



Carl Gavey – Jersey Harbours Apprentice

My first six months as a Jersey Harbours Port Operation Apprentice have flown by. I have done a wide range of activities, including navigational mark maintenance, assisting ships in and out of port with the Duke of Normandy, pilotage work, general maintenance with TTS around the port, helping with search and rescue and towing in stricken yachts. In between I have been working maintaining all of the States vessels.

As part of the pilotage service, I have acted as coxswain/crew of the pilot cutters Rival and Le Fret, which provide ships over 35m safe access into the port. We have to be on board ready to leave within 30 minutes of being called to meet the ship at the pilot station, either at Le Fret Point or the Demie de Pas lighthouse. When you get called at 3am, when it is wet, windy and cold, it can be hard to get out of bed and down to the boat! Also it doesn't give you time for breakfast or a shower, so we are lucky that the Duke has facilities so we can freshen up afterwards – and the two good cafés on the pier do well out of us!

The pilot boats are also used for trips to the Minquiers and Ecréhous to clean slipways, take painters to beacons and navigational mark engineers to buoys and beacons. This has improved my knowledge of local waters and on how to land and go alongside different locations in various conditions with different boats.

The smaller work boats are involved with ladder checks, power washing, taking painters to navigation marks and helping TTS port maintenance staff when they require a vessel. We also tow in broken down boats when required by VTS/Coastguard. It is surprising how many boats we actually have to tow in each week.

I have really enjoyed working on the Duke of Normandy, which has many uses with its lifting ability. It also assists larger ships in and out the port in adverse weather conditions and helps tankers in and out of La Collette tanker berth.

The Duke is also used to replace all the major navigational buoys around the Island in conjunction with the TTS navigational engineers. We have to load the new chain, block and buoy onto the Duke, head to the desired location, retrieve the old buoy onto the

deck of the Duke and deploy the new buoy in the exact location. I find this part of the job really interesting and enjoyable. It gives me the chance to navigate and helm the Duke on the trip to the location. I also get to use and drive the crane and winches.

I have regular meetings with my mentor, Ron Du Feu, Second Skipper of States Vessels, who gives me research topics to increase my knowledge and is organising the NVQ in Port Operations that I'll be undertaking in the next few months.

