

Westminster Boating Base

11th Edition, March 2009

Newsletter

The New Season is Here....

April the 1st is the beginning of the new season and we have a great program organised for you...

On Mondays through to Wednesdays, sailing will start half an hour later than the kayaking—so remember to check the session start times.

Rutland Water Youth Sailing Trip: 25th-29th May 2009. An action packed 5 days of sailing on one of Europe's largest man-made lakes. Indoor accommodation, fresh food cooked on site, a wide range of dinghies including catamarans and Base Instructors will make this an exciting half-term break. RYA Level 1 certificate required.

This year we have lots more kayaking and sailing on offer with sessions every evening from Monday to Thursday. Also monthly kayak beginner sessions on Sundays. Check the new timetable and on-line calendar for more information and times.



Sunday kayaking and sailing will continue as usual throughout the summer, here's your chance to improve your skills, go on trips, play games and have lots of fun in the summer sun.

It's Gold for Speedy Ben



The first weekend of March marked the beginning of the slalom season for youth member Ben Langton.

15 year old Ben began competing at slalom two and a half years ago and raced himself into Division 2.

His very successful weekend saw

him win the men's division two race on Saturday and gain fourth place on Sunday.

"Saturday went really well," says Ben, "after the first run I was in first place and had a comfortable seven second lead. I got back on the water at 5.15 pm but this run didn't go quite so well. At the end of the first day of racing, I had completed my first race of the season with 1000 points already bagged and the hope of another win on Sunday.

Sunday was the worst day of competing I have ever had. I had a bad 1st run leaving with me in 4th place and needing to lose at least 12sec to get to the top of the board.

At 4:15 I got back onto the water thinking about what I had to do to achieve the time I needed.

Although I had put everything into that last run and suffered a fifty second time penalty, I still managed to achieve 4th place. I'm treating it as experience and hope to get to Division 1 soon."

London Youth Games: 13th June 2009. If you're aged 10 to 18, and want to experience the excitement of Olympic sports, join the kayak or sailing teams and compete against other people in London. Whether you're a novice, or have done it before, come down on Thursday evenings to get that all important training and preparation.

Virgil: "Power boats are Go...."



**Matt Harbord,
Volunteer kay-
aking instructor**

After the Base kindly put me and Dominic through our level one coaching course last summer, they decided it would be a good idea if we could also drive the safety boats. On one of the rare beautiful mornings in March Dominic, Rob and myself turned up at the Base for a Power Boating course, not knowing what we were letting ourselves in for. We had hoped to be

coached by one of the best, most experienced coaches available – unfortunately only Kevin was around—and so it was with some trepidation that we took our first steps into the world of power boating.

For me, this was the first time anyone had trusted me behind the wheel. I can honestly say it's the most fun I've had in ages! After a nervous start I was encouraged by Kevin and his statement that these boats are "impossible to roll" – now, to me that sounds like a challenge!

After getting the boat up to full speed and turning it in tighter and tighter circles, I was giggling like a schoolgirl while the rest of my crew were dripping with water.

If you ever get a chance to try this out then I guarantee you'll enjoy it. Even better, if you ask Kevin nicely, he'll be able to tell you the tale of when he taught everyone's favourite Thunderbird, Virgil, how to rescue Rob (our much-loved Man Over Board), drive in straight lines really fast, and do emergency stops to soak everyone on board.



**"These boats are 'impossible to roll' –
now, to me that sounds like a challenge!"**

Neighbourhood Leadership Award for Kevin



January saw our senior instructor, Kevin Burke, receive a Neighbourhood Leadership Award of £100 from Westminster City Council, as recognition for

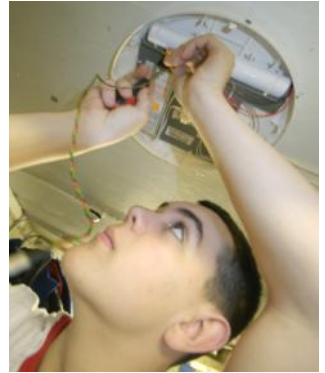
his life-long dedication to the Boating Base. Now everyone who knows Kev, will appreciate how much work and dedication he gives to the Base. But you probably didn't know that he has been teaching here ever since the Base opened in 1976, when he was the first person through the doors. He was a fifteen year old volunteer then with a couple of year's sailing experience.

The Boating Base had been funded by the Inner London Education Authority from its opening, but in 1989 ILEA ceased to exist. The Base had to find an alternative income. Kevin and Robin Turner, who lived next door, worked for three years without a penny of wages. Together, they succeeded in building a centre that is much larger than what it was then, with wonderful function rooms. They transformed the centre from a place with absolutely no income to one which became self sufficient from the money raised through the functions and which continues to support the charity to this day.

Ben Goes Electric

15 year old Ben Langton has successfully installed an emergency lighting system throughout the Boating Base building, under the watchful eye of chief instructor, Kevin Burke.

Ben spent a week, working around school time, to install the system. Interested in electronics from a young age, Ben is planning to become an electrical engineer in the Royal Navy.



Got a Man Overboard?

Charlotte Moseley, a 16 year old sailor, kayak paddler, powerboat volunteer and volunteer helper at the Base, went on a RYA Seamanship course run by Elaina and Nigel. She learned some difficult manoeuvres. Here she tells her tale.....

The conditions on the first day were pretty unhelpful, next to no wind. So Nigel's minute perfect plan had to be changed. Layered up with as many clothes as we could get on. We left the moorings and reefed afloat, before moving onto



man overboard; dropping a lifebuoy over the side, sailing away then manoeuvring back to pick it up. Luckily we weren't using real men, because in the first twenty minutes, we

would have lost quite a few.

We perfected a few more skills that morning including anchoring, heaving to, stopping the boat and landing on a lee shore.

The following week we rigged the boats and learned during the briefing that we were going to be trying some complicated manoeuvres.

We practiced rudderless sailing and had to steer the boat using just our sails and ourselves.

There were around 12 capsizes that morning. Over lunch the winds increased. One of the boats on the moorings inverted so we got our first introduction to the inversion capsiz recovery. We braved the wind and rain to try to turn over the boat, but Nigel had to jump in and recover it from the water.

We finished off with theory on meteorology, charts and road trailers. We all learnt lots from the course and can now use our new skills in our everyday sailing.

I would thoroughly recommend this course for anyone wanting to improve their skills.

The Summer France Trip

Now here's a super cool trip for all you kayaking fans. This trip is for the younger members who must have their two star kayaking certificate. The trip will be to the South of France for about ten days of white water paddling, camping, home cooking, camp songs and fun.

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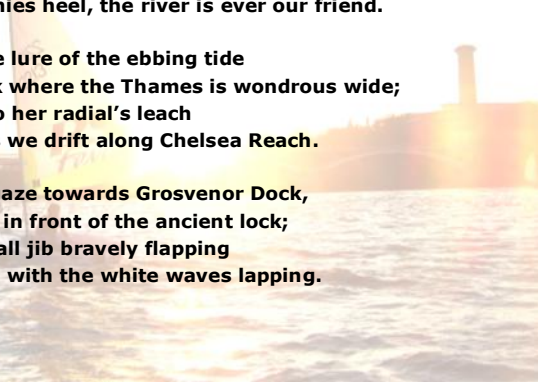
See Feva by Jackie Rhodes

**I must go down to the Base again, to the lonely mooring trot,
And all I ask is a Stratos red released from her tethering knot;
Then from Tyburn House to the lighters' bulk, I will beat into tide and wind
While the grey gulls wheel and the dinghies heel, the river is ever our friend.**

**I must go down to the Base again, to the lure of the ebbing tide
From the gravel strand by Chelsea Creek where the Thames is wondrous wide;
And all I ask is a Laser one with a star to her radial's leach
And a sunset red behind Buddha wise as we drift along Chelsea Reach.**

**I must go down to the Base again, and gaze towards Grosvenor Dock,
Where canoeists stay and kayakers play in front of the ancient lock;
And all I ask is a Feva bold, with her small jib bravely flapping
As we tack away from the shingled edge with the white waves lapping.**

Inspired by John Masefield's 'Sea Fever'



Volunteer of the Year

Volunteer sailing instructor, Nigel Berman; Freeman of London (which means he doesn't charge) was awarded the 'Robert Feneck award for Volunteer of the Year 2008'. This was in recognition of many years of sterling service as a sailing and powerboat instructor.

The award itself is a glass sculpture, originally made as a birthday present for instructor Kevin Burke, by his dad. The sculpture was created by melting re-cycled glass mineral bottles, which have a blue tint. Kevin donated the sculpture to the Base so that more people could enjoy it.

**Stop Press. Stop Press. Stop Press.
This Newsletter needs YOU!**

Hey, would you like to be a special reporter? Would you like to tell readers about your kayaking or sailing experiences at the Base? Do you have ideas about things you would like to do at the Base? Have you got any jokes, photos, puzzles or even a drawing or two you would like to share? Ask questions about any aspect of kayaking or sailing but above all—have fun doing it. We are planning a special youth edition in June so now is your chance to show your talents.

If so, let me know...

Annette