

March 2020

Pioneer: Ready and Waiting

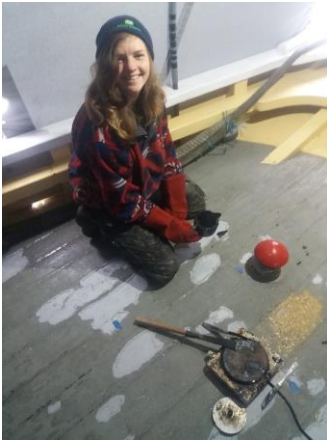


Alanna
Cameron



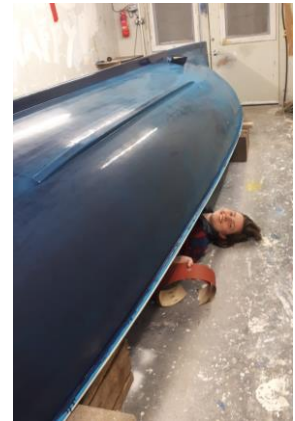
It has been all go at Pioneer this month. I've been stripping back, painting and varnishing the oars and mizzen spars - they look lovely now that they are all smart and shiny. I have used many different types of paint, learned how they need to be prepared and what conditions they need to go off properly. It is quite a minefield so it has been beneficial to use them to gain a better understanding of the importance of doing it by the book. A little bit of fancy work to finish off the spars was brilliant fun, a turks heads on the sculling oar had it looking very posh. Side note: A fun legend of the origin of the word *posh*, is that it originated on voyages between Britain and India where the most desirable cabins were out of the afternoon heat, so the best cabins were Port Out Starboard Home, forming the acronym posh. Unfortunately, there is no actual evidence to back it up but it's an amusing story all the same.





The deck was also due for some repair this month. *Pioneer's* deck is solid wooden planking and the gaps between are stuffed tightly with oakum. Pitch is then melted and poured over the top of these gaps to form a waterproof seal. We were just doing a few patch repairs, it was great fun melting the hot, sticky tar and sealing up the deck.

The Pioneer Sailing Trust also has apprentices who build fantastic rowing gigs. I did get a spin in one, certainly is hard work but such an enjoyable sport.



Many of the surrounding towns now have their own rowing clubs with these gigs and there is plenty of friendly (and fiercely competitive) competition between them. The Wivenhoe rowing club brought *Audacity*, the third gig built at *Pioneer*, back for a paint job. I had never painted anything that needed so fine a finish so it was quite a task. Sanding it back was the most time-consuming part of the job. We then went around faring out any of the knocks and bumps with dolphin glaze filler. It is a brilliant product, it is a very fine filler that goes off quickly and is very easy to sand back. Then came the painting. We used 2-pack paint, thinned to an almost water-like consistency. One of us rolled it on while the other came along

behind and tipped it off with a paintbrush. It was very satisfying when she was done and looking like new again. The sign writer paid a visit to paint her name on the bow and on some of the new gigs that had just been finished. It was incredible to see him at work. Tape was placed at the top and the base of where the lettering would be and then a stick resting between his left hand and the hull were used to steady his right hand as he painted the lettering. It was wonderful to see the level of skill it took and gave me even more of an appreciation of the variety of talented experts that are needed to produce a boat.



The final week of March the realisation of the severity of COVID-19 escalated drastically. Numbers of workers were limited in the boatshed so I was off for the final week. It is quite a surreal time.

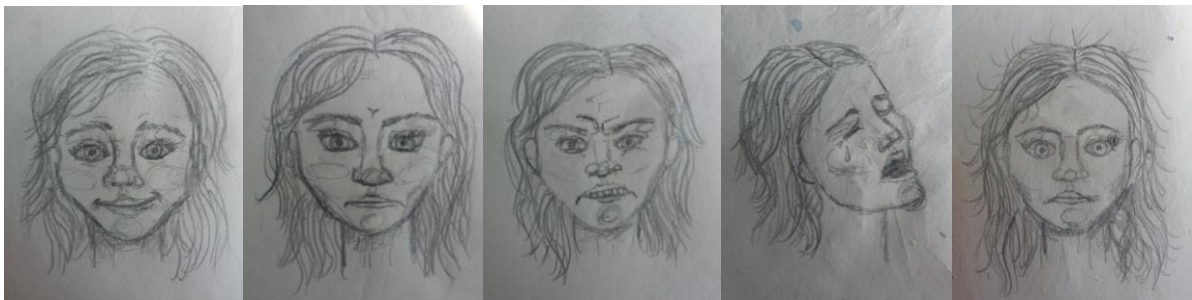
With the likelihood of sailing in the immediate future decreasing, I borrowed a friend's dingy and tried to take it for a spin. Unfortunately, the hole in the hull was too much of an impediment and it began to quickly sink. It was a valiant effort all the

same but it looks like sailing is on the backburner for now. The boatshed is going to go into lockdown in a couple of weeks' time. I'll be back to work the start of April to help do the final few bits on *Pioneer* so that she will be able to wait happily ready to spring into action when this blows over. I am planning my isolation activities. I have an online Yachtmaster theory course that will keep me plenty occupied and I have been lucky enough to be able to use one of the sheds on the farm as a workshop!



I also got a hold of a second-hand bike for my daily exercise and as an avid crocheter I have just started a new blanket project. Overall, I am really quite lucky and I am looking forward to having plenty of space and time to learn lots. I hope that you are all keeping well in this strange time.

The Five Stages of Sanding



Enthusiasm

Irritability

Rage

Grief

Hollow