



# Ocean Youth Trust South

*Giving young people the skills to succeed in life*



## Introducing our new boat, *Prolific* – available for sail training with young people from 2016



Ocean Youth Trust South, which has established a reputation for high-quality work with young people since 1960, is delighted to announce the purchase of the sail training vessel *Prolific*, now taking bookings for 2016.

*Prolific* was built in 2005, as a tribute to the herring-fishing vessels in operation along the Norwegian coast during the 19th century. The ship is a hybrid of historic design and modern-day construction. Most recently she has been used for sail training with young people in Norway. OYT South is thrilled to be able to bring this unique boat to the UK, where she can play a major part for many years to come in helping young people to develop the skills to succeed in life.

*Prolific* is a Bermudan ketch, 30 metres long including the bowsprit. She has accommodation for 12 young people plus staff, with a huge saloon with room for everyone for meals, briefings, games and more; a good navigation area with lots of space for young people to get involved and plenty of galley space. More information about *Prolific's* details and history can be found on our website at <http://www.oysouth.org/prolific.asp>.

## Voyages for young people aged 12-25

Ocean Youth Trust South offers residential sailing opportunities to young people aged 12-25. Voyages can last from two days to two weeks but in general will include four or five nights on board. This allows time for young people to develop familiarity and confidence in sailing the boat; make friends; work as a team; learn new skills; earn recognised qualifications; face new challenges; have a lot of fun; and go home with a real sense of achievement.

We sail with up to 12 young people at a time, as well as five or six adult staff and volunteers. The young people may come as a group booking of 12 (which can include adult leaders, though this is not always necessary), or as smaller groups or individuals prepared to mix with others.



Young people take part in all activities on board – sail handling, steering, navigation, cooking, keeping watch (including night watches) etc. We don't even decide in advance where the boat will go: there will be a start and finish port, but what happens in between depends partly on the weather but also on what the young people want to do.

Wherever possible, we aim to explain, listen and offer choices. Some crews will consist of young people who are ready for a challenge, with long passages that will really push them to their limits. Other voyages may involve less confident young people who need a gentler introduction to sailing, or a break from problems at home or at school.



## Sailing qualifications

Ocean Youth Trust South offers sailing qualifications through the Royal Yachting Association: the RYA Start Yachting certificate or, the RYA Competent Crew certificate. These qualifications are ideal for keen young sailors who wish to go on and develop their skills; but they can also be valuable for young people who struggle in school and may not get many academic qualifications.

As well as showing that a young person has mastered some basic sailing skills, an RYA certificate also demonstrates that they listened, concentrated, worked with others, joined in with the routine activities as well as the exciting ones, took responsibility when asked, got out of bed on time, practised things they initially found difficult or challenging, without giving up, and much more.



All of this helps provide the evidence they need to move on in life.

Young people who do really well on a voyage may be invited back to train as volunteers (which can mean years of free sailing): those over 16 can sail as bosuns, responsible for basic maintenance and safety checks; those over 18 can train as watch leaders.

## Making a lasting difference

A voyage with Ocean Youth Trust South is not just about learning to sail, but about developing qualities which matter in everyday life.

A voyage can focus on:

- Confidence
- Working in a team
- Coping with unfamiliar experiences
- Communication
- Taking responsibility
- Learning new skills
- Perseverance in the face of challenges
- Getting on with people
- Making lasting friendships

These are all skills and qualities which employers, families and communities need.



## An award-winning charity



OYT South is the first sail training charity to have won The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service.

Our Chief Executive, Mark Todd, was the inaugural winner of the Maritime & Coastguard Agency's Award for Command Commitment to Sail Training, the highest professional recognition available in sail training.

## Case studies

**Lucy** first sailed with us aged 14 on a voyage arranged through Hampshire County Council's Adoption Team. She was adopted after a traumatic early life and had since been bullied; she had very low self-esteem, and was withdrawn and nervous.

Despite this, she did her best on the voyage, helping others who were younger or less physically able, and at the end was told she had been an excellent crew member. She was overwhelmed and said she wasn't used to doing anything well or having other young people look up to her!

Her social worker felt the voyage had made a dramatic difference to her confidence. She has since sailed twice more with us and though she still struggles at times, the voyages seem to have kick-started a lasting change, in particular making her much more willing to try new things.

She is now volunteering in a residential care home for the elderly, and has a place at college. A couple of years ago it was hard to imagine a happy and settled future for Lucy; now that seems more likely than not.

**Adam**, aged 17, was referred to us by a Hampshire school, who said he was at risk of becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) due to difficulties in social interaction and a lack of confidence.

He earned his first-ever real qualification on the voyage and the school reported afterwards: "He absolutely loved it; didn't want to leave! He also says (unprompted) that he feels more confident too. Overall great stuff.

"He has since secured a job interview for a McDonalds training scheme and we have been working on talking about the voyage as a way to present himself in a positive light to prospective employers. I feel that we couldn't have found him a better experience to bring him on a bit."

## History and record of success

Ocean Youth Trust South is a registered charity (no. 1079959) which grew out of the Ocean Youth Club, founded in 1960. We work with around 450 young people each year, taking them to sea as active crew members in a purpose-built sail training vessel.

We have come to be recognised as one of the leaders in the field of sail training, and in the last five years our boat has almost always been filled to capacity – and with a waiting list for sailing volunteers.

We work with other charities, mainstream and special schools, local authorities, social workers and youth workers, who refer young people to sail with us. Especially in school holidays, these may be mainstream groups from families who can afford a voyage (including young people doing the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Gold Residential); but we also work with young people who are disadvantaged or vulnerable in some way. This can include young carers, siblings of life-limited children, young offenders, young people not in education, training or employment, children who have been bullied, abused or neglected, homeless teenagers, victims of crime, children in care and many more: and funding help may be available to individuals on a case-by-case basis.

**Ellesha**, aged 14, said: "I wasn't too sure what the crew was going to be like, or the boat. I was so worried that everything would go wrong and it would be my fault and everyone would shout at me.

But I truly can't put into words how much I enjoyed myself, I will never forget it. The crew were amazing, they were so welcoming and they didn't shout they explained and it was quite easy once they explained.

I learnt so much about sailing and about myself. I feel so much happier since I came off the boat, my confidence is so much better and I don't worry as much as I used to about doing activities outside of school with people I hardly know. When I left it was hard I just wanted to stay. I would love to come back and do another trip but for next time longer, time goes quickly when you're enjoying yourself. I couldn't thank everyone enough for giving me such a brilliant memory, I will always remember."

## Measuring outcomes, providing evidence

Those who arrange voyages for young people are given a report afterwards including comments from the skipper and watchleaders; details of certificates and qualifications earned; comments from young people themselves; and the results of a self-evaluation exercise which asks young people to give themselves marks in a range of areas at the start of the voyage and again at the end, so we can see how they feel they have changed. Results from 335 participants in 2015 included the following:

- Feeling confident: +21%
- Working in a team: +17%
- Learning new skills: +16.5%
- Coping with new experiences: +17%
- Getting on with people: +9.5%
- Dealing with setbacks: +23%
- Learning from experience: +12.5%
- Communication (speaking and listening): +15%
- Compromise / negotiation when living with others: +16.5%



## Testimonials

**HACKNEY'S VIRTUAL SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN IN CARE** sailed for the first time in 2015. L, aged 16, said: "This has been a phenomenal trip and I'm so glad and thankful I got picked to come. I appreciate all that the staff have done including taking up their time to spend it with us. I would recommend it to others. It also helps with confidence and people's self-esteem. I think this trip helped me find friends and I met some good friends that I will stay in touch with." S, aged 15, wrote: "I liked this trip a lot. When I first came I didn't know anybody but I like how we all got along. I also enjoyed sailing especially in the night and learning how to sail. The staff were also very nice, friendly and it was all amazing and I have made some very good friends I will keep in touch with." The adult leaders who sailed with the group were equally positive: Hannah said "Thank you to everyone who made ALL the effort to make the trip fun and safe. Thank you for treating each young person as an individual and bringing out the best in them – that is a real special quality."



**SURREY YOUNG CARERS** arranged voyages for four young people last year. One mum wrote to us: "I wanted to pass on a huge thanks to all the team there from myself and my son, who had a really great week sailing with you. He was unbelievably tired when I collected him on the Friday afternoon but he had such a good time. He had lots to tell us about and was very proud of his certificates. It was an experience that we could not have afforded to give him and we are most grateful to you for giving him the opportunity."

For some years OYT South has been working with young people excluded from mainstream schools in Hampshire. **DAVID HARVEY, AREA STRATEGIC MANAGER - ALTERNATIVE PROVISION**, says: "The opportunities for sailing, being part of a team, taking responsibility, learning real life skills have been invaluable and instrumental in re-engaging some challenging young people with education, leading to pathways being established. There are seven Pupil Referral Units in Hampshire and if dedicated sailing time could be provided for each centre and thereby engaging more children this would be hugely beneficial. Additionally schools have benefitted from sending young people at risk of exclusion on voyages. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive." Everyone who took part in this programme in 2014 earned a Royal Yachting Association certificate – in many cases their first real qualification.



**THE VYNE SCHOOL**, Basingstoke, has impressed us with their dedication in integrating the voyage experience with their long-term goals for individual young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. Following a voyage in 2015, their teacher, Mary Pavey, wrote: "All the students had a great experience on the voyage and I have managed to implement some of what they have learned during their time on the trip during their school days. If/when they were stepping out of line or behaving in a silly way, I just reminded them of how we would behave on the boat and what is acceptable. They would stop in their tracks and make the right decision. Every one of our students took their responsibilities on board seriously. They worked really well as a group and individually. It was lovely to see how respectful and polite they were towards the members

of staff on board and to each other. Being in a confined space was not easy for all of them but they managed to work through their issues and sea sickness without any complaints. We, as a school, cannot thank OYT South enough for all these amazing opportunities you have given our students. These are children that would never have the chance to do something like this. This is the sort of thing that can change their perspective and aspirations. They know that doing something like this will play an important part in their future."

**JACK DIGNAN**, aged 18, was born unable to see out of his left eye and sailed first with a group from MACS, the charity for children born without eyes or with underdeveloped eyes. He was later chosen to give a speech in front of an audience of dignitaries - including HRH the Countess of Wessex - during the Tall Ships festival in Greenwich. Here's an extract: "As we were pulling into Plymouth to mark the end of our week-long voyage, the sea was still with the August sun gently sinking into the horizon, Freddie Mercury was belting out a ballad, and the entire crew were reminding nearby residents that we were in fact the champions. I soon realised I was experiencing one of those *magical moments*. Turning around to see 15 friends...friends that only 7 days ago, 148 miles and an obscene amount of fish finger sandwiches earlier were complete strangers, and yet, after spending a mere week working and living together it felt like we had always known each other..."



As I took a step back to reflect afterwards, I found it difficult to believe the transformation that had occurred to those of us on board, it is truly staggering.... Never before have I had a clearer indication of the things in life that truly matter. Going away and realising that over the course of the trip I never reached for my phone...I never wanted my laptop, I never wanted to take a sepia photo of my coffee and show it off to the world, was - to say the least - refreshing, as well as unprecedented...Given the common perception of youth in the country today combined with the associated stereotypes, making the decision to come on such a voyage can be difficult. Making this decision, and playing a part in the team on board completely dissolves these untrue assumptions. Making such a decision proves that, when given the challenge and when given the opportunity...and even when pushed beyond their comfort zone, the compassion, the determination and the support offered from one friend to another is something really quite special."

Jack has now qualified as a watchleader and sails regularly as a volunteer with OYT South.

## Booking a voyage

OYT South's sailing programme for *Prolific* in 2016 is available on our website <http://www.oightsouth.org/2016.asp>. This covers voyage dates, start and finish ports, prices and availability. Bookings open NOW!



### Ocean Youth Trust South

8 North Meadow, Weevil Lane, Gosport,  
Hampshire PO12 1BP

Tel: 02392 602278

Fax: 02392 525829

Email: [office@oightsouth.org](mailto:office@oightsouth.org)

Website: [www.oightsouth.org](http://www.oightsouth.org)

Registered charity no. 1079959

