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North Sea Race Sole Role For

AFTER almost 20 years the Royal Findhorn Yacht Club is no longer involved in the North of Scotland's premier international yacht race.

In late January it was decided to wind up the RFYC and Banff Sailing Club Joint Offshore race committee which has shared the considerable organisational skills needed to run the annual Banff-Stavanger North Sea Yacht Race.

The move followed the withdrawal of BSC from the joint offshore committee because they felt the Findhorn club had not provided sufficient support during last year's event. They claimed no one from the Moray club took part in the race or attended post event functions, reports *Dave Morgan*.

One of the event's most enthusiastic supporters, Findhorn skipper Robin Miller, is disappointed RFYC is no longer part of the organisation. 'When last year's North Sea Race was on our members were involved in the Orkney Challenge event,' he said. 'That meant we did not have any representation at the Banff-Stavanger race and BSC were unhappy with that situation. Of course I'm disappointed no one from Findhorn attended last year's race and its functions, but to be fair they were all in Orkney.'

'Once Banff withdrew from the joint race committee we were left with no choice but to wind it up,' he said. 'I've been involved as an RFYC organiser and competitor right from the start,' he said.



Big finish for 'Roundabout' as she powers across the finish line spinnaker set at the end of last year's Halliburton North Sea Yacht Race. Photo by Bodies of Banff.

its 20th birthday next year. It has been a great success and created many friendships on both sides of the North Sea. It would be a disaster if it was allowed to fold after so many good years.'

But despite the disappearance of the joint organising committee, the 320 mile race is set to continue.

RFYC's former partners at Banff have taken on the mantle and plans are well ahead on this year's event which is scheduled to start from Banff Bay on 29 June.

Commodore of the Banff club, Gordon Maitland, said: 'It's a pity we've come to the parting of the ways with Findhorn, but there was a feeling their lack of involvement in last year's race left us with a heavy burden.'

'We're going it alone on this side of the North Sea, but we are working closely with our Norwegian friends at the Stavanger Sailing Club and expecting a big start line up on 29 June.'

Once again Halliburton are

to enjoy some of the best cruising grounds in the world before heading home.'

But not all links will be severed with Findhorn. Because of his close involvement in the event Robin Miller has been invited to join the new BSC

North Sea Race committee in an ex-officio capacity.

'We do not want this change to look like a major falling out with Findhorn,' the Banff commodore said. 'Most of the action is centred on Banff and Macduff so perhaps it's better for us to take the lead. But Robin's work needs to be recognised and I'm delighted he's joining our committee.'

The new BSC North Sea Race committee members are: John Sellar, Alistair Mackie, Jane Bowie, George Jack, Phil Brown and Simon Oaks with Robin Miller and Gordon Maitland as ex-officio members.

Boats from the west coast planning to take part will be eligible for reduced passage rates through the Crinan and Caledonian canals. Harbour fees at both Macduff and Stavanger are waived for all North Sea Yacht Race boats.

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Oban Sailing Club skipper Joey Gough (left) and his crew after a