

Nigel Ling – A Yorkshireman

I first met Nigel Ling in 1990 at Bowland Gliding club. He was an accomplished light aircraft private pilot and also a passionate glider pilot. He would declare, *"It's so much more fun trying not to crash land in a plane that's got no engine....."*. I had joined the gliding club when at university as a mature student. The instructors were club members and volunteered their time to train junior pilots and Nigel was everyone's instructor of choice. You knew exactly where you were with him and what you had done wrong! – but you also knew exactly what you had done right. Our common interest in all things boats led to interesting conversations at 2/3000 feet especially when Nigel used his arms and hands to gesticulate while explaining something.....the cockpits of Gliders are really quite small! As I got to know Nigel better, I learned of his gentle, kind and caring side. That side of him was not hidden but just often overshadowed by the big personality that was Nigel. For those that never saw the gentle side of him, you weren't looking, and you missed out on a real treat.

Our paths didn't cross again until Dr Roger Lorenz, also a senior YDSA Surveyor, introduced us when I was at the early stages of joining the YDSA in the mid 1990's. I spent some time shadowing Nigel – these days were whirlwinds of information and energy and I remember always trying to keep up. Wherever we went and whoever we saw, the respect shown to Nigel from clients was enormous and we were visiting some large commercial entities and household names of the marine world.

Nigel's passion and energy for everything he did was infectious and exhausting and his commitment was absolute. He was enormously proud of YDSA and the years that he had sat on the national committee and council. After his term had finished and mine had started, he coerced me into setting up some YDSA training events in the Northwest. We did this in 2003/4 and it became *'The Northern Forum'*. Nigel chaired the events and in the early days attracted many high calibre speakers for the informal training sessions and the discussions from the floor which have become legendary and a legacy I know he would be proud of. Nigel's own sessions were exciting and interesting especially *'Stability and buoyancy with no maths'* which simplified a complex subject with the aid of models in a fish tank and all delegates left with a far greater appreciation and understanding whatever their level of understanding was before the session.

We had been told by other more southern-based surveyors that a northern training event, *"...will never work"*. Nigel loved that and always chuckled as he referenced it when wrapping up the end of every session. October of this year will be the 17th year of the Northern Forum!

Nigel bridged the gap between yachts, powerboats and inland craft, bringing a wealth of knowledge from his big ship experience. He was a trained and qualified Naval Architect and not only did he design work and build supervision on multimillion pound contracts for clients including the MOD but also worked with very small one-man operations such as dinghy builders. All client types received his same level of absolute dedication to doing it right. He even worked as a consultant to big salvage companies, advising on the dismantling sequence of very large ships. Some of which we have all read about in the media that floundered on UK shores and were broken up in situ.

Nigel was a fervent and very accomplished cricketer. He played at an amateur county level all his life and turned down the offer to become professional. He represented England on various overseas winter tours when he was picked for the national over 60's team. He once told an assembled group of surveyors with his trademark modesty and frankness *"Ah....well...yes, but you see I had to wait until lots of other buggers had got to knackered or died before there was any room for me"*.

At that first meeting I remember thinking that Nigel was a brazen, blunt and forthright Yorkshire man and an excellent flying instructor. I never changed those views but came to add that he was an excellent surveyor, excellent colleague and most excellent friend.

'It'll never work