

Special matter as June event.

Charlotte Atkins MP writes



Rudyard Lake is home to the Sailability project, which continues to go from strength to strength.

CONGRATULATIONS to the pupils of St Edward's Middle School who won their category of the prestigious Times Educational Supplement Newsday competition.

Faced with the challenge of producing a newspaper, St Edward's pupils have excelled.

I had seen the newspaper when I visited the school a couple of weeks ago for my regular chat with Year 8 pupils.

Those 12-year-olds had plenty to say for themselves. Now they have demonstrated not only their writing skills but good layout and use of photographs.

They certainly deserved to win. Our local newspapers will not have any shortage of local journalistic talent in a few years if St Edward's keeps up its good work.

The competition is

a fantastic way to engage students with the news and to encourage them to use their skills to present the stories in an interesting way. Hopefully they will look at the news in a more informed and critical way as a result of their experience.

Also locally, Sailability goes from strength to strength. This is a marvellous project geared towards getting people with disabilities and their families on to the water.

I joined them recently for a few hours on Rudyard Lake and, as always, I was impressed by the operation which has inspired so many to become volunteers.

It is not difficult to see why Sailability is so popular. Sited on the lake, next door to the visitor centre, it gives people with a huge range of disabilities the freedom and confidence to explore the enchanting tranquility of the lake in rowing or sailing boats. The specially

designed boats allow people with even profound disabilities to take to the lake on an equal footing with other sailors.

As well as pupils from local schools such as Springfield School, Leek, and Horton Lodge, Rudyard, groups now come from miles away, and are sure of a great welcome.

Lee Pearson, our inspirational equestrian six times gold medal winner at the Paralympics, put Staffordshire Moorlands on the map.

Could it be that Sailability will create medal winners in the future Paralympics?

If the Staffordshire Moorlands District Council has any vision it should be angling to get Olympic and Paralympic teams to train at Rudyard for the 2012 Olympics.

There still appears to be a problem at the council over Sailability's planning application for a boat store. But this cannot be allowed to get in the way of its pioneering work upon the lake.

