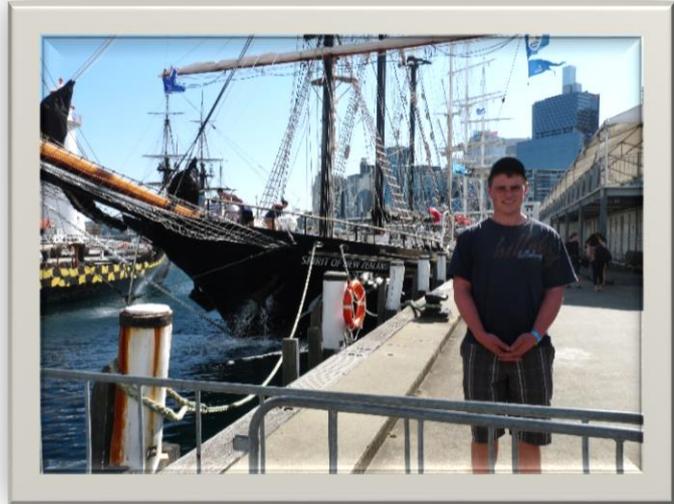


Ben's Story

October 2009 is when it all started for me on voyage 565, 10 days on a boat with no one I know and no contact with anyone apart with the 39 other trainees and 10 crew. Who would have thought that would be one of the most amazing experiences I have ever come across. In the 10 days I was on the ship I met some amazing people and still keep in touch with some of them today.



In February 2012 I went on a second voyage, voyage 617VP1 which was only a 5 day voyage which was amazing. This voyage was based more on leadership and teambuilding extending on from the youth development of my first voyage. After that voyage I decided to sign up to the voyagers club, I then got asked to go back as a leading hand in June 2012 on a 5 day trophy voyage which I was part of the crew and helped out with all the activities with the trainees. I then helped out with the ships refit in October 2012 for 2 weeks which was really enjoyable and also felt like I gave back to the trust after all they have done for my voyages I have done.

More recently I participated in the international tall ships festival on board the Spirit of New Zealand in the first tall ships race from Sydney to Auckland in October 2013. That has to have been one of the best adventures I have ever been on and it was an experience of a lifetime to be part of such a big event. From the moment I got to Sydney and saw all the tall ships and activities to the day we left Sydney was amazing, all the tall ships and spectator craft sending us on our way was overwhelming. When I woke up on the second day and couldn't see land or any other ships I realised there was no turning back and we were committed until the end. Seven long days of not seeing land and being on the 12-4 watch once in the dark and stormy weather and once in the day over and over again, it did not seem like we were getting anywhere but to see land was indescribable. We finished the race in third place and then showed 5 other foreign tall ships around the Bay of Islands and the Hauraki Gulf. Coming into Auckland harbour the day before Labour Weekend was amazing, the spectator craft joined us off Whangaparaoa Peninsula and as we got closer to Auckland the crowd got bigger both on the water and the likes of North Head and any other vantage points. It was an amazing feeling to be a part of such a huge event.

I have been very surprised coming into the workforce and finding out how highly respected the trust is and that employers have encouraged me to stick with the voluntary side of things with the trust. I wouldn't be able to thank the Spirit of Adventure Trust enough for what they have done for me and I can only hope to go back on the ship again soon. Good luck in your application – it will be life changing.

Ben Franklin