



EAST  
COAST  
SAIL  
TRUST

*Five days in another world...*

[www.thalatta.org.uk](http://www.thalatta.org.uk)





### *The ship: a traditional sailing coaster*

Recently restored in 2012 to an as-new condition, Thalatta is a sea-going vessel 90 feet long and built of oak. A superb example of a fully rigged traditional spritsail barge, she was originally built at Harwich in 1906. The word Thalatta is Greek, meaning the Sea. Craft of this type developed to combine good sea-going qualities with an ability to navigate easily in the shallow rivers of the south east coast.

For many years, in peace and war, Thalatta carried 150-ton cargoes under sail to British and Continental ports, surviving as one of the last few wooden coasters in trade, latterly under power. The barge's sailing rig is nowadays augmented with a powerful modern diesel engine, but otherwise she remains in character and appearance almost unaltered since the days of sail. In trade Thalatta would have been crewed by a Skipper, Mate and Third Hand just as she is today.

### *A modern role, working with children*

In 1966 the ship took on a different role as a schoolship under the flag of the East Coast Sail Trust. Since then thousands of young people have benefitted from the experiences of living and working as crew on Thalatta's five-day voyages.

Just as the old-time crews did when Thalatta was carrying cargoes under sail, the youngsters coming aboard today assist with the working of the ship, taking turns with cooking and cleaning duties below and tasks on deck – winding up the anchor, setting the great red sails, and taking a trick at the wheel. But they (and their leader!) need not have had any previous sailing experience.

### *Characterful accommodation*

Thalatta's former cargo space has been converted into communal living quarters. The disadvantages of accommodating the children in a warren of small cabins have been avoided. Teachers and pupils comment on the friendly atmosphere, and the youngsters' hammocks and wooden sea-chests are always a well-loved feature. Separate cabins are provided for the group leaders.

Cooking in the ample galley is on a modern gas stove. There are two conventional salt-water flushed marine toilets, washroom and a shower. A set of weatherproof clothing and lifejackets is provided for everyone.

### *Young explorers on a fascinating coast*

The ship carries two large ship's boats, each able to carry 8 passengers. These, propelled either by oars or outboard engines, are used to take the youngsters ashore, and to explore coastal inlets and creeks too shallow for Thalatta.

The Thames Estuary abounds with things to do and see. Thalatta's educational cruises offer the opportunity for a worthwhile and varied programme of environmental studies. And they give a glimpse back into a vanished age through the memorable experience of living and working on board the finest of the Thames sailing barges.

There is ample opportunity to combine adventure with formal learning. An enormous range of topics crop up naturally during your cruise – from estuary ecology, pollution and fisheries, to North Sea trade and ferries, waterside communities, sea defences, rescue services, maritime history and sea safety sense.



*Five day educational cruises exploring the East Coast*

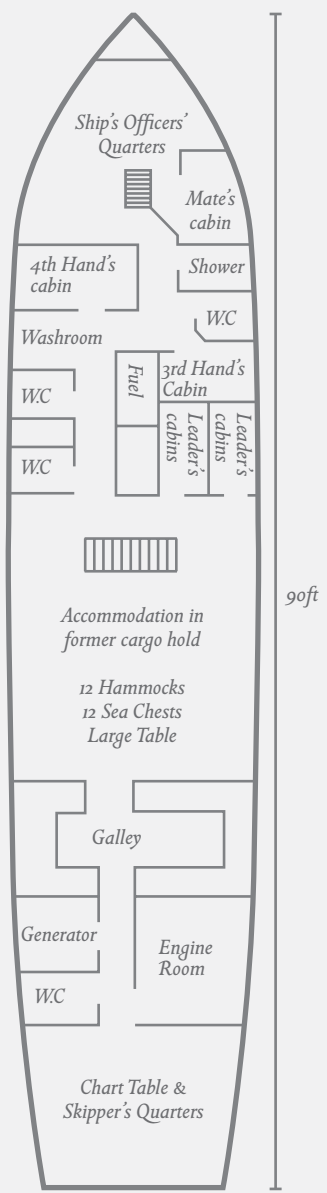


*Aboard Thalatta these young people begin to understand that it is not enough simply to co-exist and put up with others but to recognise and value interdependence, gain increased self esteem through the realisation of self worth and grow in confidence.*

Kenneth Lewis, Headteacher, Hunters Hill School



Completely refurbished for 2012, the hull layout has been cleverly designed to make the most of the space available. Accommodation for the children is in the former cargo hold, with each child allocated their own hammock and sea chest for the week. Thalatta also now boasts numerous modern features such as hot water, central heating for the chillier ends of the season, and even a shower.



### *Easing the leader's load*

The ship's own well-trying regime, evolved over 40 years, ensures that each day's activities run smoothly. The barge's experienced crew shares the task of supervision. And remember, they are perfectly accustomed to working with groups (including leaders!) who have no previous experience of sea-faring! Groups are encouraged to keep personal Log Books recording their own experiences and impressions of the voyage.

### *During the school holidays*

It is not only school groups that come aboard Thalatta. In the school holidays Thalatta welcomes parties of young people from the whole range of voluntary youth organisations. Such weeks provide an adventurous alternative to summer camp. Some of your badge work can be undertaken during the cruise, as can Duke of Edinburgh's Award projects. Visual or physical impairment need not necessarily prevent a voyage aboard Thalatta.

### *Young visitors from abroad*

An adventurous week under sail on Thalatta can be the highlight of your group's U.K holiday. Thalatta's home port, Ipswich, is conveniently close to the ferry ports of Harwich and Felixstowe, and 1 hour from Stansted Airport.

### *A sensible sailing programme*

Thalatta's weekly programme is always planned with safety, interest and variety in mind. A short coast or estuary passage is made each day (except in very bad weather), the ship coming to anchor at nightfall in some quiet haven. HM Coastguard is always kept fully informed of the boat's itinerary.

On board the Thalatta, you learn to set the sails and participate fully in working the ship. You'll really feel that you are part of the crew – not just passengers.

Expeditions to the shore are organised each day, when conditions allow, both for recreation and learning. We shall try to show you the great variety of our local scene – waterside villages, busy ports, deserted estuaries. We make time also for swimming, project work, quizzes, perhaps a Ship's concert or talent contest, a barbeque on the beach, and drawing and Log Book competitions.

Normally all cruises begin and end at Ipswich, Suffolk. Occasionally, however, the barge will start at one port and finish at another. It is decidedly not our policy to set out 'looking for some rough weather' We do not court the discomfort, boredom and additional hazards of long North Sea crossings.... we do not believe you want to spend your week being seasick!

### *Social value*

Teachers and social workers have paid many tributes to the East Coast Sail Trust's permanent staff and the social value of the Thalatta's established daily routine. For the ordinary school this experience of living and working together in a quite different world helps pupils mature in their relationships with adults and with other youngsters.

Being necessarily subjected to the ship's discipline also shows late benefits, both at home and at school. In youth organisations, leaders find that the shipboard community life consolidates their work building qualities of good citizenship and fostering leadership skills.



Heads of Special Schools show enthusiasm for the confidence-building effects on pupils with learning difficulties. They find that Thalatta complements their own programme, fully justifying a term-time week devoted to this stimulating adventure. LEA schools and units for such children, together with residential homes run by national Charities have regularly used Thalatta to help their pupils progress. Two (or more) staff normally accompany these groups.

### *Safety at sea*

Thalatta has an unparalleled safety record built up by the late John Kemp and Jane Benham OBE, originators of the Trust in its present form. The condition of the vessel, requisite modern safety and fire fighting equipment and crew competency are all supervised by the Department of Transport in accordance with the Merchant Shipping Acts. A proportion of the ship's charitable income is dedicated each year to expenditure on safety.

On board Thalatta you'll find many additional safety features:

- Liferaft provisions for 18 persons
- VHF radio and mobile telephone
- Two large stable ship's boats with two powerful outboard engines
- Potential hazard areas clearly designated
- Thalatta's modern diesel engine can be relied on to get the ship to harbour fast in any emergency
- The widest decks in the fleet! Plenty of room for youngsters and crew to move about in safety
- Gas cooking range provides safe all day cooking
- Lifelines and stanchions are always in place when the vessel is underway
- Clear-cut Safety Rules always strictly applied
- Individual lifejackets

### *Crew Experience*

Thalatta is currently skippered by Cyril Varley who has many years of experience in coastal shipping and especially in Thames Barges. He is ably assisted by the mate Roger Davies and a third hand who has specific responsibility for safety, supervision and welfare of the children.

### *How the Trust is run*

The East Coast Sail Trust is a registered charity (No 1128353) and as such has to comply with the strict conditions as laid down by the Charity Commissioners. The trust is currently run by a body of appointed trustees, who are supported by an appeal committee of two, a booking secretary and an operational crew of three who are responsible for the safe operation of the barge.

All staff, whether working in a voluntary or paid capacity are committed to maintaining the high reputation of the Trust to the benefit of young people from all sectors of the community.



### *Thalatta Safety Rules*

- 1. Lifejackets always worn on deck*
- 2. No smoking below decks*
- 3. No children allowed on deck after 'lights out'*
- 4. No shore expeditions unaccompanied by adult group leader*
- 5. No use of ship's boats except when supervised by Ship's Officers*



*Visit our website for more information;  
[www.thalatta.org.uk](http://www.thalatta.org.uk)*



*Over the last 40 years we have received many testimonials about the cruises and the life-changing effect they have on young people. Here are some of them.*

On behalf of the children of The St. Christopher School who sailed on Thalatta, I would personally like to thank all of you who were involved in making our trip possible. The importance of trips of this type for our pupils is hard to quantify. It is more than just a holiday. Though our pupils are young, they all have special challenges to cope with. Thalatta provides peace where the stresses of their lives slowly seeped from them.

They became part of a team and had to care as members of that team for one another. They faced challenges and some overcame fears which at first seemed insurmountable, such a picking up a lugworm, or climbing up a side of a barge. The encouragement their peers gave them was just as wonderful to see as the conquering of personal fear. The memory of their trip will stay with them forever, and the lessons learned will strengthen them in their lives.

*St. Christopher School, Essex*

Without the distraction of TV, radio and electronic games the group felt the need to devise games and activities of their own during periods of free time. At the end of the week everyone agreed that much of TV was overrated and had not been missed. Moreover, several new and unlikely friendships were made.

*Castle School, West Midlands*

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*Kenneth Lewis, Headteacher, Hunters Hill School*

A week aboard Thalatta provides not only the opportunity for these damaged young people to learn, at their own level, about topics such as navigation, tides and wildlife, but also and perhaps more importantly they soon appreciate that if their week is to be a success they must work collaboratively and in co-operation with other members of a team and this arguably is the most important life skill.

*Kingsdon Manor School, Somerset*

It was wonderful to see the change in the pupils as the week progressed; watching them develop, gain in self-confidence and learn to pull together as a team was in itself very rewarding. Log entries and letters of thanks to the crew are testimony to their enjoyment and gratitude at having experienced something very different.

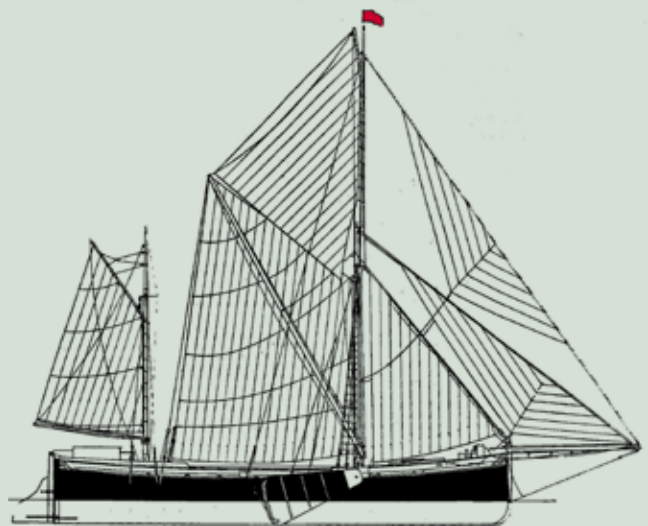
*Northgate High School*

## *Help support the ECST*

*The Trust aims to help young people discover their own talents and skills by placing them in challenging situations which are safely managed, but in order to continue this work funds are always needed to support the operation. So fund-raising for the Trust is one of the most important roles anyone can have and this can be for all sizes of donation, from corporate grants through to individual contributions.*

*Thalatta needs you! Every contribution, large or small, is vitally needed to keep Thalatta running which costs around £80,000 per year. Some of this comes from the fees charged for each cruise but the remainder comes from donations from individuals and our wonderful sponsors, and from commercial organisations wishing to make use of Thalatta as a unique venue and experience – she is not only for young people!*

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## Private Hire & Other Purposes

From time to time when *Thalatta* is not on charter with schools, youth organisations and social projects she may be used for other activities to help fund the Trust. These typically include corporate entertainment, company team building, family celebrations, club and other events.

Numbers are limited to 12 when she is underway but may be increased for alongside static events. As each event is different, it will be necessary to discuss your requirements with us.



*Thalatta* is based at Ipswich, Suffolk and cruises the East Coast of Essex and Suffolk, with overnight anchorages in the tranquil rivers which abound.

## Five day educational cruises exploring the East Coast

For further information please visit our website and Facebook page:

[www.thalatta.org.uk](http://www.thalatta.org.uk)

[www.facebook.com/eastcoastsailtrust](https://www.facebook.com/eastcoastsailtrust)

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*The trust is most grateful to the HLF for providing funding to allow the full restoration of Thalatta.*

