

International Exchange Report

– Georgia Watson



When I was told that I had been accepted on the exchange and was going to Canada, I was ecstatic! I never anticipated that I would ever be picked for anything like this!

I set off on 6th August 2018 to go on my first solo flight and it took around nine and a half hours! When I arrived in Vancouver airport, I was told that my bags stayed in London, which was great because I was already feeling super nervous! I was told I could pick them up the next day though.

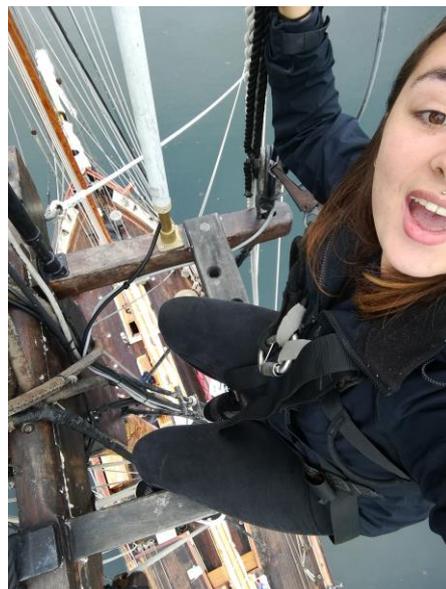
When I got to Prince Rupert, I met five other trainees who were all staying in the same hostel as me and I was invited out for dinner with a couple of them that night which made me feel less nervous about joining the boat the next day.

When we joined the boat and everyone was so nice and welcoming, we were greeted with food and a tour of the boat. There were people from Canada, USA and then me from the UK, there was even a baby on board! From the beginning everyone was obsessed with my accent and I had to say 'cheerio' a thousand times!



Within only a couple of days we felt like a proper family. We ate meals in our watches and Sadie, my watchleader, would read us a chapter of a book which would spark up interesting topics in which we all had a say. It made us closer as a watch and we quickly learnt a lot about each other and helped us to work better as a team.

The views were just stunning! I've never been anywhere so remote and peaceful. All around us was mountains and trees. I managed to see my first ever whale which was very exciting! Dolphins playing under the bowsprit was another magical moment! I really loved seeing lots of wildlife on my trip as there isn't much in the Solent! SALTS are very environmentally conscious and very proud of the local nature so wherever we went we would do beach cleans. These clean ups were actually a highlight of my trip because not only were we helping the environment but we were able to explore lots of small islands and it was very satisfying bringing all the litter back to the boat. I am so grateful that I got the chance to take the dories to explore such stunning and untouched beaches and lakes, we visited one beach which SALTS call 'Hawaii North' and I can see why! It was a white sandy beach with lots of crabs and an amazing view, also there was loads of driftwood which we used to make a fire to cook our freshly caught salmon.



Every evening everyone on board participates in 'mug up' which involves singing, guitars, hot drinks and usually a sweet treat before bed. At first, I was a little overwhelmed by this as I've never experienced anything like it but after a couple of days, I felt comfortable enough to join in and it was so much fun!

I would like to give huge thanks to The James Myatt Trust for enabling me to experience this journey and to ASTO for organising my travel also. It was truly a once in a lifetime trip and I am so grateful to have been given this opportunity. Since the trip I have been able to bring the things I have learnt back to the UK and to OYT South and I feel that I have benefitted greatly from learning how a different organisation operates. I also gained a lot of confidence within myself through travelling alone and meeting people completely different from myself. The memories and friends made on this trip will stay with me forever!