

RYA SAILABILITY SCOTLAND 'GET WET' PROJECT REPORT – OCTOBER 2009

In Brief

Royal highland Yacht Club provided funding to RYA Sailability Scotland to run 'The Get Wet' project, a project intended to provide people from 12 – 25 years to try sailing on the west coast of Scotland.

The 'Get Wet' Project has been very successful in not only highlighting the possible venues for disabled sailing for those with disabilities, but also showing clubs and centres that they are able to work with disabled people and that disabled sailing is a positive experience. From April 2009 until September 2009, 5 venues have provided opportunities for 59 people to try sailing for the first time.



Breakdown of each event

Castle Semple Watersports Centre – 30th March and 17th June 2009

The Disability Resource Centre in Paisley took part in activities on 30th March and brought 10 participants along. Their ages and disabilities varied, but all thoroughly enjoyed the experience and entered into talks with the Castle Semple Watersports Centre and Castle Semple Sailing Club. Kilpatrick School brought 12 participants with varied disabilities along, all of school age, to get out on the water. The experience proved to be very positive, and as one of the teachers involved is also part of the Able2Sail network, this has allowed for opportunities to be explored with Able2Sail for the participants to continue to sail.



Sportscotland – Cumbrae – 17th – 19th April 2009

7 visually impaired sailors took part in a weekend of training for the 'Start Yachting' certificate, having never sailed before. This was a useful exercise for both the students and the centre and provided many good learning opportunities.

Some of the comments made from the participants:

'Thoroughly enjoyed the experience of my first time sailing so much i have booked onto a BT sailing yacht to hopefully complete my competent crew certificate. Thought the staff who accompanied us was excellent' Sam

'I had a fantastic sailing weekend! The instructors made me feel like a valuable member of the crew, giving me an opportunity to experience all the tasks within the boat. The instruction was clear and

*direct; I always knew what was being asked of me! I learned loads and I will be back to learn so much more,
Nothing was a problem for the crew, Well done and thanks very much for the experience Rod and Susan on Santa Vey.'* Andrea



James Hamilton Heritage Park – 20th June & 19th September 2009

East Kilbride Disability Forum brought along 12 school age participants, with learning and physical impairments, to take part in sailing activities on both 20th June & 19th September . This group managed to bring along some volunteers to help out the on site instructors, and provide some information on how to work with the participants.



Helensburgh Sailing Club/ Royal Northern & Clyde YC – 22nd August 2009

This was one of the most advertised events, but unfortunately attracted the least participants. One person managed to get along to try sailing with the RNCYC Sonar, and she was in her twenties, with a physical disability. This event provided her with the confidence to go on and look at regular participation.

Tarbert Loch Fyne YC – 22nd August 2009

Comment from the parent of one of the participants:

'Just to say thanks for a truly wonderful day we were very impressed with the staff who were helping out and my son who has a severe form of autism adapted very well to life on the ocean waves. My son finds communication very difficult but you can tell by the smile on his face that he enjoyed every minute. I am sure this would become a very popular sport with the children who are disabled in this area. Thank you' Bernie Redman

This was a quiet event too, primarily due to the fact that it took place right at the end of the school holidays, and we were unable to publicise the event through the normal channels. However, 5 people came along with varying disabilities to take part.



Conclusion

To be able to provide opportunities for people with disabilities to try sailing is enormously fulfilling and a hugely empowering activity. Not only does it educate those who are delivering the session and provide them with new skills, it shows the helpers and carers for those with disabilities that sailing is the one sport that provides independence and it is a very safe activity. Therefore this project has been invaluable in raising the profile of disabled sailing on the west coast of Scotland.