

Introduction

I wake up every morning with the aim of having fun, learning something new and making the most of each day.

On Wednesday December 4, 2013 I woke up with an opportunity that would enable me to do the above on board Jubilee Sailing Trusts tall ship Tenacious for 24 epic days! The day and subsequent interview in front of the panel from the Australia-Britain Society and Young Endeavour Youth Scheme would determine whether my dream of being selected would become a reality. I had first heard about the award from Harriet Smith on Young Endeavour V15 2012 and a seed was planted in my mind that would captivate me for the next two years.

I think the panel will remember me saying that I felt more comfortable in 10-foot surf than I did when I first walked through those doors and throughout the interview process. After 40 minutes of hard questioning flew by I left the room feeling that I had put my best foot forward but at the same time keen to see if I had made the most of my opportunity. A day later I came back from an afternoon swim and an unknown number came up on my phone. It was Richard Tighe from the Australia-Britain Society congratulating me on being the successful applicant for this year's tall ships award. I was speechless. Given the caliber of candidates I was up against I was a bit surprised. It took me a week before my feet truly touched the ground again and it wasn't till I boarded my flight to Heathrow 3 months later that it truly set in.

Before I set off on this journey I set some personal goals, challenges and objectives within myself that I wanted to explore, challenge and push the boundaries of. Everyone whom I spoke with before the trip said that it would change me. I have to be honest that as much as I did believe it would, I had my doubts. The journey that I went on over the 42 days and the 24 days on Tenacious whilst I was away certainly changed me as a person and the way I see, interact and view the world.

The Journey

As I flew in and saw the massive rock of Gibraltar for the first time it hit home that I was finally here and about to embark on this awesome trip. A few days later I boarded the gangway and took my first steps on board the incredible Jubilee Sailing Trust ship Tenacious, a three masted barque, I was in total awe of her size, character and charisma that surrounded her. I was greeted with a warm welcome by chief mate Richard and my watch leader Peter for the 24-day voyage from Gibraltar to Southampton.

The ship was a hive of activity as the 30 strong crew ranging in ages from 17-83 went about acclimatizing to the ship and ship life whilst getting to know each other. We were quickly put to work helping the crew do the final odds and ends before we would depart Gibraltar. A day later we slipped the lines with a fair wind blowing set sail up the Straits of Gibraltar with Africa to our south and Spain to our north in clear view. The whole crew was full of an electric

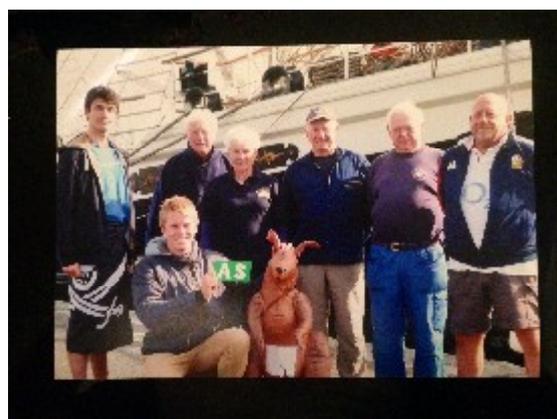
enthusiasm for what lay ahead of us, keen to explore new places and discover new sights and sounds.



First week at sea

There is nothing that compares to blue water off shore sailing. Life is simple, carefree and in the moment. The first week of the voyage was a time of learning and exploring all we could about Tenacious, about life at sea as well as about each other. It was during this first week I faced one of my biggest but most rewarding challenges of the trip. The age gap between myself and the majority of the Tenacious crew. I found it hard to deal with the difference in mentality and energy levels and times I found this challenge extremely frustrating, annoying and slow.

Over the course of the trip and with the help of all members (Peter, Arnie, Paul, Julie, Dan and Roy) of the Aft Starboard watch I was apart of, I was able to understand, appreciate and accept the differences in mentality, energy levels and perspective on life that age brings. It was with their help and guidance that they enabled me to find comfort and take pride in my youth, see the advantages to both sides of the coin and the value that this age gap can have within a crew of this nature. The time-shared during our watches taught me something new with each watch and helped bring a greater perspective to the trip, such as hearing about Roy speak about his whaling stories, Peter's maritime stories, Arnie's no nonsense humor and Paul's perspective on life. It showed me that as a team anything can be accomplished, such as when we were on watch and managed to brace both masts with square sails up to the opposite side on our own which is no mean feat with a full crew let alone just the 6 of us, there were many stories like this along the way that blew my mind of what I thought was possible.



The Bay of Biscay

After 14 days of sailing and motoring along the western coastlines of Spain and Portugal and visiting some amazing places along the way Porto, Vigo, Corunna just to name a few, we reached the Bay of Biscay. Having grown up being constantly surrounded and exposed to the ocean in all forms and on all types of craft and now being a seafarer myself, the Bay of Biscay proved to have a mythical value. A place where a seafarer can truly test one self and skills against all that mother nature can throw. It has been one of the stretches of ocean that I have heard of and wanted to sail across for many years. Sailing across the Bay of Biscay started a phase in the trip full of many special moments that pushed me to my limits and showed me that boundaries are there to be challenged, broken and jumped over.

It was the early evening we were sailing with a sharp steep 3m swell on our starboard bow and a gusty 30 knots of wind. We needed to do some sail changes to set us up for the night ahead, one of the tasks was to climb the foremast and furl the royal. It's that fight or flight reaction that takes over where you can tackle "fear" or wonder what could have been. The view from up on the yard looking forward as tenacious powered head on in to the ocean whilst we furled the sail was inspirational and enlightening, my confidence within myself grew a lot in that moment and was one of the objectives I had for the trip. The Bay certainly lived up to it's name, we encountered all sea and wind conditions from relatively calm wind and sea conditions to 4 meter seas and gusting 40 knot winds that came at the ship from all angles as we tacked our way toward Saint Malo.

After crossing the Bay of Biscay we sailed in to the magnificent walled town of Saint Malo, France where we spent two amazing days. After Tenacious was all tied up and all our duties done we were given shore leave and I along with Ben and Josh, two of the younger members of the tenacious crew set about seeing what this town has to offer. It was during the hours that the three of us spent walking around and exploring St Malo along with a night out that the similarities of the youth of both the United Kingdom and Australia share became apparent to me. It was a great chance to relax and have some fun whilst in the company of two great like-minded fiends. Our time in Saint Malo was a real highlight for me.



Culture

The culture aspect of the trip was one that I found most interesting, whether it is comparing, food, lifestyle, music, history or sport, there was always something to talk about, compare and learn. Even basic expressions and sayings that I have grown up with always attracted a laugh or strange look. It was during our time in the port of Muros, Spain that I unleashed Skippy, an inflatable Kangaroo, on the crew. Over the remainder of the trip he would end up all over the ship hanging from different places with different things people had dressed him up in and always brought a smile and a laugh.

I didn't really know what to expect of the British people and the characteristics that make up their personalities, especially with the younger generation. The heritage, history and culture of the United Kingdom are very different to Australia, but the personalities of these people are far more similar to what I had thought. Both nations share an immense grit, determination and drive to succeed, along with a hunger and thirst to push the boundaries and achieve their dreams, while remaining humble and having a joke and laugh along the way. This certainly was the case with the crew on Tenacious, with people from all over the UK along with one token 'Aussie'.



Reflection

There are certain experiences in life that raise questions, challenge your perspective on the world and evoke change in our every day lives.

This trip was certainly one of those. It has raised as many questions about who I am, how I view life, and what I see in my future, as it has answered. The biggest difference between the person I was when I embarked on the journey and the person who I am now is that the questions being raised no longer scare or worry me, but excite and encourage me to have even more fun, learn even more and make the absolute most of each and every day. There are moments from the journey I went on that will remain extremely clear in my mind for many years to come. I went through many extreme highs and extreme lows that all added to the experience. I could not have had one without the other, and I truly feel that I put my best foot forward by making the most of the opportunity that I was given. I think that we need to continue to encourage the youth of both Australia and the UK to make the most of the opportunities that we have in every day life. We truly are the lucky countries.

Thank you

I have to say a massive thank you to the following organizations that made this adventure of a lifetime possible!!!! The Australia-Britain Society (N.S.W. Branch), Jubilee Sailing Trust, UK Sail Training, Young Endeavour Youth Scheme and Australian Sail Training Association.

I would also like to thank Captain Darren and his crew from Tenacious, along with Captain Matt his crew and the youth crew from Young Endeavour V15/12. Last but not least I would like to thank the people who have given me the opportunities along with the mentors who have and continue to encourage and guide me through life, I will be forever grateful to you all.

Sam Redward.