



MDL MARINAS

News Release
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Eight young lives changed by MDL's Sail Training Awards 2022

Eight intrepid young people set sail from Southampton on the 11 April, embarking on a life changing five-day sailing voyage having won a place onboard Prolific, the Ocean Youth Trust South's flagship sail training vessel, through MDL's Sail Training Awards.

The winners of this year's awards, including Luke Harley (14), Sam Harley (12), Maya Milenburg (12), Beth Eason-Taylor (18), Oliver James (13) and Tallulah Tulloch (17), completed a five-night voyage which departed from MDL's Ocean Village Marina in the heart of Southampton, sailing to Cowes and then across the bay to Poole. When inclement weather kept them berthed in Poole, they spent time exploring ashore and completed various aspects of training towards their Royal Yachting Association (RYA) qualifications. Hoisting the sails in the shelter of Poole Bay the next day, they completed the circumnavigation of the Isle of Wight, arriving in Cowes to enjoy games on the beach. Back onboard, the young people spent time practising essential seamanship skills, including man overboard recovery drills.

"I'm proud of this voyage, in that it encapsulated why sail training exists: a group of very deserving young people from diverse backgrounds became a fun, supportive, and efficient team," says OYT South skipper, Holly Vint. "We sailed fair distances, enjoyed downtime at anchor whilst exploring new locations, and ultimately had fun with new friends.

"Everyone received an RYA Competent Crew award, but the bigger achievement was ultimately the feeling we all got at the end of the trip: that of being a family. There was particular pride felt amongst the crew from having completed a circumnavigation of the Isle of Wight. My favourite part was the final night when motoring in the dark from Osborne Bay to Ocean Village – those who wanted to navigate did, those who wanted to helm did, those who wanted to make elaborate hot chocolates for others did – meanwhile small groups of the crew broke off to laugh and chat and share stories. It was pretty magic."

The RYA Competent Crew qualification is a level above the Start Yachting certificate which is more commonly awarded on this type of voyage. It is a recognised qualification that can be kept in the young person's Record of Achievement, used as evidence of transferrable skills or potentially lead to the start of a more enduring relationship with the sea and sailing.

Two sea staff recommendations were also given on this voyage, which means those two young people have the potential to become a volunteer with the charity in future.



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MDL's Sail Training Awards were created to reward inspirational young people between the ages of 12 and 18 who have overcome adverse personal circumstances or shown other exceptional accomplishments and achievements.

The awards rely on third party nominations from people who are in contact with young people, including teachers, guide or scout leaders, youth group leaders, friends and employers.

MDL has run the Sail Training Awards, in conjunction with OYT South, for over 30 years now and the number of nominations has grown year on year. With so many deserving young people being nominated, MDL expanded the scope of the awards this year to provide eight spaces onboard *Prolific* and will increase this to 12 in 2023.

Demonstrating just how the awards can help change a young person's life, 2019 award winner Millie Nation now volunteers onboard *Prolific*. "I'm 17 now, I was 14 when I won the MDL award," explains Millie. "MDL funded my first voyage where I found nothing but pure enjoyment for sailing. Without MDL I wouldn't have the opportunities I currently do with OYT South.

"MDL allowed me to undergo new situations and navigate a different aspect of life. It's an amazing opportunity which allows a once in a lifetime experience to be so much more. I learnt so much about myself and I continue to do so. MDL and OYT South are truly amazing, and I can't stress enough just how much they can offer for young people."

Nominations for MDL's 2023 Sail Training Awards will open in November 2022.

Ends

Notes for editors

High res images are available online at <https://maa.agency/media-centre>

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