



# Annual Report

## 2021-22



## Chair's Report — Susan McKnight

On behalf of RYANI it gives me great pleasure to present this year's annual report.

Thankfully this year has seen us emerge from the constraints of lockdowns and pandemics and return to more normal ways of working. Clubs have been able to reopen their doors and it has been great to start meeting in person and on a personal note it has been great to get out to visit some of our clubs again.

Despite this, over last winter we were still using our virtual platforms for some events including our AGM last October. The virtual platform gave us the opportunity to welcome those from further afield to join events including the new RYA CEO Sarah Sutcliffe and RYA Chair Chris Preston.

It has been a year of hellos and goodbyes for RYANI with a chance to say thank you to some for their valued service over, in some cases, many years and to welcome new faces who will bring their new ideas and enthusiasm to the organisation.

Those we say goodbye to and wish well in new ventures include James Ogg who has served on the RYANI Board for 9 years as the Chair of the Development Committee, Jackie Patton as past Chair of the Board, Andrew Corkhill who led on membership and Bob Harper who as Sailability Coordinator has been pivotal in the development and continuing success in this programme.

We also have said goodbye to Richard Honeyford, RYANI COO, who has been part of the RYANI staff for over 15 years initially as performance manager and then as COO. His experience, guidance and support given to the RYANI Board and staff has been invaluable and we wish him well in his new role with the NI Sports Forum.

Our last goodbye is to our Patron, Her Majesty The Queen who we as an organisation were deeply saddened by the news of her death. We in RYANI express our deepest gratitude for her service and offer our condolences to The Princess Royal, RYA President and the entire Royal Family.

Those we say hello and welcome to include new members to the RYANI Board and staff. Liz Baker joins us the new Chair of the Development Committee and Ken Curry as the new Sailability Coordinator, who has been coordinating the project in Foyle for a number of years.

We also have just recently welcomed Greg Yarnall as the new COO. Greg comes to us with a wealth of experience from Table Tennis England where he led the development and growth department. We welcome Greg and his family to Northern Ireland and look forward to the skills and knowledge he will bring to the RYANI team.

It has been a busy year for the sport as we see the re-

turn to club racing, regattas, regional and especially national championships returning to Northern Ireland waters.

We started the year with our Clubs Conference in January which for another year was held virtually and I would like to thank the staff team for their hard work in putting together a successful event.

In the Spring we saw ourselves move from away from all things virtual. It was great to be able to attend the RYA Dinghy show in Farnborough and support Ballyholme Yacht Club who were the Northern Ireland finalists in the RYA Club of the Year.

Our RYANI Youth Forum progressed into a second year successfully being led by Jackie Patton and Margie Crawford as youth forum coordinators. They had a packed programme culminating in an evening of celebration and recognition for all our young volunteers achieved. Jackie and Margie are now stepping down from this role and we would like to thank them for their hard work and energy in making this programme a success ensuring its future as we move forward.

As in every year the Northern Ireland RYA staff team have continued to work tirelessly with the board and the RYA team in Hamble to ensure all issues arising that have an impact on the boating community are dealt with appropriately and ensure all our members are fully represented and supported. Continuing topics have included ongoing issues with Brexit and marine licencing as well as other emerging problems as they occur. There are also new emerging programmes, such as inner city sailing and the Bangor waterfront regeneration that the staff are playing an active role in supporting and advising on.

As we move forward into 2023 we are finalising our new strategy which has been on hold during covid. The aim of our strategy is to strengthen connections across the boating community, providing support through quality pathways. Our clubs and members are at the heart of what we do. In our strategy for the future of boating in Northern Ireland we are looking to support our volunteers at all levels, help develop and support our instructors, coaches, officials and all those who participate in boating whether it is learning, racing or cruising further afield through our values of inclusivity, excellence, responsibility and integrity. Good governance, equality, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding and sustainability remain at the centre of everything we do. We are excited and look forward to launching this new strategy in the new year.

Susan McKnight  
**RYANI Chair**

# COO Report

This report covers the period April 2021 to March 2022, picking up any areas that are not covered in the Club Development & Participation, Workforce Development and Performance reports later on.

Firstly, we would like to take the opportunity to thank the clubs, members, volunteers, boaters, instructors, coaches and technical officials for all their hard work in ensuring boating came back strongly, following COVID-19, which significantly impacted activity on and around the water. We are also grateful to those that support RYA NI financially and through their time and continued to do so throughout these challenging times. A big thank you to Sport NI and RYA in particular, as well as to the Mary Peter's Trust for their ongoing financial support to some of our young sailors.

Back in February/March 2021, following engagement with the Minister for Communities, we outlined the case for sailing to be permitted as an activity. Alongside other sports, this led to engagement with Sport Northern Ireland on a framework allowing restricted activity to take place in April 2021 and further restrictions eased (quite greatly) in subsequent weeks. Any minor issues or elements of clarity would be sought through the Return to Sport team at Sport Northern Ireland. Once again, sailing, windsurfing and power-boating were one of the first activities to be permitted - albeit with restrictions - before the majority of other sectors. On behalf of RYANI, I would like to thank the Minister, Department and officials for listening to our feedback and opinions and for making the necessary changes for our sport to return.

Throughout 2021-22 we informed clubs and organisations of available funding, whether this was Covid related or in support of other schemes or activities. In January 2021 we supported clubs through the Sports Sustainability fund application process. We then continued to engage with one club and Sport Northern Ireland regarding an appeals process, which focused on the rejection of an application. RYANI represented the club to the appeals committee and submitted requested information, but this process was unfortunately not completed until August 2021. Despite initial reports indicating favourably on behalf of the club, the final decision rejected the appeal. I would like to take this time to thank the staff who put so much time into supporting the club with aspects of the appeal, in particular reviewing and discussing how best to make a succinct return in a complex matter. Thanks were received from clubs in helping administrate the process.

RYA membership figures appear to have remained largely stagnant through 2021-22. The Membership department has been working on more meaningful communications with members and RYANI will support this wherever possible for RYA members in Northern Ireland.

Work has continued on the organisational strategy, with input and consultation taking place with clubs across Northern Ireland. Completion and publication of the strategy has been delayed, to allow time for the incoming COO to take stock with where we had got to so far.

Representation was provided on a range of issues on behalf of members, with some continuing pieces from the previous year. This included:

- DAERA consultation on Marine Licencing changes. The committee obtained legal advice from RYA on the requirements for laying racing marks. It is necessary to establish the facts and then report to the Board with suggested actions
- NI Water and DAERA around guidance on water quality
- PWC Consultation
- Red Diesel
- Brexit and the Northern Ireland Protocol, which remains an ongoing issue and work continues in this area.
- The Cruising and Environment Committee meeting with RYA Scotland regarding a wind farm off the Isle of Islay.
- Worked with SLLP on bouyage
- Implementing the Sustainability Action Plan
- Secured funding for a social media trainee for six months

We look forward to continuing to work closely with our Members, Clubs, Volunteers, Instructors, Coaches and Technical Officials over the next 12 months

# Board and Committee Members

## Board of Directors:

Susan McKnight	Chair
David Williams	Treasurer
Liz Baker	Chair of Development Committee
Peter Kennedy	Chair of Performance Committee
Roy Totten	Chair of Cruising and Environment Committee
Jill Heron	Director for Safeguarding and Equality

## Development Committee

Liz Baker  
Paul Prentice  
Roger Woodward  
James Ogg  
Mark Mackey  
Sara Carse

## Performance Committee

Peter Kennedy  
Bill O'Hara  
James Farrell  
Jocelyn Hill  
Curly Morris  
Colin Leonard

## Cruising and Environment Committee

Roy Totten  
David Williams  
Jackie Patton  
Isabel Hood

## Volunteers

Sailability Coordinator	Ken Curry
Regional Race Management Coordinator and Chair of RYA National Race Management Committee	Robin Gray
Regional Rules Advisor	Denis Todd

## RYA Northern Ireland Congratulates Richard Honeyford On New Post

Richard Honeyford, who has worked with RYA Northern Ireland for more than 15 years, left to join Northern Ireland Sport Forum. He joined RYANI in 2005 and since then has been an integral part of the organisation in several roles, including as a coach and then later as a Performance Manager.

Prior to his time with RYA Northern Ireland, Richard gained experience in teaching with North Down & Ards Institute, Bangor, and coached youth squads with Irish Sailing Association. He supported international athletes at SailCoach and in more recent years, Richard coached at the London Olympic Games. Richard has also supported Sport Northern Ireland as a Coach Development Mentor and joined the Board of the NI Sport Forum in November 2020.

Chair of RYA Northern Ireland, Susan McKnight, commented: "Richard has been a key part of RYA Northern Ireland since he joined in 2005. As a coach, Performance Manager and Chief Operating Officer, he has worked tirelessly with dedication and enthusiasm to develop and improve sailing and boating.

"Richard's calm and diligent manner has helped us through many challenges and his passion and drive has seen our sport grow from strength to strength. While we will all miss Richard, we wish him all the very best and we look forward to continuing to work closely with him in his new role."

Richard Honeyford said: "I have enjoyed more than 15 years working for RYA Northern Ireland and I am proud of what we have achieved as a governing body. I am delighted to be joining the Northern Ireland Sports Forum as the Executive Manager and supporting its members across Northern Ireland.

"The NI Sports Forum has done some outstanding work over recent years and I look forward to continuing this effort in supporting sports, engaging with stakeholders and advocating for the sport and recreation sector."

Chairperson of NI Sports Forum Ashley Hunter said: "I am pleased to welcome Richard as Executive Manager of the NI Sports Forum. Richard brings with him a wealth of experience, not just in the sport and recreation sector but with strong leadership skills and strategic and commercial acumen Richard is best placed to support the Forum in our next phase of work.

"Following a difficult two-year period for the sector we look forward to supporting our members in their post covid recovery plans and advocate on their behalf on a wide range of issues. On behalf of the Board of the NI Sports Forum I would like to welcome Richard to the team, and we look forward to working with him".



# Participation and Club Development

A promising start to 2021 season when 2020 hit the sailing community hard with membership numbers down, unable to run courses, and restrictions stopped opportunities to get out on the water! 2021 was the year for clubs and centres to take full advantage of the new appreciation of being outdoors, staycation trends and a chance to reconnect with members and increase membership.

But again the pandemic put a stop to the majority of the season including courses, opportunities for new participants and the unknown stopped clubs being able to plan for a 'normal' season.

13 clubs registered for Discover Sailing, but unfortunately most had to cancel as restrictions didn't ease as expected. Some clubs went ahead with a restricted Discover Sailing event and had a successful event getting new people and re-connecting with their members out on the water.

Participation programmes like OnBoard, Women on Water and crewing were limited with only several clubs asking for support to run these programmes. Donaghadee Sailing Club became an OnBoard venue in 2021 and this allowed the club to kickstart a programme for their current members using an online booking system as numbers were still limited. Welcome to OnBoard Donaghadee Sailing Club

*"Opening back to our wonderful local community again in 2022, both for our Friday BNS sailing, school and youth groups, exploiting the resources and training opportunities available from the Onboard scheme."*

Over the course of 2021 from the 4 OnBoard venues saw 56 juniors participating in OnBoard for the first time and 159 regular participant opportunities (includes returning members each month).

RYANI planned to run the first OnBoard development day in October 2021 but due to low demand it had to be postponed. This day would be for all instructors and volunteers who look after the junior programme in their club.

**" We will aim to run another OnBoard Development Day in 2022/23"**

RYANI Sporting Clubs supported East Antrim Boat Club with several programmes. A total of 18 sessions across the season and 38 participants getting regular coaching sessions including their open sessions and adult sessions (originally Women on Water it was adapted as there was a high demand for an adult open session and also training sessions for adults) . We also provided support for their race training programme which allowed the club to reconnect with their members and get them back out on the water to develop their skills and their-coach and instructors skills.

Regular club meetings proved successful in sharing ideas, figuring out specific support and keeping up to date with new committee members, volunteers and members. Club meetings are one of the most important areas as we are always keen on supporting club specific needs.



GetWet announced they were successful in funding for Try Watersports days and sailing clubs 13 clubs expressed interest, and a few were able to run a Taster Day/programme but limited in what they could do. Some clubs had to cancel, and others were unable to organise a day.

Donaghadee Sailing Club partnered with WISPA and ran a WOW taster day which 14 WISPA participants out on the water for a day. The feedback was positive and there is hope that WISPA will return in 2022.

The WOW Festival went ahead in 2021 with restrictions in place but they did not put a dampener on the day with 29 participants giving keel boating, powerboating, and paddle-boarding a go. There was also a masterclass on rigging dinghies onshore, as well as Citizen Sea bringing their boat up to Carrickfergus marina and providing tours about their charity.

The WOW Leader Group again did a fantastic job in organising this festival, from the stress of Covid to getting prizes/awards from local businesses which the participants absolutely loved.

***I had the best days fun, laughed all day. Learnt lots of new skills, tried lots of things I wouldn't normally attempt and made many new friends.***

***Thank you to Carrickfergus Sailing Club for organising this event under very difficult circumstances. You are all marvellous***

The WOW Personal Pathway delivered several workshops to grow their skills and knowledge from powerboating with Dawn Hynes coaching and instructor development led by Debbie Hannah.

This programme is helping to grow a vibrant community of coaches, instructors, officials and volunteers throughout Northern Ireland, equipping them with skills, knowledge and confidence. RYANI did apply for the Belfast Harbour fund for the WOW Personal Pathway but unfortunately this time we were unsuccessful.

In 2021 the RYA joined organisations across the globe to take part in World Sailing’s Steering the Course festival, celebrating women in sailing. During Steering the Course, we worked with Headquarters in running a ‘takeover’ on the RYA social channels highlighting women and their roles in the sport on social media, whether as commodores or committee members, helms or trimmers, race officials or mark layers, instructors or coaches, to raise the profile of women in boating. Returning for 2022, the campaign aims to introduce women and girls across the globe to the sport of sailing and promote further opportunities for those already involved.

### Membership Census

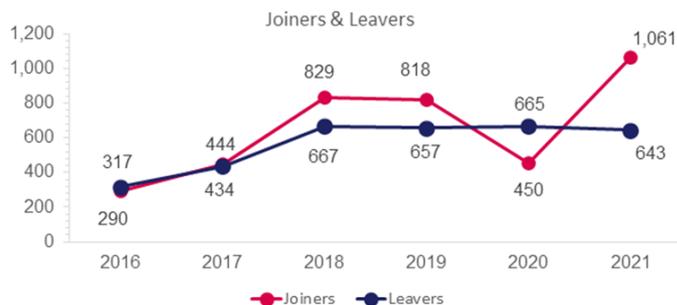
The RYA Census delivered some light within club membership in Northern Ireland and across the UK. Here are some of the membership highlights

## Membership Highlights

- Declared club membership increased from 7,933 in 2020 to **8,791** in 2021
- Estimated total membership now stands at **9,370**
- Average club size is **293** members
- Family membership increased to **1,535** members – up 291 since 2020
- Junior membership decreased to **1,375** members – down 100 from 2020, at **15.3%** of the declared total
- 93%** of clubs have junior members.

From 2016-2019 the number of new members (joiners) to clubs increased by just over 3 percentage points (528 people)

to just over 800 people. Last year, with water activity significantly constrained, Northern Ireland clubs saw record low numbers of joiners. However, this year joiners have grown substantially by around 500 people compared to the average for the period 2016-2019. Leavers have remained static compared to the average for the last four years.



### Winter Programme

RYANI supported 6 clubs with a Winter Programme of their choice, and it included Navigation workshops, weather and rules workshops, open water swim day, Day Skipper, Powerboat and race training overall, there were 31 sessions and 138 members benefitting from this programme.

This was the first year of the Winter Programme and we believe was a success for clubs reengaging with their members over a quieter period, especially during renewal time.

### Affiliated Club Conference

RYA decided to retain the online Affiliated Clubs Conference as well as running regional conferences. Originally the RYA NI Conference was to be in person but with the unknown circumstances it was decided to move it online. It was still a positive event with just over 20 club representatives attending and we had talks from RYA Legal Department and RYA Programmes Manager. The Youth Forum produced an inspiring video to show the impact of youth within our sport.

***“The conference has been informative and motivating so far and has ignited some thoughts on how we can address volunteering opportunities and overall management. I always use the conference to reignite my motivation to instigate club development. Thank You”.***

## Focus Club

RYANI relaunched the Focus Club Programme having postponed it previously due to covid. After much consideration it was decided to postpone the Focus Club programme for another year.

## Training Education Learning opportunities

Over 2021 RYANI has worked closely with RYA HQ to support and promote the delivery of workshops and events including the Affiliated Clubs Conference, Training Conference, Sailability Conference and Club Development Sessions – overall there were 398 participants with 79% of NI Clubs represented.

Club Development sessions were run for club volunteers, as well as members, to help reengage with our sport during the winter months. A Weather and Rules talk proved extremely successful with our highest ever number of registrations to the RYANI Racing Rules Talk by International Official and International Judge Chris Lindsay (also a Sport NI Sportaward maker in 2021). We had 75 people registered for this session from across the world.

Overall lots of achievements from our clubs during difficult times and volunteers and members should be recognised in this report. We are sure most are looking forward to a new year when we can all be together on the water.

## Volunteer Awards

Dedicated volunteers from across the UK were awarded for their exceptional commitment and achievements in boating on 19 November 2021 by Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal.

Overall, a total of 42 RYA Volunteer Awards were presented at the annual ceremony at One Great George Street, Westminster, celebrating long-standing volunteers as well as families, committed youngsters and most importantly, those who have made an impact.

RYANI had 4 recipients for the RYA 2021 Volunteer Awards .

In the Outstanding Contribution category -  
**HEIDI BROW & SHELLEY NELSON** - Ballyholme Yacht Club  
**KEN CURRY** - Foyle Sailability

In the Young Volunteer category -  
**ROSS JOHNSTON** Ballyholme Yacht Club

Ross Johnston was receiving a Young Volunteer Award for his services at Ballyholme Yacht Club where he mentors staff to deliver powerboat courses and oversees the upkeep of the powerboats. He's also played a key role getting the club back afloat following lockdown and uses his digital expertise to improve the website and create digital training opportunities. He said: "It's hard to see it as volunteering, when you have passion and enjoy it then it becomes a hobby! I think it's very important to bring young members in to diversify, modernise the technology and to be part of the decision process. The new members are going to be the old members in the future".

Congratulations to all volunteers and thank you for your support – you are the backbone of our sport and we couldn't do it without you

## Club of the Year

Ballyholme Yacht Club was RYANI regional finalist for the RYA & Yachts and Yachting Club of the year. They were one of 10 across the UK selected. RYA and Yachts & Yachting Club of the Year Awards supported by Gallagher celebrates the outstanding achievement and promote the hard work of sailing clubs in the UK. With continual evolution at its core, BYC has worked hard to expand its youth sailing section with both training and racing. The Club's membership is on an upward trajectory, thanks to an active recruitment campaign and an increased range of water activity including restructured sail training programme with a record volunteer uptake and dynamic vibe. Congratulations to Ballyholme Yacht Club.



# Workforce Development

Firstly, we would like to give our thanks to Gordon Reid who covered the role of Development Officer once more while Mary was on maternity leave with her second child, Finn, from October 2020 for a year. Thank you, Gordon, for keeping everything on track.

## Developing the workforce

A key area of work has been on the delivery of RYA Sailing Instructor qualifications. Following the removal of social distancing rules, we ran three RYA Dinghy Instructor Courses, a Double Handed endorsement course (a new course created following covid restrictions) and a Senior Instructor course. This delivered over forty new instructors; Donaghadee SC, South Lakes Watersports Centre (Craigavon), Strangford SC, Lough Neagh SC, Royal North of Ireland YC, Lough Erne YC, East Antrim BC & County Antrim YC all benefitting with new Senior Instructors.

We have also been working closely with RYA Powerboating RTCs who delivered more than four Powerboat Instructor courses directly.

Covid still impacted the courses. We have also been working with coaches from GB and will do for the next couple of years, this adds a pressure to running training and the administration involved in rescheduling courses. Planning has begun to help prospective local Trainer candidates prepare to

increase the workforce in NI with assistance from the current team.

## Communications & Digital Transformation

For coaches and instructors, the RYANI Instructor Training Day went online once more, with a series of 6 workshops, attended by 23 instructors from NI. RYANI ran a Senior Instructor preparation webinar and an Aspiring Coach (Sail Trainer prep) webinar which were well attended.

Communications with clubs through direct email and RYA Club Room newsletter are ongoing. We know that the readership of this may not be reaching the full spread of club officers and volunteers that they could, and work is ongoing to improve this.

The new set-up of the RYA website, has enabled a higher number of people to revalidate their qualifications as the process is easier to understand and complete online once you have set up your account on the RYA website.

Meeting with clubs and centres and providing support around our recognition, is still a key part of work. They are vital in identifying the issues and the areas where RYANI can look to support going forward.



# Youth Forum

Following a successful year, the RYANI Youth Forum ended on a high with a Night of Celebration.

The celebration event took place at Carrickfergus Sailing Club with guests representing RYA Clubs across N. Ireland in attendance.

The event included an inspiring video from Eilidh McIntyre, Olympic Gold Medallist at Tokyo 2020. RYA Northern Ireland Board Members and staff with parents were also there to congratulate the Youth Forum members on their achievements.

RYA Northern Ireland Chair Susan McKnight says: "It is fantastic to see our young people being so proactive and focusing on developing their skills. Young sailors play a vital role in developing our sport and I am delighted that this initiative is ensuring their opinions and ideas are being heard and taken forward. I am grateful to Jackie Patton and Margie Crawford for all the work they have put into the Youth Forum."

RYA Northern Ireland Youth Forum Co-Ordinator Jackie Patton comments: "We are extremely proud of our Youth Forum members. Throughout 2020-21 they have shown great determination and leadership as they acted as a voice for young people in our sport.

"It has been a pleasure to see them grow and develop and I

look forward to seeing what they achieve in the years ahead."

Throughout 2020-21 the Youth Forum members took part in ten sessions, including a team building day and a residential at National Outdoor Centre, Tollymore.

They also engaged with inspirational people within the sport including Jena Mai and Ryan Seaton, about their Olympic campaigns and how this led to Jena winning gold in Rio in 49erFX class. Phil Johnston talked about his experiences of working with the Volvo yacht team, Turn Tide on Plastic during the iconic race.

Louise Leonard from Carrickfergus Sailing club is a participant of the Youth Forum. She says: "I joined the Youth Forum to build my confidence and over this programme I have gained the confidence to speak in public. It is fantastic to be here tonight to celebrate all our achievements."

As Jackie and Margie have now stepped down we would like to thank them for all their hard work and commitment to the programme ensuring it was a great success and building a firm foundation for it to move forward.



# Sailability



In October 2021, Bob Harper stepped down as Sailability Co-ordinator after 18 years in the role. Over that time he worked with clubs and centres across Northern Ireland. Richard Honeyford commented “During his tenure, Bob became well recognised and respected. His enthusiasm and dedication have been a huge asset to our sport and Bob has played a huge role in helping the Sailability community grow from strength to strength.

“We now have three dedicated Sailability clubs in Northern Ireland and five accredited centres and this is a testament to Bob’s hard work.”

Since he took up the post, Bob has been an advocate for disabled sailing, helping to create and maximise opportunities for sailors, as well as supporting many initiatives and activities. He helped to establish Belfast Lough Sailability, which has given hundreds of adults and children with any form of disability the opportunity to take up the sport and learn the skill of sailing.

Bob’s dedication was recognised with a prestigious national award in 2010 – the RYA Francis Elkin Award.

After Bob’s departure, RYANI advertised the role and Ken Curry was appointed as the new Sailability Coordinator.

Ken started sailing in his 30s and is a member of Lough Swilly Yacht club in Donegal. A keen cruiser, Ken circumnavigated Ireland on “Kind of Blue”, Garry Crothers’ Ovni, as part of an effort to raise awareness of Sailability throughout Ireland.

Ken has taken part in many challenges over the years, some of which he says have been “life changing”. He was asked to help out when Bob Harper (former Sailability Co-ordinator) brought a group of volunteers from Belfast Lough Sailability

to Derry-Londonderry for the first ever Sailability event on the River Foyle. Many of the volunteers stayed with Foyle Sailability and Ken eventually became secretary and the club went from strength to strength.

Commenting on his new post, Ken said: “As someone who has been involved with Sailability for quite a few years now, I enjoy helping when I can and I’m a firm believer in giving those with disabilities the opportunity to get on the water.

“I understand that for a lot of our sailors, just being on the water is stimulation enough, but there are also others who have the skills, drive and abilities to become very competent and competitive sailors too. I am delighted to have been appointed Sailability Co-ordinator and I’m proud to continue my support of RYA Northern Ireland as I believe it to be one of the most respected organisations locally and throughout the world.

“I am looking forward to helping to give more disabled people - both young and old - the opportunity to enjoy our great sport.”



# Performance

2021 saw the return of sailing post Covid 19 to some form of normality. As such it has been a busy period for Performance. Further easing of restrictions have given sailors and clubs a new energy and most are discussing future plans.

Clubs and class associations, both domestic and international, had almost full calendars though some restrictions remain around travel.

## Notable Points / Results

- January saw the restart of the Celtic Cup, this year in Largs – overall we finished 2<sup>nd</sup> to Scotland. It was a close competition with podium finishes in both classes. Bobby Driscoll won the Topper fleet, while Tom Coulter achieved 3<sup>rd</sup> in the ILCA 6
- 29er Team (Erin McIlwaine and Lauren McDowell) competed at the UK Winter Champs, Grafham – 26<sup>th</sup> overall and showing positive progress
- Work with RYA and UK Anti-Doping has been a topic of discussion and work but I am please to say RYA's Sail Clean Strategy has been agreed and 1<sup>st</sup> meeting held outlines the Home Country requirements. These will now be included to the ongoing annual work plan.
- A number of sailors were invited to train with the Irish Youth Academy in January, Ellen Barbour took part in a week long camp in Valencia. Tom Coulter, though invited could not take up the opportunity due to time commitments at School. However, Tom did spend a week training in Vilamoura before then competing in the Spanish Nationals where he achieved 53<sup>rd</sup> out of an International fleet of 156.
- We are having a Performance review/planning session 8<sup>th</sup> of March with a number of head coaches, services providers and alumni sailors in attendance. The main focus will be on the Performance Academy going forward and the structure of the Youth Performance Programme.

## Youth Performance Programme

Selections for the 2021/22 Performance Programme took place in early October.

17 Toppers were selected and 18 ILCA's.

The Youth Performance Programme continues to provide the scheduled coaching, however weather and issues with club access in line with water quality reports has not always made it smooth sailing.

## Performance Academy

The role of Performance Lifestyle & Campaign Services has been filled by Phillip Johnston. This role was be established to support sailors at various stages from Academy, Transition and Elite level where appropriate. It has been positively received allowing us to archive more time with Academy Sailors and increase the amount of programme workshops we had ran including nutrition, anti-doping, goal setting and campaign planning.

A future on water session for academy athletes are being investigated. These may involve specific coaches being brought in or camps abroad where necessary.

### Current Academy Members

- Ellen Barbour, CAYC (ILCA 6)
- Tom Coulter, CYC/EABC (ILCA 6)
- Lucas Nixon, BYC/DSC (ILCA 6)
- Hannah Dadley-Young, BYC (ILCA 5)
- Zoe Whitford, EABC (ILCA 5)
- Lewis Thompson, DSC (ILCA 6)
- Lauren McDowell, RNIYC (29er)
- Erin McIlwaine, NSC (29er)



# Life changing opportunity for young sailors to have their own boat

Enthusiastic young sailors from across Northern Ireland are being encouraged to apply to be in with a chance of being awarded their own boat.

Through an ongoing partnership between the John Merricks Sailing Trust (JMST) and RYA OnBoard, 10 boats are awarded to deserving young sailors every year, providing them with the opportunity to progress their skills and continue to participate in the sport.

Connie Wilson from East Antrim Boat Club was given a boat by JMST last year. She says it has made a huge difference to her: "I recently took part in my first regatta in my JMST Topper - the Irish Sailing Youth National Championships at Ballyholme Yacht Club. It was a great experience in some very challenging sailing conditions.

"Knowing that I have the use of a boat for the next couple of years, whether it be at the club or at a regatta, has definitely made it easier to forward plan and I take great pride in my boat."

RYA Northern Ireland's Active Clubs Co-Ordinator, Lisa McCaffrey, says: "This is the chance of a lifetime for

young sailors. Each year JMST kindly donates boats to promising youngsters who are committed to the sport but may not have the opportunity or financial backing to achieve their goals.

"The JMST Scheme provides young sailors from across the country with their own equipment and after two years it is then given to their supporting organisation – usually their Club. This is a fantastic way to support our sailors and now is the time to submit applications if sailors are interested. We have had many successful sailors from Northern Ireland and they've made great progress in developing their skills with their JMST boats."

The JMST, set up in the memory of 1996 Olympic silver medallist, John Merricks.



Photo credit: Wavelength

# Excited Sailors Take To The Water For The RYA NI Youth Championships 2021

Excitement was in the air at Carrickfergus Sailing Club this weekend as more than 137 of Northern Ireland's Youth and Junior sailors took to the water to compete in the RYA Northern Ireland Youth Championships.

Racing took part of over two days on Saturday 11 and Sunday 12 September and it was a thrilling weekend as 121 boats battled it out in each of the seven categories. Competitors took to the water on Saturday for three races in light and variable conditions with four races for the ILCA 4 and ILCA 6 fleets.

On Sunday with the wind dropping, there was a delayed start. Race Officers Robin Gray and Sheela Lewis then managed to complete a single race for each class. There were six Regatta Fleet races over the weekend with coaches Dave Nelson, Chris and Jessica Penney delivering training as part of the event.

RYA Northern Ireland's High Performance Manager, Andrew Baker, commented: "It was fantastic to be at Carrickfergus Sailing Club for the RYA Northern Ireland Youth Championships. The venue was excellent and I would like to extend my thanks to everyone at the Club for their hard work and enthusiasm to ensure the weekend was such a success.

"It has been another challenging year for sport and I am delighted that we were able to run this event and I thank everyone for adhering to all COVID guidelines that were set in place.

He added: "All of the sailors have done themselves proud this weekend and we are looking forward to seeing their progression as they continue to train throughout the year."

### Overall Awards

**Female Junior Champion** Kate Brow - Ballyholme Yacht Club

**Male Junior Champion** Bobby Driscoll – Royal North of Ireland Yacht Club

**Female Youth Champion** Ellen Barbour – County Antrim Yacht Club

**Male Youth Champion** Daniel Palmer – Ballyholme Yacht Club

**Northern Ireland Schools Cup** Larne Grammar School

**Northern Ireland Club Trophy** Ballyholme Yacht Club

**Junior Champion** Bobby Driscoll – Royal North of Ireland Yacht Club

**Youth Champion** Daniel Palmer – Ballyholme Yacht Club



# 2021 Youth Championships Results

## TOPPER

<b>1<sup>st</sup> Overall</b>	<b>Bobby Driscoll</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Boy</b>	Bobby Driscoll (RNIYC)
<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	Luke Simpson (CAYC)
<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>	Toby Hughes (RNIYC)
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Girl</b>	Ciara McMahon (Howth Yc)
<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	Ella Fitzgerald (National YC)
<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>	Katie Brow (BYC)

## TOPPER 4.2

<b>1<sup>st</sup> Overall</b>	<b>Hugo Boyd</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Boy</b>	Hugo Boyd (BYC)
<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	Calum Pollard (CAYC)
<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>	Tyler Playfair (CSC)
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Girl</b>	Jessica Dadley - Young (BYC)
<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	Roma Moore (CSC)
<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>	Sally Nixon (BYC)

## ILCA 6

<b>1<sup>st</sup> Overall</b>	<b>Tom Coulter</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Boy</b>	Tom Coulter
<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	Lucas Nixon (BYC)
<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>	Finley Tulett (Dalgety Sailing Club)
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Girl</b>	Ellen Barbour (CAYC/ EABC)
<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	Hannah Dadley-Young (BYC)
<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>	Kaitlyn Eadie (BYC/ DSC)

## ILCA 4

<b>1<sup>st</sup> Overall</b>	<b>Daniel Palmer</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Boy</b>	Daniel Palmer (BYC)
<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	Joshua Kane (EABC)
<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>	Sam Kelly (EDYC)
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Girl</b>	Lucy Ives (CLYC)
<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	Sophia Cahill (HYC)
<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>	Molly McDonagh (CLYC)

