

ATLANTIC CHALLENGE GB
Maritime Training Trust

CREW INFORMATION PACK

for

Applicants for the Great Britain Crew
taking part in the
International Contest of Seamanship
Poses, Normandy, France 2026



Patrons: Dame Naomi James ▪ Admiral Sir Jock Slater GCB LVO DL

Chairman: Jane Kerr

Trustees: Jane Kerr ▪ Mary Byatt ▪ Tony Golden ▪ Ben Heaney
Gavin Sim ▪ Jade Colton ▪ Reuben Thompson ▪ Camilla Moore

Website: www.atlanticchallengegb.org

Atlantic Challenge GB Maritime Training Trust

Charity Reg. No. 1034969. A non-profit making charitable company limited by guarantee. Incorporated in England & Wales No. 2835063.

Reg. office: Y Bwthyn, High Street, Llandysul, Ceredigion. SA44 4DN

January 2025

INTRODUCTION

Atlantic Challenge is an international organisation dedicated to the teaching and education of young people through the challenge of the sea.

Every two years, teams representing the countries of Atlantic Challenge - Belgium, Basque Country, Canada, Denmark, France, Great Britain, Ireland, Italy, Northern Ireland, Quebec and USA - meet to compete in a friendly Contest of Seamanship. In 2026 the Contest will be in Poses, Normandy, France.

Contests of Seamanship take place in replicas of an 18th century captain's gig. These vessels are 38ft long and are powered by three masts and ten oars. Each nation has their own vessel for the contest. The GB gig is called *Intégrité*. The GB team in 2026 will be drawn from England, Scotland and Wales. It will be evenly balanced between both genders. All crew members must be over 16 at the time of the contest and at least half will be under 23. Application is open to all – lack of previous experience does not prevent you from applying.

YOUR COMMITMENT

We are looking for crew members with a spirit of adventure who want to experience a new and unique challenge. You should have self-motivation, initiative, determination and spirit, for this is the key to the challenge. Previous experience of sailing/rowing is useful but not essential; Atlantic Challenge is open to all. You will of course want to learn how to handle the gig and have an interest in the traditions of seamanship that are such an important part of our heritage. It is important that you are prepared to work hard as a team, even in adversity, as well as going ashore to meet the crews of other nations.

Atlantic Challenge GB is committed to raising funds to help defray costs, such as the transport of the gig, but crewmembers will also be expected to raise a minimum amount of their own. You must also be able to find time to practice ropework and learn basic navigation. You will also have to achieve a high level of fitness in order to make the most of yourself during the challenge. It is crucial that you can commit to these events as well as find time to raise funds and keep fit.

If you can achieve all this you will excel as an Atlantic Challenger and will be able to pass on your experience to others.



CREW RECRUITMENT FOR FRANCE 2026

If you wish to apply for a place on the GB Team, you must be prepared to commit yourself to the following:

- Attendance at Training Camp in Portland, Dorset, 12-19 July 2025
- Attendance at Contest at Poses, France: July 2026* (approximately 10 days)
- Time to raise funds
- Time to get and keep fit
- Time to practice ropework and basic navigation

This will take a great deal of your time during 2025 and 2026. So if you have examinations or other commitments during that time, please consider carefully before applying. Your family or partner will also have to be amenable to your commitment to Atlantic Challenge. Don't forget – the Contest takes place every two years, so you can always apply later for the 2028 team!

You will need to be fit, able to swim, and preferably a non-smoker. Those who usually consume alcohol are expected to moderate their alcohol intake during training sessions and during the Contest.

* Date to be confirmed



CONTEST OF SEAMANSHIP EVENTS

This will give you an idea of the kind of events taking place at each Contest. Each Contest is run along similar lines, although host countries may alter the programme slightly. Exact details of the events to take place in France 2026 are not yet available but will include most of the following:

- **Contests for the Atlantic Challenge Trophy**

Rowing Race

Rowed over a straight course, c. 2 nautical miles. This is a timed event, the fastest boat wins and it is a great test of endurance and technique under pressure.

Sailing Race

This race is on a triangular course with a reaching start, a gybe mark and an upwind leg to test the ability of the crew to pilot their gigs to windward. The course is typically about 3 nautical miles in length. Two rounds of the course are usual.

Oar & Sail Race

This race is run over a triangular course of about 3 miles. The crews must row one leg of the course into the wind and then raise the masts and set sails to sail the other two legs. Two rounds of this course are usual. This race provides a great test of teamwork organisation and commitment in combining the two disciplines of rowing and sailing.

Man Overboard

Crew must recover a man overboard using any means possible. Penalties may be awarded for technical infringements. The course is run under sail and at a given signal, the Cox jumps overboard, to be replaced by another crew member. The Cox is then recovered and the course completed. The fastest gig wins.

Slalom

Crews race around a buoyed slalom course without a rudder. The gig is steered with oars only and 'faults' are given for hitting the buoys. The event is decided on faults, followed by timings. This event is technically very challenging, requiring great concentration from both coxswain and crew.

Jackstay Transfer

In this event, crews transfer an awkward object from shore to gig using heaving lines and jackstay. This replicates the original role of the gigs in the 18th century to service naval vessels with important messages. Faults are given for infringements. The event is decided on faults, followed by timings.

Navigation

Practical navigation exercise afloat in the gigs to test the crew in basic navigational skills. Boats such as the gigs were used for these tasks continuously during the 18th and 19th century by some of the world's most famous navigators. The event is decided on the accuracy of the crews in completing the allotted task.

Knots and Splices

Crew members will demonstrate their skill in knot tying, splicing, whipping and seizing ropes. These are the traditional skills which all seamen in the Age of Sail would have been familiar with. They are still constantly drawn upon for the ongoing maintenance and repair of the gig's rigging.

- **Contests for the Lance Lee Trophy**

Captain's Gig

This is a test of skill, boat handling, rowing and crew discipline. A person is picked up by each crew from a pier and put aboard a vessel moored offshore and returned to shore again. Crews are marked on their skill and technique in handling the boat, themselves and the obstacles/conditions confronted. This event recreates the day-to-day role of the gigs in providing transport for the Captains and Admirals commanding the fleet.

Esprit

Mixed international crews sail, row, and navigate under sail. This event naturally tests the abilities, teamwork and adaptability of those taking part in the Atlantic Challenge.

- **The Perpetual Challenge Trophy**

For the team *Most in the Spirit of Atlantic Challenge*. The spirit of AC is participation, international friendship and co-operation; not competition. This award is voted for by all the crews.

- **The John Kerr Award for Seamanship**

Presented to the team showing the best practice in all aspects of seamanship, both during and outside events when the gigs are in general use.



CONTEST OF SEAMANSHIP FRANCE 2026

Dates

- Attendance at a Training Camp at Portland, Dorset, 12-19 July 2025
- Attendance at Contest at Poses, France July 2026* (approximately 10 days)

Applicants should allow for a minimum of up to three week's commitment including travel time.

Training will be given in rowing, sailing, navigation, ropework and general seamanship skills and a Training Manual will be sent to all crew members.

*dates to be confirmed

FUNDRAISING

Fundraising is hard work and time consuming, but it can also be fun. There is lots of money out there but you will need to plan a strategy to get it! Letters and e-mails will need to be written and family and friends enlisted to help. And remember, the people who will give you money are those who wish to help you achieve your Challenge, so always be enthusiastic and committed.

We will help you to raise this money and a Fundraising Pack full of suggestions will be sent to all crew members.

TEAM KIT

Each team member will be provided with a GB sailing jacket, T shirts, rowing vest and cap. You will be asked to provide your own shorts, cut-offs or trousers in navy blue.

Each crew member will be required to wear crew kit whilst competing in all Contest events.



TEAM MEMBERS' CONTRIBUTION

Each GB team member is asked to contribute £2,500 which **includes**:

- Food and accommodation at Training Camps
- Return travel to France from GB port of departure
- Food and accommodation in France
- Crew kit
- Travel, Medical & Sports participation insurance whilst in France

Not included:

- Travel from home to GB Training Camps and GB port of departure for France
- Travel home from GB Training Camp and GB port on return from France
- Food and refreshments whilst on route to France and return journey

It is the responsibility of each team member to raise, and pay to ACGB, the following amounts by the dates requested:

£ 300 non-refundable on confirmation of your team place
£ 600 by 1 September, 2025
£ 800 by 1 February, 2026
£ 800 by 1 May, 2026
£2,500

The £300 non-returnable deposit is payable 28 days after an offer of a place on the crew, to confirm your commitment to take part, and to enable us to book your place at the Training Camp.

CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS: 31 March, 2025

ACGB can claim Gift Aid on all donations made by UK taxpayers. This allows ACGB to increase our income by reclaiming additional monies directly from the Government. A Team Account Book will be kept to record all money received from Team members.

If you accept an invitation to become a team member, you are also accepting the challenge to raise money for your expenses. If you subsequently withdraw, you will lose your deposit and will be liable for the following costs if they have been paid out by Atlantic Challenge GB on your behalf:

- Food & accommodation booked for Training Camp
- Food, accommodation & travel to France & return
- Insurance
- Team kit

ACGB does not receive any government support and relies on crew members raising funds to cover their own costs. The initial non-refundable donation is required before the training camp and will be used to cover its costs. Without this you will not be able to attend the Training Camp. The schedule for the donations is shown above and if at any point you are not able to make a deadline it is important you get in touch with the Trustees as soon as possible and we will endeavour to find a solution.

If you are unable to make the donations and do not get in touch with the Trustees, you may lose your place on the team. If this happens, we will refund any amount donated to date, minus any costs that have already been paid relating to your involvement in the training and Contest.

You may fundraise more than £2,500 and use this to pay for any additional expenses you incur, such as your travelling expenses from home.

Atlantic Challenge GB is run by eight Trustees who all work voluntarily and no “administration” costs are charged to team members.

All GB team members will be asked to consent to the following rules for the safety and well-being of all:

CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE

The Atlantic Challenge exists to promote learning and understanding about the traditions of the sea, through the experience of working in teams and crews. It is also intended to promote personal development, though learning about seamanship, navigation and ship husbandry, as well as the necessary disciplines and mutual dependencies of team work.

An important part of Atlantic Challenge involves the International Contest at which the exchange of information and skills is encouraged through friendly competition. It is not the primary objective of the Atlantic Challenge that its gig crews should win an event at any cost; but first that they participate enthusiastically and in a spirit of co-operation, sportsmanship, good seamanship and style.

Atlantic Challenge GB reserves the right to discipline any team member who either breaks this code or conducts themselves in a manner which will bring the Atlantic Challenge and its aims into disrepute, or is a danger to themselves and/or others. The same applies if a crewmember refuses to carry out an instruction reasonably and legitimately issued by the coxswain of a gig, an Atlantic Challenge instructor, an official connection with an Atlantic Challenge event or any Harbour Authority in the UK or abroad. Any team member found to be in breach of this code and the points set out below, may be dismissed from the team, even if this necessitates that person returning home from any event, either in the UK or overseas, at their own expense.

In addition to the simple principle above, all team members are bound by the following basic rules:

1. That members of all crews should be treated with politeness and consideration at all times, afloat or ashore.
2. That team members conduct themselves with decency, bearing in mind that, at Atlantic Challenge events, they are in the eye of the public, both as representatives of Atlantic Challenge and its aims, and also of their country.
3. That all team members should look after and help each other ashore, as well as at sea.
4. That no drugs of any kind be consumed, unless they have been prescribed by a medical practitioner.
5. That no alcohol be consumed in gigs or crew accommodation. No alcohol shall be consumed prior to using a gig, either in training or at a Contest.
6. That there is no smoking in gigs or crew accommodation.

You will need to be fit, able to swim, and preferably a non-smoker. Those who usually consume alcohol are expected to moderate their alcohol intake during training sessions and the Contest. Alcohol is not compatible with physical fitness.