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Challenge Wales returns home after her biggest adventure yet

Challenge Wales | Wales' Tall Ship is set to return back to Cardiff after her biggest adventure yet after sailing over 4,000 miles this summer, crewed by mainly Welsh young people, and having represented Wales and the UK in one of the largest youth and cultural events in Europe.

After being away from Cardiff for almost 80 days she is set to return to her home port on Friday 25th August, just in time for being a feature boat at the Cardiff Harbour Festival on the Bank Holiday August weekend.

During her travels she visited no fewer than 11 countries, including Sweden, Finland, Lithuania, Estonia, Poland and Holland and 35 different ports. She motored through 3 canals, welcomed 10 different nationalities onboard and encountered wind speeds from a frustrating 0 knots to an exhilarating 42 knots.

The entire journey had different young people onboard, many of them from Wales with voyages ranging from 8 to 14 days. And, the Challenge Wales volunteer crew donated over 9,200 hours of their time to sail the boat, and mentor the young people, on this epic adventure.

Challenge Wales was taking part in the 2017 Tall Ships Races series in the Baltic which brought together a fleet of no fewer than 105 vessels, representing 20 countries and collectively had over 7,000 crew with each vessel being crewed by young people (under the age of 26). The largest Tall Ship measured over 122 metres, and end to end the vessels stretched almost 2 miles, with over 2.5 million people visiting the event to make it Europe's largest free family festival.

Tall Ships Race 2017 Director, Mike Bowles said: *"The Tall Ships Races provide a unique opportunity for young people to go to sea to learn about themselves and others while developing skills that will stay with them for life – a proven life-changing experience. Young people taking part in these races become wonderful ambassadors for their home countries at the same time as learning about other cultures from the other*



to see *nationalities taking part. It was a great pleasure the sail training vessel, Challenge Wales, representing Wales and the only Welsh registered vessel taking part. Challenge Wales is not only helping to raise awareness of Wales on an international scale but the Challenge Wales charity are to be congratulated for their continued commitment to the young people of Wales whose lives they are so positively influencing*

Tall Ships racing has a focus on young people, where a minimum of 50% of the crew must be aged 15 – 25 years, and is an opportunity for young people to meet others from all over the world, share their experiences, learn life skills and make life-long friends and memories. All those onboard Challenge Wales worked as a team and in 3 hour watches making sure that the boat finished each leg as quick as possible. The event also includes shore-side activities including crew parades through the streets waved on by thousands of onlookers.

Emily (aged 17) from Llantwit Major said “I absolutely loved being on Challenge Wales. Working with a group of strangers, who then became good friends, in an extraordinary environment to meet our goals was fun and a great team-building experience”.

“I learnt that it’s ok to leave the comfort of your family and try something new” said Tyrone (aged 17) from Cardiff.

In the Tall Ships Races 2017 Challenge Wales finished 5th in Class and 18th overall which was a great achievement for all those onboard.

Challenge Wales returns to Penarth on Friday 25th August and will be offering free guided tours, for all ages, to those visiting the Cardiff Harbour Festival on Saturday 26th, Sunday 27th and Bank Holiday Monday 28th August at Mermaid Quay, Cardiff Bay.

-Ends-

Notes to Editors:

Challenge Wales

The award-winning charity, Challenge Wales operates Challenge Wales | Wales’ Tall Ship, a 72-foot round-the-world yacht that sailed twice around the world and is now based in Penarth. Those onboard get involved in all aspects of sailing the boat, from helming and navigating, hoisting the sails to preparing meals and no sailing experience is required to take part. Most of the Welsh young people taking part in the Tall Ships Races had been nominated for a place onboard as they were seen as deserving for the adventure and had overcome personal, social or financial difficulties and wanted to have a summer of fun.

For more information visit www.challengewales.org or email Vicky@challengewales.org or call 029 20 704 657

Tall Ships Races

Visit www.sailtraininginternational.org for full details