

Tall Ships

THE exhilaration derived from the hard graft and teamwork needed to sail tall ships was described to Kyrle Probus members in a beautifully illustrated talk by experienced tall ships sailor Terry O'Shaughnessy, recently.

Terry, a Londoner now living in Coleford, talked of the ocean-going tall ships he had sailed on and how young people can enjoy the experience of a lifetime through the Tall Ships Youth Trust.

The Youth Trust originally had two tall ships, the Prince William and the S-T-S Stavros S Niarcos. The Prince William was sold to the Pakistan Navy in 2010 for £4 million to make way for four Challenger yachts the Trust acquired.



The Stavros Niarcos continues to help young people build their confidence and knowledge through teamwork and in many cases has turned their lives around, said Terry. But he was saddened that they could not these days attract the number of youngsters they would like.

This was not the case with the Russian ship the 'Mir', a fully rigged clipper ship on which the young Russian sailors were eager to learn all the skills, including speaking English, during their six months seamanship on board.

Terry also talked of the Lord Nelson which had been adapted to cater for people with disabilities of various kinds. He mentioned that a platform had been constructed over the bowsprit (the piece sticking out over the water from the prow) to take wheelchairs.

It was a magical position for them to experience sailing in a tall ship and the look on their faces afterwards was a joy to behold, he said.

He explained the technicalities of sailing a tall ship, some of which could be more than a football pitch in length and have masts up to 200ft in height. The sails, huge in area, would be 'in stow' when in harbour; 'in gear' when getting ready to sail and 'fully set' when sailing.

The ropes and sails on the tall ships all had names, some of them unforgettable, such as the 'Futtocks,' the rope ladders used to climb up to the top sails. Terry also took his audience through the process of helming (steering) and navigation using a sextant.