



## **MY CADETSHIP - ENGINEER CADET TRAVIS LIGHTBOWN-SMITH**

*Engineer Cadet Travis Lightbown-Smith commenced his Officer Cadetship in September 2023 and is fully sponsored by the Corporation of Trinity House. Since completing his initial college phase, Travis has had the opportunity to sail aboard 'Spirit of Discovery', a modern cruise ship operated by Saga Cruises.*

*Travis is currently undertaking 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 Higher National Diploma (HND) in Marine Engineering.*

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

Growing up close to a port, I feel as if I have been surrounded by seafaring for my whole childhood. As I grew older, I started to take an interest in the ships that were coming into the port. I wanted to take this interest further and find out how these ships are run. As I learnt more about the life of an engineer, it appealed to me as I like a hands-on job but also somewhere I can be mentally challenged.

Undertaking a cadetship gives you the perfect balance of hands-on work and classroom learning, while being able to travel the world. I also thought about my long-term career prospects and learnt that the maritime world offers promising career paths, job stability and competitive salaries.



**Figure 1: Formal Night aboard 'Spirit of Discovery'**

***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)?***

After studying marine engineering for 2 years at Bournemouth and Poole college, I decided that I wanted to take my studies further due to the love that I was developing for the profession. I was lucky enough to have a tutor that had been to sea, and he recommended the programme to me having completed it himself. He further explained to me that a cadetship is the best route into the industry and by far the most rewarding. After having gained sponsorship from Trinity House, they have allowed me to undertake this course.

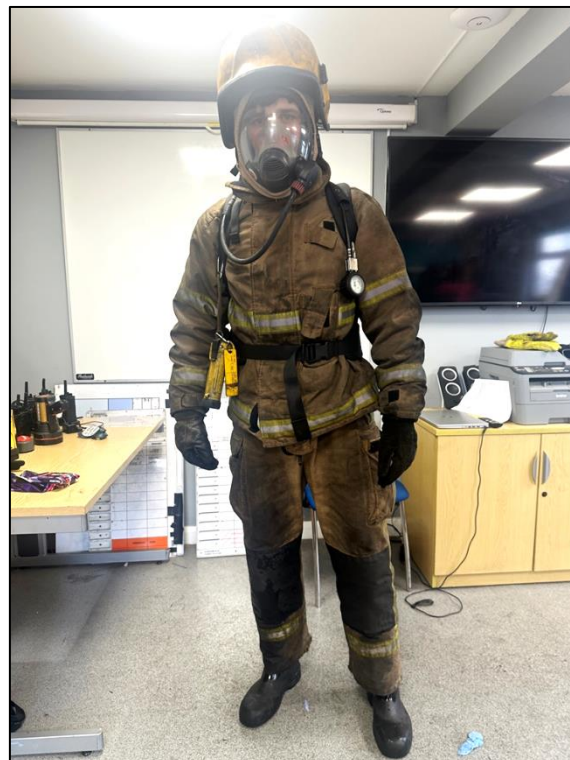
***In accepting your sponsoring organisation's offer of an Officer Cadetship, which factors most influenced your decision?***

After having offers from a few different companies, Trinity House stood out the most for me. One of the main factors was the variety that they offer you. With Trinity House you are not restricted to one company when going for your sea experience. This gives you the flexibility to really find out what types of vessels that you would like to work on in the future, and it gives you experience on all different types of machinery which in turn aids your studies.

***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.***

Although being very nervous to start this new adventure, the staff at Warsash made me feel more that welcome. They ease you into the learning at the start and try to build-up your knowledge bit by bit. The standards of the lecturers is very good and, with most of them being former seafarers, you received expert knowledge and an insight into what the life at sea is going to be like.

Before going to sea, you complete training in the Engineering workshop for basic skills such as hand-fitting, turning, and welding, while you also complete short safety courses, including firefighting, sea survival and first aid. The short courses are great fun but also very useful to undertake as you might need to utilise the skills that you are taught on board.



***Figure 2: STCW Firefighting Training***

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

My first ship appointment was on board the Saga Cruises' vessel 'Spirit of Discovery', which is a 236m cruise ship carrying 1,000 passengers and 500 crew. As I was walking up the gangway, the nerves are something that you can't describe. However, what gets you past these is the excitement that you are about to face, as you are stepping into a whole new world.

Once boarded I was made to feel so welcome by all the crew and have now made some friends for life. The 'Spirit of Discovery' was a great starting place for me as it has all the systems that I needed to learn about but it was on a scale that was bearable to learn on. This meant that by the end of my 4-month contract I felt I had gained massive amounts of knowledge.

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

Life on board the 'Spirit of Discovery' is something that I will never forget. All the crew made me feel so welcome and I made many friends. My Engineers and I had great relationships, with the perfect balance of social time and work. They would always want to push me to learn more, but we could also spend downtime together and have a laugh.

At the start of my contract, I shadowed the first Engineer in his daywork duties. As time went on, I was then put onto a watch rota and changed through the three patterns. Having the mix of daywork and watches meant I could focus with the day work team on more of the maintenance side but when on watch I could learn more about the operation of systems.

I was very lucky to be able to share a cabin with a Trinity House deck cadet. During out time together on board, we were able to help each other to understand the different sides of the job.



***Figure 3: On watch with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Engineer (Manoeuvring)***

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

You definitely must prepare yourself for the workload in Phase 1. You will have a very densely packed timetable with lessons being delivered Monday to Friday 9 to 5, all followed up with examinations. However, along the way you get to meet some great people and make new friends from all around the globe. Certainly one of the most rewarding feelings is passing through your examinations. Although it's tough in the moment, it gives you a sense of worth and the drive to keep continuing and learning.

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

I was lucky enough to be placed on Saga Cruises' vessel 'Spirit of Discovery', which is a new ship built in 2019 that gave me the opportunity to see new innovations in the industry. During my trip I visited 8 countries, first starting in the Mediterranean and then moving to the north of the world. Although being in the warm weather in the Mediterranean is amazing, I had the pleasure of visiting Greenland, Iceland and Norway. My favourite port of call had to be Flam (Norway). You get the opportunity to sail through the historic fjords which will be some of the nicest and most untouched places you will see in the world.



***Figure 4: Seyoisfjorour in Iceland***

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

I think the main thing that you will find is the people that you meet - you get the opportunity to work with different people from around the world and learn about them. They give you so many different experiences and knowledge from around the world, and definitely broaden your horizons.

From a professional perspective, I think it would have to be completing a 24,000-hour main Engine overhaul with MAN. During this major overhaul I was given responsibility with components such as fuel injectors, cylinder heads and fuel valves to overhaul them and reinstall them back into the engine. This experience allowed me to understand the internal components in an engine more

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

Doing a cadetship really gives you a sense of pride and you feel proud of what you are a part of. This in turn gives you a confidence to really push for what you want out of the career and strive for excellence.

I think you do gain a massive amount of responsibility and you must learn how to become self-sufficient, which definitely improves you as a person.



**Figure 5: Pre-Departure Checks (Diesel Generator 1)**

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

After my first sea phase, I was offered to come back to Saga Cruises as a Third Engineer when qualified, which was a massive achievement. Ultimately, I would love to work in the cruise industry, but I would also like to work on commercial vessels as well so that I can gain experience in all the different types in the industry.



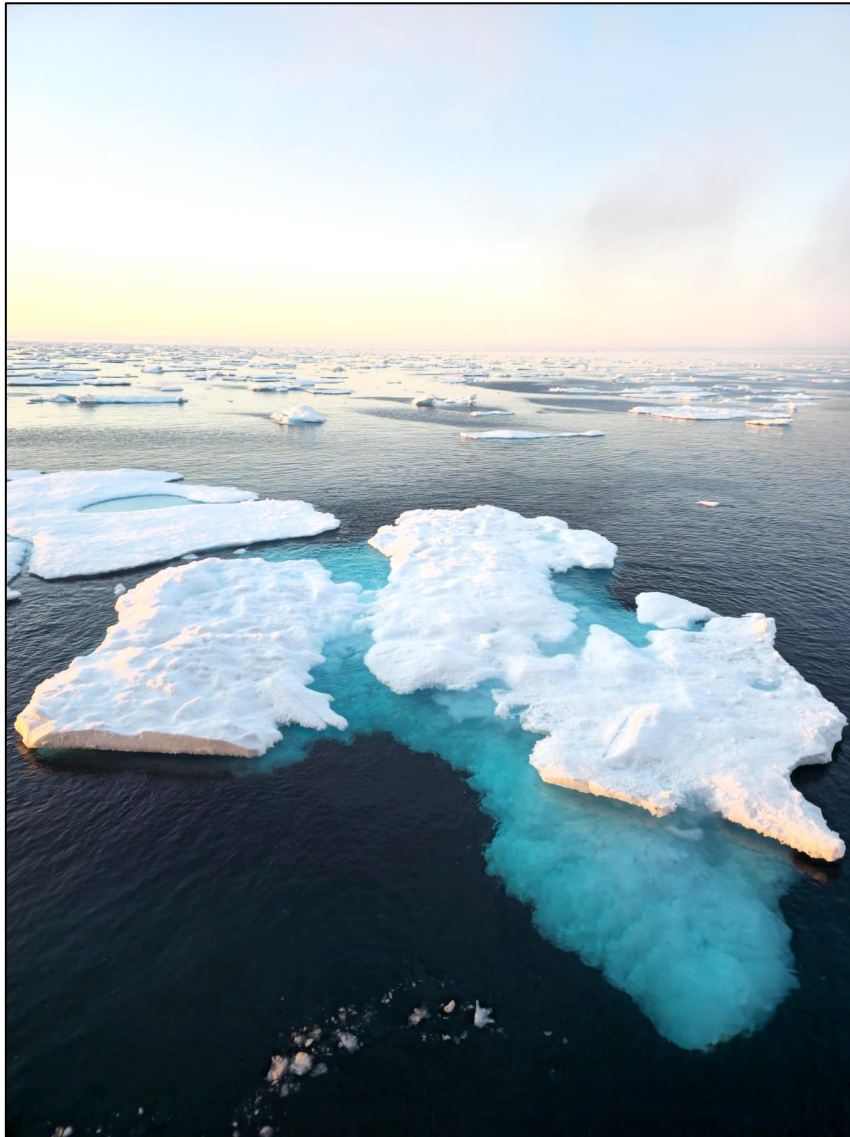
**Figure 6: Crankcase Inspection**

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

I would say to anyone thinking about a cadetship, DO IT! You will not regret it and you will receive amazing support from Just Be Maritime, which you wouldn't get with any other degree.

I also have to say that the monthly bursaries and no student debt is a no brainer.

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



***Figure 7: Greenland Ice Field***