

RYA BOARD PROFILES

Chris Preston

RYA Chair



Appointed June 2018

Board Member to AGM 2022

chair@rya.org.uk

An avid sailor with more than 50 years' experience Chris started at the age of seven launching traditional dinghies off the beach in Devon. Inspired by a school talk given by Keith Musto, Olympic silver medallist, he went on to join the sailing team, delivering yachts around Europe in his gap year and racing offshore while at Southampton University, still finding the time to study Law, and serve as an Army sailing instructor. After graduating he worked in the boating industry for Camper and Nicholsons before completing a joint MBA from Cranfield in the UK and INSEAD in France.

Chris then started a 30-year career in banking and investment management in the UK, Germany, and latterly Switzerland, where he sailed on most of the navigable lakes. Whenever possible, he continued yacht racing, including multiple Fastnets, two Admiral's Cup wins, the first UK Tour de France a la Voile entry, Olympic trials in the Star class and the two-handed Round Britain Race. His proudest sailing achievement, however, is having been the initiator, and occasional crew, of the successful "Switzerland" entry in the 2013/14 Clipper Race which raised funds for life-saving operations by the charity Mercy Ships, for which he was an ambassador.

His professional career with Bank of America, Rothschilds, Citi, and the BCV Group, has given Chris many opportunities, including as CFO and CEO, and he has served on, or chaired, multiple boards. He is now senior independent director for the LumX group. In his sporting and volunteer roles, Chris has been a school governor, an officer of two Clubs, and is now a member of the boards of Cowes Week, Cowes Harbour Commission, and RYSR Ltd. He, and his wife Victoria, sail a J109 with a Corinthian mixed crew, taking and training young people whenever possible, and support the UKSA yachting charity.

Chris is looking forward to working with the RYA team to maintain high standards in meeting the future challenges of UK sailing and boating, and to supporting the association's membership throughout the UK in all areas of the sport.

Christophe Boulanger



Appointed 2018

Board Member to AGM 2021

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Christophe's passion for sailing began in childhood in Belgium where he spent many weekends and holidays sailing and racing dinghies. He moved to yacht sailing in the early 90s when posted in the south of France, and during his subsequent posting to London, Christophe earned his RYA Yachtmaster Offshore qualification in 1996 in the Solent. In various overseas postings Christophe has continued to sail and notably owned and sailed the only sailboat in the harbour in Conakry, the capital of Guinea in West Africa, while stationed there.

Christophe is recently retired from Shell after nearly three decades based in seven different countries, including ten years in Africa. During his career Christophe managed and directed large commercial and technology businesses within Shell and led a multi-billion USD global transformation programme, the largest of its kind at the time.

His international professional experience is broad and deep following his international education experience which includes engineering degrees from the University of Louvain (Belgium), the University of Delaware (USA) and an MBA from INSEAD (France).

Christophe lives in Godalming with his wife, Melinda, and their four children who are competitive hockey players and occasional sailors. Christophe is also a keen volunteer at the hockey club where Melinda is on the Board and runs the 650-strong junior section.

Christophe is pleased to join the RYA Board to share his experience in business management and corporate governance and to give back to the sailing community.

Tasha Gladman



Appointed 2018

Board Member to AGM 2022

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Tasha loves the water and is a passionate sailor having owned and raced an RS800 since it was launched in the late 1990's. She currently crews the RS800 and has competed on the Open circuit. She is a very active member of Itchenor Sailing Club (ISC) and has 2 children who both sail their Oppies and race at Bosham Sailing Club.

Tasha has her Powerboat 1&2 and owns a RIB. She has yacht raced in the J109 series on the Hamble and while living in New York – partook in a number of events including the Block Island Race. She also races an X boat out of ISC. Tasha was RS800 Class Captain at ISC for 5 years where she sat on the ISC Sailing Committee. She was heavily involved with driving membership numbers and participation for ISC.

Tasha is a marketer with 25 years of experience working with high profile consumer brands and businesses starting at Unilever then Mars and Tesco to Board roles at Young's and Co-op food. She has re-energised brands with a compelling vision and strategy transforming them from a milk/exit status to brands businesses have wanted to support and grow again. She now co-owns Flintlock a marketing consultancy. She is also well versed in the digital space and understands how social media works, the importance of content and the use of influencers to drive the eco-system.

Tasha looks forward to bringing her strategic and marketing skills to help further develop and support the RYA.

Vernon Harten-Ash

Senior Nominated Director



Appointed 2015

Board Member to AGM 2019

vha@hartengroup.co.uk

Vernon qualified as a doctor and served for nine years in the Royal Navy and Royal Marines as a Medical Officer. He raced for the RN in the '83 Fastnet and has instructed in several centres. He remains a member of RNSA. A member of RORC since 2003, he has focussed on offshore racing.

Between 2003 – 2005, Vernon worked as a volunteer with the Prince's Trust's 'Get into Maritime' programme, attracting disadvantaged young people to the sailing and maritime industry, followed by the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme 2005 – 2007.

Vernon works in the pharmaceutical industry and is a NED with several companies. A part-time CI since 2010, he was awarded his Yachtmaster Instructor Certificate in 2014.

Vernon joined Council to develop sailing opportunities for the current membership and explore ways in which our sport can bring benefit to others.

Ronan Harte



Appointed 2017

Board Member to AGM 2021

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Ronan lives in Southampton with his wife and their two daughters. They live a very active lifestyle spending most of their spare time out and about on the water. Ronan was first introduced to the RYA when he undertook his dinghy sailing qualification twenty years ago. Since then, he has gone on to take several other RYA qualifications. Ronan sails with his family from Hamble and is also a keen dinghy sailor, towing his Lymington Scow to explore new destinations. He is a member of Keyhaven Yacht Club.

Educated in Ireland, Ronan commenced his professional career at Cunard Line in 1991. Since then, he has worked several senior roles within the industry and has owned his own business. He now leads a company which employs more than 2000 people and is focussed on providing opportunities for young and disadvantaged people, particularly through apprenticeship programmes. He believes passionately in the power of training. Together with his industry bodies, he has attended Parliament to lobby on key issues facing his sector.

He regularly undertakes personal challenges to raise awareness of issues and to support smaller charities. In the past year, with colleagues, he has raised more than £20,000.

Ronan has joined the RYA Board to support an organisation that works to provide so much pleasure and opportunity to many.

John Scott

Senior Independent Director



Re-appointed 2018

Board Member to AGM 2020

John_scott99@hotmail.com

John started sailing at university and has dipped in and out of dinghy sailing as work and family commitments permitted. Father to three sons, of all whom sail competitively, he has visited clubs in just about every part of the country transporting them to competitions as they progressed up the national ladder.

John has worked in sport most of his professional career and has broad managerial experience in a number of roles both in the UK and abroad. He was advisor to the Canadian Minister of Sport spending five years in Ottawa. A founding director of UK Sport, he has also been head of the National Anti Doping Agency and CEO of the Commonwealth Games. A former school governor and parish councillor, he has always been active in his local community in a number of areas. Seeking a complementary land based activity he is now a volunteer ranger of the Loch Lomond National Park.

Taking early retirement, he experienced 4 months living on a narrow boat exploring the canals of England. After many years of chartering in different parts of the world he has finally persuaded his wife to buy a yacht enabling them to begin exploring the west coast of Scotland.

Joe Seet



Appointed 2015

Board Member to AGM 2019

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Joe is a Chartered Accountant with over 40 years' experience in specialist accounting, regulatory compliance, tax planning, investment funds, banking, financial services and corporate governance. His career spans treasury, wholesale and investment banking in senior finance roles with Chemical Bank, the National Bank of Kuwait, ScotiaMcLeod and Donaldson, Lufkin & Jenrette until its acquisition by Credit Suisse in 2000. He was a Partner in the investment firms, Beaumont Capital and Sunningdale Capital, and Senior Partner of the Sigma Partnership, a well-regarded business advisory and compliance accounting firm, which was acquired by a private equity back group in December 2013. Joe is also a professional investor, entrepreneur, financial advisor, expert advisor on corporate governance and regulatory matters, an accredited mediator specialising in professional partnership disputes and a member of the Taxation Committee of the London Society of Chartered Accountants. Since 2011, he is also a non-executive Director of the Places for People Group and has been and is a member of various Committees and currently chairs the Remuneration Committee.

Joe is a motorboat owner and has joined the Board to assist in governance and regulatory matters.

Katie Snowball



Appointed 2017

Board Member to AGM 2021

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Katie has a passion for the outdoors and being on the water, with broad experience of both power and sail boats. She has worked as a power boat driver and water-ski instructor on inland waters, including volunteering for the British Disabled Water Ski Association, and youth training on coastal waters in the South of France. She has been part of amateur yacht racing crews for over 10 years, and has a boat share in a catamaran based in Hamble. She holds a range of RYA power and sail qualifications, and is currently working towards Yachtmaster Offshore.

Her varied career over 25 years has spanned technology, medicine, education, start-ups and multinationals - currently at Google in London, responsible for European infrastructure investments, including strategic planning, and negotiations with government authorities. She is a passionate advocate for equal opportunities and leads personal development programs to support this. Previous to Google, Katie co-founded, grew and exited a technology business, and has also been a secondary school science teacher. Katie has a BSc from University of Southampton, and a Postgraduate Certificate in Education.