

Dear James Myatt Sailing Trust.

I would like to say a massive thank you for granting me a bursary with adventures offshore on Ocean Scout for the Tall Ships Race 2017. It was the one of the best adventures I have ever been on and it was truly unforgettable. The trip has also inspired me to travel to different places as it was amazing to see different cultures and ways of life.

We met the crew and Adrian our skipper and Chris one of the mates at Gatwick airport at about 0630 hours to get the plane to Helsinki. With most of us being from the Suffolk area we all arrived at quite similar times and we were quickly checked in and through security without a problem. The plane journey was very relaxing and gave us a chance to catch up on some much-needed sleep. And before we knew it we were in Finland. A short train journey followed by a longer train journey took us to Turku where the fun began of trying to find our boat amongst the 100s of others and after a short bus trip to the water front we were very thankful to find Ocean Scout along with the other ships mate Shaun and put our bags down after a long day of traveling. From the moment we got to Turku we were blown away by the amount of boats there were everything from huge square riggers to much smaller boats like ours and what also got me was all the different countries that were participating in this event. I had no idea it would be this diverse, there were boats not even from Europe like the Brazilian one which made it even more incredible. The first day while on the boat us as crew instantly became friends and that evening we all went around the stalls and had a look around the town, then around midnight Turku welcomed us with a firework display and this was the perfect end to a very tiring day.

The next day we woke up reasonably early to get the boat ready to sail to a little port nearer the start line. All the boats left one after each other and it was an incredible sight to be able to see all these boats of all different sizes leaving one port at the same time. I remember all the people on either side of the harbour waving us off for our voyage. And we navigated our way to the second



little harbour to spend the night at. The entrance to this little port was particularly difficult to enter and hidden rocks beneath the surface threatened to ground the boat. So great care had to be taken and after about an hour at the dizzying heights of 2.5 knots we finally made it. And it was we worth the wait. This harbour was beautiful, it had the flattest water I've ever seen and once we had rafted up to another race boat called Emely. And after some dinner and a shower we messed about on the beach for a few hours which would be the last time we laid our feet on land for a few days so we made the most of it.

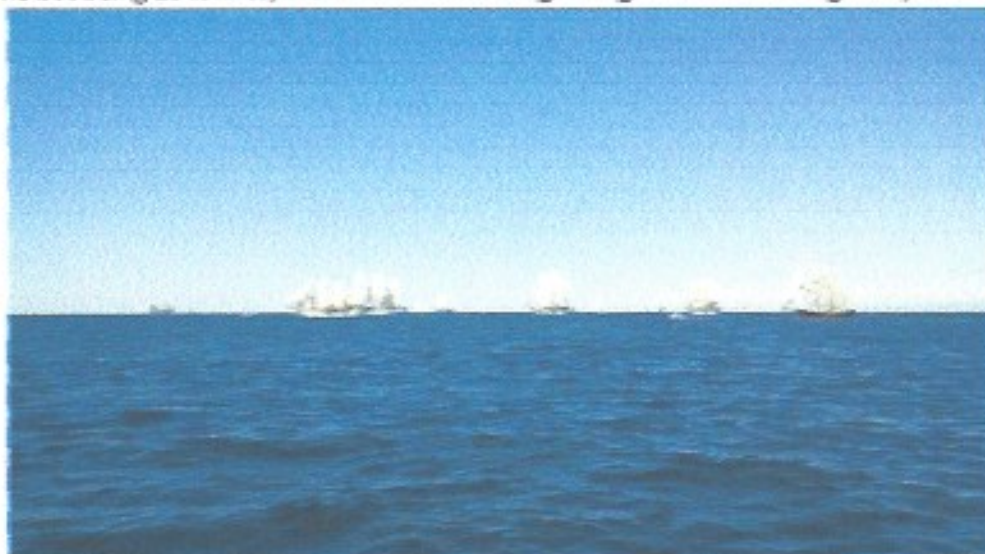
Another early start and a big breakfast greeted us on race day, we exited the



harbour a lot more easily than we entered. We followed Emely right up to the start line where we were reunited with all the boats once again. The boats were divided up into classes from A-D and we were class C so that meant we could see all the big square riggers start the race. The start line for this race is the same as dingy sailing except on a much bigger scale. Instead of two little boats it was two navy boats which was quite an

impressive sight. I was on red watch and we were sailing the boat at the start we got a very good

start off the line but being 26 tonnes, the wind wasn't strong enough to let the boat go very fast so we settled in the middle of the pack and got underway. For our rather quick trip across the Baltic sea.



During the first afternoon at sea we

learned about how to control the boat well which was a rather steep learning curve because it would never want to stay in a straight line so you had to be constantly adjusting the wheel to counteract the waves. Some of us got the hang of it in the end however others didn't... but it was fun all the same. The wind picked up a little and we managed to average about 6.5-7 knots the whole trip which wasn't as bad as the skipper has feared. On the first afternoon red watch were on the 9-12 watch and the sun setting over the sea was unforgettable.



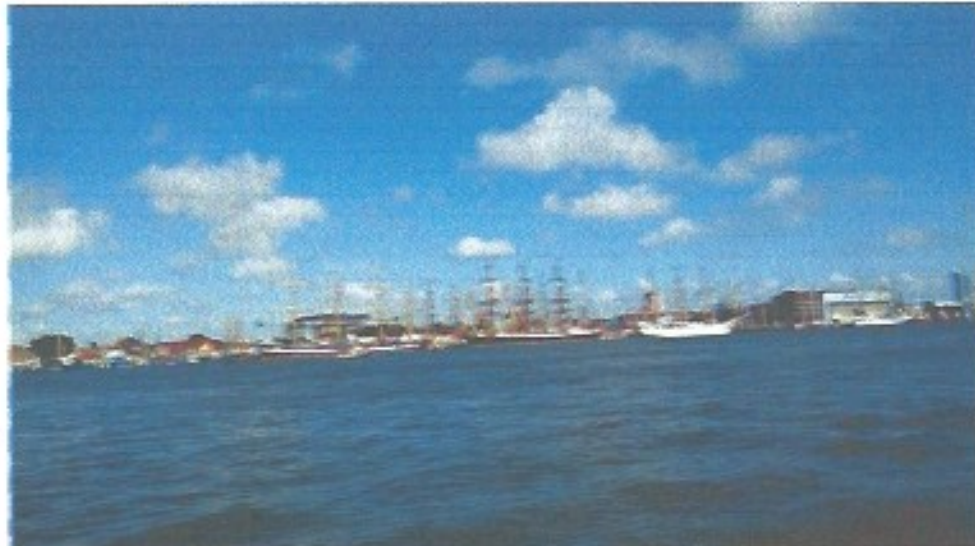
The second day of sailing was slightly rougher because we were in open water and the boat rocked and rolled a lot more however thankfully no one was too sick. the sailing was simple that day we all followed roughly the same course, no sail changes and no diversions to avoid other boats. we had to make sure we drank just as much at sea to stop dehydration from setting in. most of us forgot completely what day it was because our sleep schedules were completely off.

On the second day, the winds picked up a bit more however so did the waves and we were thrown about a bit more. But spirits were still high and we made very good progress. I remember a group of us crew sitting on the front of the boat with our legs over the side and letting the cool sea water refresh us, we all felt much better after that.

I had an early shift from 12-3 on the third day and everything was relatively fine however during the watch from 3-6 the waves and the wind picked up and they were thrown about all over the place,

they had to do a sail change and somehow, I was the only one who managed to sleep through it all! Thankfully the sea calmed down later however the only thing I managed to eat that day was a few crackers and a bit of dinner. at 2130 hours red watch (my watch) finished the race and we came a respectable 5th place which we were all pleased with because during the day were in about 12th place.

We then motored on into Klaipeda port which was a very different place we realised to Turku. It was a lot more industrial we thought at first but as we went deeper down the water ways we saw how stunning this old city is and once we had moored up in our spot at about midnight we had a quick wander around the town before we got some well-earned sleep.



Most of the boats had arrived earlier than the race officials had thought because of the good wind the town was quite empty and we managed to get a good look around before all the market stalls before the tourists arrived. We spent the next few days going around the markets eating out and having a good time on land. On the last few nights we had a firework display like the one in Turku, a crew parade which was where we really did see all the different cultures of the different countries and prize giving ceremony and finally a crew party to finish where there was a very relaxing and chilled atmosphere.

Then at half 1 in the morning on the next day we got on a bus to go to the airport and back to England we went. We were all very sad to leave Lithuania and each other because we had all become very close friends so saying goodbye was difficult.

I would just like to say thank you again to The James Myatt Trust for helping fund this trip and a massive thank you to Adrian, Shaun and Chris for teaching us and helping us sail the boat I would never have been able to do it without yours and their support. I highly recommend doing a trip like this and I shall recommend it to people I meet. It had the most incredible and unforgettable time and I'd love to do it all over again.

Kind regards

Matthew Flack

