NEW FOREST SAILABILITY

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2025

The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service
The MBE for volunteer groups

Charity no: 1210484

Chairman: Malcolm Bentley

Editor: Rowena Marsh

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Dates for your diary:
NOTE: NO SAILING FRI 18 APRIL
Wed 7 May—TT Race
Wed 2 July—NFS 25th Anniversary
Mon 1 Dec—Xmas Lunch

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Here's hoping that we get a good sailing season in 2025. And to add to the sense of anticipation, it is the 25th anniversary of the birth of New Forest Sailability (as it is now named). The Events Team are planning a 25th anniversary lunch but I am sworn to secrecy about the details. OK—the Events Team are still working on it, so no details actually exist at the moment. But I am sure that when they do finalise the plan it will be an event worth attending. Keep an eye out for announcements from the indomitable Events Team!

Whilst it was mentioned at the AGM and the refresher days, I do want to draw attention to the running of the power boats for "trips around the lake". There was a report last Autumn into an incident elsewhere when a power boat capsized. Very sadly two people drowned when they were tipped into the water strapped into their heavy motorised wheelchairs. Whilst the powerboat was of a different design to those used by us, it has led to recommendations from the Marine Accident Investigation Branch about the need to consider the loading of powerboats for people with disabilities and—most importantly—that no-one should be strapped into their wheelchairs even if they are not motorised. I don't want to dwell on the particular accident but it has led New Forest Sailability to look again at our safety rules and the major conclusions are:

* No-one should be strapped into a wheelchair on the pontoon or on a powerboat. (Our established rule)
* Lifejackets are advisable for 303 sailors "who cannot actively participate in their self-righting into a safe position and require no subsequent action by the user to maintain this position".
* Sailors in a wheelchair on a power boat should wear an auto-inflate lifejacket.
* The maximum loading for the "trips around the lake" - usually in Tango—is 8 people. Normal wheelchairs containing a sailor count as one person overall. A motorised wheelchair counts as two people plus the sailor—that counts as three people.
* The auto-inflating life jackets should be adjusted to fit each individual sailor and, in particular, the waist strap should be reasonably "snug" and the crotch strap fastened.

These safety procedures do require us all to, perhaps, take a bit more care. But the thought of an overloaded/ badly loaded powerboat with people strapped into the wheelchairs with even the remotest chance of an accident is too awful to contemplate.

So, if the driver of Tango seems to be fussy and even stroppy about the loading etc (well we are, anyway) but now there is an additional reason!

As ever, thanks to Chris Wales and others for the photos which I have purloined for this newsletter.

Rowena Marsh

NOTES FROM THE AGM HELD 25 FEBRUARY 2025 AT SPINNAKER CLUB



Malcolm Bentley
Chairman



Andy Holmes
Treasurer



Stefan Hart
Membership Secretary



Steve Kitson
Race Team Representative



Andrew Alllen
Members Representative

The full AGM Minutes are available to members. The main points were as follows.

- Progress has been made to convert our existing charity to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. It is hoped that the formalities can be finalised by the start of our 2025 sailing season. **(ED: Thanks to both Malcolm and Andy for their hard work in bringing about this change of status.)**
- As part of the conversion, there will be formal trustees but also a management committee made up of representatives carrying out the day to day activities eg Bosun's Team, Events Team.
- The RYA Sailability Session Leaders Course was attended by Lindsey Venner, Gareth Peaston, Tim Worner and Chris Westwood. This training will encourage additional people to act as Officer of the Day.

Before the AGM, a bring and share lunch was contributed by those attending. The Events Team gave thanks to all who bought food which could be placed on the table without too much work either before or afterwards—so they were not confined to the kitchen. (But thanks for all the teas and coffees!).



Needs no explanation!



Putting the world to rights



AGM in full flow



Settle down now

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES—MALCOLM BENTLEY



See Sailing Your Way

NFS and Spinnaker have been chosen to jointly pilot an RYA initiative "See Sailing Your Way" for blind and partially sighted people. This will start on Thursday 24 April and run on a weekly basis initially for 6 weeks, either in the Spinnaker Laser Stratos keelboats or our Hansa 303s depending on the needs of the sailors, widening the opportunities of sailing to more people.

Thursday Race Coaching

We will continue to run our Thursday Race Coaching afternoons. In fact these 2 hour afternoon sessions have a wider purpose than race coaching for established competitors, for example:

- Allowing Sailors to progress more easily through their RYA Sailability Certificates of Achievement through extended practice and instruction, including being introduced to racing.
- To introduce sailors to race crewing, first of all, and encourage more entries in the Hansa TT regatta.
- To teach volunteers to sail with a view to becoming skippers.

To promote performance and friendly competition, I am thinking of introducing some prizes to run throughout the season.... perhaps along the lines of the 2.4mR Challenge trophy, which was very popular.

Events

I think the Events Team are a lot more advanced in their plans for the 25th Anniversary lunch on Wednesday 2 July than the Editor implies! This will be an opportunity to celebrate, honour and recognise past and present achievements, contributions and characters. Please give some thought to what or whom these may be and give the Events Team your ideas. If we wish to invite people to join our lunch then we would need to identify them pretty quickly!

Winter Maintenance—2024/25

I know that there has been a lot of work going on during the winter of 2024/25 because I seem to be included in the maintenance team WhatsApp messages—no idea why as I am the most impractical person around. OK—I agreed to slap on another coat of paint on the shed (yeah—thanks for that Jane) but that is about the limit of my ability to carry out repairs and maintenance.

So, what has been going on? I understand that, as usual, all the boats have been "winterised" - which I think means taking off all the masts, centre boards, rudders and sheets and lines (**ED to Receptionists—these are the ropes**), washing the boats and then reversing the procedure and waxing the boats in the last few weeks to get them ready to go back in the water. This is a normal off-season task and huge thanks go to the volunteers who carry out this process every year. But in addition there have been exceptional tasks—which needed exceptional dedication by those with the necessary skills.

* Jaffa needed a new floor as this safety boat is at least 30 years old and only patching up has been done in the recent past. Steve Kitson sourced all the necessary parts. See Andy Holmes article about the process and people involved.
* Both pontoons needed jet washing and it seems that our washer would operate only on low power, which made this a much harder task plus finding volunteers who seem not to be concerned about getting wet and cold in the depths of winter! Although our power washer had parts replaced it did not sort out the problem and it seems that the pump head needs replacing. (Look, I am copying this from the WhatsApp messages—I don't understand it either.) I now understand that we are looking at buying an new jet washer.







* In addition to the cleaning of the pontoons, planks needed replacing on both pontoons and this is an ongoing maintenance issue as the weather and lake water inevitably causes degradation of the wood.
* The old "H" pontoon (where we used to moor the 2.4's) was removed—brought ashore and dismantled. I think part of it may be used as a ramp for Tango to load people for trips around the lake.







* New teak supports were fitted to the hardback seat base. Thanks to the carpentry skills of Chris Westwood.
* Tango bow doors. There was a seepage of water through the front of the lifting bow door. Andy Holmes has fitted new seals to the bow and hopefully that will sort out the problem.

Some of this work would have been done by Richard Savill in the "old" days—just shows how much time and energy he gave to NFS. It now needs a team of (mainly) willing volunteers. But thanks to them all.

And a **big thanks** to **Stuart Foreman** who organised the work parties—or, as he tells me "When someone makes a suggestion, I volunteer THEM to implement it". Great management skills, Stuart!

INTRODUCING THE BOSUN'S TEAM



From Andy Holmes

(Andy with previous Bosun extraordinaire, Richard Savill)

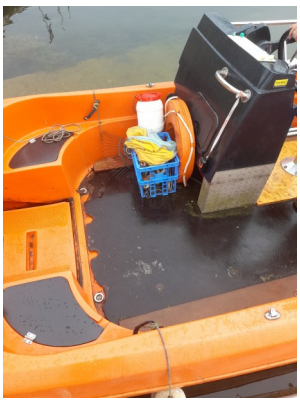
You may have heard some talk about a Bosun's Team and wondered what's that all about. As all attempts to fill the position of Bosun had failed the Committee decided to form a small group to oversee the maintenance of our boats and equipment. The team comprises myself, Steve Kitson, Stuart Foreman and Chris Westwood and is called the Bosun's Team. Our main purpose is to coordinate the various maintenance jobs which need to be done. This may mean finding a volunteer willing to carry out the job, arranging a work party, outsourcing the job to a contractor or sourcing and buying materials and equipment.

We intend to run the Bosun's Team on an informal basis, so no formal meetings. We sometimes meet up at the lake or keep in touch by WhatsApp and email and have a system to record jobs and track their progress. Rowena's article "Winter Maintenance" gives you some idea of what has being going on this winter. In addition Gareth has been servicing the auto inflating life jackets, Mags has mended many of the sail covers, Stuart is getting the hoists and slings checked and Dickie and Chris have replaced more of the planks on the pontoons, just a few of the many ongoing jobs.

Our first major project last autumn was to replace Jaffa's deck which had been renewed many years ago by Spike Spencer, a former Bosun. It was badly rotted and had completely disintegrated around the edges. To have had the job done professionally would have cost over £2,000 and so with some trepidation we decided to do the job ourselves. A team comprising John Flintoft, Steve Kitson, Trevor Jones, Dickie Dodds and many others took on the task. After a lot of discussion and planning the materials were sourced, the old deck was removed and a new one successfully installed along with a new seat for the helm. When you see the end result I am sure you will agree that they have done a fantastic job.

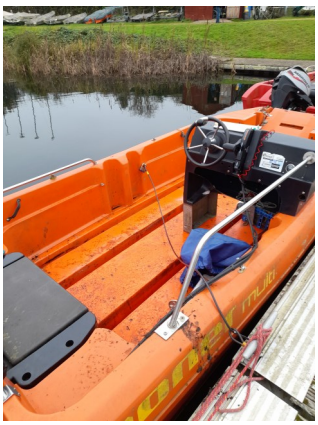
So if you spot something that needs attention on one of our boats or equipment that can't be fixed straight away then please mention it to one of the Team or put it in the maintenance book in the shed. Please also follow it up with an email to bosunsteam@newforestsailability.co.uk so that everyone on the Bosun's Team is aware.

The Bosun's Team would like to say a big thank you everyone on the Maintenance Team for all their help and support in getting the boats, pontoons and equipment ready for the new season.



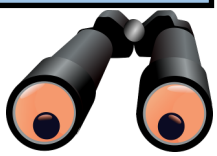


That looks better!





CLOSER LOOK – AT A SAILOR



NAME: **RACHAEL CARTER**

AGE: **35**

HEIGHT/ WEIGHT: **Height 5ft 3”—Weight— less than me, that’s all I’m saying!**

ROLE AT SAILABILITY: **Sailor**



BACKGROUND: I met Rachael on the last Friday sailing day of last season at Spinnaker Club. The session was coming to an end and Rachael was virtually the last sailor off the water—taking full advantage of her last sail of the season!

Rachael has Down’s Syndrome and has been coming to NF Sailability with the Spiral Blue group for about six seasons. For the first few seasons, she went out with a skipper to enjoy the sensation of being on the water but did not help to sail the boat herself. She has a cousin who sails and who is encouraging her own children to sail and this cousin also encouraged Rachael to learn to sail herself. So in the 2023 season, Rachael started the RYA Sailability syllabus and powered through the Entry and Bronze levels to achieve her Silver Level award in September 2023. I thought that this was good going, until I heard that Rachael achieved her Gold Level Award in August 2024 and started the Platinum Racing training just before the end of the season, in October 2024. This is really impressive from starting training in the 2023 season but, even better, when I met her Rachael had just come off the water having sailed **solo** for the 3rd time.

GOING FORWARD: Rachael is considering volunteering at NFS next season. She is realistic enough to know that she is not yet experienced enough to skipper a boat to take out other sailors, but she is quite capable of helping on the pontoon or at reception. She will certainly continue to sail and try to improve her skills with further experience of being on the water.

MOST ENJOYS AT NFS/ WOULD MISS IF STOPPED COMING: Rachael says she would miss the friendship of her group and the volunteers who make the experience enjoyable. She would also miss the freedom and relaxation of sailing solo on the water—both the sensation itself and the sense of achievement of putting the skills she has learned into practice. She will definitely miss Sailability during the winter.

ANY DISASTERS: So far—only one. Rachael got stuck in the trees and had to be towed out (backwards) by the safety boat. She analysed the situation and concluded that her jib sail was not out enough and that she had lost the wind and, therefore, power. Wow! We have all been stuck in the trees (several times actually!) but to analyse the situation to, hopefully, avoid it happening again is impressive.

ANY ONE FOR A SPECIAL MENTION: Whilst Rachael says that her family started her sailing, Nigel Silman was instrumental in teaching her the skills to get through the RYA Sailability Syllabus and has helped her to progress. Thanks Nigel—it seems to me that you have enabled Rachael to believe in herself and to put her skills into practice.

OFF THE WATER: It came across to me that Rachael, whilst being fairly reserved, was also determined to do as much as she can for herself. She lives independently in her flat although with help with some things, and there is someone on site to help in emergencies. She works one day a week in Boston Tea Party—the coffee shop in Ringwood where I frequently go—and does her own shopping, albeit again with some help from a support worker. I get the sense that Rachael is growing in confidence and her progress in sailing shows that she can learn new skills. She is proud of her sailing achievements—quite rightly— and one of the things that makes her happy is that her mother is pleased that Rachael has the determination to progress.

Thank you Rachael for talking to me and I am sorry that I kept you from your lunch with your group! I came away being impressed by your quiet confidence, your determination to keep progressing, but also your realism. I look forward to seeing your further achievements.



Rachael collecting her Gold Award from Nigel Silman

SAILING SUCCESSES LAST AUTUMN

Congratulations to all the Sailors who achieved personal milestones last Autumn

Several sailors achieved RYA Sailability Awards towards the end of last season—too late to be included in the last newsletter—but with hope they will go on to achieve more milestones this coming season.

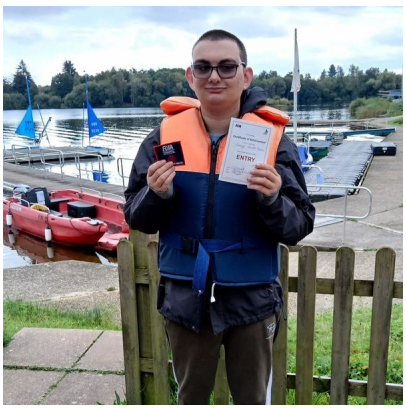
Claire Barnes

Claire achieved a Silver Award in October 2024—on the last Friday sail of the year!



George Barratt-Pearce

George with his Entry Level Award



Mitchell Brown

Both Entry and Bronze Levels



SOCIAL EVENTS

SKITTLES EVENING— 5 October 2024

Report by Anne Theile

On a balmy October evening down in deepest New Forest there was a gathering of 32 earnest competitors with winning on their minds - oh and the delicious fish and chip supper of course! Sopley Village Hall welcomed us for our first Sailability Skittles Night.

Eight teams named after our Sailability boats competed for the coveted prize of a chocolate orange each! It was a close run tournament and up until the last team, Twelfth Knight (Jane and Peter Knight, Denise and John Ridd) played their third game it looked like there would be a three-way tie for second place and a chance to get into the playoff final. However, Twelfth Knight pipped them to the post and qualified for the playoff against Flojo (Anna and Tony Taylor, Roger and Dianne Keyse).

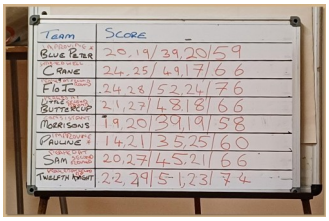
The hard fought final ended in deadlock and an extra game needed to be played to separate the two teams. It was down to the last throw by Flojo which made them 2024 champions by only one skittle! Congratulations to team Flojo. Bad luck Twelfth Knight but at least you weren't obliged to eat all those chocolate orange calories! No one went home empty handed - we were all given a packet of Skittles fruit chews for our efforts.













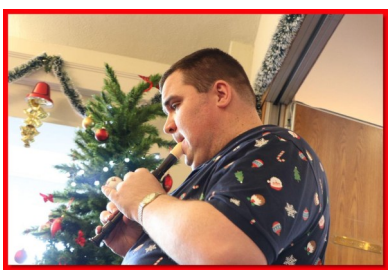
CHRISTMAS LUNCH—2 DECEMBER 2024

As usual, our Christmas lunch was held at Ferndown Golf Club. It was a packed event, with 81 attendees, including many of our sailors. A special thank you for Matthew from Spiral Blue who entertained us with a Christmas Tune on his recorder. With so many great photos to chose from, the following is just a very small sample.













MEMBERS' NEWS

TREVOR DUNSBURY

We sadly lost a long standing member Trevor Dunsbury who passed away in January. Although Trevor had been suffering from Parkinsons Decease and had become quite frail in the last couple of years, it was always a pleasure to see him on the Spinnaker veranda enjoying a coffee and a chat to his old mates. He will be missed. Some comments from our members.

Ian and Jenny Stockdale: We are both so sad and sorry to hear of Trevor's death. Trevor always loved a good natter with us girls on reception and in the kitchen on a Friday, we were all very fond of him. The last couple of years when he was too poorly to help out he still enjoyed coming to the club and sitting outside with a cuppa and skippers etc would stop and talk to him. Trevor you will be missed, we will miss your welcoming smile .
Mags Ryle: What a lovely guy. I, among many others, will miss him, he has been part of Sailability for so long.
Chris Wales: Another sad loss. RIP.





Martin "Hurricane" Hadley

Another loss is a former sailor/ ferocious racer, Martin Hadley. It is a long time now since Martin moved to Scotland. However, I am sure many will still remember him from his days sailing with us and representing NFS in the TT race series. So it was with sadness that Steve Kitson shared the news that Martin had passed away in December 2024. Martin had suffered from MS for many years and, apparently, had been in and out of hospital in the months before he died.

I remember him from my early days at NFS when I entered the TT race held at Spinnaker Lake. Martin was sailing towards us with a piratical grin on his face. I don't remember who was the "stand on" boat, but I got out of his way PDQ. He was a BIG character.

Steve Kitson and Martin teamed up to race competitively for many years and enjoyed a fair amount of success.

Some comments from others who remembered him follow.



Angela Cosford: Such sad news, such a shock as Martin was still relatively young. Martin was positive about life and such a skilful sailor who enjoyed taking gambles when racing, most of them paying off!
Ian Park: That's a great shame. I had great fun sailing with him until he moved away. Will be thinking of him today.
Chris Wales: Sad news indeed. I will remember him well. A great guy. RIP.
Val Stevens: I was so saddened to learn of Martin passing. I remember him very fondly from his early days sailing with Tim and later when Steve teamed up with him. He had a wonderful attitude and was sorely missed when he and Corrine moved away.
Jane Knight: Sorry to hear such sad news. I know how fondly Steve Kitson spoke of Martin and their many sailing adventures and laughs they shared together. It is always sad to lose a good mate. Thoughts for his family.





