



## University Sailing Clubs take on The Green Blue Sustainability Challenge



Sussex (3<sup>rd</sup> Place), Newcastle (1<sup>st</sup> Place) and Swansea (2<sup>nd</sup> Place), winners with their cheques and certificates (Dundee and East Anglia also won joint 3<sup>rd</sup> place) © Hebe Hemming

## Newcastle University Sailing & Yachting Club wins first place at 2019 Dinghy Show presentation

Hard work through the winter of 2018-19 by some fifteen university sailing clubs culminated in an award ceremony on the Main Stage at the 2019 RYA Dinghy Show at Alexandra Palace on Saturday 2 March. The University Sailing Sustainability Challenge is an annual competition, in its fourth year, promoted by **The Green Blue**, the joint environment initiative created by the **Royal Yachting Association** and **British Marine** and designed to encourage university sailing clubs to act to make their sailing more environmentally sustainable.

Supported by **British Universities Sailing Association** (BUSA), the initiative was launched in 2015 and, in its first year, saw 10 university sailing clubs signing up. In first place, achieving the Gold Award and receiving the £500 top prize was York University Sailing and Windsurfing Club. The University of Strathclyde Sailing Club clinched second place with a Silver Award and a £250 prize and, finally, in 3<sup>rd</sup> place, after battling stiff competition from several other clubs, was the University of Plymouth Sailing and Powerboating Club who achieved the Bronze Award and a £100 prize. The success of the Challenge saw 20 university sailing clubs actively participate in the 2016-17 and 2017-18 Challenges. In the 2017-18 Challenge the University of Manchester Sailing Club came in first, followed by Aberdeen University Sailing Club and Swansea University Sailing Club.



UEA Sailing & Powerboat Club are well-prepared just in case to ensure no pollution on their Broad



First Year Rep, Vishay Karai (fetchingly sporting the UEAs new 'towel-coat') draws attention to the Green Blue poster



University of Sussex Sailing Club attract interest at host's Sussex Yacht Club with their display of Green Blue posters and leaflets

The Challenge involves university sailing clubs competing to undertake as many sustainable actions as they can throughout the academic year. By undertaking these positive actions, they will have the opportunity to demonstrate to the rest of the boating community how achievable and rewarding sustainable boating can be.

Each club needs to appoint a **Sustainability Officer** who will act as The Green Blue's main point of contact and be the key driver to lead their club to success. Although in the last Challenge students undertaking geography, science and marine related degrees were keen to take up the position, those studying a variety of degrees take on the role. What is common to them is a passion for safeguarding the environment that drives them, as they build on their skills and knowledge and add their involvement with a UK Sustainable Boating Programme to their CV.



Gaby Viner & Elena St George of Newcastle USYC at Derwent Reservoir SC demonstrate their *Check Clean Dry* regime with a Firefly



Newcastle USYVC has a spill kit ready in their fuel store

Sustainable actions include: ensuring sailing venues have a Spill Kit available to clean up any accidental spills when boaters are handling oil and fuel, ensuring members use re-usable sports bottles during training sessions and events to reduce waste and single use plastic bottles, and making sure boats, trailers and equipment follow the Check Clean Dry approach to minimise the risk of spreading invasive non-native species around UK waters.

**Anna Stubbs**, Sustainability Officer, **Swansea University SC** commented:

"Lots of keen students, who already had an interest in sustainability. Good opportunity for them to get involved and maintain and improve the sustainability of the sailing club"



**University of Sussex Sailing Club** tak their publicity campaign into the their host's yacht haven at Sussex Yacht Club



**Sussex** make sure their sailors have re-usable sports bottles during sessions so reduce waste with single-use plastic bottles

**Zuza Malecka**, President, **University of Sussex Sailing Club** also took on the Sustainability Officer role: "People seemed very engaged in the scheme; it's our first year taking part in the award, so a great success. Definitely going to do it again next year and aim for gold!"

**Gaby Viner**, Newcastle's Sustainability Officer: "Enjoyed getting involved in it, increasing the awareness about sustainability within the club. We sail at Derwent, which is a beautiful place, and we want keep it natural and clean and not negatively affect the environment."



It seems that **Newcastle University Sailing and Yachting Club** seem to have fun keeping any rubbish at bay at their host club, **Derwent Reservoir SCs** beautiful site

**Will Hawkins**, Commodore: "**Newcastle University Sailing and Yachting Club** are thrilled to get involved with the **Blue Green 2018-19 Sustainability Challenge**. The **RYA** and **Green**

Blue scheme has driven many University Sailing Clubs to promote areas in which sailing can be more environmentally friendly. These effects are clear to see at **Derwent Reservoir Sailing Club**, our home club, that has been extremely helpful in allowing us to implement the Challenge. A big thank you goes to our Sustainability Officer, Gaby Viner, who has led the project and to our members, who we are always more than happy to get involved. It's important to remember that the Challenge doesn't stop here, and we will continue to maintain the great facility at Derwent ahead of competing again next year".

**Helena Leeson-Payne**, Sustainability Officer, **Dundee University Sailing Club**:

"DUSC enjoyed taking part in the Sustainability Challenge. It involved all club members, especially our teams. Our host club, **Royal Tay Yacht Club**, is always very supportive and helpful with the university sailing club and this challenge was no different. I think many of our members would agree that by taking part it clarified the reason and importance of carrying out certain tasks such as the 'check, clean, dry' procedure and formalised many of the other procedures our club does when going out on the water. Making sure we used our reusable water bottles highlighted how such a simple thing could make a difference to the impact on the water. Overall, DUSC and all its members thoroughly enjoyed taking part, and we look forward to future challenges!"

**Gaby Viner**, in her final year at Newcastle, doing a Masters in Geography, drew attention to some of the benefits that accrue for USCs taking part in the Challenge:

"Taking part in the sustainability challenge is really great publicity for your sailing club as the Facebook posts and photos get shared on social media and reach a lot of people. It also gives a really good relationship with your sailing club venue, by promoting sustainability there and keeping the club clean! Aside from this, it's a really fun way to compete against other universities and try and win prizes.

"At NUSYC, we have flag officer roles alongside the main committee roles, one of which is Sustainability Officer. I personally have really enjoyed being the club's Sustainability Officer, as it's been really rewarding and being in my final year has been great for talking about at job interviews".



Sussex securely stow a reusable water bottle



Another, pretty, but fishy, Sussex reusable waterbottle



Newcastle make their reusable bottles well-secure

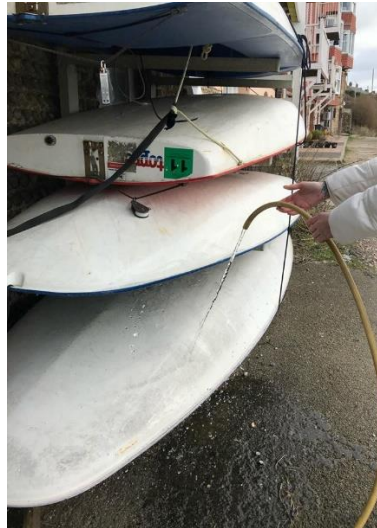
Newcastle's Vice Commodore, **Elana St George**, an active participant in the Challenge and with Gaby at the Dinghy Show to receive Gold, summed up: "Just wanted to add our thanks again to the Green Blue for organising the programme - we really enjoyed being a part of it. It was great to meet Kate and other members of the winning USCs at the Dinghy Show.

"Looking after the natural environment is vital to our sport, not only so we can continue to enjoy sailing now, but also be certain that our waters stay clean and safe for future use too".

**Bella Cooper**, Commodore, **Swansea University Sailing Club**, commented: 'It is excellent to see universities engaging in all aspects of the sport and looking after the areas in which we sail. Encouraging members to actively engage in challenges such as the Green Blue enables them to develop their skills and educate others in doing so well done to all the universities that took part.'



Swansea's spill kit in evidence at the fuel store



Sussex ensure their Toppers are spic and span



Swansea puts the words about at Tata Steel SC, Margam

**Emma Fox**, Sustainability Officer for the **University of East Anglia (UEA) Sailing and Powerboat Club**, hosted by **Waveney and Oulton Broad Yacht Club (The WOBYC!)** provides a full picture:

“From my short time acting as the Sustainability Officer, I found it to be not only an enjoyable experience but extremely gratifying. What is evident from the sailing community was the high level of effort everyone was willing and strived to put in to make sailing more sustainable. From this, it was clear just how much people appreciate our inland aquatic environment!



**University of East Anglia Sailing and Powerboating Club have their reusable bottles to hand as the sun sets on another dream day on Waveney & Oulton Broad**

Ellie Brettell (Social and Publicity Secretary), Hywel Finden-Browne (Secretary), Emma Fox (Sustainability Officer), Naomi Hudson, Vishay Karai (First Year Rep), a trail sailor for the day, Patrick Croghan (Racing Officer) and Fraser Harris (President)

“The Broads, arguably as Britain’s most important and largest protected wetland area, has already seen a large number of conservation schemes in order to protect the rare wildlife here, and these are noticeable when sailing; an abundance of wildlife is present; water pollution levels are, to the eye, low; plastic pollution is not a particularly large issue. This makes the Broad a great location for us to sail, but also meant that the host club we are linked with (the

WOBYC!) were extremely onboard with improving their impact and graciously accepted any alterations we made, in order to improve the sustainability of not only our sailors, but others using the broad.

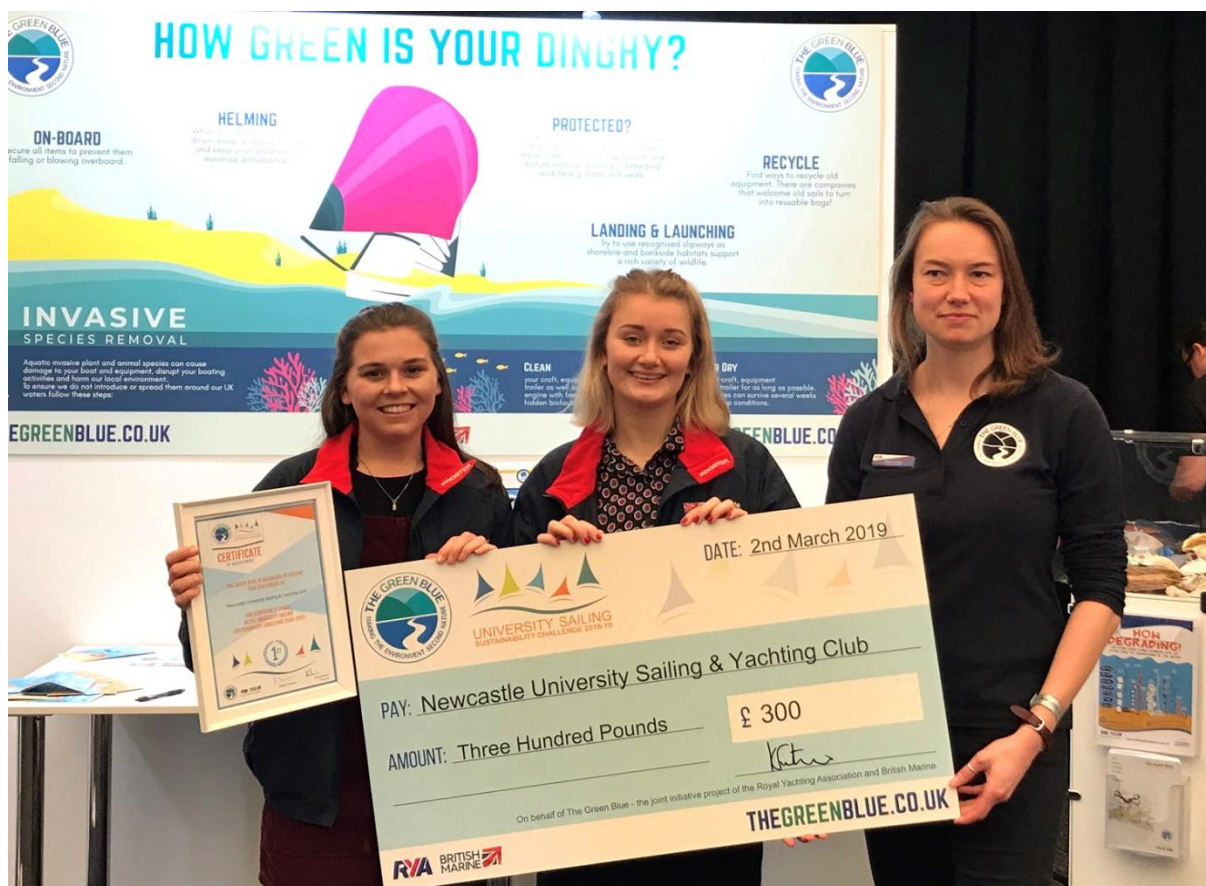
“The largest impact we made was then spreading the awareness of the Bio-Security Facilities and the process of checking, cleaning and drying boats to prevent the spread of invasive species, which has become routine for our club. Just as much as we would not like to spread invasive species elsewhere, we would not like to bring any back from the competitions our BUCS team takes part in!

“Which brings me to the attitude of the club. This was a scheme that everyone was aware of and fully participated in, and many of the tasks were completed by various members of the club when I was not able to attend. It was a club achievement, and I think everyone is proud of the award we have gained and will take on each of the improvements offered by The Blue Green to any future sailing events/clubs.

“A cause particularly close to everyone’s heart is reducing our usage of Single Use Plastics, and this ethos is now very much a core element of our sailing club. The club has even been spreading awareness to other, non-sailing related clubs, at the university to further promote this cause!”

### Champions of sustainability

Environmental problems like waste disposal, climate change and the pollution of our marine habitats affect every human, animal and nation on this planet. Environmental issues are also a hot topic in lecture halls and common rooms across the UK.



Representing the Winners, Newcastle University Sailing & Yachting Club, Vice Commodore, Elana St George, and Sustainability Officer, Gaby Viner, with The Green Blue Campaign Manager, Kate Fortnam at the RYA Dinghy Show © Hebe Hemming

Set up by The Green Blue and supported by the British University Sailing Association (BUSA), the University Sailing Sustainability Challenge provides an ideal platform for university sailors to demonstrate how achievable sustainable boating can be to the wider boating community. Swansea University Sailing Club clinched second place and were awarded a £200 prize and in joint 3rd place was Dundee University Sailing Club, the University of Sussex Sailing Club

and the University of East Anglia Sailing Club who each received a £100 prize. Representatives of the university sailing clubs were invited onto the main stage at the RYA Dinghy Show to have their awards presented by Campaign Manager for The Green Blue, Kate Fortnam, and **Peter Saxton**, President of BUSA.

**Kate Fortnam** congratulated the universities for their efforts and achievement with their certificates and prizes. She said: “It’s in everyone’s interest to protect the natural environment that supports our recreational boating activity. That’s why it’s so rewarding to see these University Sailing Clubs once again commit to making their sport as environmentally sustainable as possible.

“The competing students have once again demonstrated their dedication and commitment to keeping their sailing environment clean, safe and beautiful for future generations of sailors.”

### **Environmental audits**

To recognise the achievements of the winning clubs, certificates were presented to the Sustainability Officer for each club. Their role was to organise, encourage and lead their club through the Challenge to successfully complete a number of sustainable boating actions.

As part of the Challenge, a set number of sustainable actions had to be achieved and evidenced by competing university sailing clubs. These included performing an environmental audit of their sailing venue to identify and improve areas that can be made more sustainable, ensuring all their members use reusable water bottles as opposed to one-use plastic bottles, installing an oil/fuel spill kit at their sailing venue to clean up accidental spills when refueling, and demonstrating ‘check, clean and dry’ best practice to minimise the spread of alien species around UK waters.



Dundee University Sailing Club end the day at the Royal Tay YC with a friendly demonstration of their reusable bottles

**Cleo Dunnett** of Aberdeen, who volunteered in 2018-19 (her second year at uni) to be the Challenge Coordinator, having led Aberdeen as a fresher to a Silver award in 2018-19, commented: “I really enjoyed overseeing the Challenge. I felt like it was an important role to take on as it challenged me, and I was also able to help initiate a series of sustainable actions that hopefully would be continued into the future. The Challenge highlights how we can be more sustainable around sailing, and it would be great to see more universities taking part”. Looking back on her fresher year, when Cleo was Aberdeen’s Sustainability Officer,

she confirmed that the Challenge can lead to closer and productive working relationships with host clubs, in Aberdeen's case, **Forfar Loch Sailing Club**.

### Thanks

We are grateful for the ready contributions from the winning clubs' Sustainability Officers and Commodores to this record. Thanks are due to all those who took photos and posted on social media. Most of the images in this report were downloaded from USC's Facebook pages & groups.

But we are particularly grateful to BUSA Women's Captain, **Hebe Hemming**, taking time out from her racing campaign, managing Team Athena (and collecting the inaugural Ian Atkins award on Ally Pally's Main Stage at the Dinghy Show), who acted as BUSA's roving reporter and photographer at the Sailing Sustainability Challenge awards. We wish her and her team all the best for the Nations Cup Grand Final in San Francisco in April.

### Next year's Challenge!

The Green Blue has teamed up with BUSA to invite all UK University Sailing Clubs to enter into next year's **University Sailing Sustainability Challenge 2019-20**. If you know, or are part of, a university sailing club that is interested in getting involved or you want to find out more about the Challenge, contact **Kate Fortnam**, The Green Blue's Campaign Manager at [kate.fortnam@thegreenblue.org.uk](mailto:kate.fortnam@thegreenblue.org.uk) or call 023 8060 4227.

### Further information

For all information about The Green Blue, see <https://www.thegreenblue.org.uk/> and for the University Sailing Sustainability Challenge, go to: <https://www.thegreenblue.org.uk/University-Sailing-Sustainability-Challenge>

You can cheer on next year's university sailing clubs through the Sustainability Challenge by following @thegreenblue on Twitter and Facebook.

BUSA has a Development section at <https://busa.co.uk/development/busa-and-development>, which includes a dedicated page for the Challenge: <https://busa.co.uk/development/university-sustainability-challenge>



Swansea University Sailing Club have their reusable bottles, but we hope they enjoyed their sunset too