**Mermaid Sailing Association**

**Honorary Secretary’s Report 2020**

The Mermaid year 2020 began with an unprecedented start that we all could not have imagined would be continuing. Covid affected so much this year including sailing and as a result, there were limited sailing events that took place. For the first time since its establishment, the Mermaid Championships event that was scheduled to take place in Tralee Bay Sailing Club, Fenit in August was postponed. It has now been rescheduled for early August 2021.

The Committee met virtually on a number of occasions prior to the start of the sailing calendar as well as throughout it, to discuss how best to manage our sailing events under the new government restrictions. Because of the restrictions, only Rush Regatta unfortunately took place and some local club sailing as outlined below. In addition to this, the Committee have a number of projects underway this year some of which are outlined below:

* Introduction of a new online payments system for MSA subs, which will also allow members to buy MSA merchandise. It is expected to have the new system in place for 2021.
* Work is well underway with transferring the current mermaid plans from paper based to electronic format and are delighted to have enlisted the help of Rory Grimes and Ross Galbraith on this important project.
* The MSA are delighted to advise that we are now the proud owner of the first ever Mermaid built, “Amy” number 1. Many thanks to Dr Frank Keane the owner of the boat for keeping it in such great condition and agreeing with the help of Dan Brennan to acquire it on behalf of the Committee. The boat is in excellent condition but is unfortunately not sea worthy. It will instead be kept in the Dublin Port Heritage Centre and we will have access to it for any future Mermaid Championship events for exhibition.

Rush Regatta took place on the 8th and 9th of August. 13 Mermaids competed over five races in the sunshine and a good breeze. First place overall went to 186 Gentoo from SSC, second place was 131 Wild Wind from RSC, and third place was 188 Innocence from Foynes. As Rush Regatta was the first official MSA event to take place this year, the annual prize-giving event for 2019 that was postponed from early 2020, took place over the regatta weekend. Thank you to everyone that attended the event and to RSC who hosted a great event. Special thanks to Paul Browne who organised all the trophies and engraving, everyone commented on how well they looked and to Paul Smyth who organised the restoration of the Norman Hodgson Memorial Trophy.

Foynes Yacht Club have two new Mermaids in the club for 2020, 149 Si Gaoithe owned by Chris McDaid, 122 Fionnuala owed by Ed O’Regan. There are also two under renovation, 22 Joy owed by James McCormack and 114 Nicapando owned by Ross O’Shea which are due to be launched in 2021. Unfortunately, like everywhere else, there was not much sailing this year, but they are planning to start weekly racing in April 2021. There are currently nine active Mermaids sailing in Foynes.

Dublin Bay Sailing Club (who of course originally commissioned the Mermaid) was unable to provide suitable racing for Mermaids this year.  The class in Dun Laoghaire organised three special races – a family race for the Loving Cup, a single-handed race for the Intrepid Trophy and a race around Dalkey Island for the Meg Mug – with up to four boats competing. The National Yacht Club’s planned big regatta to celebrate their 150th anniversary did not take place.  Instead, they ran a “Race Day” on 5 September, but unfortunately could not facilitate visiting boats. Four Mermaids entered and the winner was 134 Jill.  On Saturdays during the curtailed season, in the absence of regular DBSC races, the Mermaids sailed in company to various parts of Dublin Bay: Poolbeg, Clontarf, Red Rock, Bailey and Dalkey Island.

The MSA website [dublinbaymermaids](http://www.dublinbaymermaid.org).com together with our Facebook page, Twitter account and email are now our principal means of communication with members. Please let us know if you change your contact details and we will update our records.

Thanks to my fellow MSA Committee members for their time and effort throughout the year, we would not have such a successful fleet without their continued commitment and to all of our members who showed great patience and understanding during what has been a difficult year.

We really do hope that we will all get back to what we love best “sailing” in the very near future. For now everyone stay safe.

**Jennie Shiels
Hon. Secretary**

**Mermaid Sailing Association
November 2020**