



## **Tribute to Alastair Forrest (1942 - 2020)**

It was with great sadness that in March 2020 members of the Association heard the news that they had lost their much loved and well respected Chairman, Alastair Forrest. Alastair had lost a kidney to cancer in 2017, but he had bounced back to play a full part in the 2018 and 2019 seasons. So it came as a great shock to learn that the disease had recurred over the winter and progressed very rapidly. Fortunately he was able to pass away peacefully at home in the comfort of his family.

The extent to which Alastair cared for the well-being of the Catapult Class was amply demonstrated by his last communications with the Association from his hospital bed, when his main concern was to make sure his boat would find a good home and continue to be a visible part of the Catapult fleet around the country. It was this caring attitude that led Alastair to get involved in the running of the Class in a number of roles: as Committee Member and Minutes Secretary, Webmaster and Chairman, with the last two posts held in tandem.

Alastair took over as Chairman in 2013 and was still in harness when he died. During that time the Class, despite its small membership, enjoyed a level of active participation in the sailing programme that is the envy of many other classes. A key factor in this is the encouragement given to sailors in mid-fleet.

Alastair championed the introduction of the Personal Handicap Series, for which John Terry developed the technical design. This has proved a great success, so much so that the Series is as fiercely contested as the level rated Jon Montgomery Travellers Trophy. So it is very fitting that Alastair's family have kindly offered to commission a new Personal Handicap Trophy in Alastair's name, for which the Association is immensely grateful. It will act as a permanent reminder of Alastair's enormous contribution to the Class.

Alastair was also responsible for the other main reason for the Association's continuing health: the Class Website. Alastair built up the website to the major resource it now constitutes. He made accessible the wealth of information about the Catapult built up over many years, and invited contributions from our more innovative and inventive sailors. It was a badge of honour for Alastair to attend every possible Catapult event, and the few he missed were rare indeed. As a result he became the Class's main racing reporter through which he conveyed the excitement enjoyed by all the competitors. With its wealth of race reports, technical and sailing tips, for sale boards, class history and information about the Association the Catapult website is a fine achievement that puts the websites of many much larger classes in the shade.

Alastair will be remembered even more for his warm personality, his kindness and consideration towards others, and for his thoughtful and participative leadership. The respect and admiration that these personal attributes generated were reflected in the many heartfelt tributes received from members. He will be sadly missed.