

RYANI Cruising Conference 2018 Speakers list



Peter Thornton MBE

Peter Thornton's sailing career has seen him progress from the Gorran and Mevagissey Sea Scouts in Cornwall, to being awarded an MBE at the age of twenty-five.

Pete was skipper of the GREAT Britain yacht which flew the flag for the UK in the tenth edition of the famous Clipper Round the World Yacht Race 2015-16.

The Clipper race was established by legendary UK yachtsman Sir Robin Knox-Johnston, the first person to sail solo, non-stop, around the world. He wanted to allow anyone, regardless of previous sailing history, the chance to experience the exhilaration of ocean racing; 40 per cent of crew have no previous sailing experience when they sign up, as full training is provided ahead of the race. Crew can choose to complete the entire circumnavigation, or individual legs.



Maurice O'Connell (Prof) North Sails Expert

Maurice "Prof" O'Connell is a man of many talents who can be found helming an Offshore Race Boat in the RORC Caribbean 600 or sailing a Mirror Dinghy in Cork Harbour with his children.

Prof always had an interest in sails and sail making having worked with the local loft on some projects in Cork. When the Star sailing came to an end he didn't really like the idea of heading back in the corporate world of work and under the foredeck of an International Dragon in Dublin Bay a plan was hatched to join North Sails Ireland in September 2007.

Ten years on and Prof commands a very strong position in the world of Irish and International sail making and has continued his winning ways in sailing.



Stuart Caruthers, RYA Cruising Manager

Stuart heads up the RYA Cruising Department which deals with regulatory issues, government consultations and representing the RYA at departmental and agency committee meetings, as well as above all providing a question and answer service for RYA members.

Previously an engineer by trade, Stuart enjoys the regulatory work and ensuring the voice of recreational boater is heard. He plays a key role in ensuring that any legislation is not disproportionate to those looking to get on the water.



Kate Fortnam, Campaign Manager, the Green Blue

Kate manages The Green Blue and delivers its educational awareness campaign. The campaign focuses on discovering and providing opportunities to promote an awareness of how recreational boaters and businesses can minimise their environmental impacts.

Her focus is on encouraging environmental best practice through guidance material, interactive sessions, workshops, presentations, and finding new ways to engage the boating public at various events.



Kevin Allen, Harbour Master, Belfast Harbour

Belfast Harbour is a major economic driver and facilitator for the region. Kevin works with Port stakeholders and our team of staff to contribute to the success of their business and our own. Belfast Harbour now includes a marina for recreational boater in the heart of the city.

It is a diverse port, handling all major trade sectors; including a major dry dock, offshore renewable infrastructure, even an airport every day provides a new and interesting challenge or challenges.

Kevin sums up his role as, “co-ordinating and managing a team of people to safely and efficiently deliver the marine aspects of our business.”
