

ALL ABOARD FOR FUN!

Sailing is fun, accessible and much less expensive than you might have thought

“I HIT 50 and said to myself, if you’re not going to do it now, you never will.” Gina Lamont from Devon was inspired to try sailing after she saw her daughter having so much fun learning to sail dinghies.

Like thousands of children around the UK, Gina’s daughter had discovered sailing through a tie-up between her school and OnBoard, a scheme run by national boating association the RYA that gives youngsters the chance to experience this diverse and exciting sport. Gina wanted to join in the fun and found that her local sailing club offered RYA courses for adults too.

There’s arguably nowhere in the country that offers more opportunities for different kinds of sailing than the South West, with around 130 sailing clubs offering every type of sailing and boating experience, including dinghy and yacht sailing and racing, motor and sail cruising and windsurfing.

‘Sailing isn’t all about the fresh air and exercise – it provides a fantastic social life too’

In this perfect environment for healthy outdoor activity, people of all ages, abilities and walks of life are discovering the joys and benefits of getting out on (and occasionally in) the water – whether it’s coastal, estuarine, river or inland lake water. So if you’re interested in pootling about on the river to explore the natural world around us, racing across a lake for the adrenaline rush, having an adventure by cruising down the coast with a group of friends or just relaxing in the fresh air, sailing is a sport you can really get your teeth into.

Sailing is accessible to everyone. You don’t have to own a boat – most sailing clubs have affordable membership schemes and their own fleets of boats in which you can learn to sail, and many boat-owners welcome people to crew them.

And you don’t have to be able-bodied – the region has 20 RYA Sailability sites that offer a wide range of special boats and facilities,



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WANT TO GIVE IT A GO?

Find your nearest sailing club rya.org.uk/go/wheresmynearest

Many sailing clubs hold open days and taster events where you can try out sailing in a fun, safe and friendly environment. May is National Watersports Month, when clubs throughout the UK offer free and low cost opportunities to get out on the water and try sailing as part of national RYA Push the Boat Out 2016 (14-22 May).

including hoists, launching ramps and specially adapted changing rooms, and trained volunteers to help. As enthusiastic disabled sailor Dave Durston from Gloucestershire explains: "There is no reason why, with the right equipment in place, anybody with a disability cannot compete at any level, be it class racing against others in the same kind of boat, Paralympics, or even against able-bodied sailors at your local club."

RYA Training Centres offer consistent, quality sailing courses. Whether you want to take a Start Sailing course or learn to skipper a yacht, there will be a training centre near you. Perhaps, like Gina, your children will get OnBoard through school, and you'll decide they're having too much fun without you, and join them.

Sailing isn't all about the fresh air and exercise – it provides a fantastic social life too. All over the region there are ladies' groups that include home-made cakes in their regular sailing sessions, and grandparents are showing their grandchildren how much fun and skill can be gained from leaving digital devices behind and getting out on the water.

Social media does have a place in this world, however. Groups of windsurfers often keep in touch with wind and weather conditions via Facebook and Twitter, as Sam Usher from Plymouth explains: "Our windsurf group on

DID YOU KNOW?

- Sailing is a fun, healthy, outdoor activity
- Sailing clubs are great focal points for social activity too
- You can join a friendly local club at minimal cost
- Most clubs have their own fleet of boats
- Yacht owners often welcome crew members
- Sailing can involve everything from small boats to ocean-going yachts
- Sailing is an enjoyable family activity from eight - 80+



Many sailing clubs hold open days and taster events where you can try out sailing



Facebook has been great. I know when I arrive at a beach on a windy winter's morning that I will be joined by other local windsurfers. I have met many new great friends."

Kathy Applebee from Devon points out that the over-50s enjoy sailing groups too: "As a complete beginner in my sixties, I am finding the tuition really helpful and the races at the end of most sessions are great fun - especially when I don't always come last. And the coffee get-together soon afterwards is both friendly and useful." ♦



The Royal Yachting Association is the national governing body for sailing in the UK

From beginners to the British Sailing Team, we want everyone to get out on the water and go sailing.

We offer more than 100 practical and theory courses covering everything from powerboating to dinghy sailing, yacht cruising and personal watercraft.

The south west has around 700 miles of coastline, as well as a fantastic range of estuary, lake and river sailing opportunities.

VISIT YOUR LOCAL SAILING CLUB DURING

RYA PUSH THE BOAT OUT 14 - 22 MAY 2016



Start your adventure today www.rya.org.uk/go/getafloat