



# Sailing into Spring

In this edition of Postcode News, we feature the Royal Yachting Association to understand more about their role as the national body for various forms of sailing and boating and why accurate address and bank data is essential to serving their members.

Our new website and branding launched at the start of the year, have you had a chance to look around? We invite you to visit and give your thoughts.

Spending time around nature and in green spaces provides benefits

to physical and mental well-being. This edition's Hotspot features the team member whose main responsibility is to keep the green spaces at the AFD Group HQ looking their best all year round.

# Gold Medal Standard



The Royal Yachting Association (RYA) is the national body for dinghy, motor and sail cruising, all forms of sail racing, Rigid Inflatable Boats, sports boats, windsurfing, personal watercraft, and a leading representative body for inland waterways cruising.

With over 100,000 personal members and more than 1,500 affiliated clubs and classes, the RYA sets and maintains an international standard for recreational boat training through a network of RYA-recognised training centres, world-class courses, and educational material.

Responsible for one of the UK's most successful Olympic medal-winning sports, the RYA's coaching and development schemes actively support the UK's top sailors, from talented juniors to Olympic and World Champions.

Benefits of RYA membership include advice and support, certification, offers and discounts, insurance, and the latest relevant information on all aspects of recreational boating.

We caught up with Andy Galvin, Information Systems Manager, to

understand more about his role within the organisation and the importance that accurate customer and address data plays in communicating with and recruiting its members.

"When I joined the team in 1997, one of the projects the IT team was involved in was scoping out a solution that would improve data accuracy. We needed to migrate over 300 Microsoft Access databases into a single Customer Relationship Management (CRM) solution. Whilst attending a CRM EXPO, other businesses mentioned how they partnered with AFD to get address data right, so we got in touch.

Whilst many things have changed including that initial CRM system, one thing that has been consistent is our partnership with AFD that has now been in place helping us get customer and address data right for 24 years."



## ALL HANDS ON DECK

Manual data entry has two main drawbacks: time and human error. Having automatic address validation in place helps to remove these challenges. Data accuracy helps ensure communications get to the right place, and when the message being sent contains critical information, this is essential.

Andy describes: "As a membership organisation, we actively

communicate with our members via traditional mail - sending out updates, events and literature which include safety information updates and protocol changes. We need to make sure this vital information is getting to our members and instructors quickly and accurately to help them stay within the latest guidelines.

We have up to 70 team members processing contact data in the CRM at any time. When we consider that manually typing an address can take between 15 and 20 seconds (slowed down further when struggling to read hand-written application forms), and processing over 250,000 address checks per year, AFD's address lookup solution is saving 1400 hours each year in staff time and headaches!

Following the easing of government restrictions last summer that allowed sailing to resume, we found a much higher volume of applications for RYA Certificates of Competence (boat and yacht qualifications) and membership. Despite the high spike in applications, we were able to accurately process an increased number of applications in the same

timeframe. Without AFD in place to help process the data, our application processing time would have increased and data accuracy would have dropped massively."

## GETTING UNDER WAY

Due to the difficulty in processing handwritten applications, the RYA now provide the ability to sign-up as a member on their website. To ensure they have plugged all the gaps for data accuracy, AFD's address validation is deployed to help quickly capture the right address.

Validating addresses on entry has additional benefits which Andy goes on to explain: "When the application is completed online, our CRM system then checks if the

applicant is already in the database via a postcode and surname match. This process relies on the accurate address AFD provides, allowing us to eliminate duplication which in turn reduces wasted costs and administration in rectifying."

## LEARNING THE ROPES

With a growing international presence and members from around the world wanting to train at RYA centres to gain their International Certificate of Competence, the website and UK-based team process international applications which come with their own challenges.

Andy continues: "We have found some countries addresses are more difficult than others to process. These difficulties are further compounded when most applications are filled out using pen and paper.

Having a tool that allows the team to search for international addresses makes a tricky process very straightforward and saves us having to recruit address experts with local knowledge for the 50+ countries' varying postal systems we work with.





AFD's International address validation allows us to search by postcode or other address fragments and find the right address without having to do further research or spend time contacting the member."

## KEEPING AN EVEN KEEL

Funding from membership revenue allows the RYA to continue its work and deliver the benefits and certificates that members sign up for. With a range of membership plans available for both individuals and families, payments can be made for annual memberships online and over the phone.

Describing the process of capturing payment details Andy continues, "When an error is made during a direct debit process, it's not only the cost of a missed payment but also the cost of fixing the issue. A member of the team will need to go into the

record, remove the direct debit and try to contact the member to update the record. This complication results in a poor experience when becoming a member or renewing.

With AFD's bank verification solution for our team and the website, we can spot and rectify any errors whilst the customer is still on the phone or completing their application online, helping to achieve a smooth onboarding process."

## A HAPPY SHIP

In summarising the partnership between the RYA and AFD Software, Andy concludes: "The way we have designed all our processes is tailored to give the best experience for both members and our team. We view services from AFD as far more than just address lookups; onboarding, finding, and communicating with members all rely on our partnership in data quality.

We have worked with The Postcode People at AFD Software for over 20 years. Two decades of partnership is a testament to the quality of solutions that we receive and the team that sits behind them.

We have found all the team are proactive and quick to respond to any of our requests. Being able to pick up the phone or send an email to a real person rather than an automated response is especially important for our small team. From a technical perspective, the APIs are straightforward to work with and deliver the results we need. I would recommend the team at AFD to help overcome challenges around contact data accuracy."

*For nearly 40 years, AFD has helped organisations get data right.*

In the membership and not-for-profit sector, accurate contact data is crucial to ongoing communication and support. Our data validation and cleansing solutions help thousands of organisations accurately capture and maintain millions of contact records each year.

**To find out how our solutions could benefit your organisation contact [Joel.miller@afd.co.uk](mailto:Joel.miller@afd.co.uk) or call 01624 811 711.**



# Online Feedback

**Our new website has been live now for over 3 months, have you had a chance to look around yet?**

Feedback from our customers highlights that the strength of our team and the experience held within it (see "About" page) is key to trusting AFD as their partners in data quality.

Core to our new website's design and build was making it simple and easy to navigate, whilst highlighting all of the solutions we provide and the specific sectors and organisations that benefit from them.

Our new "Try It" page allows users to test the functionality of Address Lookup, Phone & Mobile Validation, Email Validation and Bank Verification.

We would welcome your feedback and views of the new site and anything else you would like to see on it. We look forward to hearing from you!

**Contact [Joel.miller@afd.co.uk](mailto:Joel.miller@afd.co.uk) or call 01624 811 711.**

**WWW.AFD.CO.UK**

Between January and March 2022 there were significant updates to data on PAF. These included 20 new localities; 7,762 new postcodes; 91,149 new delivery points and 15,298 delivery point changes.

Post-code	Double Dependent Locality	Dependent Locality	Post Town
AB42 5	NETHER ADEN	MINTLAW	PETERHEAD
DE4 2		STANTON LEES	MATLOCK
EX5 5	HALF MOON VILLAGE	NEWTON ST. CYRES	EXETER
FK1 9		CAMELON	FALKIRK
GL6 6	STOKENHILL	WHITESHILL	STROUD
HG3 5		STEAN	HARROGATE
IV2 6		SLACKBUIE	INVERNESS
LL68 9		MYNYDD PARYS	AMLWCH
LNI 5		FENTON	LINCOLN
LN6 6		WITHAM ST. HUGHS	LINCOLN
ME20 7		PANATONNI PARK	AYLESFORD
NE23 8		WEST MEADOWS	CRAMLINGTON
NE65 0	LONGSTONE MANOR	AMBLE	MORPETH
OX11 0		HARWELL SCIENCE & INNOVATION CAMPUS	DIDCOT
PE11 6			SPALDING
PE11 7			SPALDING
PL9 0	BOVISAND HARBOUR	BOVISAND	PLYMOUTH
TD6 9	LINTHILL	LILLIESLEAF	MELROSE
TR19 7	BOSORNE	ST. JUST	PENZANCE
TR19 7	COT VALLEY	ST. JUST	PENZANCE

The most up-to-date PAF data is available now in our latest Q.2/22 update. You can order updates for any AFD Software solution by calling 01624 811711 or email [postcode@afd.co.uk](mailto:postcode@afd.co.uk)



## Ben Richards, Properties

Ben's area of expertise and focus is maintaining the green spaces at Mountain View Innovation Centre (MVIC), home to the AFD Software Group HQ and other companies ([www.mvic.im](http://www.mvic.im)).

When we say green spaces, this isn't weeding a flower bed or two and mowing a square patch of lawn – it requires management of a 25-acre site that includes flowers, plants, trees (including over 4,000 that have been planted by the team), allotment areas for staff use, in addition to large lawned areas and agricultural fields and pathways around and through them all.

Managing the various habitats that both wildlife rely on and the community benefit from is an important part of the role. Ben is involved in maintaining the plants that the four onsite beehives pollinate, leaving designated "No Mow" areas of grass for specific periods to provide bees and other pollinators with more nectar from wildflowers, planting wildflower seeds and adding bird boxes to promote a diverse range of wildlife.

Spending time in green spaces and nature improves our mental and physical health. Both staff and the local community are encouraged to enjoy walks on the paths around the site, taking in the fresh air, stunning views, and feeling better for it. *[Ed: If you want to take a sneaky peek at what's currently happening in our grounds and some of Ben's handiwork you can usually find current photos on the home page of [mvic.im](http://mvic.im).]*

Ben first learned greenkeeping at Ramsey Golf Club where he trained and earned various qualifications for 5 years before gaining international experience in Austria and Spain. He then returned to his native Isle of Man and turned his hand to landscape gardening before joining the team at AFD Software in 2015 (having passed a rigorous test on plant knowledge set by very keen gardener and AFD Director Alison Dorricott!).

An outdoorsman through and through, Ben is a keen angler, competing at the highest levels at home and throughout the UK, often bringing home not only fish, but awards and accolades! When not on the water, he hones his skills as a marksman, regularly entering clay pigeon shooting tournaments.

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