# Sail Training

# in Scouting

# Amended Annually

# SSWA Info 008 (Nov. 2011)

Coastal and offshore sailing is an excellent activity for senior Scouts and Venture Scouts, and even in the earliest days of Scouting some Sea Scout Troops had access to vessels capable of coastal and offshore sailing.

The international Sail Training movement, as we know it today gradually emerged in the early 1950s and one of the catalysts for its development was the foundation of the Tall Ships Races in 1956.

Sail Training started in Ireland when the historic yacht “Asgard”, a gaff-rigged ketch, which had been used by Erskine Childers to smuggle rifles for the Irish Volunteers in 1914, became available as a national sail training vessel in 1968. “Asgard” was later replaced by “Creidne”, and in 1981 a new, purpose-built sail training brigantine, “Asgard II”, was designed and built in Arklow. Many Irish Scouts have sailed on her over the years.

A limited amount of coastal and offshore sailing has also been available within Sea Scouting for some years. There have been many coastal cruises around the Irish Coast, and across the Irish Sea in privately owned yachts.

“Asgard II” made a great reputation for herself in the Sail Training world, and many Irish Scouts enjoyed the “Asgard experience”, especially since the Irish Association of Master Mariners instituted and sponsored the competition for the Desmond Fortune Trophy for Sea Scouts, or by taking advantage of the “Asgard Challenge”, or indeed by direct application to Coiste an Asgard for a place.

**LOSS OF STY ASGARD II**

Unfortunately, Asgard sank early in September 2008, south of Brittany, on the way to La Rochelle for a routine maintenance session. Mercifully, all the crew and trainees were rescued without injury.

Two Sea Ventures from 5th Wicklow (Bray) Sea Scouts had sailed on “Asgard” from Den Helder to Lowestoft to Dieppe to Weymouth on the cruise before she sank. Two other Sea Scouts, from 9th Wicklow (Arklow) and 3rd Sligo (Rosses Point) unfortunately lost their chance – they were due to embark for a cruise at the beginning of October.

Asgard lies in quite deep water and the government has decided to abandon any attempt at raising the vessel, and has apparently taken the insurance money and put it into the general funds.

**LOSS OF STY LORD RANK**

As if the loss of “Asgard” was not bad enough, **“Lord Rank”**, a 21 meter ketch run byOcean Youth Trust Ireland, based in Bangor, Northern Ireland, sank after striking a rock last year, and was a total loss. Thankfully, as was the case with “Asgard”, all the crew was rescued.

So, sail training in ireland has suffered disastrously recently. However, a number of interested people have got together to plan a revival of our sail training capability, and two meetings were organised by interested bodies and people, and were hosted by the Dublin Port and Docks Board. The Sea Scout and Water Activities Committee of Scouting Ireland was represented at both meetings. A new cross-border body has been formed - “Sail Training Ireland for Youth Development”. This body plans to resurrect the Irish Sail Training tradition

**TALL SHIPS RACES** first started in 1956, and have been held every year since then. The races take place in waters around Europe, from the Baltic to the Mediterranean. Time in each port is usually three or four days during which the focus is on activities for the young trainees, time for crew changes, and a festival atmosphere for the local community and thousands of visitors.

Many Irish Scouts have taken part in these races over the years, on board “Asgard I”, “Creidne” and “Asgard II”, on “Lord Rank” (OYTI), British Scout training yachts or on chartered craft. On three occasions, chartered vessels fully crewed by Irish Sea Scouts took part in the Tall Ships Races of 1998 (Vigo to Dublin),1999 (St.Malo to Greenock) and 2005 (Waterford to Cherbourg).

**TALL SHIPS RACES** **VISITING IRELAND** In 1991, the event came to Cork from Milford Haven, in 1998 to Dublin from Spain and in 2005 started in Waterford. In 2011 the race again started in Waterford, and the first leg was clockwise around Ireland to Greenock, in the Clyde. The second leg was from the Clyde to Shetland Islands, thence to Stavangar in Norway, with the last leg to Halmstad ih Sweden.

**“Sail Training International”** organises and manages these races in European waters. The purpose of the events is to provide an opportunity for friendly competition among the sail training fleet and to develop international friendship and understanding among the young trainees and the communities visited during the races. The Tall Ships races typically attract a fleet of 70 -100 vessels from about 20 countries, and of every size from 30ft yachts to square rigged ships over 300 feet long. Most years some 3-4,000 young people (aged 16 -25) from close to 30 countries take part in the various legs. Details of the races for the next two years are given below. Applicants for Tall Ships Race must be over 16 yrs. The events usually consist of three segments - two races, with a “cruise in company” in between, thus visiting 4 ports. Individuals will usually “sign on” for one of these segments only.

**SMALL SHIPS RACES** started in 2002, organised by the Association of Sea Training Organisations (ASTO). The first Race was from Weymouth to St.Malo Irish Sea Scouts entered a boat in this event, having a round cruise – Dun Laoghaire – Penzance – St. Malo – Jersey – Guernsey – Dun Laoghaire.

Later these races became single day events, held each Autumn in the Solent, but “Lord Rank”, the sail training vessel of Ocean Youth Trust Ireland, based on Bangor, Co. Down, usually arranged to sail to the Solent to participate, and Irish Sea Scouts participated in two of these events, on one occasion crewing the yacht from Bangor to the Isle of Wight, participating in the Solent Race and then returning by air, and on another occasion flying to Southampton, and sailing the yacht back to Bangor.

In 2006, ASTO organised a Small Ships Race from Glasgow to Belfast and 3 Irish yachts, fully crewed by Sea Scouts, took part. The same 3 yachts took part

in another Small Ships Race from Greenock to Belfast In 2009, coinciding with the arrival in Belfast of the final leg of the “Trans-Atlantic Tall Ships Challenge”.

**SEA SCOUT ARMADAS.**  In July 1995 a “Sea Scout Armada” sailed to the World Jamboree in Holland. Thirty nine Sea Scouts from Dundalk, Dublin, Waterford and Cork chartered 3 large sailing craft on the south coast of Britain and sailed up the English Channel to the Netherlands, joining with twenty-two other vessels manned by Sea Scouts from Norway, Denmark, Finland, Poland, UK, Italy (small vessels brought by container), Netherlands, and Belgium, to form an impressive Sea Scout fleet to visit the World Jamboree. This was an extraordinary event

In July 2007, to celebrate the Centenary Jamboree, another “Sea Scout Armada” of 27 boats, with crew total of 281 from Belgium, Norway, France, Spain, Portugal, Holland, Poland and Germany assembled at Ostend and sailed to Ramsgate in Kent, and then up the Thames to the West India Dock in London.

# The boats spent 3 days in the dock**,** and the crews visited the Jamboree and Londonbefore embarking on the return journey home.

# In 2011, another Sea Scout Armada, called “Simply Sailing”, was organised mainly by the Polish Sea Scouts. Seventeen yachts manned by Sea Scouts from Poland, Norway, Denmark, Sweden and Netherlands sailed across the Baltic to visit the World Jamboree in Sweden.

**Tall Ships Races – 2011 and 2012**

# **The Tall Ships** returned to Ireland again in **2011**,when the race series started from Waterford on 3 July. New Ross Sea Scouts organised an expedition down the Barrow to visit the event and to watch the vessels sailing out to the start line off Dunmore East.

**In 2012** the race series started in St Malo, with a race to Lisbon, the second leg was Lisbon to Cadiz, the third to La Coruna and the final leg was the long haul to Dublin. A number of Dublin Sea Scouts in 3 yachts, participated in the “Parade of Sail” when the fleet departed from Dublin and dispersed home.

**Scout Sail Training Vessels in UK**

# **London Docklands Scout Project**

# **Discovery Sailing Project** is part of the London Docklands Scout Project of The Scout Association, and administratively is a Scout District in Greater London Northeast County. The Project has three training vessels, “Thermopylae Clipper”, “Discovery” and “Bambi”. During the sailing season the vessels are based on the South Coast of England, at Universal Marina in Southampton. For details of all vessels, see website [www.dsp.uk.com](http://www.dsp.uk.com)

# **“Discovery”** is a 13.5 metre Seastream cutter. There are mid-week and weekend cruises throughout the Summer and autumn training cruises are run on the South Coast of England. The Small Ships Race and the Tall Ships Races and subsequent delivery cruises home occur during July and August. For Tall Ships Races, minimum age is 16 yrs.

**“Thermopylae Clipper”** is a 60 ft clipper racer, used, together with “Discovery”, for training cruises during May/June and Sept/October on the South Coast, operating out of the Universal Marina in Southampton. She is also involved in offshore cruises.

Address: Clive Fisher, 54 Chantry Lane, London Colny, Herts AL2 1JU

Website: [www.dsp.uk.com](http://www.dsp.uk.com). email: [discovery@lordamory.org](mailto:discovery@lordamory.org)

## Adventures Offshore is also part of the Scout Association and administratively is a Scout District within Essex County. Its function is coastal and offshore sail training.

## “Ocean Scout” and “Offshore Scout” are 15 metre ketches. The age range for trainees is normally 14-25, but for Tall Ships Races it is16-25 yrs.

Address: Adventures Offshore, The Lane, West Mersea, Colchester CO5 8NT

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