



HMS SAILING SEMINAR 2012 – MAIN SPEAKERS BIOS

Denis Dillon

Denis's big interest is in RIBs and this year he plans an attempt on the Round Ireland record of 18hrs, 36 mins and 40 secs to be followed on by a round Britain and Ireland record attempt (27 hrs 10 Mins to beat)!

He has been involved in boating both professionally and recreationally since 1978. He was the Motorboat Development Officer with the Irish Sailing Association for 4 Years with the remit to promote and develop power boating in Ireland. His achievements were:

Powerboat Circuit racing re-established after an absence of 5 Years.

Five new racing Clubs Formed, National Championships Run in 4 different classes.

European Circuit P750 Championships held.

Three Irish teams to South Africa for P750 World championships

Offshore powerboat racing introduced into Ireland.

International 1st Around Ireland Offshore race held for marathon Boats.

Two Irish teams competed in Round Britain 2008.

Three attempts to set new Around Ireland Record.

Denis acted in various roles during these events from pitching in where it was needed to Union Internationale Motonautique Irish Delegate, UIM Official Timekeeper, ISA Commissioner, Officer of the day and of course his favorite role 'Competitor'.

Denis's participation in the HMSailing Seminar has been made possible by the kind sponsorship of Findhorn Marina.



Chris Owen

Chris is an accomplished sail designer and maker whose very best experience was to see his sails win a gold medal, at the pinnacle of sailing - The Olympic Games - in Beijing 2008. His spinnaker, after 2 years of development, crossed the line in the medal race in the Yngling class to win the gold medal for Team GBR with the Yngling girls, Sarah Ayton, Sarah Webb and Pippa Wilson and not forgetting coach Paul Brotherton!

More recently, after a sail making career spanning 35 years with many notable successes, Chris has branched out into a new business that has evolved as SailTrimCoach.com, where he is available to sail with customers and show them what rig tuning and sail trimming is all about and to get the very best out of their boat.

In 2010 Chris invested heavily in new software called Azure Project with not only sail design software but also analysis software that exposes the design to both Aero and Structural analysis. The software is also a great teaching tool and is updated regularly. In June 2011 Chris coached Paul Brotherton at the Olympic trials in Weymouth ahead of the 2012 Olympic Games. He has also been appointed Chairman of the Azure Project User Group which allows him to be at the very cutting edge of sail design software.

Stewart Graham

Gael Force owner Stewart Graham successfully completed the final 6,000-mile leg of his round the world journey in November 2011. Stewart had been sailing his Discovery 67 mono hull yacht the Rhiann Marie, named after his daughter, both with his family and single-handed since September 2009.

Though finding friendship with people all over the world, he experienced a number of 'threatening encounters', including having the yacht approached at high speed at dawn by a boat with masked men wearing balaclavas off Columbia. His yacht was hit by lightning in the Caribbean, which destroyed electronics including its essential autopilot system, and he had to cope with storm conditions, high seas, ripped sails and damage to his rigging, plus the constant repairs required to keep a circumnavigation on track, with a minimum amount of sleep.

In February 2011, Stewart had eight nuts and bolts, two rods and a metal plate permanently fitted into his spine after an off road motorcycle accident in the jungle in Malaysia. However he was back at the helm just one week after the accident proving his determination to succeed.

Finding that his return route through the Gulf of Aden was a no go zone, due to the activities of pirates, Stewart refused to give up, showing characteristic grit and determination in continuing through a Southern hemisphere winter.

Stewart, who took up sailing 10 years ago and now has more than 50,000 miles' experience, said he had found the journey both physically and mentally challenging.