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The Future is Brightlingsea



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This month kicked off with a sail making, repair and rigging course. I learned how to patch up sails properly and the properties of different sails and rigs. We each got a sailors palm which we worked hard to mould to our hand. This is a leather and rawhide strap with a large steel thimble that sits at the base of your thumb. They help push sturdy needles through the heavy sailcloth. I also had a lot of fun making a bosun's bucket over the course of the week. With a few tips from our wonderful instructors, I soon had a very useful tool bag. It is made of thick canvas with a sheet of plywood lining the bottom, a wire grommet sewn into the rim but, most importantly, it has plenty of pockets!





I got the chance to learn welding at IBTC. It was such great fun to learn and such a practical and transferrable skill to have. We were given a talk on safety and the basics of welding, then we were allowed free reign of the skip to find materials for our 'creations'. There are few things as fun as a good skip dive and once I found a small metal spade an idea blossomed from there. By the end of the day, I had a strange little metal demon who I was inordinately proud of. He was given to Sharon, the admin wonder woman at IBTC, to guard her garden. We spent a couple of days doing a lofting course. It was so interesting how much information you can get from a few tables of numbers and I really enjoyed learning how the different lines of the boat relate to each other. I now have a beautiful lofting plan decorating my wall.

The end of our time at IBTC came along too fast and the last day was very bittersweet. It was really quite sad to leave such a welcoming place where I had learned so much and made many friends, although I was still excited for a fresh start with the Pioneer Sailing Trust. I think IBTC provided a safe learning environment where every question was answered with care and attention. The people, instructors and students alike are so friendly and made me feel right at home. Thank you so much to everyone at IBTC - you will be sorely missed.



After saying my goodbyes at the college, it was off to find a new home in Brightlingsea and was welcomed with a storm to get me settled into my little caravan! Joking aside, I have moved to a really lovely place and I am looking forward to spending the next few months here. The town is quaint and seems to have plenty going on including yoga classes, poetry readings and live music - not nearly as sleepy as I thought it might be. My first day at Pioneer had me covered in Stockholm tar. Brilliant! I spent the first week serving the

shrouds and seizing wire around blocks, which got a few hard knocks from my rigger's mallet. Seizing is a way of protecting the wire shrouds from rust and prolonging their lifespan. We started by thickly brushing on melted lanolin (the oil from sheep's wool), then tightly parcelling it by wrapping strips of tarred canvas around with the lay of the wire. To finish off we used a seizing mallet to tightly wrap tarred marlin around against the lay of the wire. I have also been stripping the paint of oars and spars in preparation to repaint and revarnish which while time-consuming, will be so satisfying when they look as good as new. The refit is in full swing and it feels good to use the skills I was given at IBTC. There is a lovely atmosphere in the boatshed and I am really lucky to be working with such lovely people. The first evening I was there we went climbing, something I haven't done much of but really enjoyed. My hands have gone pathetically soft without lines to haul on so I came out of the place with blisters on my hands and a smile on my face. It's all good practice for shimming up the shrouds or skipping up the luft when the sailing season starts.



Tools for Seizing Wire Around a Block