

Janice - April report

We've started sailing this month, and I'm beginning to find my feet more and more on the ship with every time we go out. We kicked off the season officially on the 4th, with the shakedown sail and an end of refit party, which included free beer and a shanty band singing in someone's living room, so was awesome!

After the shakedown sail we spent a couple more days tidying the ship up and preparing to sail down to Ipswich to officially kick off the season with some day sails. The trip to Ipswich was long, hard and cold... but AWESOME. I got my first experience at steering the ship using a tiller, and (surprisingly to me) managed not to screw it up!

The sails out of Ipswich were lovely; we met some really nice, cool people, and because of the light weather and easy route up and down the river Orwell, I had a really good chance to get to know the sails and manoeuvres better!



This month we also did our first sail training trips of the season!!! The first group were only for a day and came onboard as part of the *Oceans of Waste* project, run with the Maritime Museum. The kids were VERY differently behaved compared with the Sea Cadet kids that I'm used to working with, but they are different in a really wonderful way, and it's a really fun challenge for me to try and get a group of mega unenthusiastic kids excited about something they don't want to do!

We had our second group of kids for a four-day long trip down the east coast, stopping in Harwich for a night, anchoring outside Brightlingsea for a lovely beach BBQ and bonfire on Mersey Island, and running unexpectedly into Jenna on Blue Mermaid, who were out for their shakedown sail!!!

This group of kids were AWESOME and it's just a shame we didn't get to have them for the full week! Again, it was a really fun challenge to get some of the less enthusiastic guys to get into the sail setting and helming and stuff, but it was so lovely to see them eventually get into it, and I think they all had an awesome time in the end!!





We then had another *Oceans of Waste* day sail with some adorable little 12 year-olds, who were all really sweet, and it was adorable watching these tiny people sweat up the huge mainsail of *Excelsior*, using ropes that were probably the same thickness as their wee legs!!!

Other than all of the awesome sailing we've done over this month, I've been doing some cool maintenance jobs, one of my favourites being changing belts on the engine with the bosun, Mette! After two days of literal blood, sweat and tears, we had both worked together to change our first belt on the engine, which I'm insanely proud of!

I also got to do some nice rigging jobs, making stoppers, tussies, and doing a bit of climbing, and finally did a bit of work on the ship's workboat from IBTC!



After the sailing we've done this month I can't wait for the season to get slightly busier, and do some longer trips and more sail training voyages. I'm also beginning to feel a lot more competent during maintenance days, which is really lovely, and I'm so glad that I'm finding my feet more and more on *Excelsior*, and forever thankful that the crew are putting up with my endless stream of dumb questions!

