



Video

For video on this story, go to www.cambridge-news.co.uk

Anne launches new era for sail scheme

■ LAURA JEAN MORRIS

THE royal seal of approval has been given to a £2.5 million refurbishment and expansion at a watersports centre.

The Princess Royal visited the popular Grafham Water Centre yesterday to officially open its newly refurbished building and mark the 15th anniversary of the Royal Yachting Association's Sailability project.

Sailability, of which she is patron, gives disabled people the chance to experience sailing regardless of a lack of mobility, sight or hearing.

Princess Anne arrived at the centre at about 10am to tour the new facilities and unveil a plaque marking the date of her visit.

Piers Hampson, spokesman for the centre, said: "I think she really enjoyed herself actually.

"She interacted with all the Sailability group down on the water's edge and then she had a guided tour around the rest of the site and met a few of the children on their residential trips at the moment.

"She was very friendly, and she took time to really try and meet everyone - around 300 people in all."

The centre has been gradually improved over the course of two years thanks to a £500,000 grant from Cambridgeshire Horizons and a £2 million loan from Cambridgeshire County Council.

Mr Hampson said: "Over the last two years the changes have included increasing our residential capacity with a whole new block and expansion to the existing block with far, far better access for disabled visitors to enable everyone to come and experience the facilities here."

laura.morris@cambridge-news.co.uk



ROYAL AT THE HELM: Top, the Princess Royal unveils the plaque. Above, meeting children from Steeple Morden Primary School. Below left, with users of the Sailability scheme, and below right, a chat with members of staff. Pictures: Roger Adams 597141(top)/597148(above)/597149(below left)/597137.