

An Opportunity not to be missed!

The Tall Ships Race and associated River Festival taking place towards the end of July this year will be a huge event on Tyneside! Over 100 ships with some 3,000 crewmembers from all over the world (including from places as far away as India and Indonesia) will start arriving on the River Tyne on Saturday and Sunday, 23rd and 24th July.

Crewmembers will spend several days sampling the legendary hospitality we give visitors to the Northeast, before departing on the next leg of their race in a grand *Parade of Sail* on Thursday 28th July. Up to half a million visitors are expected to converge on the Gateshead/Newcastle area and along the banks of the Tyne for the event.

This presents us with a unique, not-to-be-missed evangelistic opportunity, just like the first Day of Pentecost. Luke tells us that, at that time in Jerusalem, there were *people from every nation under heaven*, who heard the followers of Jesus *“declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!”* [Acts 2.5,11].

Spread the Word!

To this end, a specially commissioned, full-colour evangelistic leaflet, *“Harbour Lights”*, has been prepared by *TELit*, an organisation who specialise in themed literature for such events.

The leaflet has great potential for us to share the Gospel message in a simple but attractive way with the 3,000 crewmembers and half a million visitors expected on Tyneside for this ‘event of the decade’.

- Permission has been granted to place the leaflet in each of the *crew reception areas*.
- Distribution of the leaflet will take place amongst the crowds along the *quayside* during the week of the race. Let me know if you would like to be involved in this.
- 20,000 *park-and-ride* places are being made available from five centres, north and south of

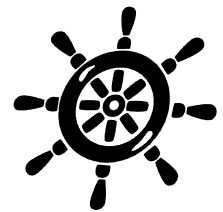


the river, for ease of access to the quayside. We are exploring the possibility of us being able to place a leaflet in each of the ‘goody bags’ the *park-and-ride travellers* will receive.

- We are also seeking permission to place leaflets in the mobile *Tourist Information Centres* that will be situated on the quayside, as well as in the two permanent Tourist Information Centres, and in *local libraries* - these suggestions have come from the Tall Ships organisers themselves!
- *Other possible ways* of using the leaflet include
 - ⇒ Distribution amongst friends and neighbours, and/or door-to-door in your neighbourhood.
 - ⇒ Distribution amongst church contacts.
 - ⇒ Using the leaflet as the basis for an all-age and/or evangelistic service on the Sunday 24th July.

Pray for its impact!

Samples of the leaflet have been sent out to 100 local churches in Gateshead and Newcastle. Please pray that a good number will be ordered. The four Newcastle/Gateshead Baptist Churches (Westgate Road, Heaton, Beacon Lough, and Durham Road) have each pledged £100 to cover the cost of placing leaflets in the crew reception areas and distributing a good number on the quayside. With the price of the leaflet set at 8p a copy, our combined £400 will be sufficient to purchase 5,000 copies.



We hope other churches will make donations, so that sufficient funds are raised to place plenty of leaflets in the Tourist Information Centres and local libraries, and also have a good number to distribute amongst the park-and-ride travellers. Please pray for this venture, claiming the promise of Isaiah 55.11.

*My word that goes out from my mouth
will not return to me empty,
but will accomplish what I desire
and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.*
[Isaiah 55.11]

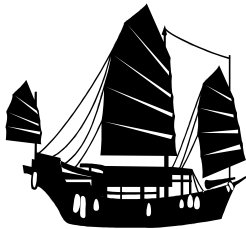
A box on the back panel of the leaflet contains my contact details for follow up purposes.

Seize the Moment!

There are several others ways in which we can make the most of the evangelistic opportunity the Tall Ships Race and Festival presents to us.

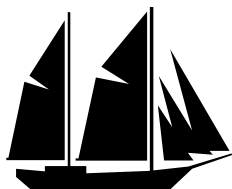
⇒ Special services: Sunday 24th July.

We are planning to hold an *All-age service* at the church on the morning of Sunday 24th July. It will have a nautical theme, based on the 'Harbour Lights' leaflet. We will bring forward our monthly *International Tea* (normally held on the last Sunday of the month) and give our *Evening Service* an evangelistic emphasis too. We hope that these services may attract some of the crewmembers already in port by then. Some of the ships will probably arrive on the Saturday,



depending on wind and weather conditions. To invite people to these events, we will prepare posters to put around the town and flyers for handing out on the quayside. It would be good to get a group together to distribute them on the Saturday afternoon and evening. Let me know if you would like to help with this.

⇒ **Open-air witness:** Stephen Lindridge, a local Methodist minister with special responsibility for mission amongst the Methodist churches on



Tyneside, is leading an inter-church open-air event on the quayside between **2.00pm and 4.00pm on Sunday 24th July.** I hope many of us

will be able to support it, and use the opportunity to distribute the *Harbour Lights* leaflets to those passing by. Very appropriately, this event will be based on the Newcastle side of the Tyne in Wesley Square! How about taking a packed lunch with you, and heading down to the River straight after the morning service.

⇒ Befrienders needed

The Tall Ships Race and Festival organisers are looking for befrienders with foreign language skills, who will be able to greet and accompany visitors to Tyneside around the various activities taking place. Let me know if you think you may

be able to help in this regard.

⇒ Lunchtime Drop-in, Tuesday 26th July

We are planning to lay on a free buffet lunch for crewmembers and visitors, between 12 noon and 2.00pm, on Tuesday 26th July. If you would like to help with the catering, please see Elma. The lunch is being advertised in the crew's information pack, but we will hand out flyers on the quayside too. Let me know if you would like to help with this. It would be good if as many of us as possible were on hand to welcome our visitors and chat to them over the lunchtime period.

Further information about the Tall Ships Race and River Festival is available on their excellent website: www.tallships2005.com.

Your insights are welcomed!

At our Quarterly Church Members' Meeting towards the end of this month, on Wednesday 29th June, there are several matters on which we would welcome your thoughts.

- (a) **Our Children and Young People's work.** What should be the arrangement for our clubs in the autumn? Should we start a 14+years group, in addition to our two existing groups for 7-11 and 11-14 year olds? How could we best staff three groups? How can we reach out to the children and young people in our area with the love of Christ?
- (b) **BMS project.** Wanda Stockdale, our BMS World Mission rep, will be outlining a number of possible projects for us to adopt for our BMS giving.
- (c) **Ideas for contact-making Sowing One events.** Our Tuesday night *Fun and Food for all the Family Evenings* have been running for three years, and we have received a generous grant from Gateshead Council to cover their running costs for another three years. What sort of evenings would you like to see included in our programme?

A Fond Farewell

We have greatly appreciated the fellowship we have enjoyed with the Teekens-Veldkamp family over the past 9 months. Sadly (for us), their time in the Northeast will draw to a close at the end of this month. So we wish them all – Jan and Alice, Stijn, Franka and Falk – God's richest blessings as they return to Holland.

David Hunt