

## SPECIAL ACCESS PONTOON FACILITY

### FOR DISABLED SAILORS OF ALL AGES

Walcon Marine has designed, built and installed a disabled-access pontoon for Hampshire charity Sailability. This allows individuals of all ages with special needs to enjoy dinghy sailing in a safe and supportive environment. The pontoon has been built on a freshwater lake outside Southampton, on the UK's south coast. Constructed using Walcon's aluminium-framed System 2000 pontoons, the

structure has a 13.5-metre bridge leading out to 7.5 by 4 metre landing stage with an 11.5 by 4 metre main platform beyond.

Special features include optimisation for wheelchair access, detachable hoists to assist with embarkation and disembarkation, and safety barriers around the perimeter.

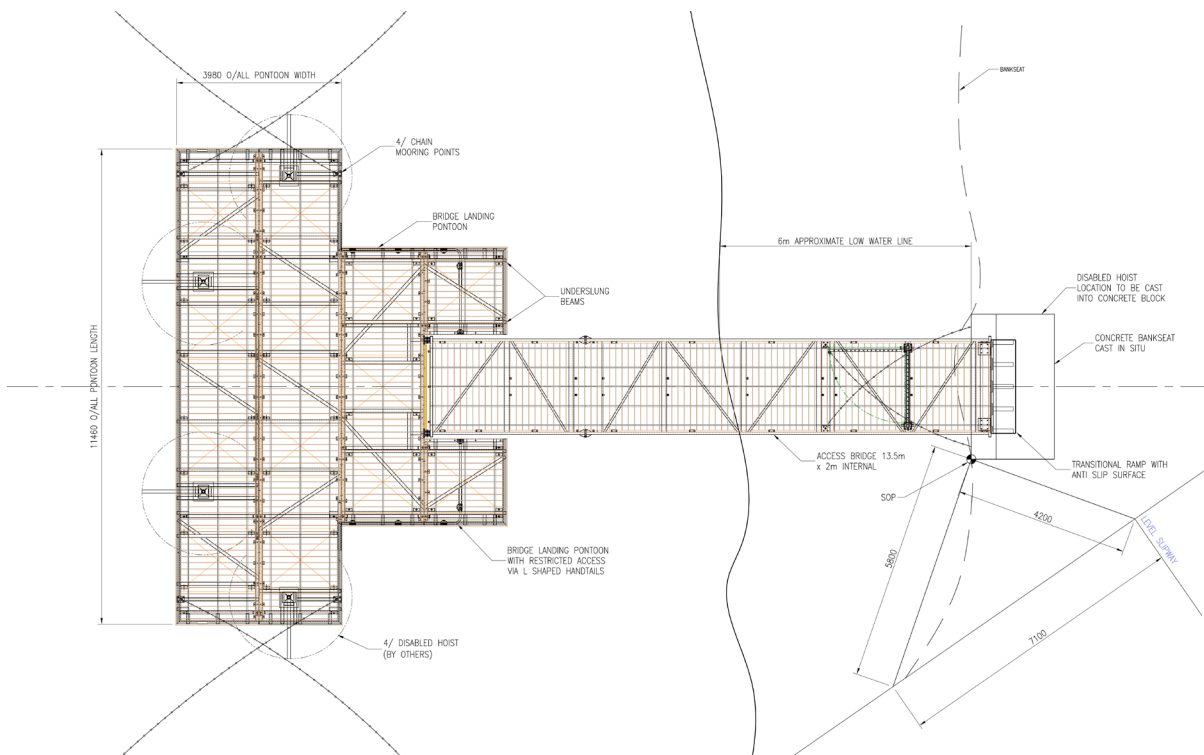


The inauguration of the pontoon represented the creation of a third branch for Sailability. Testwood Lakes Sailability (TLS) took six years to get up and running, and the pontoon facility was only made possible by donations from individuals and organisations including Sainsbury's supermarkets and the New Forest branch of Rotary.

The pontoon was officially opened by disability sports ambassador and well-known yachtsman Geoff Holt MBE, who is Patron of the charity. TLS Chairman Eric Blyth, who was the driving force behind the project, hosted the event. New Forest Rotary also presented a specially designed and built dinghy named the Maurice Porter.



*TLS Chairman Eric Blyth (above left) and Geoff Holt MBE (above right) performing the opening ceremony.*



As the pontoon is located in an area accessible to the general public, entry to the landing stage is restricted by a locking gate with raised barriers on either side. The hoists and other equipment are removed to nearby storage when not in use. The sailing takes place in Hansa Access dinghies that are especially designed for people with all levels of disability.

Walcon Marine is experienced in creating marine access structures to aid those with special needs. Its Wheelchair Pontoon is a specially designed and engineered marine pontoon that gives the

disabled and elderly wheelchair access into deep water, whether at swimming pools or in fresh or salt water bodies of water. It allows individuals in wheelchairs to move down a series of internal ramps fitted within a pontoon which extends below the surface of the water. At the end of the ramp system is a submerged platform at one side of the pontoon ramp, from where individuals can float gently off their submerged wheelchairs and move ahead into the water with their escorts.

For more information on Testwood Sailability, visit <http://testwoodsailability.weebly.com/>



Founded in 1963, Walcon Marine is the market leader in the design, construction and installation of marinas, yacht harbours and berthing facilities around the world. As probably the longest established and most experienced company in its field, Walcon Marine is a global organisation with manufacturing facilities in the UK, Australia and Dubai. Its pontoons are now installed in over 30 different countries on five continents, and recent projects include the marina built at Portland on the south coast for England for the 2012 Olympics.