

FLOATING CLASSROOM WILL BENEFIT YOUNGSTERS

The Junior Section of Horning Sailing Club is a voluntary organisation teaching young people to sail in the Norfolk Broads. It was established in 2003, as the children had nothing to do while their parents raced. Starting with just six members it quickly grew, and today has over 50 members, gaining RYA recognised Training Centre status along the way. Training now takes place on Thursday evenings, with monthly Saturday race sessions. A new venture for 2008 was the introduction of keelboat courses, which have proved highly popular with both parents and juniors sharing the learning of a new skill.

“Over the past six years we have seen the skills of our juniors improve greatly, and as they get older we hope that they will help make the Training Centre a sustainable venture, by training as Instructors and teaching the next generation,” commented SI Robert Hancock.

“Sailing is a really great eco-friendly sport for youngsters to get into, their increased confidence in all areas of life being noticed by their parents and schools, and they benefit from the new friends they make. We are currently working towards becoming an RYA Volvo Champion Club to better the race training and coaching available to our members. We also wish to instil a love of the Broads and the natural habitat to preserve them for future generations.”

The club has applied for grant to fund a floating classroom as its main clubhouse is situated 20 minutes away from the Broad they regularly use for training, and is a required to provide better facilities to enable young people to make the most of their learning.

The need for somewhere for the juniors to have a dry teaching area for theory sessions, moor boats, shower and change when wet and cold, toilet facilities, somewhere to hold lessons in case of bad weather, get snacks and hot or cold drinks, and get first aid help.

“A mobile floating classroom would also allow us to take the young people to events at other sailing clubs, widening their skills, and to take parents or helpers to observe the racing when we hold events such as regattas. It would hopefully allow for the expansion of the facilities we offer to include becoming part of the RYA’s OnBoard Scheme where we can involve local schools in the sport. Experience tells us that the facilities provided will be greatly in demand; our training has grown to such a degree that it is vital for our continued development, and it could provide disabled access that we are currently lacking,” said Robert Hancock.

“We feel that there is no limit to the number of people who could benefit from our project. With the recent success of the 2008 Beijing Olympics people are keener than ever to get into sailing, and we would like to encourage as many as possible – by keeping it affordable and accessible for all,” he added.