



Review of 2024

Once again we have had superb feedback from the season's voyages and we can tell the story of 2024 through the words of young people, parents, teachers and others who saw the impact of our charitable work.

The season started with some very windy weather, and the first voyage, with **Petersfield School**, spent two days in harbour due to strong winds. Nevertheless, students said: *"Cold and wet but it makes it better when you go back in. Very fun."* The teacher who sailed with them said: *"It has been a pleasure to see the students grow in confidence, work as a team and learn new skills. Such an incredible environment for young people to grow - particularly with incredible support from Sea Staff."* One of the girls on this voyage was previously only attending school a couple of days a week, on a very reduced curriculum, because she wasn't coping with anything more. The voyage and the friendships formed on board gave her the confidence to start attending full-time – meaning that she now has the opportunity to tackle as many GCSE subjects as anyone else, and for her results and achievements to be determined by her ability not her anxiety. Her voyage may have helped to change everything for her future.

Our major sponsors, **Marina Developments Limited**, once again selected some exceptionally deserving young people to sail with us. Comments included: *"I was able to be myself and enjoyed meeting everyone and having a rave with everyone (even though I have social anxiety)";* and *"Trips like this bring out the best in all of us. Give it your all and you will surely enjoy it."*

Testbourne Community School came back for a second year of sailing. The teacher who sailed with them said: *"My best bit of the voyage was seeing all of the students and how they were getting on, getting stuck into things, enjoying themselves, not grumbling, just doing everything that was asked of them, and just having a really good time ... we have all learnt so much".*



Many of our school clients use their voyages to focus on disadvantaged or struggling students who would never normally have this sort of opportunity. A crew of girls from **Harris Merton Academy** were in the Solent to greet *Maiden's* all-female crew on their triumphant finish of the Ocean Globe round the world yacht race. Comments included: *"It was a different experience. Not like anything I have been before. The fajitas I helped make was so good and everyone worked so hard";* and from the teacher who sailed with them: *"It sounds really cliché, but I think it's why we teach and why we volunteer is seeing so many young people coming onto the boat, never having sailed, learning everything the first time, and just smashing it ... It'll be fun seeing year 11s in the hall and being like "hey miss we were on a boat together for a week" - that's a forever bond."*



A sixth-form group from **George Green's School** in Tower Hamlets arrived with outstanding levels of motivation. Comments included: *"It's all ending. That's probably the worst part ... The most memorable part is probably the fact that we've got 19 people who are all so different and hadn't really spent that much time together at all or even met each other before and we all just got on so well and could have so much fun and made it just an unforgettable trip".*

An adult training weekend brought us lots of people interested in joining the charity as sailing volunteers. Comments included: *"Blown away by professionalism of sea staff and the care they put into the safety and well-being of those on board";* *"Sea staff attention to detail second to none, extremely helpful with a 'can't fail' attitude, it was humbling";* and *"OYT is such a great charity. I can see the value it brings to young people".*

The Costello School, Basingstoke, brought two groups with a teacher who has since qualified as an OYT South watchleader, and he said: *"Best bit has just been these little moments where I watch these young people take a little bit of leadership and a little bit of responsibility ... Memorable bit was watching green watch doing their navigation, and that teamwork, that leadership that they worked together was just fantastic."* A student said: *"I think I have laughed at least every day and I have started to speak a bit more. I think this trip has really helped my confidence"*.



Applemore College students said: *"I liked how we were able to do everything ourselves"* and *"I loved every second of it except being seasick and everyone was really nice and I made some amazing friends and some AMAZING memories"*.

Muntham House School was a new client this year: a special school working with pupils with Autism, ADHD, Trauma, Social, Emotional, Mental Health and other SEN conditions. On paper a complex group; but in practice they came prepared to join in, and had a really successful week. Comments included: *"All the crew was amazing and understood us."* The school staff who came with them added: *"It was really nice to see, knowing you boys inside out, that this shouldn't really work on paper. You boys can't even spend an English lesson together, let alone four days and four nights on a ship, tolerating each other, being around each other in such close conformity. You've represented yourselves really well ... I'm really proud of you all for that."*

Ambition, Aspire, Achieve supports the most disadvantaged and at-risk young people in Newham, east London. For this year's group, they chose eight young people with additional needs, supported by three leaders. Comments included: *"I'm so privileged. It has been so, so, so, so, so amazing, brilliant, fabulous and fantabulous, marvellous, lovely, superb and wonderful and superb time"*. There was a big achievement for one young person: *"I was missing my mum and was sick ... I wanted to go home but I stayed!"* The group organiser emailed later: *"It's really heartwarming to see just how much so many of the young people thrived and wonderful that some of our more vulnerable young people had the opportunity to participate ... I am sure all involved will treasure their memories on board this year."*



A group of **young people in care in Kent** came for a May half-term voyage. Comments included: *"My most memorable part is probably cooking the dinner, 'cos like I didn't think anybody would like it, but I think - I hope - everybody liked it!"*; and *"I have eight friends now"*. One adult leader said: *"My favourite part was seeing everybody really interact, phones down and actually just spending time with each other and laughing - it was fantastic"* and the group leader wrote later: *"Your Sea Staff are amazing at looking after us, teaching us and entertaining us. Many thanks to them all. The willingness of your volunteers to give us their time and expertise is particularly appreciated. I know it has been a significant experience for some of our young people and they are already saying they want to come back next year."*



Alfreton Park Special School's annual voyage involves young people with multiple moderate to severe physical and learning difficulties alongside school support staff, and the whole week is tailored to their specific needs. With help from staff, they put in the comments book on board: *"I liked helping to do the jobs on deck"*; *"I liked going out in the dinghy and eating ice cream in Cowes"*; *"I enjoyed sailing and waving to the people on the passing boats"* and *"I enjoyed everything."* The school staff said they would remember: *"Seeing everybody so happy and enjoying themselves and especially pushing themselves past their comfort zones"*, and *"Best bit about the sailing trip is seeing all the students gaining confidence throughout the week."*

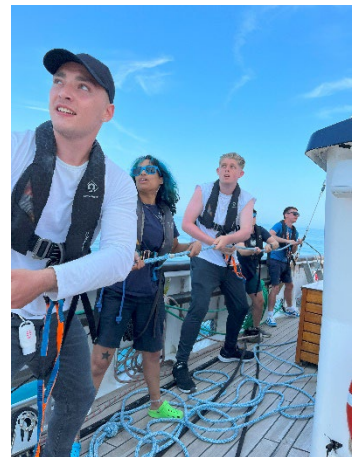
Next came two great day sails for sponsors, donors and other people who are supporting our charitable work, including guests from the RYA, Trinity House, Xylem, Saltee sunscreen, British Marine and more. It was lovely to be able to thank lots of people whose support for our work means so much. Their comments included: *"Thank you so much for everything you do – it's an honour to support you from Trinity House."*

One of the guests was Robbie Crow who started our long history of running voyages with the MACS charity for young people born without eyes or with underdeveloped eyes, and remains a great advisor on anything to do with accessibility and inclusion. Robbie wrote a post about us on LinkedIn: *"OYT South ... are, in my opinion, one of the leading sail trainers in the UK at the moment ... OYT South are doing some great work in diversifying the range of young people they work with."*



Harris Merton School sent us a group of boys including several who had hardly left London and never seen the sea. They said: *"My most memorable bit was when I went to that beach and saw a beautiful sunset"; "My best bit was the pilotage exercise we did yesterday. It was really fun steering the ship and navigating quite a lot"; "Helped me learn new skills and the food was awesome and we created iconic moments with friends"; "Amazing trip, never lost interest or gained boredom. Always something to look forward to. Kindest people and most marvellous experience".* The school staff said: *"Phenomenal trip!! All the boys enjoyed the experience and would love to come back!"*.

The **Amber Foundation** works with young adults who have been homeless. After a voyage in June, they said: *"What a great opportunity this voyage was, I have learned so many new skills and met some wonderful people, sea staff were exceptional in teaching us and had the patience of saints"; "The voyage was very exhausting but you can make life-long friends during the experience so I would 100% recommend"; and "I had a WONDERFUL voyage, everyone's super. My favourite part was navigating and shouting at everyone - yeah that was quite fun".* Amber organisers commented later about one resident: *"She was so thrilled with her feedback and is feeling so confident since returning - it really has changed her and her outlook on trying new things."* At the end of this year we learned that this resident had made a successful transition into work and independent living. She said sailing with OYT South *"was the highlight of my time at Amber and I wouldn't have had the confidence to put myself forward without Amber. Being on the boat taught me how to persevere at things and how to get on with people. I loved it so much that when I was given another opportunity, I jumped at it. My second voyage was a longer one and I had to raise some money towards it and fly to Guernsey to catch the boat."* She adds: *"I'm so proud of my time at Amber and so happy with what I've achieved. Without Amber I think I'd still be absolutely lost."* Amber plus OYT South is a great example of an effective partnership where one charity offers long-term support while OYT South adds a short, intensive intervention which makes a lasting difference.



Dartmouth Academy sent a group in July. Feedback included: *"The voyage was very tiring but I had a lot of fun and learn many new things, love the crew!"; "This voyage has taught me that if you want something, take initiative and get it done"; and "The voyage is a great experience definitely for someone who can't get rid of their fears."*

An individuals' voyage in summer enjoyed a cruise around Devon and Cornwall. Comments included: *"An incredible experience. I would recommend OYT to anyone who would like the opportunity to learn to sail in a safe and exciting environment ... The most memorable bit would have to be the evening games we played, I think it was a lot of fun and brought us all together"; "My most memorable bit was leading the staysail hoist. I think the best bit was running round the deck with my notebook trying to remember what rope colour corresponds to the halyard and whatever."*

This year we formed a new partnership with **Raleigh International**, who wanted to offer experiences of adventure away from home which are more accessible than their longer overseas projects. Feedback included: *"I was super nervous to come on this trip but now that it's the end it's definitely an experience I'll never forget. I would 100% recommend this trip to anyone"; "The trip challenged me physically and mentally in ways I could never imagine. Thank you"; and "I learnt so many new skills, developed my ability to work in a team and made friends that I'll hopefully keep for life."* Organisers told us afterwards: *"We have received outstanding feedback from the venturers ... Thank you so much to you and your team for being so wonderful, organised, fun and having a positive impact on these young people. You really are Raleigh on a boat!"*



We have a longstanding partnership with **MACS**, the charity for young people born without eyes or with under-developed eyes, and many young people come sailing year after year as a chance to be with friends who share the same condition. Comments included: *"I can just totally be myself, that's just the best bit"*; *"I loved leading sail drops and getting included in everything!"*; and *"I really pushed myself to try new things which resulted in me going out on the bowsprit to help take in the jib and leading a mizzen drop which I am really happy about."*

The next group sailed across to Guernsey so that *Prolific* could take part in a race back again. Feedback included: *"My most memorable bit was being out on the bowsprit, after we'd crossed the Channel, and the sun was rising and there were dolphins everywhere"*; and *"I have been waiting for this trip forever and I have had the best week of my life."* One crew member later posted on social media: *"The experience was absolutely amazing and so I want to say a huge thank you to the charity for helping me build my confidence and teamwork skills ... I highly recommend this charity to anybody looking for a new experience."*

That was followed by a day sail where we were delighted to have HRH The Duchess of Edinburgh on board! After she left, the crew took part in the ASTO race from Guernsey to Poole, competing against other sail training vessels crewed by young people in celebration of the RNLI 200th anniversary – sadly racing in almost no wind. Comments included: *"My best bit was probably meeting all the friends from other boats and stuff, I really enjoyed it, it's good fun and it really makes you feel like a massive community. My most memorable bit was probably going round the RNLI college [as part of the celebrations in Poole at the end of the voyage] because it's a great opportunity, and it's like opened up a path that I didn't really see my life going down, but now I'm really really considering maybe like going to the college, or like try and get an apprenticeship there for four years or something"*; *"Sailing with the Duchess has got to be my favourite part. It was incredible"*; *"One of the best ever weeks, I'll be buzzing for months"*; *"My best bit is probably right before the race, when we are tacking and stuff, and everyone's busy. And even though I've never done sailing before, like I say everyone's telling me what to do, and it felt a little bit like I was contributing and committing to the boat, and helping everyone else"*; and *"This was my first voyage on Prolific, despite stressing out at the start of the week, I really shouldn't have. It has gone way above my expectations, I am extremely sad to be leaving today."* An email from a parent: *"We've noticed a beautiful shift in [our son] on his return that only a supported rite of passage, such as what you gave him aboard Prolific, can bring about."*



The **Ellen MacArthur Cancer Trust** organised a cruise in company with *Prolific* and two smaller boats all crewed by young people with experience of cancer. Comments included: *"I have made great friends and we worked together - I have met new people with different ideas"*; and *"Great trip - lots of fun experiences, perfect for stepping out of your comfort zone. Would recommend"*.

Feedback from parents after summer individuals' voyages: *"[My son] had a fantastic time! He found everyone so kind and loved spending time with new people and learning new things ... Thank you so much to everyone at the Trust for the positive impact that your work brings to his life."*

"I want to thank your crew for giving [my son] such a great experience - and also the land-based staff and volunteers without whom the charity couldn't operate. He had been really anxious as the departure date approached and he can be quiet and sullen amongst strangers, so I was a bit worried whether he'd throw himself into the experience or not. I was so pleased when he got home and was chatting away, telling me about his experiences. He loved the sunset and sunrise watches he was put on. Seeing dolphins up close, also seeing all the tankers and ships passing by. He liked the food and the chats and enjoyed the games and swimming. He's been inspired by getting to know the crew, I think it's so beneficial for children to spend time with a varied group of people - different ages, personalities and life experiences. Please thank the crew and staff for the work they do, they really make a difference to young people's lives, I hope they always know that."



The final summer holiday voyage brought *Prolific* back from Brixham to Southampton. Comments included: *"I think my best bit was ... probably being able to navigate on the last day, 'cos it felt like we actually knew what we were doing! And as I didn't know how to sail at the start of the week, I think that that made a big difference! ... It was the most fun I've had all year"*; *"Really enjoyed being trusted to be put in charge of the boat"*; and *"The most memorable part was the sunset on the first night, where it looked like the sky was just painted on, and it was absolutely beautiful"*.

In September we worked for the first time with **Brighton & Hove City Council** to offer a voyage for their children in care. Comments included: *"My most memorable bit is knowing that everyone will go back to their normal lives happier now that they have discovered what it's like at sea"*; and *"It felt like a mini family. It was fun getting involved."* Social workers sailing with the group added: *"I loved learning about sailing and seeing everyone getting stuck in and persevering even when it got tough. Everyone left with lifelong memories!"*; and *"The thing I loved the most was just seeing you being really supportive of each other ... It was lovely to watch a group of young people embrace a new experience, overcome personal and group challenges to form wonderful friendships whilst learning new skills"*.



Bruern Abbey School specialises in issues like dyslexia, and ADHD. Comments included: *"It was a really fun time and it taught me how not to be homesick. Everyone was really nice"*.

Shooting Star Chase Children's Hospices organises voyages for siblings of those with a life-limiting condition. Comments included: *"The trip was phenomenal and absolutely fun all the way ... only wish it was a little longer"*. An adult leader said: *"Thank you so much to the totally awesome crew - our young people have gained so much"*.

A crew from **King's Academy Bay House** in Gosport competed in the ASTO Small Ships Solent race against other sail training vessels crewed by young people. Comments included: *"Doing jobs and work on deck was fun with the amount of work."* The school staff who sailed with them said: *"Seeing the progress from a few individuals over the past few days has been really nice"* and *"Being part of the team and watching everyone be part of the team as well, really loved that ... Crew allowed students to learn at every opportunity."*

Bohunt School in Liphook was a new client this year. Comments included: *"Most memorable bit ... everyone like taking part - each having their own job to make everything work smoothly ... The voyage has opened my mind since day one, and every day I learn something new and I enjoy every minute. The crew were always motivating me to push myself. Starting to feel like this is where I belong"*; and *"I built confidence on the boat because of the staff's friendliness."* One of the school staff added: *"From the moment we arrived crew were enthusiastic and looked after everyone impeccably. Students gained confidence and grew as individuals and as a team."*



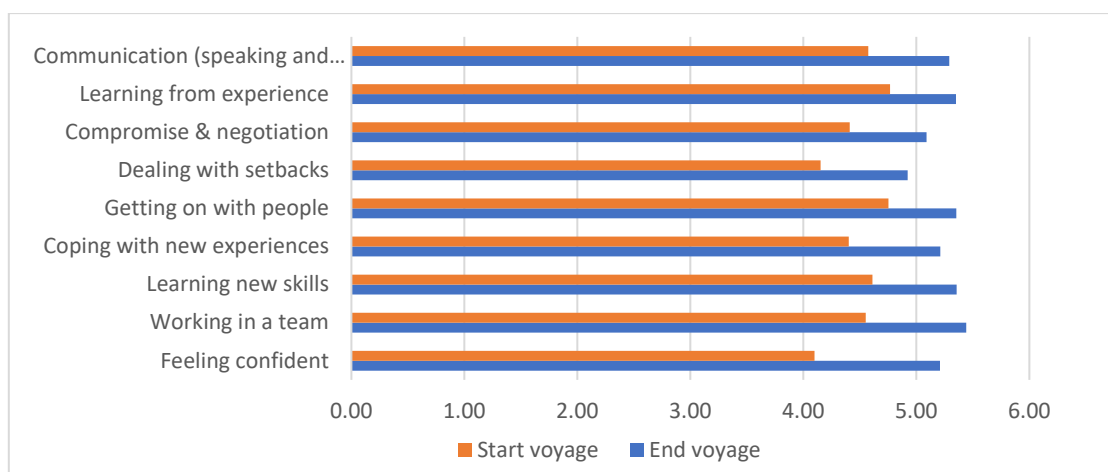
Students from **Cowes Enterprise College** sailed on a voyage in October. Comments included: *"Once in a lifetime opportunity. I didn't want to go at first but at the end, I didn't want to leave ... I wish I could go back in time and start again"*. A parent wrote later: *"A massive thank you to all the crew for making my daughter's time on the trip this week a wonderful time - they looked after her when she was sick at start of week (sea sickness) but her body soon got used to the water and she smashed the rest of the week ... she has never been away from home before not even a sleepover so this was a massive deal and she has said if she had the opportunity she would do it again which shocked me so thank you everyone for everything ... she has grown in confidence, I'm one proud parent."*

Young people from the **Royal Cruising Club** filled the final youth voyage of the season. A parent wrote: *[My son] absolutely loved it - he came home bubbling with all the stories of anchor watch in the wee hours, cheffing skills, helming, card and spoon games, adventures in port, and round the cabin table chat and laughs with everyone in the evening. Social and sailing skills galore! The crew were super friendly and made feel him immediately at ease on board, so many thanks to them all for their warmth and care, and for the very successful trip which I always think is impressive with little wind!.. It was a real confidence building trip."* The group organiser wrote: *"Thank you all so much for your brilliant organisation in the run up to the voyage, and for a truly amazing experience for all of the young people. They were all so enthusiastic afterwards ... It was impressive how much they did over just a few days."*

Facts and figures

- We ran a full programme of 40 voyages and 10 day-sails from March to November.
- *Prolific* sailed 4,781 miles during the 2024 sailing season.
- We had 671 crew berths available this year (up from 639 last year) and we allocated 664 of them (99%). 634 people actually sailed in crew berths (up from 578 last year). Berth occupancy this year was therefore 94.5%. The difference between berths allocated and actually occupied is mainly due to clients not actually filling as many berths as they had booked (and, in many cases, paid for), usually because they wanted an exclusive booking even though their group included fewer than 15 people – often where the young people had issues in common and it would have been inappropriate to include outsiders on their voyage. There were also a few last-minute dropouts.
- The average age of people in crew berths on youth voyages, excluding over-25 teachers, leaders and carers, was 15.
- 67% of people in crew berths on youth voyages had some specified disadvantage and another 8% were adults essential for disadvantaged young people to sail (e.g. carers and support staff). 159 people on youth voyages and another 28 on adult voyages or day sails had some form of physical or learning difficulty or mental health issue.
- 479 people completed pre- and post-voyage Outcomes Wheel self-evaluation sheets giving themselves marks out of 6 in different areas. Average changes during this year's voyages included:

	% change
Feeling confident	+ 27%
Working in a team	+ 20%
Learning new skills	+ 16%
Coping with new experiences	+ 18%
Getting on with people	+ 13%
Dealing with setbacks	+ 19%
Compromise & negotiation when living with different people	+ 15%
Learning from experience	+ 12%
Communication (speaking and listening)	+ 16%
Looking after myself	+6%



- 338 people earned RYA Start Yachting certificates, and 46 earned the more advanced RYA Competent Crew certificate. We always stress to young people and the staff working with them that these certificates represent much more than basic sailing competence: they can be used as evidence of transferrable skills. To earn a certificate, young people have to be able to listen, concentrate, work in a team, persist where they initially struggled, contribute to cooking and cleaning as well as the more exciting jobs, cope with living in an entirely unfamiliar situation and being away from home, undertake tasks which some will have found really challenging, take responsibility when asked, and much more.

- We also filled 278 volunteer berths, with volunteers giving 1,254 days to make these voyages possible. A third of volunteer berths were filled by people aged 16-25, almost all having sailed first on an ordinary youth voyage and impressed the skipper enough to be invited back for further training.
- 604 berths in total were filled by people aged 25 or under, including staff, volunteers and crew.
- 52 people did well enough to earn a recommendation to come back and train as volunteers on our voyages, and another 63 were told they had shown the potential to reach this level when older or after a few more voyages - though in practice we don't expect everyone to take up their recommendation, and training berths will go those who are most keen and committed. Excluding adult and mates' training voyages, and recommendations going to teachers, youth workers or other group leaders, 31 sea staff recommendations went to young people sailing on standard youth voyages.
- Two people passed skipper assessments this year, three first mates, three second mates, fifteen third mates and three bosuns.

Winter 2024-25 and the 2025 sailing season – funding requirements

Thanks to enormous support from our sponsors and donors, Ocean Youth Trust South is in a strong position going forwards, and we are enormously grateful to everyone who has made generous contributions to see us through the coming winter or to support us next year.

If anyone hasn't donated recently and is wondering where a new grant might make the most difference, we have a very busy winter in progress, with *Prolific* out of the water for our five-year survey, as well as inspecting the keel bolts - a huge job requiring removal of tanks to gain access. We are also doing significant work on the masts. This is by some margin the most expensive year in a five-year refit cycle and we can provide details of work required and budgets to anyone who might consider making a new donation.

At the same time we are busy making plans and taking bookings for the 2025 sailing season. As ever, we are receiving plenty of applications on behalf of disadvantaged and vulnerable young people who cannot afford the advertised voyage costs: the more funds we can raise for bursaries, the more often we can say "yes" to someone who would not otherwise have been able to sail with us. Bursary donors receive detailed reports on any voyage you help to support.

Finally, none of our work would be possible without our dedicated staff team and we are always looking for donations to help with salary costs.

Please contact caroline.white@oytsouth.org if you might be in a position to consider a detailed application for funding.

2025 boat visits for sponsors, donors and other supporters

Ocean Youth Trust South welcomes sponsors and donors who would like to visit *Prolific* or even come for a sail. Dates for 2025 day sails may include:

Sat 14th June
 Sun 15th June
 Sun 22nd June
 Sat 20th September
 Sun 21st September

Any of these could give you an opportunity to come and see our boat and find out more about how we work. Day sails run 0930-1700 from Southampton - sailing in the Solent with lunch on board. No previous sailing experience needed! It is also possible to arrange visits to the vessel in harbour in between voyages.

Email caroline.white@oytsouth.org to arrange a visit or a day sail.



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