



Andrew Leng

Tallship Sailing Report

13th – 18th October 2014

Southampton – Southampton

Introduction

Hi there. My name is Andrew Leng, I am 17 years of age and I volunteer for the Hand in Hand and Oasis Youth projects. I have volunteered for these projects since March/April 2014 and have enjoyed every experience with them. When I was offered the chance to take part in the voyage I immediately accepted, knowing that I would be able to gain experiences such as tending to help a sailing ship, visit a country that I had yet not seen, meet new people and help people. After accepting, I was informed that I would be accompanying Lorna McGill and Maxine Bennie on this voyage; this lifted my spirits towards the voyage even more so as I became friends with Maxine a couple years back through school and Lorna, who I met at work experience when I was fifteen.

Before we could even think about packing we had to raise money in order for us to actually attend the voyage. Lorna set up a bag packing event at the local Asda supermarket in order for us to raise our £350 goal. With Lorna, Maxine and I's work, supported by a few friends and colleagues we managed to easily achieve our target goal.

Day 1

All of a sudden, it was the night before departure and we were recommended to get an early night's sleep as we were to leave Girvan at 4.30am on the Monday morning. However, I could not sleep due to my excitement over what the next five days would have in store for me. We left Girvan in good time although the tiredness did not hit until the flight from Glasgow to Gatwick to which I amended through a quick, one hour power snooze. We only had to wait an hour or so for our train and then off we were to Southampton. It was raining when we arrived so we immediately ran for a taxi to take us to the port in which Tenacious would be docked.

My first impression of the ship was "I thought she'd be bigger." But it was not until I stepped aboard and shown around inside by our watch leader Simon, that I realised how large she really was; all 585 tons of her! From bow to stern, HMS Tenacious is a magnificently beautiful work of craftsmanship. After a quick tour of the ship we were assigned to our bunks and given our "oily's" (waterproof over-all). Across the next couple hours we welcomed aboard the other sailors who would be accompanying us on the voyage. They all had very friendly and enthusiastic vibes and I couldn't wait to become aquatinted with them.

Once everyone was on board, we all gathered in the lower mess to be introduced to the permanent crew members and were then given a health and safety briefing. A select few of us were assigned rolls within the practice safety drill, and in the event of an emergency. My role was to hand out life jackets to everyone in our team. I enjoyed the responsibility as it kept me on my toes at all times. After completing the safety drill, our team were called for an early dinner as we were on the 6-8pm watch. This particular job involved switching from starboard to port, looking out for other boats,



ships and buoys and reporting it back to helmsman, to which he/she would decide if the ships position needed to be adjusted. The two hour watch seemed to fly by and before we knew it, we were congratulated on our job and released of duty. Our watch went to the lower mess to relax and chat to the other crew members. A little after 10pm we were all exhausted and decided to call it a day, eagerly awaiting tomorrow's half 7 wake up call.

Day 2

Waking up on the ship was an experience in itself. I, a rather tall individual, am used to big spacious double beds, NOT little single beds which have very little head room and movement space. Never the less, I rose out of bed, got changed and headed to the lower mess where we all had breakfast. Last night we had anchored the boat beside the Isle of White and we were not setting sail until later in the day. This meant that instead of having to follow our 8-12pm shift, we would have the chance to climb up the mast. (I've always wanted to climb a mast, which came as a surprise because I'm not too fond of heights.) A sense of adventure came over me as I clumsily attempted to put on my body harness. We gathered in separate groups (as there was more than one mast) and were given a demonstration on how to safely climb the mast. I was extremely excited to start climbing but since I wasn't first in line, I eagerly awaited my turn. Climbing the mast was terrific fun, being able to be that high up and seeing other ships sail into the horizon was a beautiful sight. After climbing back down, we all stopped for smoko (a coffee and cakes break). I liked smoko as it gave us a chance to chat with the other people on the ship.



Shortly after smoko we all congregated at the far starboard side to learn about the sails. There was so much information to take in but the crew made it a fun learning experience. At half past seven we were ready to experience our first night watch as a group which would start at 8pm and continue until 12am. The view we were able to see was breath taking. The lights on the surrounding ships, added with the breathtakingly beautiful starlight sky were a sight I shall always remember. Towards the end of the shift we were informed by the Captain that as the wind has settled we would have to bring down the sails. This wasn't as bad for me as I knew a quick workout would be sure to put me right to sleep. As both sides of the ship had to be manned to take down the sails, our watch and the following watch joined together to take the sails down. Following this, we said our good nights and off to bed we went, ready for the events the next day would bring.

Day 3

Rise and shine at 7.30am, ready to dock and venture out into Cherbourg. Our watch was supposed to be on duty from 12:30 till 4pm but as we were to arrive in France before this, we were thankfully relieved of our duties. Before we could venture out into Cherbourg, we were to first finish our breakfast and then experience what the ship's crew call 'happy hour'. This is when all members of

the crew come together to clean the ship. I was to clean the showers/toilet rooms towards the bow of the ship which I can assure you were not a light task. After happy hour we stopped for smoko and received word that the pilot who would be guiding our ship into port would arrive at 11:15. It was at this time I thought it would be suitable to go for a shower and get myself dressed for venturing into Cherbourg. Lorna, Maxine, Jack, Sam and I grouped together, and at 1pm we walked onto shore. The weather in Cherbourg was absolutely beautiful which is a huge difference to Scotland's 'miserable at best' weather climate. After exploring some shops and buying gifts for our families, we found out that the exchange rate was fascinating, for instance; their chocolate was of much higher quality yet surprisingly cheap compared to that of what we have back home. After heading back to the ship, our watch arranged to have dinner together at a local diner. The diner was so much fun as we were all sat sharing jokes and fun experiences that we had throughout the journey so far. After the meal, we collectively headed back to the ship to rest our tired feet. Although I could only rest for so long as I had volunteered myself for the 2am till 4am shore watch with another member of our watch, Christine. This watch surprisingly flew by for me considering I was very tired and that it began to rain an hour into the watch. After the watch I marched straight into the cabins and silently crawled up into the tight compartment I called my bed and fell fast asleep.



Day 4

Rudely awakened 2 and a half hours into my slumber, I steadily rose and walked through to the lower mess, still in my pyjamas to have breakfast. I remember this morning well as I had what seemed to resemble a birds nest on my head (I have rather long hair for a guy). At breakfast we were informed that we would be departing Cherbourg at 1pm and should be arriving on this Isle of Wight within approximately 24 hours. After breakfast I went back to my bed for a half hour, got dressed then relaxed around the ship, ready for the Captain's orders. Time came and we were ordered to set the sails. All hands on deck and I feel like we were a performing act as locals started to gather along the port to watch us. Sails were set and off we left for England. I had some free time before starting my kitchen duties from half 5 till half 8, so I and a few other sailors decided to gear up and climb the middle mast of the ship. Although the wind was pretty strong, the sun was shining strong and we stood on the second platform and re-enacted the 'king of the world' scene from the film Titanic. The kitchen duties were no problem for me as I previously had a job as a kitchen porter. Kitchen duties finished, I had the rest of the night to relax, which proved tricky as we were sailing through a small storm which made the ship keel from side to side. I remember sitting in the lower mess, talking with some of the crew, when someone noticed that what we could see out of the port hole looked rather odd. Following closer inspection, we realised that it was due to water swirling around the outside of the port hole, caused by the keeling of the ship to let the water level rise above the window. This looked rather amusing as it resembled the look of a washing machine. Shortly after this I headed to my bed, ready for my last full day on the Tenacious.

Day 5

Early start at half 6, I was on the breakfast kitchen shift which was a busy job to be doing just as the sun begins to rise. The meals on the ship were far from expected, I didn't imagine the breakfasts to be a full English fry up, to which I took great pleasure in devouring every morning. After breakfast, the last happy hour on the ship was called. Everyone was really talkative during happy hour as we were all discussing our thoughts on the storm we sailed through the previous night. Due to discussions, happy hour flew by and smoko was called soon after. It turns out that it was an old fella's Birthday, Nick. So we had coffee, birthday cake and all sung happy birthday as we sailed through the middle of the English Channel. During the excitement of the birthday on board, Lorna, Maxine and I realised that we had very little time left on the ship. We were due to depart the ship the next morning at precisely 7am so we decided to make the most of the time we had left on the ship. Playing cards in the lower deck with all of our new found friends, everyone gathered round the tables made the atmosphere lively and friendly. Lunch passed quickly which was followed by more free time. Since we had dropped anchor outside the Isle of Wight, we were relieved of our 6-8pm watch so the rest of the day was ours. I spent my time walking around the ship, inspecting its beauty one last time before my final departure. Eventually, dinner was called where we were told that we would be having a group quiz at 8pm. Time came and we were soon gathered around the tables in our teams, discussing answers to the questions we were given. A lot of the questions were based on subjects before I was born so I was at a disadvantage. Never the less, eventually the quiz master ran out of questions and our scores were totalled up. Our team came 2nd to which we shared great delight. After the quiz I thought it would be best to pack my bag and get a decent sleep, so I bid goodnight to the crew and headed back to the cabins.



Day 6

Sleeping in is possibly the worst way to start the departure day, especially as I woke at quarter to 7 and we were to depart at precisely 7. I very quickly got dressed, packed what I wore to bed, gathered my final items and made a quick dash to the deck to where I was greeted by my fellow crew members. I will admit, I was tearing up a little as I had become friends with some of the nicest people I have ever met. I gave many hugs, said many dear hearted goodbyes and slowly climbed over the side of the ship, down the ladders and into the rib (small boat). Once safely on the rib, we departed, waving goodbye to all the people we grew close with. After a very quick 5 minute boat ride, we were standing on the Isle of Wight. From there we started our travel back home, starting with a taxi from the south docks to the north ferry terminal, boarded the Red Jet to Southampton, took a bus to Southampton Airport, a quick flight to Glasgow International, and then a steady drive back to Girvan. Finally, we were home.

Conclusion

This voyage was utterly spectacular!

No job on the ship was too arduous as I loved the entire experience, from hoisting and lowering the sails in ferocious rain, to the early hour dock watches of which I may or may not have slightly dosed off to sleep at a few points. Throughout the voyage I became particularly close with a boy named Jack Thomson. He is such a courageous guy and I took great pride in assisting him and his carer on the voyage. If I were to be offered the chance to do it again, I would accept it within a heartbeat. Thank you very much to the Girvan Youth Trust, The Royal Thames Yacht Club Charity Trust and The Jubilee Sailing committee for giving me this 'once in a lifetime' opportunity, and I hope that many people in the future get the chance to venture as we have done. Thank you to everyone involved in this magnificent experience!

