

Any crew member, including wheelchair users, can climb the masts if they wish

Sailing the sea of opportunity

The Jubilee Sailing Trust has a simple mission: to make sailing accessible to everyone, regardless of ability and background

The Jubilee Sailing Trust (JST) was founded more than 40 years ago with a simple mission: to make sailing accessible to everyone, regardless of ability and background.

The vision for the charity was for it to be a flagship for social inclusion and a catalyst to create stronger, more resilient individuals and communities by sailing on board its two sailing ships: *Lord Nelson* (now retired) and *Tenacious*, the only tall ship custom built to be operated by a mixed-ability crew.

What started as an ambitious project to enable people of all backgrounds to take to the waves, has since welcomed more than 50,000 guests – the voyage crew – to undergo life-changing experiences on board. It is recognised internationally, including by the United Nations, as a pioneer in the field of reducing barriers and creating inclusivity.

The JST was founded in 1978 through the extraordinary vision



Cruising editor Camilla Herrmann and her disabled husband Sam Brown, aboard *Lord Nelson* in 2016

of a dedicated group of people working against the odds to make their dream a reality.

Co-founder Christopher Rudd first began working with disabled children by teaching them to sail in dinghies. He believed that most of the constraints that prevented them sailing further offshore were artificial and could be overcome. He also believed that if disabled and non-disabled people were to sail alongside each other, it would help break down the prejudices and misunderstandings between different social groups.

Through the partnership between Christopher and his co-founder Dr Tony Hicklin, and backed by the fundraising efforts and invaluable support of former chairman Francis Cator and current President The Hon Jacquetta Cator, the JST was formed and *Lord Nelson* was built.

After the launch of *Lord Nelson*, the JST, based in Southampton, grew from strength to strength, and demand for berths on voyages began to outstrip supply. With this in mind, in 1993, Lindsey Neve, then director of the JST, made it her aim to fundraise for the build of a second ship. Later that year, naval architect Tony Castro was commissioned to design *Tenacious*. Many of the volunteers who helped build her, working alongside professional shipwrights, still sail the ship today.

Over the years, the voyage crew has included more than 5,600 wheelchair users, 1,900 visually impaired, 1,700 with cerebral palsy, 1,300 hearing impaired and almost 600 amputees.

Dealing with such a diverse voyage crew brings with it its own challenges for a charity ever-conscious of laws and regulations. But it is the wide range of needs of the crew members that is the charity's greatest challenge.

"I got back last night from my first JST adventure and I would like to thank you for one of the best times I have had in my life! I felt truly inspired by the other voyage crew; whether able bodied or disabled, all worked as a team and the camaraderie on board was brilliant. As a person with a spinal cord injury it is true that my ability is limited; however I still felt that I was a part of a very happy crew."

Fiona Shaw TNS276

"We've seen people on board who've suffered a recent bereavement, victims of accidents and even those who are trying to overcome a fear of the water. We also see lots of students suffering with post-exam stress or who are simply seeking a new life challenge, and we see them flourish," said JST chief executive Patrick Fleming.

"Quite simply, we don't have a typical profile of what our voyage crew may look like – they are everyone from war veterans to opera singers! I'm immensely proud of everyone involved with JST and all that they achieve," he added.

In July 2019, the JST announced that due to financial stress there would be cutbacks ahead. It managed to raise more than £1 million in five days, with donations from 3,500 individuals and companies, to ensure that its work could continue. The subsequent review withdrew *Lord Nelson* from service and changed organisational structures to reduce core costs.

Charles Humpleby, who joined JST as Chair in January this year, said: "I'm acutely aware I'm joining at a challenging time. We are living with the continued impact of the global pandemic and the world is a different place. Our voyages, our fundraising, how we work with supporters – there's much work to be done to ensure a safe, secure and bright future for the Trust."

Charles has spent three decades working in financial businesses and came to JST from the Barclays Family Office in Jersey, where he was director. He's also a keen yachtsman and has raced in Jersey and Hong Kong.

As with many charities, Covid-19 has had an impact, and the charity has relied heavily on the support of trustees, donors and other supporters – particularly during long periods of dry dock.

Even during the enforced postponement of normal voyages *Tenacious* has been active, partnering with the Royal Navy. Junior sailors crewed *Tenacious*, giving them a unique insight into the days of sail and the chance to pick up key leadership skills, such as setting the sails, watchkeeping and steering. The use of *Tenacious* has helped to plug the gap left by the closure of the Navy's command and leadership school in the Brecon Beacons due to the pandemic.

"In a difficult period for Royal Navy training due to the pandemic, the use of the Jubilee Sailing Trust has allowed us to continue to provide top quality core leadership and team training in a maritime context," said Commander Adrian Coulthard from the Navy's training organisation.

"It has also meant we have been able to maintain our training pipeline through-flow, while providing our trainees with early and very valuable experience – from maintaining watches to living and working in the challenging maritime domain."

The JST's financial review published in 2019 reported that 99% of people who came on board said they now have the freedom

TS Tenacious under way



to push their own boundaries and 85% said voyages gave them increased confidence their ability to achieve anything.

Today the JST emerges from the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic knowing that the crisis has isolated the very people the charity seeks to support. It has announced new voyages on board *Tenacious* from this June, venturing around the waters of the UK and Ireland, including Jersey to London, Portsmouth to Dartmouth, Cardiff to Dublin and Dublin to Liverpool.

Looking to the future, the aim is to continue JST's five-year plan to make a bigger impact on more lives and as a result create better resilience for the charity. JST aims to do this by increasing awareness of its role and work, especially to the business world where inclusivity and leadership skills are so vital.

- The Jubilee Sailing Trust is the preferred charity of the Cruising Association and receives free advertising in *Cruising*. You can make a donation or book a voyage at jst.org.uk.

- **See page 11 for details of how to win a day trip on *Tenacious* in 2022 by referring a friend to join the CA.**

"The whole experience was wonderful. The feeling of working as a team with each member contributing in different ways was very special. I loved the camaraderie. From my own observation, I noted vast improvements in people during the holiday including my husband who has MS. This improvement has carried on now that we have returned home and he is much more positive and rejuvenated."

Elaine Johnson TNS277