

Expedition Log for IODP Expedition 347

Week 5

In this instalment, Drilling Coordinator Graham Tulloch shares his views on life on board the Greatship Manisha – Language coaching, knitting and the GMDB!

Here we are, sailing around the Baltic Sea for 60 days. We work in two teams; Dayshift 12 noon until 12 midnight and Nightshift, 12 midnight to 12 noon this means we make best use of the time we have on the ship.

Unfortunately, although we are ‘sailing’ around the coast of Denmark and Sweden and have 12 hours when we are not working we cannot get off the ship, we are here 24 hours a day so no sight-seeing opportunities, no ‘retail therapy’ options and none of the things you at home can do if the mood takes you.

So, what do we do when we are not working? Mostly we sleep: not very exciting but necessary (more so for some than others admittedly), eat and watch films (movies).

The dayshift has what has turned into an informal “film club” which has a few regulars including the “founding members” of myself, Dalton Hardisty and Alan Gillies. Alan has since switched shift so can’t take part now.



CarolCotterill©ECORD_IODP_IMG_1395: Dayshift Film Club Jeanine Ash, Dalton Hardisty and Graham Tulloch with the now absent Alan Gillies in the front row.

We meet after supper in the lounge and by committee decision a film is selected. On occasion if someone has a strong opinion on a particular choice they can take it upon themselves to choose a film. This can be a dangerous strategy as by the unwritten consensus you do not get many of these selections and if it is decided by the rest of the viewers to be a poor selection it will be held against you for some time so it is best to “go with the flow”. However if by chance you make a good selection your standing in the club rises and you can be seen as a safe pair of hands and additional weighting is given to your opinion. There is also a possibility the selected film may not be available in English, or may end 20 minutes in, these events also count as black marks against the chooser! Such is the life we lead. Rock & Roll it is not!!

To extend the evening a little we sometimes have a discussion at the end of a film and rate it to provide a GMDB figure (Greatship Manisha Data Base, not to be confused with other similar systems). These discussions can be heated and contentious depending on the film. Sherlock Holmes for example... do NOT get me started! However at times there is a consensus when everyone agrees which makes the discussion short and can propel a film to the top of the list, Gran Torino. What a film, we cannot recommend it enough.

By way of comparison and to check our scores Ian Marshall wrote an algorithm which compares the order by which people have sorted the films they have watched against everyone else's and by assigning a value to these ratings a Manisha Movie Results table is produced. Life on the edge!!

There has been an explosion of craft production onboard. It started with one member of the science party, Jeanine Ash and slowly swept through the ESO team engulfing Carol and Sophie. To be fair, Carol brought needles and wool with her with the intention of picking the skill back up again after laying her needles down quite a few years ago but Sophie is new to the pastime. A result of the increased activity a call for more wool was made and a few balls were brought out on the boat with the journalists a couple of weeks ago.

There are now a number of new woollen items being worn which have come in handy as the weather is becoming cooler with each passing day and so the scarves and snoods are most welcome to the owners. More worryingly is the uptake of this skill by the Operations Superintendent, Dave Smith. Jeanine gave Dave a ball of “America's Finest Cotton” which to the uninitiated (me) it looks like a ball of string. I think Dave is attempting to knit a vest however it does not have the correct hole count so I fear for the results. He takes this new hobby very seriously and can be spotted in various places around the ship with his needles. I await the first details of Dave knitting at his 10:30 meeting with the Captain such is his enthusiasm.



CarolCotterill©ECORD_IODP_IMG_1365: Operations Superintendent, Dave Smith and Jeanine Ash & Sophie Green in discussion. Note Jeanine's knitting tools spread out on the table.

There are one or two small games on board, as well as the ubiquitous deck of cards there is a connect-4 game which is used heavily at times with continual games and a winner stays on rule. I think there are also other strategies in play, including "I want a cup of coffee so I'd better lose now" and "it's close to meal-time, I'd better lose to get to the front of the queue".

Having such a diverse crew on board the ship (I think at the last count we had personnel from 20 or so countries), allows for a good cultural exchange. The working language on the ship for both ship-side and the science party is English and so conversations tend to be held in English whether they are around the dinner table or on deck. Unless of course more than one of the same nationality are chatting together, this is also fortunate for those of us who do not have a second language.



CarolCotterill@ECORD_IODP_IMG_1366: Dave knitting and Sophie and Dalton playing connect-4 with Jeanine engrossed, hardly able to contain herself.

This said I have been providing daily Scots language lessons to Jeanine so perhaps I do speak a language other than English, some of my close colleagues have been saying this for some time! I have to report that I am rather pleased with my student who has taken her lessons seriously, requesting revision on occasion prior to airing the 'Word of the Day' on the expectant. The only proviso is that Jeanine cannot manufacture a conversation to allow her to use the word.

A selection of the words and phrases taught so far are: glaikit, gliff, numpty (although this was directed at rather than provided to Jeanine), caw cannie, jacket on a shoogly peg (I was particularly pleased with her on using that correctly). We have also taught her the nautical term "blowing a hooley", which thankfully she has only had to use once this trip so far.