

IN THIS ISSUE

Welcome to the first issue of the new year.

We start on a note of sadness as we pay tribute to Frank Duffy and John Heron, two gentlemen who had considerable influence over the Sailability community. An example of the latter's influence is plain to see in John McPartlin's eloquent tale of triumph over adversity which resulted in him collecting a Traveller series prize.



Inside this issue you will find the usual mix of news and articles some less serious than others on the various goings on in Scotland.

In his regular Chairman's Thoughts Merrick throws off the blanket of winter and looks forward to a season of fun!

There is also an article which hopefully will enable Sailing Clubs to understand what "Sailability" is about and to take up membership or at least contribute to our fund raising campaign .

All this and more beside - and in colour!.



So that's another issue successfully rolled down the slip. Enjoy the read!

Fair winds to all!

Gary Phillips
Editor

Course	
In This Issue	1
Chairman's Thoughts	2
Collection Box	2
Frank Duffy	3
John Heron	3
First Year	4
Let's Work	6
Squibbits	7
Fife	7
Fleet	7
Dates For Your Diary	7
Vacancies	7
Got Something To Say?	8
Membership	8
Last Goodbye	8

THE CHAIRMAN'S THOUGHTS



Greetings!

It hardly seems like it but it is a year since I was invited to take the high chair at the end of the table. Doesn't time fly when you are having fun!

It is the start of a new season and the first event is our Annual General Meeting where we get together to take one final look at the year past and get on with planning the future. This year the meeting was hosted by the Royal Tay Yacht Club and we were warmly received by the members who made their contribution to a very enjoyable occasion.

As for the meeting itself, it appeared that everybody wanted to look to the future as the official business (the looking back bit) was rapidly concluded. This gave us a longer opportunity to introduce to the membership the first instalment of our Development Plan for the next three years. The Plan is still a "work in progress" and Gary hopes to have the first complete draft available for review by the Executive and RYA Scotland at the end of March.

The draft was well received and encouraged an in depth and constructive discussion with many questions coming from the floor. The three main elements discussed were the racing where a need for full participation particularly at SOCC was highlighted, Experience Days and the creation of a Training Team, and finally the need fundraising and sponsorship. Quite simply our ambition is to create new ventures and expand existing ones.

I have been invited to attend Sail**Laser** Scotland's open day on the 19th April prior to its group officially starting sailing on the 26th. Rob Mutlow and Steve Noble are hoping to have a specially adapted SB3 for this event. At Lochore Meadows, Fife Sailability starts sailing in April but it will not be officially launched until May to coincide with a major event at Lochore Meadows over the weekend of 21st/22nd of that month at which all of the Centre's facilities and activities will be available to try. Another date to look forward to is the re-launch of Thunder after her

transformation. Attending such events is the icing on the cake for any Chairman and I am looking forward not only these days but seeing all three activities flourishing in the future.

So that is about all from me, except to thank Gary, Neil and the Executive for continuing to hold the reins, to James and his team at RYA Scotland for their support and to you the membership. Soon it will be time to get back on the water so I wish you all good sailing and look forward to more fun.



Merrick

THE COLLECTION BOX

RYA Sailability Scotland is like any other Charity in that it does not run on fresh air. We need funding in order to meet our objectives whether for specific projects or general issues. We receive no core funding, nor do we employ fundraisers. We rely on voluntary funding

Neil Morris came up with a brilliant initiative which hopefully would see a Collection Box placed at Sailing Clubs and Centres. So with the support of RYA Scotland and a ringing endorsement from James Stuart a letter was sent to all 154 Sailing Clubs and centres in Scotland asking them to consider putting a collection box for donations to Sailability Scotland on the bar or other prominent location within the club.

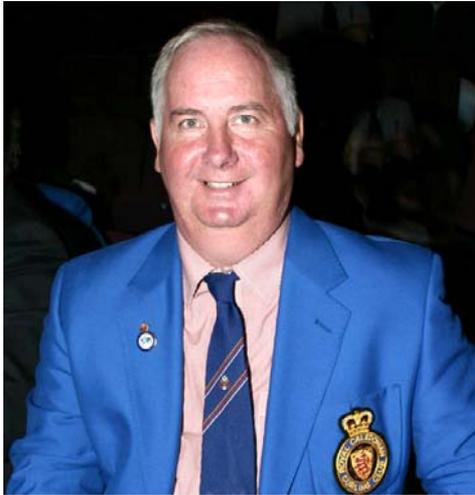
The current state of response would give those familiar with PR speak a perfect opportunity to wax positive as follows: "The initial results show that the campaign is like to exceed expectations as responses confirm an uptake of 50%!!!" The reality is that one club has said yes and one has said no. Two replies.

We will keep plugging away and now that the covers are coming off as we approach the new season the invitation will be reissued and we hope for a better response. In the meantime a box will soon be on its way to the Upper Forth Boat Club.

Donations welcome!

FRANK DUFFY

Merrick Yates remembers



It was with great sadness I read of Frank's tragic death in December last year. Some of the older members will remember Frank as a mild mannered gentleman, quietly spoken but always ready to help. It was Frank that first introduced me to Sailability in 1999.

The tributes to Frank both on the web and in his local paper were many, with some coming from far corners of the world. When Frank gave up sailing to concentrate on his first love wheelchair curling I don't think he would ever have believed the success he would achieve in the sport and the international acclaim he would achieve. Twice he was Skip to the Scottish team that won the world championships in 2004 and 2005 and Skip again when the GB team won a silver at the Winter Paralympics in Turin in 2006. On route he received two International personal awards for his contribution to furthering wheelchair curling. He was also a Director of British Curling and of Scottish Disability Sport.

He will be sadly missed by all that knew him not just for his achievements but for the man he was.



JOHN HERON

A Personal Memory From Fiona Morrison

John Heron was a unique character. I loved his sense of humour and his one-liners had everyone in stitches. He didn't mince his words. You knew where you stood with him. I first met John in England when I went to watch a Challenger Championship. I was introduced to him and asked about 2.4's in Scotland. He told me there wasn't any activity, but why didn't I come along and try a Challenger, which is what I did.

John had a heart of gold, trailing boats all over the place for the sailors, often not sailing himself, just out the goodness of his heart. His contribution to CCC sailors was huge and he also helped out other sailors taking boats for them when he could, and giving lifts to us.

I loved John's humour and I loved his gentlemanly manners. He was a one off. I can't imagine the Travellers without him, as he was such a huge part of them. He will be greatly missed by lots of people. I know I will never forget him. A spark went out when he left this world.

A Tribute by Dorothy Bennett

John Heron our Senior Sailing Instructor of Clyde Cruising Club died suddenly on the 5th January 2011. John will be very sadly missed by the Challenger fraternity, for over the twenty years he had been involved with challenger sailing, he had buddy sailed with many sailors young and old, given us lectures and advice on points of sailing and acted as race officer on many occasions.

He towed countless challengers for thousands of miles to the venues, and international regattas in Scotland, England, Ireland and Wales sometimes towing boats for other clubs as well. He gave support to the sailors by travelling to international challenger events near Volos in Greece in 2007 and Cascais in Portugal.

At regattas John was always just there, either buddy sailing, helping pull trolleys in and out of the water, tying down boats on trailers, always quiet and unassuming but with a twinkle in his eye and a wry sense of humour.

He will be a hard man to replace.

MR COOL



MY FIRST YEAR IN CHALLENGERS

By John McPartlin

In August 2009 the bottom dropped out of my life when I had a stroke and was left paralysed down my right side. Up until then I had led a very active outdoor life doing mountaineering, sailing and that year had even tried some ocean yacht racing.

There followed a long hard winter where my future life seemed quite depressing. By the time spring came round though I had plenty of time to think and it had started to dawn on me I could maybe try Challengers - I had helped with these in the past - at least it would get me out doing something in the outdoors.

I phoned John Heron and he suggested that I come down to Bardowie on Tuesday afternoons and try it out. I was quite keen to have a go getting out sailing on my own although John did try to persuade me to accept a "buddy" to start with. I'm really glad now that I resisted that suggestion as the sense of

freedom I got on my own was great. After a whole winter of having to be helped with almost every aspect of my life, to be out there on the water, sailing, alone and totally in control was fantastic.

Challengers are quite tricky to sail with only one hand but with the aid of a mainsheet cleat and other little tricks I managed.

A few more afternoons and then for the rest of the season I went along on Tuesday evenings joining in with the other Challenger sailors at Bardowie. They often arranged practice races on these evenings and although I joined in these, and enjoyed the sociability of them when they happened, I must admit that the greatest satisfaction was when I'm off on my own just enjoying the freedom, the control!

The facility at Bardowie to enable sailing for disabled is tremendous - I had been aware of that before but now I'm very appreciative.

In my previous years sailing in dinghies and yachts I had never really been interested in racing. Although I had indulged in ocean yacht sailing the previous year I had not really enjoyed it.

However when John suggested I come along to a weekend at Strathclyde park I had already got hooked on Challengers and saw this as yet another opportunity to get out sailing. "I don't need to be too competitive" I thought "just get out and enjoy the sailing". To this day I still don't know quite what happened. On the Sunday of the regatta there was almost no wind and I seemed to drift through the 3 races to discover at the end that I had come first - a fluke?-definitely. Beginners luck - I didn't expect it would ever happen again and it didn't.

To be honest I had already been thinking about the other traveller's events although the main interest for me, apart from the fact it was yet more sailing, was the opportunity to get to venues further afield. To sail in fabulous scenic places like Loch Venachar and Loch Linnhe was quite appealing.

But by then I had the bug and signed up for the Lochaber traveller event which was sailed on Loch Linnhe. Great to get away for a weekend again with a purpose.

A bit more soft than I have been so used to in previous years where I have enjoyed camping and staying in hostels. This time we were in the Clan MacDuff hotel, on the edge of Fort William - pure luxury!

What followed then was a weekend of sailing in magnificent surroundings and the weather was super. The tidal conditions definitely adds a touch of spice to the sailing as well. We met many more challenger people here, made new friends, and also had a very sociable evening in the clubhouse with good food and wine served up by the yacht club members. I trailed in last here as promised and didn't give a hoot as I had what I wanted - great sailing in great surroundings.

At Loch Venachar we could have commuted from home but elected instead to make a weekend of it by taking a B&B in Callander. The event featured very strong winds on the Saturday - touching force 6 in the first race and I got my feet wet from the waves while reaching to and fro at the start line. Aside from that it was tremendously enjoyable - Challengers are really exciting to sail in strong winds. Merrick was at this event and spotted me using my knees to steer whilst sheeting in at the downwind mark - is that against the rules?

I wasn't last this weekend but that's not what I remember from here - wind, waves and scenery was what it was all about.

Down at Bardowie in August for the Duncan's Regatta



it seemed strange to be here for the first time as a Challenger sailor in this. Great fun for me to be sailing though for a weekend here. We organised a carry-out into the clubhouse on the Saturday evening. Good to see John back from his convalescence this weekend and overseeing the prize giving.

The final weekend was at Loch Earn This was a real mix of things for me. We had booked accommodation at a B&B at the west end of the Loch - they gave us a great meal on Friday night and we ate out at the Clachan on Saturday.

The weather was damp and dreich on the Saturday with very fickle southerly wind all weekend. I ended up with a different boat this weekend and maybe because

of this I found that I seemed to be sailing better - at least from a competitive point of view. I even managed to sneak a 3rd place in the first race on Sunday.

A really strange thing happened though in the last race - some of the leading sailors made false starts and I found myself with the front group at the first mark. Just before this they bullied me wide and then proceeded to get themselves all in tangle at the mark. I stayed wide to keep clear of the stramash and sailed out across the loch without tacking so as not to get involved. It took me till halfway across to start to wonder where everyone else was - it was with a sense of horror that I realised that I was out in the lead - I hadn't a clue what to do here - nobody to follow!! I got chased down and passed on the final leg by Graham Hall but the sense of satisfaction nevertheless was tremendous.



What I hadn't noticed during all this was that the weather had brightened up considerably during the race and I had missed the opportunity to appreciate it - I said to Enid once I was ashore "I came into this to sail in beautiful surroundings and this is what I had here but all I looked at during that race was tell-tales, sail shape, burgee and the occasional glance at the mark - I didn't look at the scenery once!!"

Last year sailing Challengers became a big thing in my life and helped me come from a winter of depressing thoughts of regrets for a past life gone to then look forward to what is there to go for in the future (did you know that you can do disabled gliding!, skiing!, curling! and....?) I also regained my driving licence during the year and am driving again with adapted controls - what a difference these things make to your sense of well-being.

I am tremendously appreciative of all the help I have received during the year to let me get this gift of sailing (not least from my long suffering wife Enid).

Thanks,

LET'S WORK TOGETHER!

Sailability is a concept not a commodity. It does not come ready packaged.

The Peoples Front of Judea once argued that apart from "sanitation, medicine, education, wine, public order, irrigation, roads, a fresh water system, public health and peace, just what have the Romans ever done for us?"

A similar debate could occur in Sailing Clubs around Scotland - why should we join Sailability Scotland? What has it ever done for us?

What we are trying to achieve through working with the sailing club is to create an environment in which disabled people are welcomed as participants in club activities, as members, as part of the club itself. We cannot impose this. This can only be achieved if the sailing club and its members embrace the concept of Sailability and agree to work in partnership with us in making the concept a reality.



So what are the benefits?

By joining Sailability Scotland sailing clubs are able to access our team of experienced personnel who are able to work alongside club instructors and other members to encourage and educate them in aspects of working with disabled people, both on and off the water. The best way of doing this is for the club to host a dinghy awareness day where members of local disability groups, sports clubs or support organisations can enjoy the sailing club environment and partake in sailing using suitable dinghies readily available at the club or specially adapted craft provided by Sailability Scotland. The intention of a dinghy experience day is not to provide a one off event but to encourage interaction between club members and participants and to create a sustainable activity.

A sustainable activity can take two distinct forms, either by the creation of a distinct "Sailability" section within the club or by the inclusion of disabled people as regular members taking part in club activities. The former has more benefit to us in that it can have a more concerted voice and can be more manageable.



Another benefit of membership is that the club then becomes eligible to host further Sailability events such as regattas or training weekends at which their own members can participate. Such events showcase the activities of both the club and the achievements of disabled people.

Whatever the event, membership of Sailability Scotland provides an opportunity for clubs to explore the potential of creating a sustainable activity for disabled sailors and ultimately to increase club membership with positive minded people.

Oh there is a cost element in all this by the way! Group membership of Sailability Scotland costs just £30 per year (2011 rates). That wouldn't really break the bank would it, and suppose one new member joined the club on the back of an experience day? Not a bad return on your investment in anyone's books.



SQUIBBITS

THUNDER

Royal Tay Yacht Club is working on preparations for the re-launch of our Squib "Thunder". Details of the event will be posted as soon as available.

LIGHTNING

Meanwhile our second Squib "Lightning" is available for hire to any Sailing Club which would like to develop sailing for disabled people. If you are interested in taking the boat on loan please contact us through our Edinburgh office or attend the THUNDER event at the Royal Tay. We look forward to hearing from you.



FIFE SAILABILITY

Meanwhile down at Lochore Meadows Fife Sailability kicks off its season on 9th April. The occasion will be marked by students from Carnegie College, Dunfermline who will be on site making a video as part of their Media Studies course. The video will be available in due course. To help the group commence operations RYA sailability Scotland has secured the loan of two Challengers from the Dinghy Section of Clyde Cruising Club at Bardowie. We would like to offer a special thank you to Helen Kirk, Dinghy Section Captain and to the Trustees of the Seamanship & Pilotage Trust for making this happen.

The group itself will be formally launched over the weekend of 21st/22nd May during Lochore Meadows Open Weekend. In addition to sailing visitors will be able to try any of the centres activities both on and off the water.

RYA Sailability Scotland will be on hand to offer advice and assistance. We look forwards to seeing you there.

THE FLEET EXPANDS

Whilst still of the subject of Lochore Meadows we are pleased to announce that Mike Thompson has kindly donated two Challengers to RYA Sailability Scotland. The two boats numbers 169 "Swiftsure" and 170 "Wings of Freedom" were formerly with the Forth Challenger Trust at Lochore. The boats will still be based there after refurbishment.



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

SCOTTISH CHALLENGER TRAVELLER SERIES

May 7th/8th - Strathspey Regatta, Loch Insh

May 28th/29th - Castle Semple SC**

July 23rd/24th - Lochaber Yacht Club

September 17th/18th - Loch Earn Sailing Club**

** Note the change of dates since the previous issue.

SCOTTISH OPEN CHALLENGER CHAMPIONSHIPS

SOCC 2011 will take place over the weekend of 25th/26th June at Strathclyde Loch

NOTE: The entry fee has not yet been decided therefore the information in the Challenger Class newsletter should be ignored.

TEAM VACANCIES

We are always looking for individuals willing to join in our work.

We still wish to recruit both a Secretary and a Treasurer as soon as possible. If you would like to volunteer, or would just like more information then please get in touch with the Executive.

GOT SOMETHING TO SAY?

Please contribute to the next newsletter. Share your sailing adventures; write about why sailing is so important to you.

Articles and letters for publication should be submitted to the editor no later than two weeks before the scheduled issue date. Articles should be prepared in Word format. Photographs to be used to illustrate the articles should be supplied in jpeg format.

Articles are submitted on the understanding that *starboard* will be published on the RYA Scotland website (www.ryascotland.org.uk/sailability).

A contribution is accepted on the basis that its author is responsible for the opinions expressed in it and such opinions are not necessarily those of RYA Sailability Scotland.

Articles should be sent to the Editor at sailability.scotland@tiscali.co.uk

MEMBERSHIP

Membership of RYA Sailability Scotland is open to all properly constituted clubs or groups providing sailing exclusively for people with a disability, any sailing club or group that accepts people who are disabled into membership and any individual who is interested in what we do.

For further details on the benefits of membership and current fees please contact:

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A LAST GOODBYE



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