

Catamaran Voyage 2010

I thoroughly enjoyed my four day experience on the Tall Ships Catamaran and would like to send a huge thank you to the Lizard Outreach Trust for giving me this amazing opportunity.

I've had a difficult few months recently following my mum and dad separating. When you are thirteen it's not easy, sometimes, to cope with all the changes that brings. However, I think I've coped really well and the positive way in which I dealt with the Tall Ships adventure confirms that I'm pretty intact!

My mum dropped me off at the Gosport Marina on the morning of December 18th following a drive through thick snow and ice the evening before. As soon as I saw the catamaran I became very excited and knew I was in for a great time. The staff that met us, Martin and Steve, seemed very friendly and made me feel very welcome. My bunk bed was on the port side hull so after I dumped my belongings I was ready to wave goodbye to mum. I have to say that she was a little reluctant to leave because she wanted to join in on the experience!

On the first day we were given the safety briefing and launched into the dinghy for a sculling competition. By now there were four of us on board; me, Francis, Scott and Noah, so that made for some frantic racing!

After the sculling, Steve informed us that we would be sailing to Cowes in the afternoon – unbelievable! And it was a great idea except the challenger yachts accompanying us had a problem so we had to turn back three quarters of the way into the voyage. We did rescue a stricken fishing boat on the way back though, whose engines had packed up.

Day two was very cold with heavy blizzards pretty much all day. All anyone could see were my eyes peeping out from my hat and scarf as I tried to keep warm. We sailed to Yarmouth and I helped Steve with steering and working out the tides. Despite the snow I thoroughly enjoyed this experience and we moored up in Yarmouth harbour for the night. Monopoly and another board game I can't remember now kept us entertained.

On day three we actually made it to Cowes and spent the evening in the harbour there. We were allowed to make use of the shower facilities in the marina and we even went to the pub for a coke! The journey across into Cowes was a little hairy with us catching the wind big style in the sails and almost capsizing. Strangely it didn't bother me at all. In fact, I found it very exciting. Of course, not only did we help with the actual sailing on this trip, we had to do everything from preparing meals to cleaning the toilets (or 'heads' as they call them on board ship).

By day four I was feeling quite tired and had been suffering with a sore throat and cough for a while but I was determined to make the most of the last day. The four

of us kids did the whole thing on our last day – by that I mean navigating, steering, working the ropes and sails and tying onto the marina. It was awesome! I'm really grateful for the chance to get to grips with sailing and mum now fears that this will become a new, expensive hobby! I learnt a lot about team work, overcoming fears and the ability to keep going even when you feel like giving up. Thank you so much LOT and if the opportunity were to come my way again I'd love to have another go!

Hannah Bowman.