

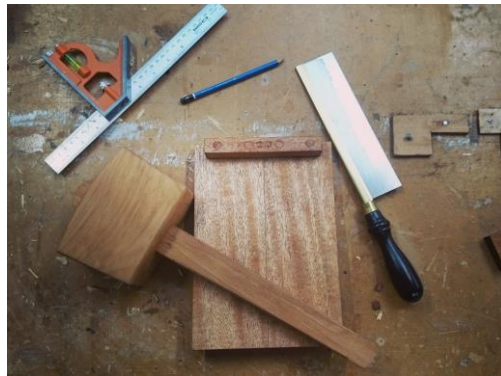
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# Woodwork is Hard Work



Alanna  
Cameron

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I was particularly looking forward to our stint in the International Boatbuilding Training College and I was not disappointed. With little to no knowledge of boat building and repair, I was eager to learn lots of new skills. I have always loved creating things and am quite practical but I've never had an opportunity to develop it. The first week we spent time studying terminology and the properties of wood. It was like learning a whole new language.



In the training cabin we were taught how to make deck beams by building jigs and laminating. We constructed a wooden template and bent thin pieces of wood over it, gluing each layer to the last, then clamped it in place. Next lesson was steaming. We steamed timbers and bent them. It was surprising how flexible they were for how short a time they had been steamed. I used to work with a basketmaker and we would steam the willow before weaving it. It is really interesting to see how the same skills are used for the two different forms of craft.

Soon it was into the joinery workshop for a few weeks. It took a while to learn the basics. Getting a piece of wood flat and in square is much harder than I imagined. Our first project was the bench hook, a test to get everything perfectly in square, then learning how to glue pieces properly. I was quite pleased with mine, the glue line was barely visible. However, I am convinced it is becoming more noticeable by the day. Either that or my eyes are becoming more finely tuned to achieve perfection.



Next was the mallet. This project was particularly interesting, as it involved more complex curves than what we had done previously. A mortis had to be chiselled out of the head of the mallet so that the tapered handle would slot through it perfectly. While it got quite frustrating, it was really quite rewarding when it finally fitted together. I also got a head start on Christmas presents this month by making my Grandpa a set of mahogany coasters. I really love that the instructors at college are so helpful when you try out some of your own projects.



Some Sketches of the Beautiful Pilgrim