



BSC Sailability Newsletter

December 2011

Burghfield Sailing Club Sailability Group

FORTHCOMING EVENTS:

New Year Social – Bring & Share
Thursday 26 January

Training Sessions
Wednesday 7 March 19.30
Wednesday 21 March – 19.30
Wednesday 4 April 19.30

Preseason Social – Cheese & nibbles Thursday 29 March 19.30

Start of Sailability –
Thursday 12 April 18.00-20.00

Challenger Open – Friday 11 & Saturday 12 May

BSC/BSTC/Sailability Open Day – Saturday 19 May

Access Open – Wednesday 30 May

Sailability Funday & Barbecue – Saturday 4 or 11 August

Last Sailability 2011 –
Thursday 6 September

RNLI/Sailability Challenge –
Sunday 30 September

End of season social Bring & Share – Thursday 11 October 19.30

Sailability dinner – Saturday 10 November tbc

Review of 2011

Thursday Evenings

It's been very pleasing to see demand for our Thursday evening sailing sessions has been higher than ever this year. In 2010 64 individuals went afloat on a Thursday and this year the figure rose to 91, assisted by their carers and 41 volunteers.

This popularity is very welcome, but it has brought specific challenges particularly as we no longer have the Cheverton Workboat.

We have been lucky in that one of our user groups, Connexions, purchased their own Drascombe Lugger and Wayfarer which has helped a great deal. We have also benefited from reclaiming the old concrete pontoon to allow all our heavier boats to be moored alongside rather than on moorings. This has sped up the process of getting everyone on the water in a timely fashion.

Recognizing the increased number of wheelchair users in attendance the Committee has been working hard to acquire an additional roll-on roll-off powerboat or Wheelyboat.

Well done to all the volunteers who made it all run so smoothly this year, a great job by everyone.

Thanks also to Tony Lawton for continued loan of his Challenger Trimaran when not used by him.

Racing

We again hosted very successful open meetings for the Access and Challenger Associations. The weather was very kind for both events, and the dreaded weed stayed below the rudders and centerboards. Thanks to all the helpers who were able to attend and our Race Officer team who do such sterling work.

The RNLI/Sailability Charity Challenge races took place in early October and enjoyed the fantastic late summer weather. Malcolm Perry was the first Sailability boat in 6th place closely pursued by Tony Lawton in 8th.

Martin Emsley has been our most active racer this

year, attending several open meetings across the country. He has picked up several medals for his achievements and race wins. Martin was also awarded with the Chairman's Shield for the most improved sailor of 2011.

Social Activities

Our usual range of socials were well attended giving an opportunity to mix. Jackie Clark again organised a very

very successful dinner in the clubhouse. Thanks to Chef Keiran and his galley slaves.





Fund Raising

Lottie Harland, one of our youngest helpers, competed in the Isle of Sheppey (IoS) Round the Island Race on 3rd September. Sailing in a Laser Radial she completed the 41 mile race in just over 5 hours, finishing 36th out of 119

boats. In completing the race Lottie raised over £500 from sponsorship donations for Burghfield Sailability and the RNLI. Well Done Lottie! Another Island, this time the Isle of Wight, was circumnavigated by the Chairman and crew

against stiff competition from 1,906 other boats. Finishing 41st in the largest class (ISC) meant the sponsors J P Morgan Asset Management donated £1,000 to Burghfield Sailability.



Awards

Well done to Charles Benham who received an RYA Community Award for "Outstanding Contribution" from HRH The Princess Royal, to recognise his work in

supporting Burghfield Sailability for many years. Very well deserved it is too!

Web Donations

This year the Berkshire Community Foundation suggested we enrolled with localgiving.com to enable us to receive donations on-line. Gift Aid tax relief is automatically applied to all donations.



2012 – the forthcoming year

Sailing programme

We will again be running 21 sessions commencing on Thursday 12th April and finishing on Thursday 6th September.

cover general sailing skills and look at those special skills needed by disabled sailors.

Training programme

It is planned to hold three shore-based training sessions over the winter (see forthcoming events on page 1). They will

Ian Smith our Senior Instructor has offered to help anyone wanting to improve their theory & practical skills whether under sail or power. Please email Pat if you are interested, and if there is enough he'll schedule

RYA courses in:

- Safety Boat Skipper
- Powerboat Theory
- Powerboat Practical
- Dinghy Theory
- Dinghy Practical

Ian would like to see more of our helpers with RYA Powerboat L2 become Safety Boat Skippers.





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Views from the Shore-Side

As another season draws to a conclusion, a number of thoughts have come to mind. As this is my second year of being involved with Sailability, I still find it very humbling to see the members we do, being so cheerful and positive. And to see how they enjoy the activities – even though we may be limited in what we can offer.

As I am sure will be recorded elsewhere, the 2011 season had more members than ever before (about 50% up on 2010, which was about - from memory - 15-20% up on 2009). This made it harder to get people on the water – and for as long as we would all like; and without the support of so many helpers, this would have been impossible.

This year, we have seen a number of new helpers as well, which has been really appreciated.

And so what have I seen from the shoreside this season? There has been flat calm water, lots of weed, and some rain prior to a session. There has also been a lot of sailing and many happy smiling faces. Even some of those from the helpers! There was even a black swan on occasions (must have

mistaken the sailing club!). I must have about the best role of anyone – as I get to see lots of happy faces – and get to eat biscuits when most helpers are on the water and busy with the members!

And the worst role? I suspect that must fall to those few, brave individuals who have supported the launching and recovery of the Challengers throughout the season. These are the people who wade chest deep in very cold water to launch and recover each Challenger.

Before the start of the season, the helpers worked hard to get the area ready for the season, and one of the tasks was to move an old concrete pontoon from the far end of the lake to its current location behind the Challengers, where it has become a wharf (Andy's Wharf) for the luggers and the Sunbird. The pontoon was navigated through the shallows thanks to lots of muscle from Dave Martin, and powerboat control and navigation from Andy! At times, I didn't think we would navigate this huge pontoon without crashing into something, but it was a success.

We also purchased a Sunbird single handed dinghy with a keel and two sails, which makes it more interesting than the Access dinghies, yet remaining very stable. On our helper's day before the season, it was nice to see a number of helpers trying out the boat. During the season, a few members tested the boat, and fed back comments about the boat in comparison to the Challenger.

Towards the end of the season, it was used less, as the weed problem in the lake became worse. Nonetheless, it seems as though this boat is a good addition to the fleet.

The final session was greeted by a beautiful evening, nice wind, and only marred by a lot of weed in the lake. (For the uninitiated, the weed gets caught around the propellers of the power boats, as well as around the keels and rudders of the sailing boats, which stops them from moving!)

We had a few entertaining moments, when there were radio messages, which made us chuckle, and there were a number of close calls when

Views from the Shore-Side (Continued...)

helpers nearly fell in the lake, or water came over the top of wellies or waders!

And then there were the satisfying moments, such as when one of our new members was too nervous to go in the powerboat the first week, and the second week, with some gentle persuasion was convinced to go out, and when they got back, I asked how the

trip had been, and was greeted by such a positive response, that it was one of the highlights for me.

As another season has closed, and I look forwards to the social season, I am also thinking about the next season, and what it holds.

We are looking at adding to the capability to take people out in powerboats, subject to obtaining some grants we are make it

a successful season – whether keeping me stocked with biscuits, through to the social calendar work, as well as those stalwarts who maintain the boats behind the scenes, all that remains is for me to wish you all a Happy Christmas and New Year, and I look forwards to seeing you at the Socials and during next season!

Ian Smith

