



MY CADETSHIP - ENGINEER CADET JACK WATSON

Engineer Cadet Jack Watson commenced his Officer Cadetship in September 2022 and is fully sponsored by Döhle Yachts in partnership with the Corporation of Trinity House. Since completing his initial college phase, Jack has had the opportunity to sail aboard THV Galatea, a Trinity House Multifunction Service Vessel, and the polar research vessel RRS Sir David Attenborough.

Jack is currently completing Phase 3 at Warsash Maritime School before returning to sea to gain additional watchkeeping experience. He will then complete his final college phase before qualifying as an Engineer Officer of the Watch and being awarded his BEng(Hons) in Marine Engineering.

What made you decide to follow a seagoing career and undertake an Officer Cadetship?

Growing up in Warsash, I started sailing as soon as I could swim, and that's when my love for being on the water began. The opportunity to travel around the world is what mainly drew me towards a seagoing career.

How did you learn about careers at sea and then decide upon your professional discipline (i.e. Deck Officer, Engineer Officer or Electro-Technical Officer)?

I've always had an affinity for engineering so, after learning about the Bachelor's degree programme in marine engineering, I knew that was exactly what I wanted to do. After receiving my A-Level grades, I knew I would be able to do the full degree, and being sponsored by Trinity House and Döhle Yachts has allowed me to do this.



Fig 1. Sunset during helicopter operations aboard THV Galatea

In accepting your sponsoring organisation's offer of an Officer Cadetship, which factors most influenced your decision?

As I said earlier, the ability to do the BEng(Hons) course with those sponsors is what finalised my decision. As a sponsor, Trinity House sources a variety of vessels for you to gain work experience on before starting my seagoing career. This means that I will be able to experience an array of ships and find which working environment suits me best.

After hearing that Döhle Yachts wanted to co-sponsor me, I couldn't have been more privileged and happier to be their first engineer cadet. I'm looking forward to some exciting work opportunities after my cadetship.

Please describe your experience at college during your first training phase, in terms of academic delivery, safety training courses and preparation for your first seagoing appointment.

Having just completed A-levels in physics and maths helped me through College Phase 1. I already had an understanding towards most of the mathematical subject, yet still learnt lots from the physical engineering subjects. The lecturers at Warsash are fantastic and the short courses at the old Warsash Maritime Academy site were great fun and very useful as I did lots of fire and enclosed space drills onboard the ships in Phase 2



Fig. 2 Steering gear operation from emergency local control point

How did you feel as you walked up the gangway upon joining your first vessel?

My first ship appointment was THV Galatea. Even though it wasn't a large ship with only 30 crew, I still had some nerves. But as soon as I was on the ship and meeting the crew, I felt so welcome. It was a great first ship to go on as the smaller size meant that nothing was too overwhelming, and I got to know everyone's names very quickly.

Please describe your experience on your seagoing vessel appointments, in terms of onboard integration, work experience, training support and general lifestyle aboard.

With both of the ships I sailed on in Phase 2 having crews of about 30, it meant that everyone was very social when not on watch. This was great as I could get to know the people I was living and working with. It created a great camaraderie and made the crew feel like family and made work not feel like work.

When I started working onboard, I would shadow the 2nd Engineer but, once he was confident in my ability, I was able to complete Planned Maintenance tasks on my own and sign it off on the ship's record system. I was very fortunate as I was on two ships with great accommodation and food.

What have been the most demanding and the best parts of your college training phases?

I found the most demanding part of the first college phase was the very densely packed timetable. Having lessons delivered 9-5 from Monday to Friday is hard going compared to normal university, where they are only in a few days per week. But this meant that I was more motivated to be in college as every day was used to its full advantage and it's also good preparation for the workload whilst at sea.

Which types of vessels have you sailed upon so far and do you have any favourite ports of call?

I was meant to sail on THV Galatea, which is a buoy laying tender, for 3 months but after a month onboard I got a call from Just Be Maritime to say that I would be joining the Royal Research Ship Sir David Attenborough down in the Falklands.

It was amazing to get to sail on this state-of-the-art research vessel and I had the opportunity to meet and speak to Sir David Attenborough himself when he came on board to visit the crew in Harwich. My favourite port of call must be the Falkland Islands where I joined the ship as it is such a unique place.



Fig. 3 Lifeboat drill during my first day aboard RRS SDA

From both a professional and personal perspective, what have been the highlights of your seagoing appointments to date?

The highlights so far are meeting new people and seeing how the two different crews on each ship did things differently and learning from them.

From a personal perspective, my best moments were the 'Crossing the Line' ceremony aboard RRS SDA, playing badminton with the captain on the helideck, and being anchored in the Isle of Skye as the sun set in the background. It felt very surreal.

What personal benefits have you gained so far from undertaking your cadetship?

I have improved on my ability to speak to and live around people whom I have never met before, but more importantly get to know and trust them.



Fig. 4 Main Engine Tappet Adjustments



Fig. 5 Totem pole in Port Stanley, Falklands

How do you see your career developing once you have successfully completed your cadetship?

I was always set on working on yachts once I complete my cadetship but, after being on these other ships, I'm much more open to other work opportunities.



Fig. 6 Visiting St Kilda (World Heritage site)

What would be your recommendations to someone who is considering undertaking an Officer Cadetship too in the near future?

If you're looking for a career at sea, this is how you should do it. It's a great way to get into the industry and you make so many contacts along the way that, once you qualify, you won't have a hard time finding a ship to start your career on.

You will have amazing support from the sponsor as well as Just Be Maritime, which you wouldn't get with any other university degree.

The monthly bursary and no student debt at the end of training is a big plus too.

If you are able to study at the prestigious Warsash Maritime School, I would definitely recommend it.



Fig. 7 Anchored in the bay of St Kilda