

The RYA Club of the Year Award 2012

Hollowell Sailing Club – Overall Winner



Having been selected as finalists in two previous years, Hollowell Sailing Club are regulars here on the stage. The club, based 10 miles from Northampton provides excellent facilities and offers great dinghy sailing and windsurfing and caters for sailors of all ages and abilities.

Much of the Club's success stems from its track record in engaging with the local community. In 2011 their Open Day attracted 147 people, contributing to 116 new memberships. An incredible 83% of the adult and junior members who joined the club last year had no previous sailing experience. New members cited 'the welcoming atmosphere, low membership fees, good facilities and the availability of courses at reasonable prices' as key to their decision to join the club.

Hollowell continues to forge links with many local schools and youth groups, with its OnBoard sessions providing the perfect opportunity for other family members to come along to the club at the same time and also enjoy their first taste of sailing. Meanwhile, as a Volvo RYA Champion Club, the club's talented youngsters are frequently fed into the RYA's World Class racing programmes.

The club has trained many new and existing volunteers to enable them to expand their activity including their popular 'Buddy Friday', informal coaching evenings and marathon 12 hour races.

Hollowell SC continually makes improvements to its equipment and facilities and has excellent vision for the future.

Chichester Yacht Club - Finalist



Located on the banks of Chichester Harbour, West Sussex and is a family orientated sailing club that successfully encompasses dinghy sailing, yachting, and motorsailors.

A key achievement, has been the extension of the club house, to provide bar and dining areas, meeting rooms, and additional changing facilities.

The club holds two open days a year providing the local community with an opportunity see what the club has to offer along with two 'Activity days' for those wishing to 'have a go' out on the water. A year round programme, including training sessions, free sailing, race coaching, after school clubs, ladies only sessions, handicap and fleet racing ensures that there is something for sailors of all ages, abilities and interests.

The Yacht section of the club offers a year round racing programme , a fun racing series, cruises in company along with winter seminars and lectures. The Motor section also runs a cruising programme, lectures and social events, and both sections meet informally each month in the club bar.

The club is based firmly on the principle of being run 'by members, for members' and while a small number of highly committed staff run the office, bar and restaurant, most of the club activities are run by teams of enthusiastic volunteers whose reward is the satisfaction of seeing members enjoy the club and being part of its success.

Leigh and Lowton Sailing Club - Finalist



Leigh and Lowton Sailing Club is situated at the western end of Pennington Flash, near Leigh in Lancashire. The Club is run by its members to promote and enjoy the sport of sailing.

The recently extended club house offers fantastic facilities and existing members are proud to invite family, friends and colleagues to experience the sailing facilities available. The annual Open Day successfully attracts new members with the local community experiencing sailing through taster sessions. New members are able to borrow club boats for the first year so they can take time to get into the sport and decide what boat they want to sail. Social sailing sessions, held on Saturday mornings, offer support and advice from experienced sailors and provide a safe environment away from the pressure of racing for people to develop their skills and experience.

Leigh and Lowton offers an extensive year round programme of handicap and fleet racing for Solos, Open meetings, a Regatta weekend in July and a winter series open to all visitors. The club have consistently run a strong junior training and race programme which feeds into the RYA Performance Pathway with sailors attending the Zone Championships as well as being selected for the Zone Squads.

Over the last five years, the club has changed its focus from being primarily a racing club to one which aims to be more inclusive. While many activities still have a racing focus, the inclusion of juniors in the racing fleets and the support offered to new sailors ensures the club is an enjoyable place to be, regardless of age, ability and sailing aims.

Salcombe Yacht Club - Finalist



Salcombe Yacht Club situated on the Salcombe Estuary, in Devon has gone from strength to strength in recent years; working hard to retain an active membership as well as increasing the number of people who get out on the water and sail at the club.

The club has a thriving cadet group, training on Tuesday's, with fleet racing on Wednesdays and Saturdays through the season.

This year the club introduced a 'ladies who launch' group with the aim of encouraging women who have not sailed for a long time or usually crew, to take to the water and helm. The 'Beat the Stig' competition also proved successful as a 'sailing- but- not- racing' activity.

The Club has strong racing fleets of Solos and Salcombe Yawls and hosts the very popular annual Salcombe Town regatta, which is supported by sailors throughout the South West.

The Yacht section organises rallies to sister ports throughout the year and offers a warm welcome to many visiting yachtmen.

A series of Friday evening talks and lectures, along with regular themed 'dinner nights' and a Sunday carvery help to keep members engaged throughout the winter.

The club welcomes new members and involves them in not only the sailing but in the social side and the voluntary running of the club.

Staunton Harold Sailing Club - Finalist



Staunton Harold Sailing Club is based on a reservoir 15 miles South of Derby. They are an extremely warm and welcoming club and their much improved facilities are amongst the best in the Midlands yet they are still striving to renovate and extend the club. A successful application to the Sport England Inspired Facilities Fund has meant they were recently awarded £50,000 to develop the club house.

Sailing is available all year round with a comprehensive training programme, an active youth and junior fleet and a full social programme.

Racing takes place on at weekends and Wednesday evenings for most of the year and on Sundays throughout the Winter. Thursday and Friday evenings are reserved for members who prefer a more leisurely pace with dedicated cruising sessions, although members can sail at any time provided there safety cover is available.

The club offers a fantastic range of activities and pathways to their members as well as a buzzing social scene including the 'Friday Night Club' which runs every week throughout the summer. This was launched to introduce informal coaching sessions to help adult members gain confidence and develop their skills on the water.

Members can sail with the knowledge that there is always a friendly face on hand to assist with rigging, boat handling, or to offer more technical advice. By also running OnBoard sessions on Fridays, the parents of OB sailors get a chance to meet club members and see what club life is all about. Friday nights offer something for everyone within the club and always end with a free bbq and few beers at the bar.