

I finally ran away to sea!

I'm Jess - one of the Seafaring Trainees of SHTP2. I'm so excited and proud to be part of the Shipshape programme. Hailing from land-locked Birmingham, seafaring may seem a bit of an odd choice of career! But I have a real love of the sea and for old wooden sailing boats; and after 10 years in the education sector, the last six of which working alone in a windowless office, it was time to turn my passion into a career.

This year I've been lucky enough to have sailed as crew on Brixham sailing trawler *Pilgrim*, and pilot cutter *Amelie Rose*, providing a solid foundation of skills and knowledge to build on over the next 12 months.

The start of the programme has been a whirlwind! We've crammed so much into the first three weeks, and have had so much fun along the way.



Portsmouth

Arriving in Portsmouth, I eagerly made my way to the Historic Dockyard for our introduction session where I met my fellow trainees along with Becky and Victoria from National Historic Ships UK (NHS-UK). We learned a bit about each other, the programme, and later took a look around Boat House 4 at the various boats in the museum's collection.



The following day we attended the NHS-UK networking event located in the beautiful Princess Royal Gallery, overlooking HMS Victory! We met lots of interesting people from the maritime industry and it was especially nice to see Nick Beck of *Amelie Rose* and Lynda Davison from *Pilgrim of Brixham*. The SHTP2 Year 1's gave presentations about their year, and it was inspiring to see how much they had achieved. It made me excited about the experiences and opportunities ahead of us. The day concluded with dinner aboard a converted lightship, now a restaurant.

The programme's partner hosts gave presentations about their organisations, boats and museums during our final day in Portsmouth, which was a great opportunity to ask questions and find out more about what our placements might consist of. Soon after, we were on our way to Falmouth.

Falmouth

The journey to Falmouth was arduous, with various delays on the roads, but we soon perked up once we arrived at our accommodation for the week, finding it was little short of a mansion! Here we got to know each other better and really bonded. We cooked, ate together, played games, watched films and indulged in the local nightlife. It wasn't all play though, we worked hard too, completing several qualifications and attending talks and meetings.

The first of which was First Aid at Sea at Falmouth Training Solutions (FTS) with instructor, John. This was a fun, hands-on course and the presence of Milo, the FTS office dog, made it all the better! The course included theory and practical aspects such as cold water shock, using a defibrillator and CPR.

We completed two more courses at FTS during the week, Powerboat Level 2 with instructors Simon and Roy, and Sea Survival with Steve. Powerboat was a real highlight for me - don't get me wrong, bobbing about on pretty sailing boats is my passion, but skimming across the tops of waves at 30mph was awesome! Sea Survival included time in a



local pool. We discovered the importance of wearing a well-fitted life jacket as we jumped into the pool and later attempted to right and climb into a life raft. For me it was a very sobering experience. Ten minutes in the raft with friends in a heated indoor pool was tiring and enough; I hope none of us ever have to experience it in a real-life scenario. But at least we're now somewhat competent to deal with that situation should it arise.

We attended several sessions at Falmouth Maritime Museum. Mike, the museum's Boat Manager showed us around their storage facility and spoke about some of the fascinating boats within the collection, and Ship Keeper, Reuben invited us into the museum's workshop and showed us their latest restoration project, an early 1900s steam launch named *Emma*. Craig from the Island Trust also met us at Falmouth Maritime Museum and gave a very interesting talk about sail training and the positive impact it can have on the individuals who take part. The experience of being at sea really can be life changing.



One of the biggest highlights of our time in Falmouth for me was visiting Working Sail - Luke Powell's boat yard. The small team at the yard are working on building a giant pilot cutter, *Pellow*. We were lucky enough to have a tour of the boat, inside and out, and Luke spoke to us about the project, the role of traditional wooden sailing vessels in the 21st century and the importance of keeping them afloat. We could have spent all day talking to Luke and we will certainly take him up on the offer to visit again sometime soon.

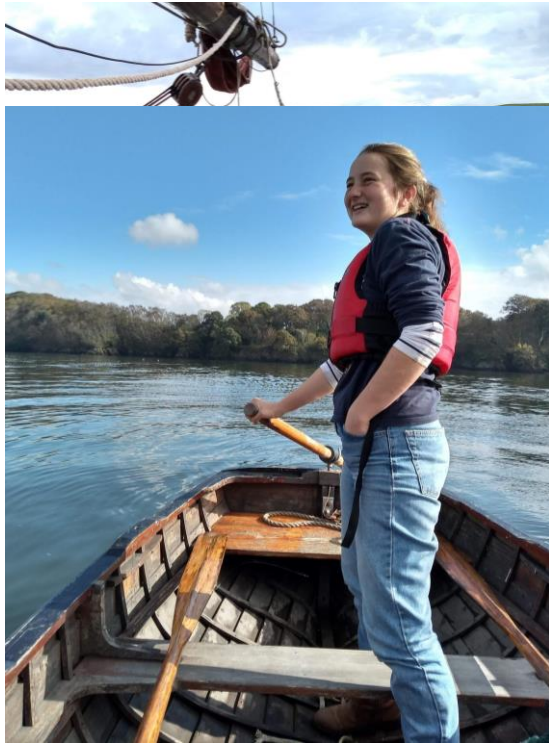


Before we knew it, it was time to pack our things and head over to Plymouth, stopping in Charlestown on the way for a quick visit to the Shipwreck Museum. I love Charlestown and have spent many hours in the harbour. Last year my partner and I volunteered on their resident ketch, *Kajsamoor*, learning to splice and replacing the ratlins on her main mast.

Plymouth

Arriving at Mayflower Marina, we were warmly welcomed by Dom and Barbara, owners of the *Lynher* barge - our home for the next few days. *Lynher* is simply amazing and has a fascinating history, having been built in the late 1800s, requisitioned during WWII and being abandoned in the mud for 30 years, she was excavated in the 1980s and restored in the 90s and sailed for a few short years before being left on the slip at Mashfords Boatyard for over 10 years, before Dom and Barbara took custodianship of her in 2016. She is still in the process of being fitted out so the living conditions are basic, with the hold being one big room to cook, eat and sleep in, which we all thought was great fun!

The following morning, Dom and Barbara handed us the reins and it was up to us to first turn the barge around, then raise the sails and head off down the river. This 'you'll figure it out' style of teaching was invaluable; even those of us who sail regularly rarely need that level of critical decision making. We sailed out past the breakwater, squeezing somewhat sideways through The Bridge on the way (10 points



for style!), and headed west towards Cawsand where we dropped the anchor for lunch before returning to pick up a mooring buoy for the night.

The next couple of days were a blast! Joined by additional crew, Simon and Aiden (skipper of *Tectona*), we split into groups and tried our hand at knot-tying, rowing, dinghy sailing in Dom's beautiful *Wayfarer*, and sculling - a very old method of propulsion, using one oar off the stern of the boat - much harder than it looks!

On our final day, Barbara kindly gave us each a *Lynher* T-shirt and a cucumber (it's an in-joke!). We took a very scenic walk down to Mashfords Boatyard where *Lynher* had spent so much time out of the water. Brig *Phoenix* was in for maintenance, having a new mast fitted and her engine reconditioned. It was lovely to see Captain Eric and the gang, who kindly took an hour out of their busy day to show us the work they were doing and answered our questions. *Phoenix* is my favourite ship, and partly what inspired me to take part in SHTP. Later, with the *Phoenix* crew in-tow, we headed up the path to the boat

shed *Lynher* shares with *Tectona* for a cuppa and a chat with Aiden and friends about the work they are doing on their boats during the winter.



It was genuinely hard to say goodbye to Dom and Barbara as they waved us off on the ferry. They had been such wonderful hosts. I hope to spend more time with them and *Lynher* in the future. Once off the ferry, we walked back to Mayflower Marina, showered and got back on the road, Brixham-bound.

Brixham

We settled aboard Brixham trawler, *Provident*, one of the Trinity fleet. She was moored abreast to *Pilgrim*, a boat I know very well! I hopped aboard and said hello to my Skipper, Richard and good friend Neil before heading over to the infamous Blue Anchor for dinner.

On Saturday morning, the seafarers amongst us were (miraculously, after a lock-in at The Blue the night before, thanks to Toni Knights) up early to complete an interesting but intensive VHF radio course at

Torbay Sea School and, despite being a little worse for wear, we all passed with flying colours. Big thank you to Tim, Duncan and Lucy.

Sunday was to be a day off, but Richard and Lynda very kindly allowed me to tag along on *Pilgrim*'s new volunteer crew assessment day. I was able to spend a good amount of time on the helm with some one-to-one tuition from Richard, even bringing *Pilgrim* back into the harbour and mooring her up against *Provident* under Skipper's watchful eye.

The next day we were all lucky enough to go out on *Pilgrim*, which was a rollercoaster from start to finish! For some of the trainees, this was the first real sail they had completed and even for some of the experienced sailors amongst us, it was challenging. I was proud to show my new friends around and to see the smiles on their faces as we rolled about near Berry Head. We faced north-easterlies all day, bringing with them rolling waves, icy winds, lots of noise and plenty of water over the deck. Lynda cooked us a lovely lunch and spoke to us about the history of Brixham, the trawlers and the people who sailed them, which we learned more about during a visit to Brixham Heritage Museum.



We finished our time in Brixham, and indeed the induction part of our traineeship, back on *Provident* with team building exercises, a chat with Victoria about the conservation side of the programme, and one-to-one sessions with Becky and Victoria. We each left Brixham for a couple of days at home before the next chapter begins - Lowestoft, and the International Boatbuilding Training College.



Pupdate - Shipshape dogs, October.



Milo, Falmouth Training Solutions

Curly-boi.

Very soft.

Greets all visitors to the office.

Knows first aid.

Very good boy.



Merve, Falmouth Water Taxi

First day on the job.

Nervous but doing well.

Very small.

Loves a cuddle.

Very good boy.



Tazeo, Lynher barge

Stocky-boi.

Stylish, sailor hair-do.

Interested, but not very much.

Grumpy, but approachable.

Very good boy.