

INFORMATION PACK FOR ADULT GROUPS



Contents

Section 1 The Charity, Staff, Contact Information

Section 2 The Thames Barge Blue Mermaid

Section 3 Programme contents

Section 4 Accreditation

Section 5 What we provide and a kit list

Section 6 Safety and our policies

Section 7 Applicant details

1.The Charity

Sea-Change Sailing Trust is a registered charity. It was formed in March 2007 to provide residential opportunities afloat, to embed personal development and offer accredited learning. This is done by working together on a large traditional sailing vessel. People participate in the whole range of domestic and sailing activities and are encouraged to take increasing responsibility for their contribution and group decisions.

The Staff

All staff are selected for their experience and attributes when working with young people and all have enhanced DBS certificates.

Office: Judy Harrison, Assistant Executive Officer, acts as emergency shore contact and is informed of the vessel location and progress.

Barge Skipper: After a career in Personnel Management, Richard Titchener has spent 15 years taking groups of young people sailing on a Thames Barge and is a qualified Barge Master, Yacht Master with a Commercial Endorsement, and First Aider. He is the primary skipper of 'Blue Mermaid' and the Executive Officer of Sea-Change Sailing Trust.

Barge Mate: Oliver Evans joined us as Mate after his Shipshape Heritage Training Partnership placement learning about sailing and conserving heritage vessels. He is training to become a barge skipper and is an RYA Cruising Instructor.

Youth Mentor: Hilary Halajko has worked extensively with young people in a variety of age groups and settings. She has sailed with groups of young people as mate for 8 years. She is the retired Officer in Charge of a 24-place day nursery linked to an educational establishment. Hilary is also the Chair of Sea-Change Trustees.

Staff Contact Information

Richard Titchener	07895 063838	richard@seachangesailingtrust.org.uk
Hilary Halajko	07597 355782	hilary@seachangesailingtrust.org.uk
Judy Harrison	07708 656854	judy@seachangesailingtrust.org.uk

2. The Thames Barge 'Blue Mermaid'

We successfully raised the money to build our own Thames Sailing Barge. 'Blue Mermaid' was commissioned in 2019. She is built of steel and is a replica of the last Thames Barge to be built in 1930 which became a casualty of WW2.

Blue Mermaid meets or exceeds all current Maritime and Coastguard Agency safety standards for carrying passengers and is equipped with lifejackets, safety harnesses, and waterproofs for each passenger to use whilst on board.

Blue Mermaid is fitted out down below to accommodate up to XX passengers. The accommodation is basic as the hold space has been retained to enable us to sometimes carry cargo under sail. The permanent crew have their own cabins separate from the voyage crew.

Cooking and eating is done communally with everyone eating meals around a table in the cargo hold.

3. Programme Contents

During the voyage everyone will participate in sailing the barge from place to place. The nature of working on the water is one of variety, whether it be the result of the changing tidal pattern each day, the weather or destination. Therefore, the ship has a routine which runs throughout each day and onto this is superimposed the daily objective. Breakfast is 0830, lunch 1230 and evening meal mid-evening. The crew will work a watch system whilst the barge is sailing. The watch system ensures that each person gets a chance to cover every job, and nobody ends up doing either only popular or unpopular work. It also ensures that all times there are enough people available for the safe sailing of the ship. In addition to the sailing related tasks, everyone takes a turn at helping to prepare meals, wash-up, and to help clean and maintain the barge.

On arrival, there will be an initial safety brief while the barge is still tied alongside and a longer safety brief for sailing, and familiarisation with work on deck and with the facilities below.

The whole crew are fully involved in the sailing of the barge so that after the first few days they will play active and responsible roles. Usually there will be a de-brief and reinforcement of learning after the evening meal.

Night times are usually spent at anchor somewhere sheltered. Sometimes we sail into the night. It is unlikely that the barge will be tied alongside a quay during your voyage, and so the opportunities for shore-leave are limited. If possible, there will be at least one opportunity for a shore visit with the emphasis on experiencing the estuary environment by taking the barge-boat to a riverside beach.

The sailing area around the Thames Estuary and coasts and rivers of Suffolk, Kent and Essex are ideal for exploration, gaining an understanding of the environment and the historical context of the barge.

4. Accreditation

All participants will receive a course completion certificate at the end of their time aboard.

We offer the Royal Yachting Association Competent Crew certificate to those who would like to work towards this. It requires 5 days training.

5. What we supply and what you should bring

We supply: The barge, qualified staff, and safety equipment including lifejackets, waterproofs and harnesses.

The group supply: Food and cleaning materials for the duration of the voyage. We can offer advice on a suitable menu for the voyage.

Clients should bring the following kit in a soft holdall:

Essential

Warm sleeping gear
A change of clothes
Warm clothes
Suntan lotion
Old trainers
Wash kit
Towel
Sun hat
Warm hat and gloves

Desirable

Musical instruments
CDs/MP3 player
A little pocket money
Wellington boots
Shorts/swimming gear
Personal reading matter

Mobile phones may not be used when people are engaged in an activity, or at the meal table. They can be used during free time. Phones and personal stereos must not be used on deck when the vessel is moving for safety reasons.

Alcohol, illegal substances/recreational drugs or any form of weapon are not allowed. Jewellery must not be worn when sailing.

6. Safety and other policies

Safety is of paramount importance. The vessel is operated according to, and exceeds, the requirements of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency. Every possible attempt is made through explanation and example to instil a safe working attitude and thereby to mitigate risk. Where risk exists, reasonable steps are taken to guard against accident by using safe working methods, for example, no person is allowed on deck alone after dark and anyone under eighteen years is required to wear a lifejacket on deck at all times. It may be appropriate for everyone to wear a lifejacket on deck at the discretion of staff.

No alcohol is to be brought aboard the vessel and the law concerning consumption by young people will be adhered to.

No drugs are allowed aboard the vessel unless prescribed by a medical practitioner. Any person found to be in possession of an illegal substance will not be able to continue the voyage.

Smoking is not allowed below decks for safety reasons but is permitted on deck when not engaged in activity, and with consideration for non-smokers present.

Our Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Policy is available on our website.

7. Applicant Details

We expect the group leader to have obtained informed parental consent for the sailing trip including swimming if intended. Swimming will only take place when a safety boat is present and at the discretion of the skipper. For adults with special-needs, we ask consent from parents/guardians for members of staff to be able to assist with personal care if it is needed during the voyage. Finally, we would like permission to use photographs of the voyage, which may include images of students, for publicity and fundraising purposes.