleet, a couple of boats did not go out with conditions being well forecast. Sheevra did the two-step and the other eight boats went to the start. The committee boat was positioned down beside our Killymard No5 mark. Wind was 14 knots gusting up to 25 knots and boats were on their ears on the beat. The top of the first beat saw Fiend in the lead from Maimoune with Snipe and Lorelei in close attendance. On the run back, Snipe were the only boat that flew a kite and gained a few yards. Fay called it a day at the top of the beat and returned to the moorings as the conditions continued to be difficult. Maimoune had to do an extra turn having hit a mark and that allowed Lorelei and Snipe to get through. Lorelei continued that improvement and led at the top of the second beat. Banshee also made some ground and were in the hunt. At the finish of the first race, Lorelei held on for the win from Snipe then right on the line Banshee pipped Fiend for third place. Five of the fleet headed back to the moorings, wet and tired after one tough race, Pixie, Psyche and Lorelei stayed with it and did the second race. Psyche won the second one with Lorelei second and Pixie third. Even as those boats were approaching the moorings the gusts were still smashing into the fleet. On the shore, it was great to see so many old friends and former Fairies enjoying the regatta day atmosphere including Bobby Graham and Sheila Bradley former owners of Psyche and Minx as well as our current class secretary Jacque who was at the club for the first time in a while.

At the prizegiving, Lorelei won the Fairy class prize with her first and second, and as the Fairy class were the largest fleet competing on the day, she was also awarded the impressive Knockdene trophy. Well done to our Class Captain David and his team Paul and Brian on Lorelei.



10th August – Strong southerly wind gave flat seas and white horses galloping through the moorings. Several boats did not go afloat, four, went out and did the two-step, and five defied the conditions and went sailing. The period before the start saw boats reaching up and down on their ears and quite a lot of flogging mains as they spilled wind to stay in control. Course was 5-4-home, only one lap. Wind was 15-25kts from South. Pixie and Psyche were closest to the line at the start, however both were well short of the line. The race turned out to be a bit processional with boats finishing in the same order they crossed the line. So Pixie won from Psyche and Snipe followed by Minx ad Banshee. Testing conditions for everyone.

8th August – Eleven out sailing this evening – Light breeze from SE – Course was 6-5-home, only 1 lap. All eleven pushing the line at the start causing a General recall (haven't had one of those for a while). On the second start, Pixie and Sheevra got away well, with Snipe and Fiend also in the hunt, those who went right early in the beat came back from the shore having gained, this persuaded Sheevra and Psyche that this was the way to go. D'oh, wind filled in from the left and anyone on the right got stuffed. Pixie now had a lead from Snipe, going well straight out of the box, with Banshee in third. The run home saw Lorelei improving from 9th up to 5th or 6th, Psyche caught up with Maimoune and Banshee and managed to get inside them on the West line and crept over Banshee between the lines. Good win for Pixie and a great first performance from the Snipers to hold second place.



This was the first race in the Fairy class in about 15 years with 11 boats starting and finishing.

6th August – Then there were 11! Snipe – F16 was successfully launched today.



Having had a previous 'dunking'; this time it was more permanent. She was watertight apart from a leak above the waterline in the stern, which should take-up. She was immediately towed to her mooring and Ed and Mark occupied her for a while. All was well so she was secured and left on the water. This is the first time in her 115 years she has ever been properly afloat in salt water. This is also the first time a Fairy will actually carry the sail number F16, it was originally allocated to the Fairy that was never built, tentatively named 'Wraith' back in 1902. The Snipe team are rightly proud of her and are looking forward to sailing against the rest of us in the very near future.



5th August – CAYC Whitehead Regatta – Another race lost to the conditions. Strong wind was blowing straight at the moorings from Cloughan Jetty. A choppy swell was under it making conditions very unpleasant. Squib Nationals were on at the club and they had great Squibbing conditions, but a bit too much for us to go to Whitehead. We had four boats crewed ready to sail but all decided against it.

3rd August – The grim summer continues with another bad day. Strong winds from NNW saw white horses sweeping across the lough and the high-stools were calling us into the bar. N over A was flown and no-one went out.

2nd August – On the summer sailing course, they were forced to stay ashore due to the strong NE winds, but thankfully, Marcus and Laura were still in observant mode and noticed that Fiend was moving towards Holywood at a rate of knots. They immediately launched a rib and managed to retrieve her and brought her back to the moorings. Conor and Frank went out later and inspected the moorings where they found a chain link which had broken. With the chain replaced, Fiend was moved back to her mooring. Big thanks to the retrieval team for bravely going out in difficult conditions.

1st -August – Remains of a sea-breeze welcomed us and nine boats took the gun. A minor incident on the start line saw Fiend doing a couple of turns. Sheevra, Minx and Pixie got away well on the inside with Lorelei and Psyche on the outside. Wind was NE 8kts at the start, but eased all evening and eventually finished up as very light and fickle. Course was 6-5-home, in the easing breeze only one lap. Maimoune made some gains on the inside out of the tide and the fleet cross tacked to follow her in. Sheevra stayed wee bit further out and minimised the number of tacks on the beat and squeezed around Dunratho fighting the tide to stay up. Lorelei looked really good having taken a wide rounding of No6 and were holding up well in the tide. Sheevra needed a wee hitch at No. 5 and made it round

Killymard. Lorelei looked like they would follow shortly after but drop in breeze and tide did for her and she had to make two extra tacks. This opened the tidal gate for Sheevra who slipped away. She did her best to slow down with Brick dropping the kite in the water and nearly breaking her pole, but they managed to recover and held on for a win between the lines. Lorelei, Psyche and Fiend came through in that order, then the wind switched off and the rest of the fleet really struggled to get over the East line. Banshee retired at this point having realised that they had missed a mark. Pixie, Minx, Maimoune and Fay all persevered and got a finish. Psyche's position ahead of Pixie got her the mid-season points. Overall season points are now posted.

29th – Forecast was for gusty winds and potential heavy showers AGAIN, and so it was. A brief lull at lunchtime fooled a few crews into thinking it might be sailable, but after a 'Fairy twostep' the crews came back ashore. This would have been the last race in the mid-season points, however the two crews who are top of the pile in the mid-season points have sportingly agreed to use the next race sailed as a decider for the mid-season, rather than it being settled on a non-race.

27th – NE breeze of 10-12 kts gave us wet ears for the first time in a while. Two boats went back F5 and F8 after 2 toots from the starter. Psyche didn't need to go back! Lorelei, and Fiend were away well off the line. With all 10 Fairies in the water competing for clean breeze those who were in the dirt suffered. Sheevra tacked inside and lost out. Lorelei held on to clean air and crossed ahead of everyone to round Dunratho first. Course was 6-5-home x2 laps. After the hitch to Killymard the fleet were a bit more spread out, Lorelei had extended her lead. Neither Fay nor Maimoune flew kites on the run home, and from where I was sitting each boat gained at least a place and maybe two! At the leeward mark there was a scrum, finishing up with Minx leading the pack at a very slow rounding as the rest tried to push her up up up. So the chasing boats were all stalled on the outer limit. At this point the Lorelei's were disappearing over the horizon. Pixie, in recovery mode, got round the scrum and held momentum and gained about 5 places in one manoeuvre, an act repeated by Fiend at the end of the race for a similar result. Simon on Maimoune provided the following information from the chasing pack :

En route to the leeward mark ('E') on the first lap Finvara and Lorelei in 4th and 5th were having a luffing match with F2 some way behind although catching slowly. Finvara overstood/misjudged the tide at 'E' (much to Alistair's chagrin watching from the shore!) and took Lorelei with her as they both (correctly!) were carefully giving the 'give-way-boat' room to keep clear. Thus leaving a big gap at the mark which Maimoune nipped into and rounded although then had some problems getting our spinnaker-lowered. So, as the results sheet shows, Maimoune were fourth on crossing the West line at the end of the first lap and held it through the beat - having spotted Fiend and managing to cross her - to the end of the race.

F8 were attempting a recovery and did gain on the fleet, but could not gain a place. The second lap was slightly more processional, however, Finvara lost out after a luffing match went wrong and they lost out to Pixie between the lines. Great close racing through the fleet, except at the front where Lorelei had a huge comfortable win.

25th July – All the forecasts said dropping breeze all evening. They were all wrong a lovely breeze filled in from the west at 8-10 kts. It held for two laps of the course, 1-2-home. Pixie, Psyche and Sheevra were well away from the East line. There was a viscous strong tide rushing out following

several days of heavy rain. Going across it was serious 'crabbing'. Sheevra were closest to the shore staying out of the tide and risking the shelving beach at Pump point. They tacked in time (unlike Finvara, bump bump) and made their way out to pump point mark. Psyche rounded first followed by Sheevra then Pixie and Finvara who were forced to tack by Pixie on Starboard. The leg to holywood East was about staying up to crab across the tide. At the back of the fleet, Fined and Banshee were at the rear. The run home saw no change up front but Lorelei and Maimoune ran into a bot of bother rounding the East line. The second lap, was similar to the first but Sheevra lost out to Pixie in a mix of Squibs rounding Pump point. Fiend, meanwhile tried a hitch out at the West line and gained 4 places on the second lap. Psyche extended her lead and won, Pixie, however tacked close to the finish line and sailed along it without crossing and Sheevra pipped them to second place. A request for redress is being considered. Maimoune got through Lorelei to get 4th.

22nd July – Ballyholme Regatta – In the eye of a low pressure system AGAIN, a well forecast day with constant drizzle, light breeze and very poor visibility. At 11.00 (when we should have been leaving) there was no wind and although we had three crews ready to go. None left. Several members of the class went out to check their boats and make some adjustments. Team Snipe were in the yard most of the day, and at 12:45, the restored and 'converted' Snipe made her way down the slipway and into the water of Belfast Lough for the first time 'proper'. Into 'any' body of water for the first time in approximately 15 years. I am pleased to report that the vast majority of the hull was completely watertight. She was leaking through a few planking gaps at the stern, however these were above the waterline and should take-up after some more time in the water. This was a test 'dunk' for her and she was recovered again. However she should be back in the water permanently early next week.



20th July – Fiend win the boat speed award. This for two reasons: first, she was the only boat to drop her mooring, second she got a tow from a safety boat. The sea was like glass, no wind at all. Terry, the OOD tried hard, put up the AP waited fifteen minutes, still no wind. We all packed up and came ashore.

18th July – Miserable wet day gave way to a bright dry evening. Eight boats on the line. Pixie, Sheevra and Psyche got away well. Course was 6-5-home-6-home. Wind was NE – 7-10 kts. Several boats went in to escape the tide. Pixie and Sheevra stayed out. On the final approach to Dunratho Fay made a brave and competitive approach on port and tacked in perfect time to squeeze Maimoune . Pixie rounded in the lead and Fay second, however Sheevra had a bit more momentum and managed to climb over Fay and Maimoune. At Killymard, Pixie had some problems with her spinnaker and Sheevra made some gains on her. The end of the run saw six boats abreast of each other at the west line. Everyone got round safely. On the second lap, Pixie covered Sheevra up the beat. Maimoune

made some gains on the inside and got clear ahead of Psyche and Lorelei. No further incidents that I saw on the run home from Dunratho. Pixie held on for the win from Sheevra and Maimoune.

15th July – Fairy worlds – The Inglis cup. Seven boats drifting around the start area. We were in the eye of a summer low pressure system, wind was very light and expected to change at a moments notice and so it proved to be. With tide pushing the fleet over the line, it was no surprise that there was 2-toots, Banshee were the guilty party and they took a turn round the outer limit. Course was E-3-2-home. By the time Fay, the lead boat, reached the East line 11 minutes had passed.



The fleet headed towards Jewel, Fay stayed left Pixie and Psyche went a bit further right. At the rear of the field, 18 minutes passed before Banshee rounded the East line. Maimoune were just in front of Sheevra who in turn were just in front of Banshee. At Jewel, Pixie were in front of Psyche and Fay were third. At about this time the wind switched off completely and we sat wallowing in the confused wash of three passing ships. Pixie went left as they headed for Hollywood East, Fay went right and Psyche and Lorelei up the middle. The breeze eventually arrived, from the right and Fay picked up her skirts and went flying away with a lead of 150 metres inside about thirty seconds. Psyche were next followed by Pixie. Pixie tried her best to catch Psyche but to no avail. Lorelei were 4th followed by Sheevra, Maimoune and Banshee. Denis and Jane won well on Fay.

13th July – Sea breeze was coming in from NE. That worked for the first leg. Course was 6-5-home. Unfortunately, half way back from Killymard, breeze switched off. Tide continued pushing us back towards the lines. At this point Finvara were leading from Psyche and Pixie. Finvara sailed the beat well starting outside and staying in fresher breeze. Psyche and Pixie had a tacking battle up the shore. Sheevra, Maimoune, Fay and Banshee went up the middle. Lorelei and Minx were also staying in

close. When the breeze switched off, someone 'upstairs' rolled the dice and snakes and ladders was the game. Fay, Maimoune and Lorelei got the ladders, Sheevra, Banshee and Minx slid down the snakes. Frustrating end to a very nice evening. Finvara held on for a win with a late tack on the West line to shut the door on Psyche.



13th July – Another milestone reached for F16- Snipe, as they were able to fit their boom and also have a test hoist of her mainsail. Fingers crossed for getting her wet before the end of the month.



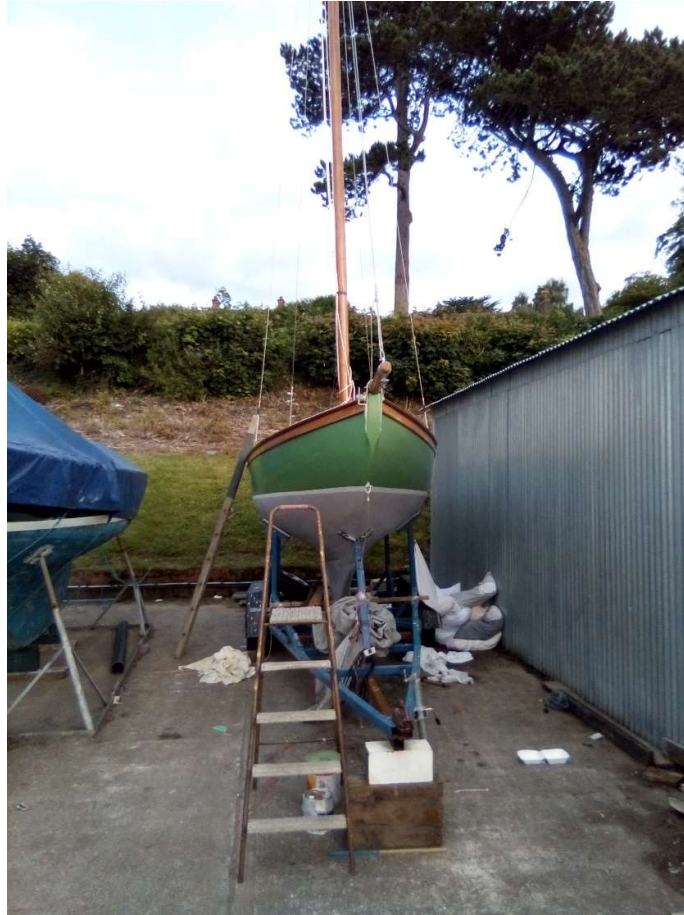
11th July – A nasty squall during rigging made sure that the crews started wet. Lorelei and Banshee had both been re-launched and both were dry. (Fingers crossed). Eight boats raced in changeable conditions and a strong tide. Course was 2-3-home. It was a beat to Hollywood East and then a beat back home from Jewel! 1 lap only. Sheevra went up the shore and reached Hollywood East in 1st place. Spinnakers up for the leg to Jewel. Some close action at Jewel saw a few turns taking place. As the leaders approached Jewel the wind switched and made it a beat back home. Pixie and Psyche got through Sheevra, then a quick dart between the lines saw Sheevra recover to 2nd place behind Pixie.

8th July – As the stormy conditions eased some crews had a look at the conditions, but then went home. Three boats went out for ‘crew’s race’. Pixie, Maimoune and Fay were the brave souls. Fiend, Sheevra, Lorelei and Psyche all decided against it. Blustery conditions saw boats on their ears and a few broaches out on the water. Eric Heyes on Pixie prevailed and won a tricky crew’s race. Interesting to note the professional way the race was managed by (probably) the youngest ever Race Officers, i.e. Raffi Vaughan and Rhemy Polly aged 2 and 8. Some adult supervision may have been supplied by some senior Vaughan family members.

7th July – Wind still strong from the south, but thankfully it had abated a little bit. David Carlisle, Cham and Brick went out to try and sort out the two misbehaving moorings. Completely lifted Fay’s mooring and moved the anchor to a new position further away from Psyche and the rest of the Fairy trot. We were also able to lift Maimoune’s anchor. About half way up the riser chain, we had the anchor in the boat. It had somehow got a half-hitch of rising chain around the flukes. That would explain her ‘wandering’ last weekend. It was re-laid clean in a new position.

6th July – HOOLIES! Big summer storm (from the south) swept across the province. Boats were checked on their moorings by our ever present safety boat team. All boats were riding it out well.

5th July – Another little step along the way. Snipe- F16 – got her rigging cut and spliced and today got her mast up. Hawk attached, halyards on, shrouds, runners and forestays all present and correct. Team Snipe still have some work to do with deck fittings and deck holes to take halyard tails, but now that the mast is up the locations of these holes are much easier to visualise. The bow sprit has been shortened to match the other RNIYC Fairies and a new gooseneck has been fitted to her boom, so it is getting closer.



4th July – After the hectic breezes at the weekend, light rain and light winds were on the menu. Seven boats on the line. Wind was a bit variable From N to E then SE back to NE. Never more than 8kts. Psyche led from the off. Course was E-3-2-home-6-5-home. Several boats tried kites on the way out to Jewel, but most dropped as wind got tighter as we went out. Psyche led from Finvara and Sheevra. Pixie made some gains with spinnaker up, getting through Fay. It was a tight fetch back home, Psyche held on from Finvara. With tide coming in, up the shore was favoured, although, Pixie and Fay paid the price going in too far and losing breeze. Psyche and Finvara were locked in a close battle up the shore. Sheevra ploughed a line up the middle staying in the breeze, and managed to get through Finvara. As they rounded Dunratho, Sheevra stayed a little bit higher and managed to crawl over Psyche to take the lead. Pixie had, I think dropped down the order as had Minx. Both managed to recover a couple of places on the run home. Sheevra held on for the wind from Psyche.

3rd July – Pixie dropped in and back on her mooring. Banshee recovered on the same trolley. Fay who was sitting too close to Psyche was then moved to Banshee's mooring. Bit of shuffling all round, good effort by owners, club volunteers and Cham for getting all of this done. We now need to lift, check and move Fay's and Maimoune's moorings. Banshee not showing any immediately obvious 'holes' or gaps initially however, after some water was added to her ashore, there were clear oozing seams in several areas.

2nd July – Banshee again looking very low in the water, once again wind blowing hard from the West. Another bailing mission got her emptied, this time water was up to the seats and she was taking water over the bow. A plan was developed to get her out as soon as possible.

1st July – Hoolies blowing from the west. All the Fairies bouncing on their moorings. Ricky the shipwright was in the yard working on Snipe and Lorelei. Pixie ready to go back in, but conditions would not allow. The 2 Marks were also in the yard working on Snipe. Banshee was wallowing quite low in the water. Then Brick noticed Maimoune on the move, she was going downwind at quite a speed, so a rib was dropped in in marginal conditions with Brick and Cham on board. When we got out to Maimoune she was alongside Banshee with only 3 feet of separation. We used the rib to keep them apart as Cham boarded Maimoune and set about letting go of her mooring (which was still well attached). We got a tow line on and towed her to Lorelei's vacant mooring and made her fast. No damage visible on either boat. Cham then boarded Banshee and bailed her out, she had water six inches above the floor.

29th June – First race in the Mid-season points. Pixie and Lorelei still ashore with some repairs outstanding. Seven boats answering the gun. Light conditions, wind from South only 3-8 kts. Course was 6-5-home and with the light conditions only one lap. Big cluster of boats on the outer limit, Sheevra ploughing a lonely track on the inside. We thought Finvara was well over the line, but only a single toot, so on we went. Sheevra looked good on the inside for half the leg, but then breeze filled in on the outside and Finvara, Psyche and Fiend picked up the pace. Sheevra tried to gybe the kite on the led to Killymard, but it was too tight. Finvara led and got through the tidal gate and got away on the beat downwind and down tide. Initially it looked like a fetch back, but wind swung round further to the West and it was a beat in flukey light breeze. Finvara were clear away for a good win, Psyche tried an inside line and held her place, Fiend went inside and held on to third. Sheevra gained over Banshee on the outside and had a really close tussle with Fay who tried and narrowly failed to shoot the West line and allowed Sheevra through. Banshee lost out up the middle and oddly, Maimoune lost out on the outside.

27th June – Breezy showery conditions wind from WSW – 10-20kts in the gusts. Lots of white horses. It was enough to put off Fiend and Sheevra who stayed ashore. The rest of the fleet went out to brave the elements. From my position on the shore the fleet were at hull Vmax on the downwind leg. Psyche won the race with Maimoune 2nd and Minx 3rd. Hopefully someone on the water can fill me in with some detail. Minx are the provisional winners of the early series, however there are some protests outstanding which may alter the overall scores.

24th June – After Psyche's entry for 'Stanley's Hammer' on Thursday night, finishing the race with a broken shroud, another two other boats made their bid for that particular trophy this afternoon, more later.

A fresh Westerly was bowing across the moorings, eight boats went out, with Banshee and Finvara choosing to stay ashore in the gusty conditions. We had 12-20kts in sharp gusts and a great deal of variation of direction from NW-SW. Course was set as 1-2-Home-3-4-home, a good indication of the changing wind direction. Psyche, Pixie and Sheevra went to the inner limit to broaden the fetch to Pump Point. Lorelei, Minx and Fiend were in a perfect line at the outer end on a finer line to the mark. After rounding Pump the fleet headed for Hollywood East. Some flew spinnakers, some did not, however it did not make a huge difference. Minx took the lead from Psyche on the inside, Sheevra also got through on the inside and there were 6 boats pretty much line abreast as we approached

No2. Minx led from Sheevra and Psyche and in the melee of the downwind mark rounding some damage occurred to both Pixie and Lorelei, forcing each to retire. Other boats were in recovery mode following this adrenalin fuelled few moments and the fetch back to the lines was a case of playing the gusts. Minx led at the end of the lap followed by Sheevra, Psyche, Maimoune and Fay. Course was changed to reflect the wind change and we headed for Jewel. Spinnakers up and under a lot of pressure. Minx held the lead, Psyche got through Sheevra. The beat back home was a wet one with lee rails under. Fiend made a terrific recovery on the right hand side charging in at the finish for a great 2nd place behind Psyche, Sheevra managed to get through Minx between the lines for 3rd. Only 1 race left in the early series and 'provisional results' have Minx leading from Sheevra and Psyche, with some protests outstanding. **All protests now withdrawn and the results stand as published.**

Lorelei recovered with some damage to her bow and the bob-stay anchor point torn away, she is on her stands awaiting assessment. Pixie has some damage on her starboard aft quarter and her capping strip has been removed.

22nd June – Phowar, what a cracker. Decent offshore breeze 12-20 knots SE. Course was E-4-3-home, 2 laps. At the start those closest to the outer end had a bit of a shouting match. Maimoune gybed round the outer limit and re-started, Fay also went back, although, it transpired she did not need to. Psyche, Sheevra, Fiend and Lorelei were the first boats around the E line. Good hoists across the board saw the fleet moving out towards Killymard. Sheevra sneaked ahead. Shortly after rounding Killymard, spinnakers gybed, wind direction became too tight and spinnakers were dropped.



The view from the front – before it all went wrong on F4!

On the beat back home, we were getting our ears and leeward decks soaked for the first time this year. Sheevra covered the fleet to stay ahead. At the end of lap 1, there was a bit of a barney in the middle of the fleet and turns were done by Banshee. On the way back out, it was too tight for spinnakers at the start of the leg, but the direction broadened and the coloured stuff went up. Sheevra had a problem with her spinnaker pole and lost the lead to Psyche. On the beat home Psyche threw a blanket over the chasing pack and even after losing a shroud, she held on for the win. Maimoune, Finvara and Minx had a great second beat, with Minx improving to 3rd behind Lorelei and Psyche.

20th June – Leaden skies surrounded Belfast Lough, lightning striking all along the Co. Antrim coast and a highly variable (in strength) wind was the picture. Some crews wanted to go and check boats after several days of thunder storms. A Couple of crews thought they might try sailing. The rest of us ashore were giggling in our beer as we watched wave after wave of heavy breeze and heavier rain sweeping across the moorings and boats swinging as the shifts hit and boats took some awkward angles in the swell. When the dark clouds passed, two boats left the moorings and drifted towards the start line. Maimoune was about 1 minute late to cross the line in very light conditions. Minx followed, crossing the line seven and a half minutes after the start. Simon on Maimoune contributed the following:

Pixie had lost her jib halliard up the mast and even with the boatman's boathook were unable to retrieve. Maimoune joined the half a dozen Squibs all straining not to be swept prematurely over the line by the ebbing tide as the wind switched off to zero at sea level and only the faintest of zephyrs at mast-hounds level thus Minx battling to get from her mooring to the West Line. Banshee and Fiend variously deciding not to sail. With a course of 6-5-home some 15 mins after the start the breeze started to fill in from the East with Maimoune inshore and Minx further out. Needing to put in just one short hitch Maimoune rounded ahead of Minx who was barrelling in on Port as the wind backed. A cracking reach to 5 saw Minx gain significant ground but on the Spinnaker run to the West line she was not able to get any closer and good rounding by Maimoune enabled her to cover safely to the East line finish where a brace of toots greeted us.

17th June – Ladies' race – After an unbroken spell of magnificent weather with no rain for 3 weeks, the weather broke on Friday evening, and heavier skies greeted us on Saturday afternoon. There was an offshore SW'ly breeze and the course was set (correctly) as E 4-3-home.



There were two toots at the start and Leah on Fiend and Heather on Sheevra decided that they were the likely culprits and went back. Leah was correct, Heather, unfortunately, was not and her return was unnecessary. Some spinnakers up on the leg out to No4. Then the breeze switched off. Ellie on Pixie was leading but Wendy on Finvara seemed to carry breeze on the left side of the course. Wind was completely gone for 10 minutes spinnakers up and down, tacking and gybing without moving tillers. Some breeze did arrive from NE, only 5 knots but reasonably steady in direction. Wendy on Finvara managed to shoot it around the mark just ahead of Ellie. Leandra on Banshee, Jane on Fay, Holly on Psyche and Leah were all locked together and very close, Sheevra were at the back. We hoisted for the leg to Jewel, and some places were swapped. Heather gained a couple and Holly dropped back a bit, at one stage there were 5 boats exactly abreast of each other with Pixie and Finvara out front. The leg back home was a fetch, Ellie tried to gain using a spinnaker after the gybe, but Wendy stayed out front for the win, from Ellie and then Jane.



15th June – Light light light – Breeze was West / NW – 3-6 kts. Course was W-2-3-home – 1 lap. There were holes everywhere and most of the boats were in one at some point during the evening. Pixie avoided the first hole by going the wrong way and following the Squibs straight to Jewel.....but it paid off as he avoided the hole that the rest of the fleet sailed into. F5 was leading at Hollywood East when she realised her error and gybed at a better angle to get there first. The reach from Hollywood East to Jewel was a mixed bag with the last place boats making huge gains on the leaders, then that breeze taking the leaders away again. Finvara sailed that led brilliantly going from 8th to 3rd. The fetchy beat home was a test, Fay and Psyche tried the Right side oh dear, hole of the season so far, they both lost out. Pixie tried it briefly but soon saw the error and came back. That sealed her win. Finvara improved to second and the fast finishing Lorelei were tramping up on Minx at the end but couldn't get through for the last podium place.

Maimoune went in for her second dip this evening and the free flowing leaks had eased to a gentle trickle, so she stayed out.

13th June – Our season finally got underway after the delay caused by the late delivery of our sails. Thankfully the sails seem to fit all the boats (excepting Fay whose sails arrived with the wrong sliders). So we had nine boats on the line for our first race. Of the nine boats 6 made it into the 'money shot' taken from the outer limit. Sheevra, Lorelei and Pixie made the best starts.



The wind was NE, 6-10kts. Course was 6-home x 2 laps. Psyche gained on the inside then had a crossing incident with Banshee , Sheevra crossed behind Lorelei, then went in out of tide and managed to just cross in front of the fleet. Pixie had retired with a problem needing the crew to head home. Lorelei were second with Finvara Fiend and Fay all in close contention. Sheevra managed a clean hoist and managed to get away. Lorelei then got a gap to the chasing pack and were right behind Sheevra at the end of the first lap. Great to see the new coloured stuff on display, particularly bright are Finvara, Psyche and Fiend.



Lorelei continued to push Sheevra all the way to the finish, with Minx making late gains to recover to third, but Sheevra held on for the win.

10th June – Wind from E-NE – 10-15 kts. Too windy for a long beat to RUYC regatta. Several boats had crews hoping for a gentle cruise for lunch, but it was too windy and bumpy.



Maimoune was ready to drop in and a small crew assembled to slide her in. Unfortunately, after 90 minutes, she had not taken up after a significant amount of work that her crew had completed on her hull over the winter, she just was not tightening up. So out she came for some more seam work and transferred off our only working trolley back onto her stand.

8th June – Wind from the East 5-10kts. Four of the boats went for a wee sail as a shakedown and all other boats were checked on their moorings. Fay had filled up a little bit having had her battery overwhelmed with the initial leaks. Dennis bailed her out and sponged her dry, and almost two hours later she was still dry. Pixie, in her new colour scheme, was first to drop her mooring and sail away with her new shiny, crinkly white sails. Banshee, Psyche and Minx followed soon after. They sailed around for half an hour or so with three of them even ‘popping’ the coloured stuff, and very brightly coloured they were too!

7th June – Team assembled for the launch of Fiend. Barring an injury to one of Fiend’s crew who bashed into a dinghy mast in the yard, the launch was incident free. Fiend stayed very dry upon entry and all other boats on the moorings were still riding high in the water despite a choppy sea and decent breeze from the NE.

6th June – Launching day – From 1100 until 1600, we were able to get 8 Fairies launched today. It was all going quite smoothly until Banshee was lifted onto her trolley and the axle failed half-way across the yard, leaving Banshee (thankfully safely) sitting on the bed of the trolley with the trolley sitting on its belly on the concrete and wheels detached from the axles. After a couple of hours of head scratching and several tentative attempts we eventually got the trailer lifted up and Banshee lifted up high enough to remove the broken trailer and replace it with another one. Job done, and we were able to launch another boat after that. So far, Fay, Lorelei, Minx, Sheevra, Pixie, Finvara, Banshee and Psyche are in and although a few boats had a few weeping seams, they were all dry enough to leave in after an inspection this evening.

5th June – Sails arrived (with some assistance from Fred and his great big car) and the team wasted no time in bending them on.



2nd June sails now with DHL for postage. ETA now 6th June. To hopefully launch 6th and 7th opening day probably 13th June following RUYC regatta on 10th.

2nd June – Pentagon Freight gave the sails back as paperwork was too difficult.

31st May – Sails were completed and given to Pentagon Freight.

25th May – Having been given a date of 22nd May for completion, Jeckells let me know that they were late. Spinnakers were finished, jibs were finished but Mainsails were not yet complete.

22nd May – Because of the late sails we had to postpone our opening day.....

18th May – Return of the 'SNIPERS'. The newly restored and very beautiful SNIPE returned to the yard this evening. Mark Brien and Mark Hunter were with her and took the applause and plaudits from

the small crowd of on-lookers who were there to share in the moment. The Snipe team over the following few days were busy measuring other boats in the yard to establish the best spots for deck furniture and mast gear.



13th May – First Fairy moorings floated and several others sitting on the slipway ready – Most boats now well prepped.

3rd May – Cloth arrived at Jeckells to start the manufacture of our new sails. Jeckells promise at this point was to turnaround in 7-10 days.

29th April – Club opening day – Great job by Alastair and Finvara team getting racing underway for Squibs, Dinghys and a few cruisers.

28th April – All boats now underway preparation for the new season ahead, excepting Mousme who is looking for a new owner.

Mid-April – Work continues on Pixie with Eric and Sam putting many splines in her hull to try and seal her.

7th April – Maimoune took her covers off and removed them completely.

6th April – Some discussion about who had covers off first.....Lorelei and Minx took covers off, did some work and then put their covers back on.

5th April – Snipe, currently undergoing her massive restoration has now had her top-coat applied – a delicious shade of ‘Apple Green’. Will hopefully make the trip back to RNIYC before the end of May





Late in March – Banshee returned from her extensive works and re-took her place in the yard. She has had new keel bolts and keel re-seated. Also all the sole bolts replaced.