

# UKSA Trip

Name: Albi Cairn

Age: 15

Date of joining The AHOY: 8/11/14

Couse attended @ UKSA: Private Dinghy/Keelboat

Date of UKSA Trip: 20-24/8/15

## Day One

### *What I did:*

We set off at 9, equipped with our 'trusted companion' Bob(basically a fender in a buoyancy aid and a helmet, it was used mainly for man-overboard drills). We decided against using a spinnaker on our first day as I had never sailed with one, nor had I ever sailed on a Keelboat at all. Even without a spinnaker, the wind was strong enough to get quite a bit of speed. Both me and Ivan helmed the boat, which worked very similarly to on a dinghy. However, because the jib was so much bigger, on either side of the boat, there was a winch to hold the jib in place, also, there was less need to loosen the jib to go further downwind, and likewise less need to tighten the jib to go upwind. We did a few man-overboard drills, sailed about a mile east then came back to have lunch on shore, then set out again. The weather in the afternoon was a bit less sunny, and slightly colder. We didn't go particularly far, mainly just more man-overboard drills.

### *Who I worked with:*

Ivan and Lewis

### *What I learnt:*

The traveller in a Keelboat allows the mainsail to be pulled in tighter, which allows the boat to travel further upwind.

## Day Two

### *What I did:*

Another early start, taking the BDH, battery and fuel onto the Keelboat. As well as, unlike the day before, a spinnaker. I drove the boat out of the pontoon while Lewis and Ivan sorted out all of the ropes and clips to sail with the spinnaker. The weather today was even warmer, however there was slightly less wind today, nevertheless, once we finally got the spinnaker up (It took multiple tries), the boat travelled much faster. Around lunchtime, we anchored up and ate lunch. The weather was still bright and sunny, so after lunch we rested for about ten minutes before setting off and doing a few more man-overboard drills and jibing practice.

### *Who I worked with:*

Ivan and Lewis

### *What I learnt:*

Sailing with a spinnaker means you have simultaneously more control over the boat(when the wind is acting properly), and far less control over the boat(when the wind isn't), and how to lay anchor.

## Day Three

***What I did:***

We met Lewis in the morning, took out the J80 (the type of keelboat we had been sailing), and as quickly as possible, got the spinnaker up. The weather today was a bit less warm and sunny, the weather getting progressively more wet throughout the day; by around half past 10, all three of us were bundled up in inches thick coats with our hoods up and tightened as much as possible. Today we met Max briefly on another keelboat. He is going to be our instructor for the next two days instead of Lewis. We were about to go in with the engine when it completely cut out. So, Lewis called for some help and moored up to a buoy. We had to be driven in by a rib, which gave us a few confused and curious stares as we were towed through the docks. The weather in the afternoon was much better: although it was still raining, it wasn't quite as bad. We took out a different keelboat after the engine in the other had stopped working.

***Who I worked with:***

Ivan and Lewis

***What I learnt:***

More experience with man-overboards and spinnaker sailing.

**Day Four**

***What I did:***

In the morning, we met Max again, we rigged up the same keelboat as yesterday afternoon since the engine in the first hadn't been fixed yet. The weather hadn't really gotten any better, it was still pouring with rain. We did some fairly similar drills with Max as we did with Lewis; man-overboards, spinnaker practice, etc. In the afternoon, he took us deeper into the docks to do some seamanship skills on the engine when the rain had eased off a bit.

***Who I worked with:***

Ivan and Max

***What I learnt:***

More practice and how to 'park' a keelboat next to a mooring.

**Day Five**

***What I did:***

The weather was still very wet and cold. The rain had gotten a bit worse and the wind was far stronger. We got the boat's necessary equipment on-board, when the rain suddenly got much, much worse. So instead, we went to the IT room where we planned out a couple of journeys around the water north of Cowes. But the rain had only gotten worse. We realised the journey we had planned was a bit long so instead sailed a bit closer to land where the wind and tide were a bit weaker. After we had lunch, the weather had continued getting more and more rainy and windy, until finally the wind was so strong it would've been quite unpleasant to sail, so, instead, Max took us into one of the classrooms and answered any of the questions we still had, then went out to get our Keelboat Level 1 certificates stamped and signed.

***Who I worked with:***

Ivan and Max

***What I learnt:***

How to plan a trip over water. What type of weather is definitely not good for sailing.

**Summary of the Trip**

***Best part:***

Everything was so good that it is very hard to put a finger on one best part, but, I did really enjoy sailing with a spinnaker as there were times when we were practically horizontal because the wind was so strong, and I had never actually sailed with one before this week.

***What I learnt:***

How to rig and helm a keelboat.

How to setup and use a spinnaker.

Seamanship skills with (and without) an engine.

Route planning over tidal areas.

Much more that was too subtle for me to notice.

***How I'll use my new skills:***

Helmimg a keelboat was very similar to with a dinghy, and most of the skills I learnt will be transferable to the stratoses and ventures at the Ahoy, these 5 days have also greatly improved my confidence in sailing generally.

***My special message to the Royal Thames Yacht Club for funding my trip:***

As I've said to all the people who have asked, these 5 days have been some of the best of my life, and I can't really convey how grateful to you I am for granting me this opportunity, and I hope others like me will have such an amazing week.

Thank you.