

## Yachting Life (Sept 2003)

New for this year in the Marine Resource Centre (MRC) at Barcaldine is the provision of 60,000 sq ft of indoor storage area able to accommodate up to 100 boats. MRC, owned by The Lithgow's Group, started secure indoor and outdoor yacht storage back in 1999 and the demand has been so great the group has increased space allocation to now make it the largest indoor yacht store in the West Highlands.

Barcaldine is 12 miles north of Oban and two hours from Glasgow with good transport links and offers an option for those who want the luxury of indoor storage and dry working conditions.

Since the conversion of the former alginate buildings to give full work facilities for boats, MRC has also built a new slipway, which allows easier launching, and retrieval of craft as well as access to its existing deep-water pier facility. The hoist accommodates up to 15 tonnes and there is a crane available. Inside storage on cradles is mandatory and there are cradles for hire if required. In addition to the shore side options there are also eight moorings available for use just offshore.

New, also, to head up the facility this year is chief executive Martin Waterhouse who has come from a fish farming background with Landcatch at Ormsary. Martin is keen to develop MRC to become a centre of excellence for marine resources in Western Scotland. He told YL: "We offer a good service and there is certainly a strong demand for our facilities. An important facet is the opportunity to diversity on this site which has a unique range of features. We feel our prices are competitive and have been encouraged by the number of customers who have returned every year since we started in 1999, in fact we now offer a loyalty discount."

Martin said he had received enquiries from all over the UK about storage which showed that people were prepared to travel to work on their boat. "The great thing about being indoors is you are not limited by weather", he said.

Although a full range of work facilities is on offer, sub-contractors are also allowed on site provided they meet the MRC health and safety policy.

Indicating the diversity of the facility, in addition to yacht storage there is a fish farm cage manufacturer, a biotechnology company, a concrete laying facility, a fish farm company, fish food distribution, an engineering workshop, a precision instrumentation group, a subset of the original alginate use and a steel fabrication operation.

Martin said MRC was already working in close liaison with the neighbouring boat businesses Creran Moorings and Ewan MacGillivray's Home Farm outdoor storage. Said Martin: "It's very important that we all work together and we do the lifting for the boats stored at Home Farm as well as offering our marine services. We feel that with the different options working together we are giving an unrivalled provision for the yachtsman on the west coast."