

Report on Delivery Voyage on Thermopylae Clipper  
Den Helder (Holland) to Halmstad (Sweden)

by Jacob Reid

I caught a flight from Luton Airport having met the rest of the crew who were all adults. I was the only trainee probably because this was a delivery leg and not a race leg. We arrived in Amsterdam where we took a minibus that had been hired to join the ship in Den Helder. There were quite a few other ships there and we found our ship, Thermopylae Clipper, on a pontoon.

We had a quick lunch and then set off under sail out of the harbour and within an hour I was feeling sick. I was sick seven times in all then slept for sixteen hours, after which I felt much better. I didn't wake up until about 2pm the next day and by then we were on our way to Borkum which is in Germany. We moored there overnight then set off again early the next morning heading for the Kiel Canal. We had to motor along the Canal which was huge and full of big container ships which were quite intimidating due to their size.

We moored up in Rendsburg which is on the Canal for a couple of days where we explored, went to a restaurant, went to a church (I like churches) and did some shopping and also had a nice rest. After that we left Rendsburg early in the morning and reached the far end of the Kiel Canal a couple of hours later. We emerged into the Baltic Sea at last.

Here we set off for Sondeborg which is in Denmark and arrived there in the evening as the sun was setting which was spectacular. The next day we headed for Middlefart where I had some danish blue cheese. The next morning we set off at 4am (watched the sun rising) heading for Torekov in Sweden arriving about 1.30 am. We all crashed into our bunks at about 2am (exhausted). We spent the next day there exploring where we bought some swedish cheese and had dinner in another restaurant where we were given free drinks because we were english. That was nice.

The following day we set off about midday for Halmstad going round an island nature reserve where we saw lots of guillemots. A couple of miles off Halmstad we heard a mysterious noise which we think was whale song. You could hear it echoing through the water. Sadly we didn't see the whales as they were probably some distance off as sound in water travels at 1500m/second.

We moored up in Halmstad with lots of other ships for the Tall Ships Races, most of them much bigger than our little sixty footer. They were from countries like Italy, Turkey, Wales and France. I chatted to the French people as I am bilingual and it was good to practice my french. I did some exploring by myself in Halmstad and went bell ringing (my obsession due to my Asperger's) at St Nikolai's church.

The next day it was time to go home via a train journey to Copenhagen (I saw lots of Sweden), where the shops refused to take my euro change (they would take notes) so I missed out on a burger for lunch. That was rather annoying. The flight home was tiring, or maybe I was just tired from the trip, and I sat next to the skipper and his wife. The flight came in to Stansted airport where my parents met me and I said goodbye to the rest of the crew.

I think the whole trip was really worthwhile. I like making friends with older people and I actually think I preferred to be on a ship with just adults as young people my age can be quite annoying. It does me a great deal of good (so my parents say) to work in a team which is what you have to do on a ship. We sailed most of the way, only using the engine a few times such as along the Kiel Canal. It was really great to have been given such an opportunity and I really appreciate the help the James Myatt Trust has given me.

Jacob Reid (aged 16)