

Edinburgh Reporter Chats – Christopher Robson



Christopher Robson is a Property Manager after completing his studies in Property Development and Valuation at Edinburgh Napier University, but it is his passion for sailing which takes up most of his time.

Who are you, where do you come from?

My name is Christopher Robson, I'm 22 and I grew up in Newcastle-Upon-Tyne in a very hard-working middle class family, who had a lot of history working in the dockyards at [Swan Hunter](#). I was lucky enough that my parents fully supported me from a young age and after prep school in Newcastle, I gained a scholarship to Merchiston Castle School in Edinburgh. This helped me to make my own decisions and have a lot of freedom from a very young age, which has definitely had an influence in the shaping of the character that I am today. I was never the brightest in class or the best on the sports pitch, but I learned that if I kept up a good work ethic and worked hard for what I wanted it was a step in the right direction. I really enjoyed my sports career at school as it allowed me to participate in a wide variety of sports from rock-climbing to playing in very competitive rugby teams through different age groups.

When did you first become interested in sailing?

From a very young age I helped my dad on fishing boats which started my enthusiasm for the sea. From then on whilst I was growing up, I jumped at every chance I had either to go racing on keelboats or take a dinghy out. I started by going down to my local yacht club, Blyth, in the summer holidays to see if

there was any work that needed doing or if people needed to be helped with anything. From that I got on keelboats, and managed to get a lot of racing done on the North East Coast. In the summer holidays I also used to spend some time with my parents cruising around the West coast of Scotland and East coast of Ireland, which I loved. It gave me a great respect for the sea living on a boat for three weeks at a time. It made me realise how much we take things for granted.

How has your passion and sailing ability progressed?

When I was 16 I managed to get a few jobs working out of Fort Lauderdale and Miami, and I also did my first delivery trip from Newcastle to Ipswich which was my first real long sailing passage at night. When I was 17 I campaigned in the Laser 2000 class in Scotland and was very successful. In that same year I competed in the Three Peaks race when I was watch leader, and we managed to get a second position.

That moved onto racing a keelboat from Port Edgar named *Nijinsky*, which was again a winner in a lot of outings. These successes were not the result of chance or luck – the team I was a part of were dedicated, enjoyed the sport, had lots of experience and I certainly learned a lot from them about team work.

What have been your greatest sailing achievements?

The pinnacle of my sailing career so far has been to take part in the Clipper Round the World Race on board Edinburgh Inspiring Capital [crossing the North Pacific](#). This was an unbelievable experience being at sea for 35 days, learning how to deal with different emotions through highs and lows, through hurricane force wind and bone chilling cold, and it is certainly something I will treasure in my memory for the rest of my life.

For this opportunity though I must take time to thank [Edinburgh Napier University](#) and local companies such as [The](#)

[Elephant House](#), who sponsored and supported me in this once of a lifetime opportunity. Without their support could not have been possible.

What does 2012 have in store for you?

I'm now lucky enough to say I represent my country, which I am very proud of, being in the [British Keelboat Academy](#) and our aim this year is to compete in the [Commodores' Cup](#), essentially the amateur world cup of sailing, and I'll see where that takes me after the summer.

What would be your advice to anyone who wants to get involved in sailing?

The world of sailing is very glamorous, however, for the guys who actually work in the industry, it's a pretty hard, long day and night preparing racing boats and it takes a lot of time and effort to get things perfect. It's paid pretty poorly until you get well-known and win big professional competitions. It is definitely a job you have to be passionate about and focus on an end goal, rather than thinking about the pay cheque.

Where do you see yourself in 10 years time?

In 10 years time, if I'm still lucky enough to be in the sailing industry, I would love to do more offshore racing and be part of a [Volvo Ocean Race team](#), which happens every 2 years – it's a massive dream of mine!