

## **Aaron Gavey – Jersey Harbours Apprentice**

I have been amazed at the scale of work undertaken by Jersey Marinas in my first six months with them. Even as a local boat owner myself, I had not appreciated the vast amount of administration involved with the management of the marinas and outlying harbours.

A log of every berth in each of the three marinas is completed daily for St Helier and La Collette and weekly for Elizabeth Marina to ensure boats are in the correct berth and, if not, that they are being invoiced correctly for the period of stay.

The spring is also when many boat owners renew their annual JY number registration. Hundreds and hundreds of registrations come through to the Marine Leisure Centre, and each has to be processed and updated on the Marina Management System before the new certificate can be issued.

Preparations for May's Jersey Boat Show began weeks in advance. Every pontoon plank in the marina was inspected and fastened at any sign of a hazard to the public, and whole pontoon sections had to be towed and shifted into place to accommodate the exhibiting boats in the most efficient and accessible layout possible. Over the three-day show the Marina Staff, myself included, had to be present on the pontoons to attend to the public.

In the summer months it became apparent to me how vital the organisation of the visiting craft becomes. Each day an accurate and detailed berth list is drawn up to identify how many spaces were available for visiting boats. If the marina was closed for most of the day over the low tide, the holding pontoons just outside the gates would be swarming with boats all waiting to enter the marina at the first chance and intent on attaining the best berth possible.

It was our job to get out there in the thick of it all in the Marina Dory, which was crucial in obtaining some form of organisation. I was taught that the most effective way of controlling the berthing would be to barricade the entrance to the marina – literally! This was the best way of sifting through and allocating the most suitable berths for each boat. I also quickly learned that some directions to foreign visitors were conveniently lost in translation!

We next assist the crews by taking ropes and getting them tied up and secure. One incident saw me nearly end up in the water as I took the ropes for a boat whose captain decided to change his mind and back away at the last minute, only just failing to take me

with him.

Once everyone is reasonably settled, it is time to begin 'reggling' – the art of clambering over the newly arrived visitors to collect their dues, with a hand held PC and ticket dispenser and a rather fetching bum bag full of change.

The apprenticeship has also meant attending several courses. We are due to commence an NVQ in Port Operations in September and I am grateful to Ron Du Feu who, as my mentor, has been heavily involved in the planning process of this.

**ENDS**

