

SOLENT DOLPHIN CHARITY MARKS 30 YEARS



MORE than 100 people gathered at Hythe marina to celebrate the 30th anniversary of a charity's inaugural boat trip.

Volunteers, friends and families toasted the success of Solent Dolphin, which was set up by New Forest Rotary Club and takes disabled people on trips out to sea.

To mark the occasion the charity treated 12 members of the New Forest Parkinson's Group to an excursion aboard its Alison MacGregor motor vessel, before holding a party.

Among those attending was the Hythe Ukulele Group, which presented a cheque for £1,000 to Solent Dolphin founder Alan Blair. New Forest District Council chairman, Cllr Alan Glass, a Solent Dolphin volunteer, made a speech and thanked all who had contributed to the charity's success.

After it was first set up, the charity received a donation for half of its capital costs - £20,000 - from Jimmy and Muriel MacGregor. It was in memory of their daughter Alison, who had been sailing in Southampton Water the day before she was tragically killed in the Clapham train disaster.

Prior to its inaugural trip Falklands veteran Simon Weston, the charity's patron, launched its first boat, an orange-coloured work vessel. That initial journey had three passengers and the charity quickly grew; by the Millennium it had transported 15,000 disabled people and their carers.

