

The Start of IODP Expedition 347, Baltic Sea Paleoenvironment

The Baltic Expedition had been a long time in the planning, but was eventually about to happen in Autumn 2013. The Greatship Manisha travelled over from the other side of the world to the mobilisation port in Falmouth, UK. Most of the ESO team arrived on 2/3 September and our various mobile lab/office/storage shipping containers were loaded on to the back deck of the ship in the evening of the 2nd.



Photos Mary Mowat©ECORD/IODP and Dave Smith©ECORD/IODP

Once we arrived we got settled in to the Greatship Manisha. It was a bit like deja vu for some of us as the Manisha is a sister ship of the Greatship Maya which we used on a previous IODP expedition back in 2010 (Expedition 325 Great Barrier Reef Environmental Changes) so it didn't take too long to find our way around and feel at home. I even have the same equivalent cabin as last time.



Photos Mary Mowat©ECORD/IODP

The accommodation on the ship includes the mess where we have all our meals. They keep us really well fed with a good selection of food including lots of curries. There's also some lounge and office space and a gym.



Photos Carol Cotterill@ECORD/IODP and Dave Smith@ECORD/IODP

The ship wasn't quite ready so mobilisation took a bit longer than the couple of days originally planned... The back deck and drill floor were still being finished off and there was a lot of welding going on everywhere and many of loads of equipment and supplies were being lifted from the quayside onto the ship.



Photos Mary Mowat@ECORD/IODP and Dave Smith@ECORD/IODP

We unpacked and started work on getting the containers/labs and equipment ready. There was lots to do. Alan connected up the electricity and Hans and I installed the network cables between the containers and got the servers and network up and running. Annette and Annick the petrophysicists got the MSCL (Multi Sensor Core Logger) instruments ready while Luzie sorted the geochemistry lab and Ali and Graham checked out the coring equipment among various other tasks. Andy Frazer and his crew worked on the drill rig and drilling equipment.

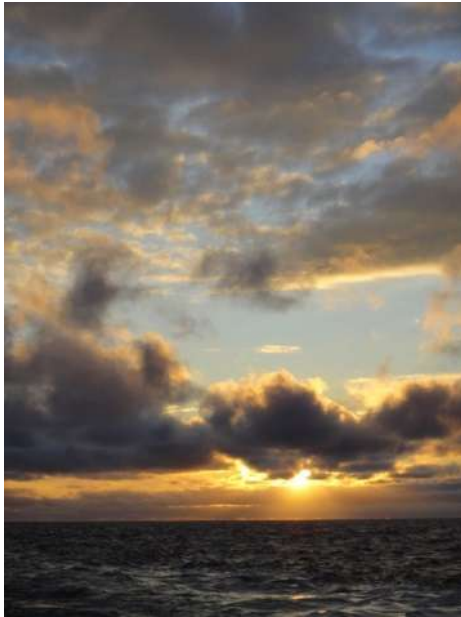


Photos Jeroen Groeneveld©ECORD/IODP and Dave Smith©ECORD/IODP

It was the last few days of the summer in sunny Falmouth and sometimes we went for a beer in one of the quayside beer gardens in the evening; each time thinking this might be our last before sailing... this happened for quite a few days...



Both photos Mary Mowat©ECORD/IODP



Both photos Mary Mowat©ECORD/IODP

Finally the ship was ready and we departed from Falmouth on Monday 9th September on our way over to Kiel in Germany which took 2.5 days. The crossing started off fairly nice, but later the sea turned a bit rougher.... so a few people got a bit sick... this is the not so fun part of being at sea.



Photos Jeroen Groeneveld©ECORD/IODP and Mary Mowat©ECORD/IODP

We passed through locks of the Kiel Canal and then docked to refuel and pick up the scientists and also Carol and Sophie, the ESO Expedition Project Managers who all came from a pre-expedition science meeting in Copenhagen during the previous week.

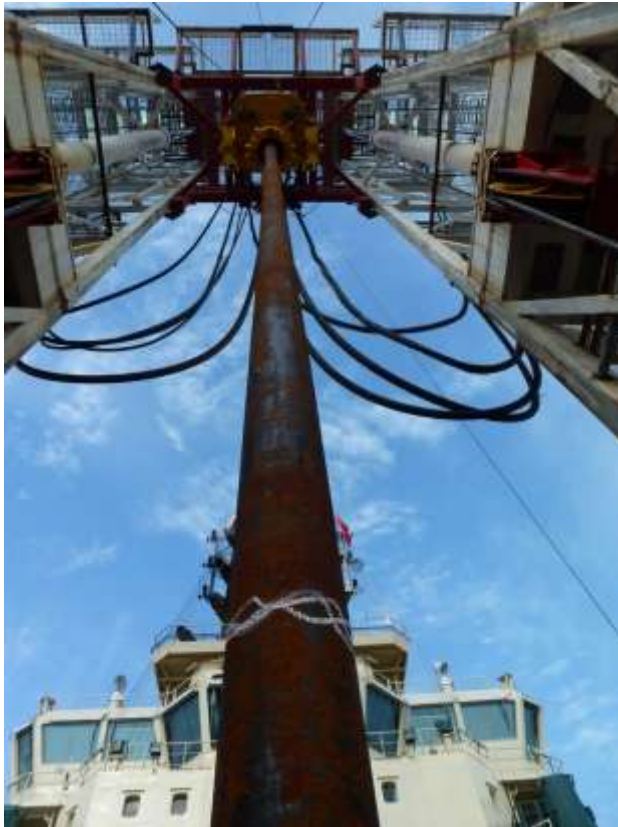


Photos Nan Xiao©ECORD/IODP, Aarno Kotilainen©ECORD/IODP and Carol Cotterill©ECORD/IODP

The scientists (a mixture of microbiologists, geochemists, sedimentologists, micro-palaeontologists and stratigraphic correlators) boarded early in the morning and were shown round the ship and introduced to everyone and to their various laboratories where they're going to be working for the next 60 days. The scientists come from many different countries and some haven't been to sea before, or not for a trip of quite this length. They quickly adapted to their new environment and worked on setting their work spaces up such as the microbiology lab. They also added a few unique touches such as some plants for the science garden and a hi-tec coffee machine brought by Barry, one of the microbiologists.

Including us, the ships crew, the drillers, the wireline loggers and a hydrographic surveyor, there were now 66 people onboard the vessel. We started getting used to working a shift pattern. We work 12 hour shifts with most people either working midday to midnight, or midnight to midday, with a few of us doing cross-over shifts from 6am to 6pm or 6pm to 6am.

Later that day on 12 September we set sail for the first site, BSB-3, not far off the Danish coast. After a short transit it was time to start coring!



Photos Carol Cotterill@ECORD/IODP



Photos MaryMowat@ECORD/IODP, Outi Hyttinen@ECORD/IODP and Caroline Slomp@ECORD/IODP

The first core!