

## **Tall Ships Race crew standing tall in Greenock**

For the first time in the 54 year history of the Tall Ships Races, a truly Scottish-wide team of young people are representing their country.

64 youngsters aged 16 – 25 years are participating in this international event thanks to a joint initiative between Ocean Youth Trust Scotland, COSLA, Young Scot and all 32 Local Authorities.

The lucky 64 are crew aboard Ocean Youth Trust Scotland's sail training vessels *Alba Explorer* and *Alba Endeavour* which have already raced from Waterford in Ireland to Greenock and later in July will race from Lerwick to Norway then Sweden.

24 young people from Race Leg 1 came together last night in Greenock, OYT Scotland's home port, to tell the story of their adventure under sail.

"Although it was challenging, it was an amazing experience. The best moment was standing at the front of the boat whilst the waves crashed over us. I will never forget that feeling," said Amy Paterson, 17, of Dundee.

"Just over a week ago, we didn't know each other but once we were underway, it didn't take long. We soon found out that working as a team is the most important aspect of sailing one of these big yachts," said Phil Cridge, 19.

"I had so much fun. I want to come back as a Bosun," said Paul from Ayrshire.

As well as simply learning to sail a yacht for the first time, a sail training voyage provides many new opportunities. Describing her experience of life aboard, 20 year old crew-member Johanna from Greenock said, "Being on the boat developed my life skills. The close proximity to people you don't know well makes you develop friendships really quickly but it can also intensify annoyances. Learning to deal with situations properly instead of doing what I do normally ie walking away, was difficult but really good for me. I learned to be a lot more patient. That'll really come in useful for future jobs and such like"

"I think I really tested my mental capabilities of how far I can push myself when feeling tired or unwell – just getting up and on with it because you don't want to let other people down. I think we all experienced moments when we thought, "Oh, I can't do this anymore," but we all rallied round each other to lift each other's spirits.

She added, "You can go in feeling anxious and uncertain of things and come out the other side confident and wondering why you were worried at all in the first place."

And in thanking the local authorities that sponsored the crews, Johanna summed up for the whole group, "You've given us a great experience that it always going to be with us."