

# Tall Ships for All



The Jubilee Sailing Trust owns and operates two very special tall ships. They are the only tall ships in the world specifically designed and built to enable people with sensory impairments and physical disabilities to sail on equal terms with their more able counterparts.



The square rigged sails pull taut in the wind as the magnificent ship sails out of Kochi harbour in India. The permanent crew competently direct the voyage crew in the tasks necessary to start the STS Lord Nelson's voyage. Over the next 28 days, the ship will cover 1,600 miles, wending her way to Singapore, taking in the captivating cultural heritage of India and Sri Lanka, the exotic landscape of Thailand and the melting pot of races and religions of Malaysia along the way. There are



**no passengers. Everyone aboard is considered to be crew. It's all hands on deck, whether vision impaired, hard of hearing, wheelchair bound or able-bodied. It's all about teamwork on this accessible sailing ship.**

In October 1986, the newly built Lord Nelson made her way out of Southampton to start changing lives. Since that time, over 36,000 people have sailed with the Jubilee Sailing Trust. The Lord Nelson claims over 24,000. Tenacious, launched in 2000, claims the remainder. Many of these part-time sailors are physically disabled, including thousands of wheelchair users. Lord Nelson was the first square-rigged ship in the world to have been designed to enable able-bodied and disabled people to sail side by side. Along with Tenacious, she was commissioned by the Jubilee Sailing Trust (JST), a charity founded in 1978 to promote the integration of people of all physical abilities through the challenge of crewing a tall ship.

The JST was the brain child of Christopher Rudd, who began his involvement with special needs children in the sixties. For eight years he was sailing instructor to a school for children of limited ability and for three years to a school for emotionally disturbed children. It

became increasingly obvious to Christopher that the obstacles which prevented disabled people from off-shore sailing were to a large extent artificial and were all issues which could be surmounted. He believed that given adequate safeguards, thoughtful design and proper equipment, disabled people should be able to sail equally with the able-bodied off-shore, and not just in sheltered waters. Christopher inspired others with his enthusiasm, and chance allowed him to meet several people who became instrumental in moving the project forward. The first funding came from a grant from the Queen's Silver Jubilee Appeal, sealing the name of the Trust. Further grants, including a £150,000 windfall from the Beaverbrook Foundation led to the decision to build a purpose-designed vessel that could sail unimpeded, incorporating adaptations for disabled people.

This required a ship with wheelchair access throughout, with light hauling loads on the ropes and a good measure of stability against heeling. The process of trial and error took years. One test involved capsizing a wheelchair. Testing showed this happened more or less reliably at twelve degrees. Lord Nelson was therefore designed to have a full sailing performance at ten degrees.

The final result was a ship that has the capability of sailing with a mixed physical ability crew in virtually any sea in the world.

Since then Lord Nelson has sailed hundreds of thousands of miles, participated in The Tall Ships Races and been instrumental in helping to change thousands of lives, whether through a five-day sailing, a thirty-day voyage or a forty-day journey. The objective of sailing on either Lord Nelson or Tenacious is the same - to include people from all walks of life, to offer challenges and promote teamwork; to improve communication skills and increase disability awareness through working together as crew. Everyone is included in the experience, involved in all aspects of sailing the ships to the best of their abilities. This goes from setting sails to helming, cleaning and maintaining the ships. The emphasis is on inclusion and what people can do, not what they cannot. "For some this is an opportunity to discover talents they never knew they possessed, but for many there is an opportunity to set sail on an adventure that can provide a truly life-changing experience," explains CEO Alex Lochrane.





Onboard, each person is assigned a buddy and together they discover how to sail the ship. The buddy system teams physically disabled and able-bodied pairs, to promote integration, the central concept of the mission. "We have people from all walks of life sail with us," Lochrane says. "Especially thanks to Sail the World we have Voyage Crew from all over the world. We do have groups and couples sail, and they can sail together if they want to." Lochrane goes on to say: "It is rare for a buddy team not to get along, but the watchleaders and permanent crew are experienced enough to deal with such issues on an individual basis." Everyone pays the same amount to travel, but every place is subsidised - only 50% of the operating costs are covered through voyage fees. The balance comes from donations and fundraising activities. This is no small feat – it costs £3 million to run the ships each year.

Whether you are an avid sailor, or a complete landlubber, Lord Nelson

and Tenacious offer opportunities for you to not only take to the seas, but also to share the experience with a new friend on equal terms. "A lot of people make friends that they are still in contact with over a decade later," says Lochrane. "The voyage opens their eyes to what other people are capable of and shows true teamwork. And they get to participate in a real adventure - after all, sailing a three-masted, square-rigger through the middle of the night and watching the phosphorescence being churned up by the wake, and then the sun rise on the empty horizon is pretty spectacular sight!" From a day sail to a once in a life-time round the world epic journey, your ship awaits, as does your buddy. It's time to set sail.



To learn more about the JST, Lord Nelson or Tenacious, see: [www.jst.org.uk](http://www.jst.org.uk).  
To donate see: [www.jst.org.uk/forms/onlinedonation](http://www.jst.org.uk/forms/onlinedonation)

Other ways to help include recycling your old phone or printer cartridges through the JST, sponsoring a Jubilee Sailing Trust mile, or holding a fundraising event. See the website for details.