

Tall Ships Race 2012- Onboard the Stavros S. Niarchos

Spending almost 2 weeks on a ship is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity which I will never forget. From the minute you step onboard you are constantly kept busy, and are working with people you've never seen before- it's a great chance to meet new people and improve teamwork skills!

I was in White Watch (of Red, White and Blue) which had 16 people- 9 boys, 7 girls- in it, as well as our Watch Leader Sarah, a volunteer who's an accountant in everyday life. We had several Irish lads since we were going to Dublin which was amusing and great fun- when we stopped off in port at Waterford they all bought penguin onesies (all-in-one costumes) and wore them around the town attracting a few looks! Throughout the course of the trip we had an inter-Watch competition involving activities like tug of war, rowing boat racing, photo treasure hunt (points for being the most creative) and writing limericks. I'm happy to say White Watch won overall- obviously...



Setting off from La Coruna we saw all of the other Tall Ships, which was such a majestic sight set against the sunset and blue skies behind- and heading into the approaching storm. In the Bay of Biscay we caught the back end of the storm- which was still enough to make 9 metre waves enough to make anyone's stomach feel a little uneasy! We had our first watch from 12-4am, when it was pitch black, the ship was pitching and waves washed across the deck (luckily we had harnesses). It probably should have been terrifying but was just exhilarating, I don't think I've ever felt more alive. We'd just got back to sleep when a huge wave hit the ship (tilting it over 50 degrees, more

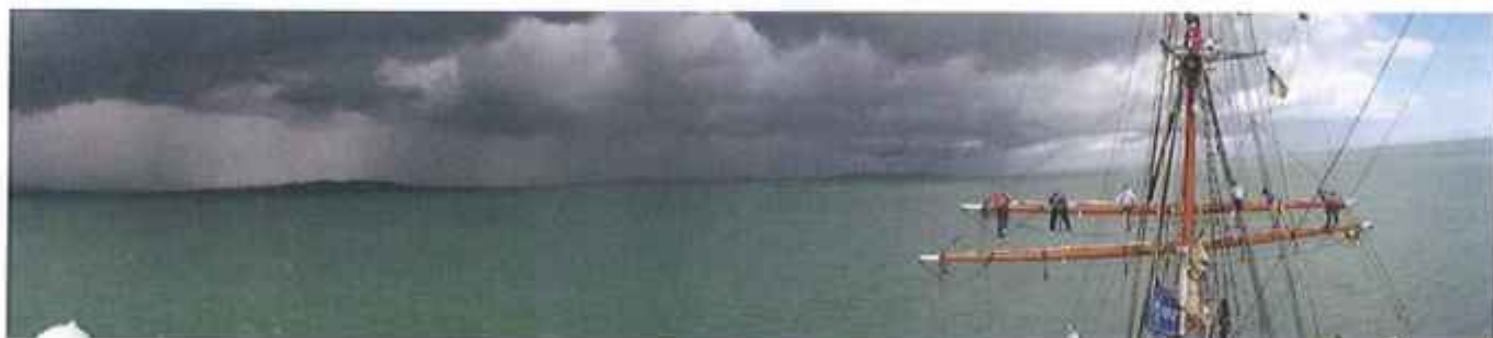
than ever before) and water washed down the air vents and straight over my bunk- our cabin was absolutely drenched, as well as our sleeping things, shoes, clothes etc. An extremely wet and sudden start to the day!

Past the Bay of Biscay the worst was over and we went into port at Waterford, our Captain's home town, to dry off and catch up on a bit of sleep. We then went along the coast for a couple of days enjoying the calmer sailing until we reached our final destination-Dublin. This was my favourite part of the voyage. One 4-8am watch we had, we watched the sun rise slowly over the horizon, and a school of dolphins came right up close to the ship- before heading down to a well-earned breakfast.



Coming into Dublin we 'manned the yards'- all went aloft- and sang and chanted our way into the centre where there were already several other tall ships right next to office blocks. We got quite an audience before it started raining! The next day was our last so we explored a bit of Dublin- a few of the crew were locals so showed us the sights. A few of us climbed up to the Royal yard (the very tallest) which we hadn't done before- an achievement we were all proud of as it's quite a scary experience (you're not even attached by harness when on the ladders) but exciting.

I would like to thank all of the Trustees of the James Myatt Trust for your extremely kind donation towards paying for this amazing trip- which I wouldn't have managed to pay for without your support. It was an actual life-changing experience which broadened my horizons- literally! I will remain grateful forever that I've been lucky enough to have been on a Tall Ship- the best time of my life.



THANK YOU!!!

