

INFORMATION PACK FOR GUESTS SAILING ON A THAMES BARGE MATCH (RACE)

THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT US BEFORE YOU SAIL...



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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.

Our Staff

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



Office: Judy Harrison has worked for many years in sail-training before joining Sea-Change in 2021. Judy looks after fundraising, and administration of bookings and voyages. She our emergency shore contact and is informed of the vessel location and progress. Judy is our Assistant Executive Officer.



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 in 2019 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

Environmental awareness:

We are a very low carbon organisation. Our Thames sailing barge Blue Mermaid does not have an engine. Our voyages are carried out using just wind and tide. We pay to offset the little carbon that we do produce.

We are very proud to be the very first operator on the River Thames to be awarded the Gold Award under the Thames Green Scheme, and to have received the ASTO Environmental Excellence Award in 2022.



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. Her deck is 26 metres long on deck and provides a wide and stable platform for the inexperienced sailor.

We have retained her original appearance on deck and have kept the open cargo hold inside to allow for possible shipments.

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 does not have an engine, in common with other charter barges and heritage craft. We work in harmony with wind and tide. This means that life on board has a special connection to the natural elements, and peace that is excellent for wellbeing. It also means that the daily routine is very much dictated by the wind and tide and the plan for the day can change with very short notice. Some flexibility is essential, especially regarding such things as meal-times and wake-up times.



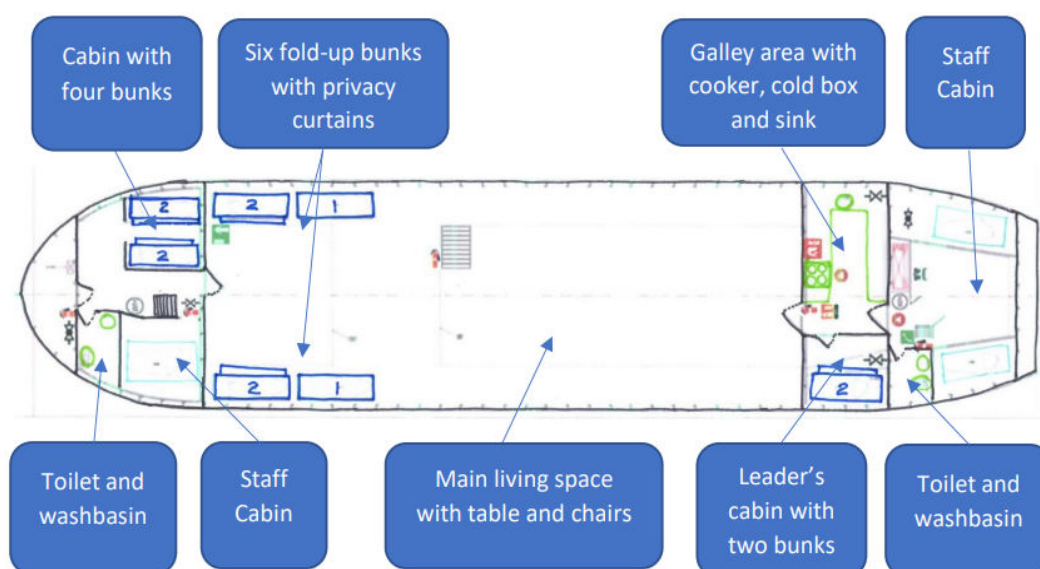
Electricity:

Blue Mermaid has a 12volt electric system topped up by solar panels. These power electrical lights below decks and navigational equipment. There are several USB charging points and these can be used for charging mobile phones but cannot be used for charging high power items. You will see some conventional 3 pin 240volt sockets onboard. These will only work when we are moored to a quayside and a shore power lead is available, or if we are running our generator. In summer we rarely run the generator as the solar panels provide enough power for Blue Mermaid's needs, and we are unlikely to moor the barge alongside a quay during your voyage. There is no Wi-Fi onboard and phone signal is poor inside the accommodation.

Sleeping Accommodation:

Blue Mermaid is fitted out down below to accommodate up to 15 people including our three sea-staff who have cabins separate from the voyage crew. Accommodation is basic as the hold space has been retained to enable us to sometimes carry cargo under sail. The 12 berths for guests are organised in a configuration of 4 permanent bunks in a cabin in the fo'c'sle, 6 demountable bunks with privacy curtains in the hold, and two bunks in a cabin beside the galley.

INTERIOR LAYOUT OF BLUE MERMAID SHOWING SLEEPING ACCOMMODATION



Toilets and Amenities:

There are two toilets on board, each in a cubicle with a handbasin. There is a small manual-pump shower in one cubicle. This is normally reserved for the use of staff if they are resident onboard for a longer period of time. Blue Mermaid has to carry fresh water in tanks, and with no mains electricity hot water is very limited. Please assume that for one night stays onboard, access to a shower will not be possible.

Catering:

Simple catering will be provided during your stay on board Blue Mermaid. Because our crew will be very busy on race day, we are always pleased to have help with making teas and coffees for everyone, and anyone arriving with cake will be especially warmly welcomed!

We don't allow alcohol to be consumed whilst the boat is sailing or on the evening before the race. You are welcome to bring a few beers to share after the race is over and the barge is moored up, and you will also be invited to attend the prizegiving ashore after the match, where alcohol will be available to purchase.

3. What to expect when I come aboard Blue Mermaid

Guests will be welcomed aboard in the early evening and choose their bunks before being shown domestic things like how to work the toilets, followed by a tour of the deck and some explanations on the gear and general safety. They will then have an opportunity to help the regular crew with any final race preparations such as rigging the running pole, preparing sails and handy bits of line, greasing winches etc. Dinner will be served when the skipper returns from the match briefing ashore. After dinner the whole ship's company will receive a briefing for the next day and everyone wishing to participate in sailing the barge will be allocated a role, before we all get an early night.

Participation is not compulsory, though anyone on deck is in danger of being allocated a job in the heat of battle unless they have alerted us to either their wish not to partake or any physical reason which might impair them taking an active role. Thames sailing barge races are very competitive and during the race our race crew will be working very hard to sail Blue Mermaid at her best. There will be many excellent photo opportunities when racing amongst the fleet, but please ensure you are not in the way of the race crew when they are handling ropes, winches or sails. We will make sure you know where to sit or stand in order to keep out of the way of all the activity if you haven't been given a role. On a match day we regret that guests will not be able to take a turn at steering the barge

After the match and once the barge is moored up, there will be a prizegiving ashore which guests are encouraged to attend. Unless other arrangements have been made, guests usually depart after the prizegiving.



4. What we supply and what you should bring

We supply:

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

Simple catering throughout your stay onboard.

Guests should bring the following kit in a soft holdall:

Sleeping bag

Pillow

Warm clothes, warm jacket and warm hat and gloves

Suntan lotion

Old trainers or soft footwear – not flip flops or heels please as these are dangerous onboard.

Wellington boots

Wash kit

Towel

Sun hat

Camera

It is always much cooler on the water than people expect – make sure you pack plenty of warm clothes even in summer!

You are welcome to bring a few beers for after the race, and anyone arriving with cake will be especially popular!

5. 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.

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.

Mobile phones may not be used when people are engaged in an activity, and preferably not at the meal table.

Illegal substances/recreational drugs or any form of weapon are not allowed.

For your own safety jewellery should not be worn when sailing and long hair should be tied.

Our specific policies are available on our website.

6. Guest's Details

All adults:

It is essential that every member of the crew supplies us with details of an emergency contact person ashore for the duration of the voyage.

We also ask you to supply details of any medical conditions and prescribed medication.

Finally, we would like permission to use photographs of the voyage, which may include images of clients, for publicity and fundraising purposes.

If you have any questions about sailing with us, please call our office. We will be pleased to help you.

