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## TRAINING SHIP SIR STELIOS – REPORT FROM 1 MARCH TO 24 NOVEMBER 2023

### Aim

This aim of this report is to highlight the achievements and outcomes from TS Sir Stelios' 2023 sailing season.

### Overview

After a return to full operations in 2022 from the impact caused from Covid, the 2023 season commenced with a relatively new team, with Ms Lowri Boorman as the lead Skipper for the TS Sir Stelios and the other 42' Rustler (the TS City of London) operated by the Marine Society and Sea Cadets. The intent for the year was for the yachts to operate along the south coast and to spend the summer operating out of the Channel and Scilly Islands.



The season commenced in mid-March with an adult training voyage, giving our new relief skippers and mates the opportunity to test the vessels and to try all the systems and emergency procedures before the cadets joined on the 18 Mar 23. The first two weeks were focused on the Solent before she conducted her first voyage towards the Jurassic coastline. During this time the Offshore Fleet was also visited by Mwaka Mudenda, a member of the children's TV programme Blue Peter. During her visit, the offshore fleet conducted a sail in formation on a beautifully clear day in March, which can be viewed via the link [Sea Cadets Offshore Fleet In Formation](#), this clip provides a great demonstration of the fleet we operate, and the lasting experiences that our offshore vessels provide.

However, for much of the year, TS Sir Stelios and the other Sea Cadet vessels were affected by very unseasonal weather with easterly winds covering much of the UK. This caused exceedingly choppy waters which limited the scope of several of her voyages.



TS Sir Stelios then deployed to the Channel Island in early May, but her sister vessel suffered a catastrophic steering failure in the middle of the English Channel and had to limp to the nearest port of Guernsey using emergency steering, fortunately everyone was safe and the Skipper (Zoe) performed magnificently. Due to the nature of this breakage, this placed her out of commission for almost 5 weeks until parts could be manufactured and flown out to the island to allow appropriate repairs. However, this meant that the TS Sir Stelios continued her journey around the Channel Islands and the South Hams of Devon on her own.

What has been new for the TS Sir Stelios, is for her to be used as a platform to deliver Gold Duke of Edinburgh Offshore Expeditions. In July and October, saw 12 cadets using her as a base to conduct a two-week long adventure developing their navigation and sailing ability in order to run their own four-day voyage, with staff only there to assist in an emergency. This saw vessels explore the entire Solent area and an expedition taking place between Brixham and Gosport.

One of the other highlights of the year, was the two 42' yachts taking part in the Association of Sail Training Organisation's Small Ship's Race in early October, this saw the vessels sail alongside seven other sail training organisations to deliver a five-class race. Although our vessels took part, I cannot say that we performed particularly well, though we had relatively inexperienced crews compared to some of the other vessels.



TS Sir Stelios has now concluded its sailing season and is now commencing a period of winter maintenance and overhaul of some of her systems. This includes a deep clean, engine overhaul and the purchase of a new canopy.

We will also be saying goodbye to Lowri Boorman as she looks to move on her experience within the sail training community. We are already in the process of recruiting her successor.

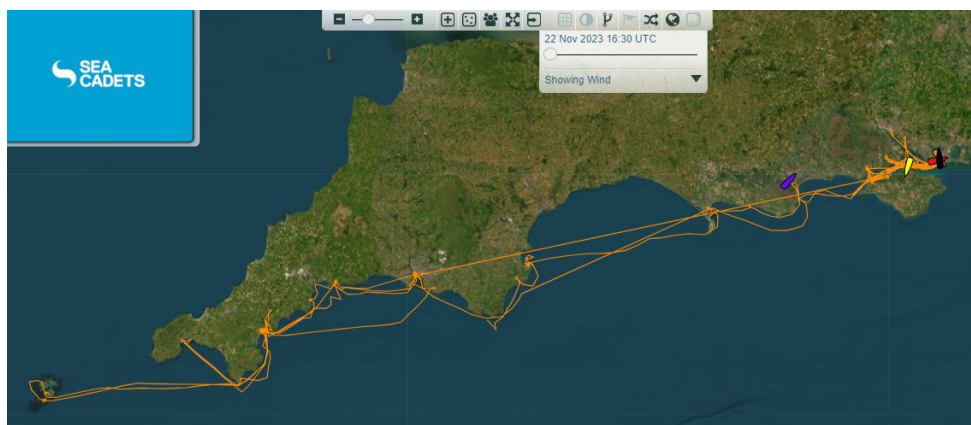
Next year TS Sir Stelios will be continuing her tour of the south coast, in order that she can take part in the acknowledgement of the 200th anniversary of the Royal National Lifesaving Institute in Poole, exploring the Pembrokeshire coastline and ultimately taking part in the much-longer Small Ships Race taking place from Gurnsey to Poole between the 10-17 August 2024.



During the 2023 sailing season, the TS Sir Stelios has taken over 132 Sea and Marine Cadets on week-long voyages around the UK and near continent. These cadets came from 125 separate Sea Cadet Units (out of a total pool of 399 units). Of these 132 cadets, 58 received enhanced Bursary support to allow them to voyage with us at either little or no cost (including the travel to the vessel).

## Ports Visited

The image below details just under half of the ports TS Sir Stelios has visited during the 2023 season:



### A full list of Ports visited were:

Fort Blockhouse	Mylor Yacht Harbour	Mayflower Marina
Gunwharf	Maggoty Bank	Falmouth
Cowes	Pendennis	Penzance
Yarmouth	Tregnothan Pontoon	Parn Voose Cove
Lymington	Fowey	St Mary's
Gosport	Plymouth	Mevagissey
Hamble River	Brixham	Newton Ferris
Hamble - Mercury	Fishcombe Cove	Mayflower Plymouth
Poole	Weymouth	Dartmouth
St Helier	Studland Bay	Swanage
St. Peter Port	Bucklers Hard	Southampton
Havre Gosselin	Petrol Pier	Beaulieu River
Helford River Anchorage	Portland	Gunwharf Quays

### Evidence from the Offshore Cadet Satisfaction Feedback

Question	TS Sir Stelios Score	Whole Fleet Average
Going offshore met my need for travel and adventure?	9.4 out of 10.	8.5 out of ten
This is how much I would like to go offshore again?	9.1 out of 10.	8.9 out of 10
I feel that the skills I have learnt whilst at sea will help my progression in the Sea Cadets / Marine Cadets?	8.9 out of 10	8.5 out of 10
As a result of the voyage, this is how confident and happy I am in facing new challenges?	8.6 out of 10	8.1 out of 10

## Specific quote given as part of the Duke of Edinburgh Expeditions included:

PO Cdt G\*\*\*\*\* commented: *“I am passionate about navigation as a topic, so having the opportunity to be in charge of the TS Sir Stelios gave me a lot of confidence, and being trusted to plan the routes and passages really boosted my self-esteem. It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience for a career-enhancing qualification”.*

PO Cdt H\*\*\*\*\* commented: *“This is definitely the best thing I could have done for my DofE. I was thrilled to find out that walking isn’t the only option for my Exped. At first, the thought of being in charge of the vessel terrified me, especially as I had never been on board a yacht before. However, being fully immersed in the experience - which included planning where to sail to, how to get there, whether the berth was suitable, radioing the marinas, and actually sailing TS Sir Stelios - completely changed my outlook. You are expected to have little to no input from your skipper, meaning it is down to you and your group. It is massively exciting to work so tightly with your team, to command the yacht, and I highly recommend this to anyone considering a yacht voyage for their DofE Expedition”.*

From all of the comments received from the cadets the words they most associated with the offshore experience gained onboard the TS Sir Stelios were:



## Summary

In summary, 2023 has been a largely challenging season with the impact of weather, industrial action by the rail companies and high rates of mechanical failure across the offshore fleet. Fortunately, this has not limited the TS Sir Stelios too much. The ship has enjoyed a safe operating season and has only missed two voyages over the past 9 months – testament to the very sound material condition she is in. The ship has sailed thousands of miles and visited many interesting places in the south of the UK and beyond.

Most importantly, the 132 cadets who have enjoyed a week on board the vessel, will have undoubtedly departed as more confident young people, will have learnt valuable life lessons whilst also enjoying lots of nautical fun and adventure.

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