



# My Experience on SV Tenacious

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By Maxine Bennie

My name is Maxine Bennie. I am 17 years old and I volunteer with Girvan Youth Trust/ Z1 Youth Bar. I regularly attend Z1 as a young person and I am currently a young volunteer with the youth trust as a buddy at Hand in hand. Additionally, I done my work experience at Z1 when I was in third year at Girvan Academy and I also done my community involvement placement on a Friday afternoon in Z1, working with the local children with additional support needs. I thoroughly enjoyed my time working in z1 and this made me want to go onto be a young volunteer at Z1. During my time at Z1 there hasn't been many activities, outings and opportunities I have missed out on, so when the opportunity to go on the voyage from Southampton to Southampton- I jumped at the chance. I had attended a day sail with the youth trust the year before on the same tall ship and loved every minute of it, to be given this opportunity was amazing. I started to count down the days leading up to the big day when I would leave on my sailing adventure. I was so excited, I have never been abroad before- never mind on a boat and the excitement was overwhelming me. Finally the day came, October 13<sup>th</sup>, I had waited what felt like forever so when my alarm clock rang that morning at 3:30am I jumped out my bed in the utmost excitement and dashed downstairs to wait on Bill coming to pick me up and take me to the airport to start what would be my sailing trip.

## Day 1

We arrived at the docks about 1pm that afternoon and were greeted by our watchleader for the Forward Starboard Watch- Simon Harsh. He was a nice man, very funny. He gave us a tour of the ship and showed us to our berths, where we were to be sleeping for the 5

nights we were onboard. I was berth 24. The beds were comfy and clean so I knew I would sleep ok. After unpacking our things we were to make our way through to the Lower Mess to collect our oilys and wellies that we could wear throughout the voyage. We were also given watch cards from Simon, giving details about when we were to be on watch, emergency stations and messman days. Shortly after, all voyage crew met in the lower mess where we were introduced to all the permanent crew members and were given the Health and Safety talk. It was then announced that we would have a practise safety drill. My emergency station was Evac 2, this meant I was to ensure everyone was out the Lower Mess and heave the wheelchair users up the stairs. I was so relieved Sam and Simon were there to help heave, I have no muscle to have managed it alone! Being given



this duty was of benefit to me because it meant I had an opportunity to get to know the people on my watch more as I was assisting them on getting up to the deck safely. After our drill, we were on watch for the first time at 6pm Monday until 8pm. This meant we got an early supper, I was quite happy about that! Once on the bridge we

were given a quick talk of what was expected of us and my first duty was to be on Starboard watch with Lorna (Standing on the Starboard side of the ship and looking for any ship's and buoy's in our sight). After a little while I got the chance to helm the ship for the first time. I was really nervous at first but Simon talked me through it and was really helpful- encouraging me and telling me I was doing a good job- this made me feel better about carrying out the task and I started to

relax a bit after a bit. The two hours flew in and we were released of our watch duty. We made our way down to the lower mess to enjoy a chat, hot chocolate and a comfy seat out of the cold. After a very busy first day, we were knackered, at 10pm I decided it would be a good idea to go to bed as I had a 7:30am wake up call for breakfast the next morning.

## Day 2

Tuesday morning I woke with a jump-forgetting I was on the ship- to the sound of the wake up call at 7:30am. After a quick change I made my way to the lower mess where we all had breakfast. As we had anchored last night at The Isle Of Wight and were not setting sail until the afternoon we didn't have to follow our 8am to 12:30pm

watch so instead we were told that we would have the chance to climb the mast. I was really excited by this because I had done this before when I was on the day sail so I was ready and raring to go! I was the second person to go up the mast and being out on the yard was an amazing feeling, the sights I



This is a photo of me climbing the mast.

could see were unexplainable. It was

truly breathtaking to be up so high

and look across the water to where we had set sail. When we

returned to the deck and with the excitement over, we stopped for

smoko (coffee and cakes on deck). After smoko, we all joined to learn

about the sails before we got chance to set them. Even though there

was a lot of information to take in with all the different phrases used

and all the names for the sails, I found myself really involved and

loving every minute of taking part and working together with a team

of people I had only just met. Finally at half 7 we were getting ready for our first night watch from 8pm- midnight. It was about half past 11 and we were looking forward to getting to bed when the Captain informed us that because we were sailing through the night and the wind had dropped that we would have to take the sails down. As you can imagine this is not what you want to hear when you're just about to go to bed, but nevertheless our watch and the next took together as a team and brought down the sails that we had put up in the afternoon. I was knackered and so relived afterwards that I could go to my bed and have some rest before having to wake up again at half past 6 the next morning for the next day of my adventure... Mess duty!

### Day 3

My messman day was today, 6:30am-2pm. This was the very day that it was decided we would have 'Happy hour' this involved cleaning (which I hate doing) I spent this hour in the kitchen cleaning the condiments trays, it was horrible! Thankfully I was relieved of our watch duty that day because I was on mess. It was announced the

pilot from Cherbourg, France, would be joining the ship at 11.15 to sail us in. We all got cleaned up and left the shore at 1pm. Five of us from our watch stuck together, myself, Lorna, Andrew, Jack and Sam and we had such a fun time exploring Cherbourg. We all got presents to take back to our families and friends. We met back at the ship at half 6 ship time to meet up with our watch and go



out for a meal. The meal was ok but the atmosphere was even better, we were laughing like we had known each other for years. I thoroughly enjoyed every minute of it. Seeing the city at night was

heartstopping, it was so beautiful! I feel privileged to be able to be part of the voyage, everyone was so friendly and kind.



This is a photo that was taken in Cherbourg after our dinner.

## Day 4

On Thursday we were preparing to leave the docks in Cherbourg. I was part of the linesman crew, I was to stay ashore and untie the ropes and lead them back onto the ship then climb down the ladder onto the rib and catch up with the ship and climb back onboard. It was an amazing experience and I'm so glad I did it, I was really nervous at first because I didn't know what I was supposed to do but we all worked as a team and helped each other so I overcame my nerves soon afterwards. Later that day it was time to take the sails down, taking in the scenery leaving Cherbourg, I ran to get my harness on and was quick to climb up and help. It was quite difficult as I am so small I could hardly get my



arms around the heavy sails but with the encouragement and support from the rest of the crew I managed. Standing in our allocated positions we worked together perfect as team and got the task in hand completed much quicker than normal. I couldn't quite believe how 2 days ago I knew nothing of how to sail a ship and now I knew all the correct terminology for the sails and all of the different techniques involved with sailing. The sails were up and we were thanked for our help and were told that we now had free time. Myself and Lorna decided that we would chill out in the lower mess before going on watch at 4pm. It felt like we had just sat down when we were called to go on watch. Our watch conducted as normal and we took on our usual duties either on watch or helming. Standing on Starboard watch I could feel that the wind had picked up a considerable amount and I could feel myself starting to shake with the coldness. 6pm arrived and I was glad to be relieved of watch and to be heading down for dinner in the warmth. The captain came and announced to us all that we were expected to hit a small storm tonight but that it was nothing to worry about. The wind had picked up and the waves were making a splash against the ship when in contact, the ship was slightly keeling to the left and I was a little off balance as we had experienced nothing but soft water.



This is some of the crew, including me, taking up the sail.

## Day 5

9:30am Happy Hour is how my morning started. This was spent cleaning the stairs in the lower mess and outside the berths leaving up to the deck. It wasn't that bad though, my watch and I had a good laugh whilst cleaning so the time passed really quickly. I can honestly say I have never really enjoyed cleaning before but this time it was different... "happy" I suppose. After the hour spent cleaning, smoko was called and we made our way outside as this smoko was special. It was Nick's birthday surprise, his wife Anne had arranged for a cake to be made for him. So we all sang Happy Birthday to him and got to enjoy some cake afterwards. Taking in the surroundings, Lorna, Andrew and I were upset to think we were reaching the end of our experience as we were disembarking first thing the next morning. We made our way down to the Lower Mess to meet with the friends we had made and play a game of cards. I was saddened to know that it was soon to be over; I had really enjoyed my time on the ship and didn't want it to end. Our group was next on watch at 6pm til 8pm but because we had arrived back at The Isle of Wight in the afternoon and had anchored for the day we were again relieved of our watch duties. Dinner was called and then it was announced that we would be having a group quiz later on. The day passed very quickly as we spent the majority of it having a laugh with the friends that we had made. At 8pm we all huddled round the tables in the lower mess in our watches waiting for the quiz to start. In the end we finished up 3<sup>rd</sup>, I didn't really know any of the answers to the questions but I managed to get 1 right out of the 50. Afterwards everyone decided it was probably best to pack our bags as we would be leaving the next day, I took this opportunity to say goodbye to

everyone as we would be away before they were up the next morning.



I knew I would miss everyone when we left, especially the people on my watch as the time we spent were full of laughter.

## Day 6

I woke up with mixed emotions that morning, happy because I was going home with all my achievements but sad because I had met a great bunch of people and was sad to be leaving. I went for a shower and got the last of my things together before heading on deck to make our way to the Isle of Wight via the rib. We were on every



mode of transport available, from getting a Taxi to the three side of Isle of Wight to then getting the Red jet across to Southampton where we got a direct flight to Glasgow and drove home. Finally I was home and I had completed my journey. I had lots of amazing stories to tell my friends and family and so many great memories to

keep with me forever. I met some amazing people and conquered so many of my fears, thanks to the support of the JST crew and the voyage crew also. I truly thank GYT, JST and the Royal Thames Yacht Club for giving me this opportunity and I would love to attend another sail.

The memories will stay with me forever!