

A word from the Duyfken's Bosun (Boatswain)



Left; "Working the rigging while underway" Right; Andrew atop the main mast

IF ANY person involved in the 'Dove' can speak fondly of her, with associated experience - knowing her from bow to stern and every bit above and below it is Andrew Bibby the ship's Bosun (Boatswain). Following are his memoirs:

"After leaving the cabinet making industry in 2008 and travelling Europe for some months taking in its history and sights, I arrived home in Brisbane with some spare time before I needed to find a job.

My father (who was working at the Queensland Maritime Museum) suggested I check out the Duyfken, which in January 2009 had recently arrived in port. I headed down to the museum with my father shortly afterwards and found a beautiful ship with a great crew, one of whom was a young lady I would become engaged to some years later.

Before long I was volunteering 30 hours a week aboard Duyfken. I also fell

in love with the young lady.

The ship wasn't sailing during her time in Brisbane so the crew were all busy maintaining it and museum items.

I found the work very interesting and developed a thirst and passion for her quickly. Before long, five months of volunteering had passed and the ship was due to sail north, to Cairns via Mackay, Port Douglas and Cooktown, as she did that time every year during her time on the east coast.

This was when I was lucky enough to secure a position aboard as volunteer crew, one of 16, but arguably one of the least experienced at sea, let alone on a 16th century square rigger replica.

The time at sea was amazing.

What a transition; the little ship that had lay static in Brisbane for months suddenly came alive, bounding along inside the barrier reef with a bone in her teeth.

I began to realize that an

entire industry existed that I had never even considered... that of the professional square rig sailor, be it captain, mate, Bosun, sail-maker, rigger or engineer. Even the cook on this voyage was a seasoned square rig sailor.

The time went by all too quickly and before long we had arrived in Cairns and were busy going about setting her up as a Museum again for the locals.

We also organised a schools' program and day-sail program, along with the ever-present maintenance which such a beautiful ship needs.

With the nature of these ships, a paid crew position is a rare, and much coveted.

Luckily a position opened up a few weeks after arriving in Cairns. It was a case of being in the right place at the right time and being willing and dedicated to have a serious go at it.

I still had a lot to learn and I set about doing just that from the then Bosun, who

was also more than capable of being a Ship's Captain.

I was taught many skills which were immediately useful for the ship, but not necessarily for me. I was shown how to set up a ship's rig, how to use the tools that exist nowhere else but shipboard; tools for seizing, serving, splicing and sewing. I was taught the basics of setting trimming and dousing sail. And I loved it.

Duyfken and ships like her are, I believe best described as organic. Not just because they spend their time slowly decomposing, despite our best efforts, but because they fall just short of being a living creature. The earthiness of the woodwork, the flax rigging, the hemp, the canvas sails. It is like working with a living thing. And now, after some five years on the beautiful Dove, when at sea where she belongs, with a trained crew getting the best out of her, is as impressive to me today as it was the first time I experi-

enced her 'become as one' with the ocean.

In the five years living aboard, sailing Australia's waters, meeting other tall-ship sailors and ships, both foreign and local, I am always impressed with how warm, welcoming and helpful is the tall-ship community.

Duyfken has given me some amazing experiences, such as riding out the 2011 floods in Brisbane, the Australia Day Tall-ships parade in Sydney Harbour (read "race" to all tall-ships involved) and being part of three documentaries.

But it's probably the sailing with 200 plus wonderful ship-mates, meeting 500 plus volunteer guides, crew and staff, and seeing the smiling and amazed expressions on the faces of thousands of school children that lingers.

Last but not least is that I have been aboard as she has covered about 10,000 nautical miles under sail."

As a footnote to this story readers will have seen how Robin Chester the ship's captain volunteered after reading the articles in *Have a Go News*.

Well Bosun Andrew Bibby is desperately in need of a ship's engineer, plus carpenters and more.

So please if you'd like to join the ships family send your details to marketing@duyfken.com and they'll get Andrew to give you a call.