

Thousands of dinghy sailing enthusiasts flocked to the RYA Volvo Dinghy Show, in association with Yachts & Yachting and Suzuki over the weekend of March 6-7 at Alexandra Palace, London. It again proved an ever-popular draw for dinghy enthusiasts and those wanting to get started. Over 200 exhibitors filled the halls with everything from boats, kit and gear and books to expert advice from clubs and class associations.



There was plenty to see and hear all weekend on the Volvo Main Stage and at the interactive coaching sessions, where some of the best dinghy sailors in the world shared their top tips and advice.



On arrival at the show visitors were met by the sight of the amazing Vestas SailRocket, which dominated the Palm Court entrance area, and in which pilot Paul Larsen made his bid for the speed sail record. But for those who like to sail by the seat of their pants, this way out speed machine in blackcarbon fibre might fit the bill

Many of the younger visitors enjoyed battling it out on the rowing machines in the Fitness Zone, as well as whizzing around the show collecting the clues in the Treasure Hunt and getting faces painted at the Sunsail Kids Zone.



There were top tips galore in the Volvo Main Stage talks and coaching sessions, among them Skandia Team GBR's Nick Thompson who shared his secrets on up-wind sailing with a packed house, whilst the RYA's Chris Watts explained the rules out on the water. Norwich-based RYA East Rules Adviser Trevor Lewis, who launched the brand new 'Racing Rules Explained' book, also joined Chris on stage.

The show saw the launch of National Windsurfing Week 2010 by Olympic bronze medallist Bryony Shaw, who said said: "The things I love most about windsurfing are the lifestyle and the thrill of being out on the water so National Windsurfing Week is a fantastic opportunity to introduce these things to other people. The week is about having fun, as it isn't competitive. It's great to be able to spread the word about the sport."

Skandia Team GBR launched their brand new 'Support Crew' website, the RYA Sailability Marina was packed all day showcasing a wide range of sailing boats designed for disabled sailors and judges perused the many beautiful boats at the show

in their deliberations to choose the winner of the Concours d'Elegance award — won by the Redwing class dinghy.

Day two of the Show saw the halls jam-packed with youngsters, who got in for free, and their families. There were talks ranging from the essential checklist for buying a second-hand boat to insider tips on improving your upwind sailing. Windsurfing also made a welcome return to the show with everything from tips for the complete beginner to improving high-speed windsurfing technique.

Among winners of the advance booking club competition were Silverstone Sailing Club, which won the 10-or more club members category and picked up 10 Rooster Sailing buoyancy aids for the club; Midland Sailing Club in the 20-or more club members' category won a set of five Volvo Racing marks, and Bewl Valley Sailing Club in Kent, which took over 30 club members to the show and won the star prize of a Safety Boat Package, comprising a Suzuki 9.9hp outboard engine, Rigiflex NewMatic 360 rescue boat with trailer from Mersea Trailers.



Another very popular display at the show was the Sailability marina showing the range of boats available to disabled sailors. Peter Hibberd, RYA Sailability Eastern regional organiser said: “It has been fantastic for Sailability at the show because it has given us the opportunity to create awareness by letting disabled people know where they can learn to sail and how

easy it is to get involved. We have also been encouraging able bodied sailors to get involved with Sailability too.”

Paul Bayliss, RYA Volvo Dinghy Show manager said: “The RYA Volvo Dinghy Show is a real family affair and we’ve been delighted with the number of people including families and youngsters visiting the show this year, it has really been a huge success and we hope to make the show even bigger and better next year.”

Show visitor Emma Young from Suffolk said: “The dinghy show is great, there’s plenty of stuff to keep the children entertained and plenty for us adults too. I’m really glad we came, it was great family day out.”

And finally the Brightlingsea One design (BOD) which ran the redwing a close second in the Course d'Elegance competition attracted a lot of interest from people looking for a fast cruiser/racer three-quarter decked dayboat

