

# TRAINEE BLOG: BELINDA CREE

AUGUST 2021

## MY FIRST RESIDENTIAL!

Right at the end of July there (after I wrote that month's blog), we had our first residential of the season (and my first ever as crew!). This was with the Royal Association for Deaf People (R.A.D.)

It was a really great learning experience for me - one highlight in particular would be doing a night watch for the first time. I just loved it, revising your lights on black flashcards is one thing, but actually using that knowledge to identify other vessels in the pitch black while you're cutting across the Thames estuary towards the Dover channel is another thing entirely!

There was even one set of lights which no one on deck recognised, one of the trainees from R.A.D. and I had many theories... Was it the back of a cruise ship? A yacht covered in fairy lights? Alien spaceship? Turned out to be the *Golden Horizon*!

It's the largest square rigged sailing ship in the world (hence thinking it could have been a cruise ship), and they had the yards on all of their 4 masts lit up in the night (like a Christmas tree...) so that was a cool spot. Also, a rare example of when binoculars fail you, sometimes you can just get your phone out and check the Marine Traffic app!

The group we had on board did a fantastic job - they were an older group (aged 15-19) up for a challenge - and they got one! After we left the mooring on their first day, we sailed straight for 28hrs without stopping, and that was only the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> day of a 7 day trip. Props to any non-sailor willing to get up of their bunk at 3am to get dressed top to toe in oilskins and sit on the deck box in the rain for 3 hours...

Here is a summary of what we got up to on the week-long trip:

### Saturday

Group arrived  
Sailing all day and  
night towards the  
Lymington

### Sunday

Still sailing!  
Anchored tonight  
near Chichester

### Monday

Day sail onward to  
Lymington, berthed  
at the Yacht Club

### Tuesday

Memorial service and  
reception, stayed  
another night in  
Lymington

### Wednesday

Left for  
Brightlingsea, but  
sought shelter for the  
night in Eastbourne

### Thursday

Left Eastbourne to  
continue to  
Brightlingsea, sailed  
through the night

### Friday

Arrived in  
Brightlingsea and  
then debriefed with  
the group on land

379 MILES  
6.8 KTS AVG.

## IT'S NOT ALL SAILING

During the month, I had to take a couple days out to go back to Northern Ireland for a test, and the week after that I skipped the next residential to focus on working in the yard instead. Some of this time was spent doing my usual thing - I like to check on the boats we have at the yard after it's rained and make sure they are bailed out, and I generally do quite a bit of tidying and organising the container too... But with Pioneer being away all week, the place was much quieter so as well as those tasks I was also able to take on a few other wee projects.

One of these was a deep clean! Did you know that under the right conditions, dust can become explosive? Well it sure can - so although ridding a warehouse-sized boatbuilding workshop of dust would be a task worthy to rival that of Sisyphus rolling the boulder up a hill in Hades for all eternity... there are some very legitimate safety reasons for giving it a go! It's more the build-up of dust and fine particles that could pose a potential hazard, as with a high enough concentration of combustible material in the air - any possible source of ignition (hot surfaces, friction, static shock, electrical arcing) could cause it all to combust rapidly.

While giving some of the workshop spaces the undivided attention of a very powerful '*Festool*' Hoover... I decided to record some footage of me cleaning, purely because it was quite satisfying to look at the dust disappearing! But there ended up being more than enough footage to make a video out of, so I made this little (comical) video of me working my butt off to get the place looking shipshape!

[CLICK THE PICTURE BELOW TO WATCH ON YOUTUBE](#)

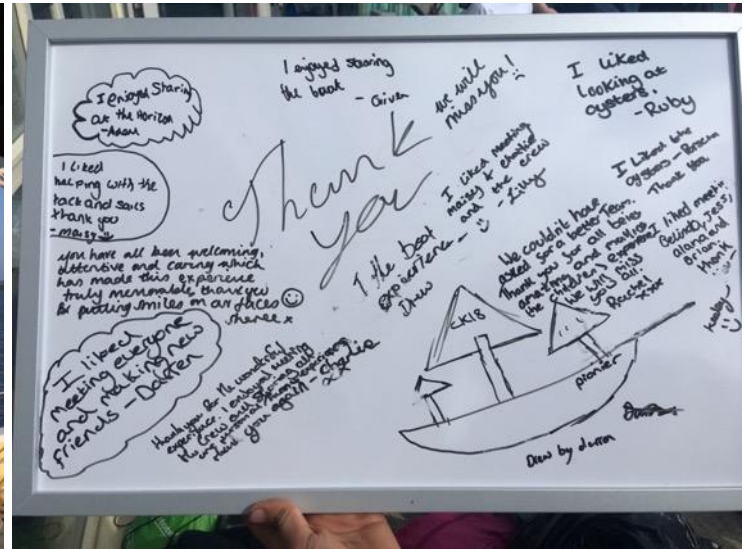


Link not working? Try here: <https://youtu.be/gd-cjizlO5Q>

## SUFFOLK FAMILY CARERS RESIDENTIAL



A composite of two photos I took on the mooring beside Osea Island - one in the evening and one in the morning. From our spot we could very clearly spot VENUS, JUPITER, and SATURN!



I thought I heard some conspiratorial whispering below deck! The kids each left us a little thank you message on our whiteboard, such a lovely way to get their feedback.

My next residential was with the absolute heroes that are Suffolk Family Carers! We had the young adult group with us, with ages ranging from about 13-16. It was only 3 days (2 nights) but it was an adventure from start to finish - the group were just so engaged with what we were doing and some of them especially really exceeded expectations as for how easily they managed to become familiar with the jobs on deck in such a short period of time, on the way back to Brightlingsea we had a pretty finely tuned tack!

I'd also brought with me all of the embroidery materials I had spare from the classroom workshop I put together a few weeks ago - I just thought it would be a really good 'aside' activity - perfect for foul weather or anyone who *really* wasn't up for getting involved in every aspect of the sailing.

This proved a huge hit! I offered everyone the chance to sit down for a bit and do some embroidery, and both leaders and about half the young people took me up on this - and then 3 or 4 kept on the activity after the initial session where I was there to help re-thread needles and help cut threads...

I was so glad I had this activity ready to go in the background, on a surface level it was cool to be able to introduce folks to something new in a quiet moment on board - when folks were engaged and in the mood to give it a try. But on a deeper level this also gave me the chance to get to know some of the quieter group members a bit better - I think it was easier for some of them to open up a little while we had an individual task to focus on, no awkward eye-contact or social pressure when you're engrossed in your stitches! I was really pleased to see some of them take their embroidery hoops home with some extra supplies, to finish off their project or to give to a sibling - that's how I got into embroidery crafts, someone else showed me how.


## D-BIT DAY SAILS

We had a couple of day sails with the Divisional Based Intervention (D-BIT) team this month. They work with families in the local area identified as being on the edge of care due to a breakdown of family relationships - and on the day sails, their social worker or support worker will come along too.

Everyday was different - I didn't know day to day say how many adults or kids there might be, if that was all one family or 2 or 3... so every day was a clean slate with new folks to get to know. I love introducing the boat to people who haven't been on a sailing vessel before - but it's the quality time away from the usual comings and goings of everyday life that I think provides an amazing opportunity for families to just hang out together in a way that might be quite difficult at home. Pretty much everyone will be doing something (or lots of things) for the first time, so it's a great environment where the crew can support them in this, and encourage families to work together onboard.



# JASPER'S LOGBOOK

What we can see 




**BOAT**



**COOKER**



**TORCH**

What I like 



**SHARK**

**HOT CHOCOLATE**



**LADDER**



**BUNK BEDS**


SAFETY SCENARIOS



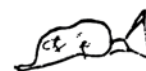
**FLARES**



**LIFEJACKET**

What we can hear 


**WAVES**



**ENGINE**



**RADIO**

What is new 

**FINS**

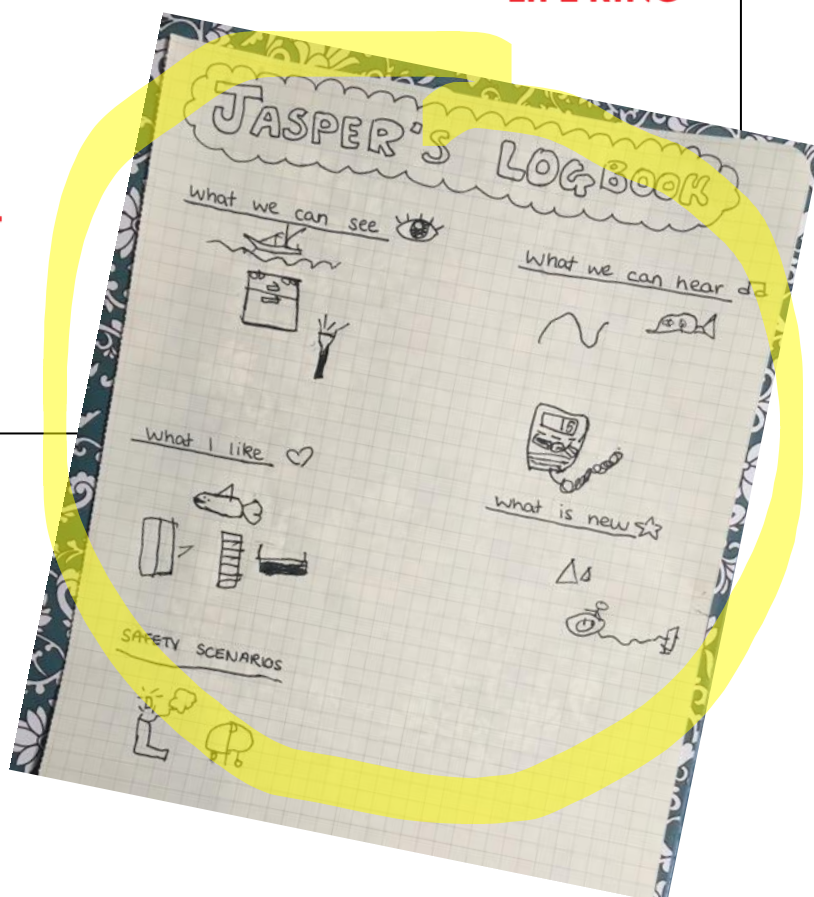


**LIFE RING**

One of the kids onboard was younger than our usual clientele, and sometimes that can make it tricky for them to get involved in everything on deck - those spars are heavy! But I had an idea...

I took out my notebook and wrote down some headers for him to draw pictures underneath, to keep him safely occupied - but still engaging in the vessel and this new experience.

Look at the detail! He even wrote the channel number on the VHF radio!



## VISITING GROWLER IN BURNHAM OVERY STAITHE

My very last port of call on the traineeship was a masterclass scheduled for the last day of August. Jess and I travelled up the length of East Anglia to visit Ash Faire-Ring near King's Lynn.

Ash is a young boatbuilder who has taken on 'Growler' - a great wee barge - that he has been lovingly restoring for about 2 years now. Now, over the course of the traineeship I have seen many boats! And I have seen quite a few projects in progress - but it was still special to get Ash's perspective on the rebuild and hear from him what hurdles there had been to overcome, or what surprised him, or what advice he would give someone else considering a similar venture etc.

Now, it might sound like a nitpick! But I was quite curious to know if Ash had come up against any issues or decisions when it came to *coding* the vessel. I knew it was his intention to have Growler running as a commercial vessel, so I wanted to know if that had impacted any of his decisions when it came to *how* he was rebuilding her - was there ever a choice to be made with what he'd consider a preferable or more authentic feature that just wasn't going to jibe with modern commercial standards.



It was very interesting to hear how actually, this area might not have been as much of a problem in the rebuild as I had imagined. The main concern when it came to getting a heritage vessel like this sailing again was very much the structural integrity - that was a hurdle that would need to be overcome regardless of any finer details further down the line - the boat has gotta float! So any standards to meet regarding coding, seemed to follow in that vein of "things you'd need to do to the boat anyway" - so from Ash's experience - there really was very little conflict between progressing his vision for Growler while also meeting the criteria of her class for coding and insurance etc.

I think this has become an area of interest for me as with the Shipshape programme, I've gotten the benefit of training alongside some of the museum shipkeepers, and meeting some amazing people in the museum industry - and while that is very much not my field (I'm so focused on the operational side of heritage vessels and sailing them today!) - it really has piqued my interest in terms of how can we as seafarers work to protect the heritage status of the vessels we sail, and is there likely to be a practical conflict in trying to achieve both ends in addition to the purely 'academic' one. I've met and worked with boat operators with totally different approaches to preserving the 'authenticity' of their vessels, and how the heritage aspect of the vessel influences or is integrated into their day to day operations as a commercial, sea-going enterprise - so it's definitely become a recurring theme in my experience and growing understanding of the heritage maritime industry.

All that to say it was really useful getting to speak to Ash about this topic!

Also, there was the issue of funding. I did a good whack of my final year creative project at university researching the potential of crowd funding as a income source for low budget independent films, and the possibility of using this to pitch to larger studios and attract higher future investment into the same project... So of course I was fascinated to hear more about how crowdfunding had enabled Ash to tap into a reliable source of income for the project in it's earliest stages, and how the invested community this funding campaign helped him to create was still going strong - regular updates on the project keeping patrons engaged and willing to contribute again once major milestones had been met and the project had developed.

## WATCH THIS SPACE - NEW YOUTUBE CHANNEL

One of my goals during this second placement was to bring my creative skillset as a filmmaker and artist into my work in the traditional seafaring industry - both to contribute to my host organisation and to produce content that combines my passion for sail training with my love for film. Having perhaps carved out quite the niche for myself there - I've started to bring all of this footage together into a new YouTube channel, where I will keep publishing short videos about my work in the sector. You can find my channel here: [Bosun Belinda](#)

## THAT'S ALL FOLKS?

This is my final blog of the traineeship, even as I write this last paragraph I am a trainee no more!

So what is next now that my time with the Shipshape Heritage Training Partnership has ended? Well in recent days I have managed to secure some full-time refit work for myself over the winter months, so I've made the transition into gainful employment in the industry as I had hoped! I'm heading south to Southampton and I'm so excited about the work waiting for me there and what future opportunities this could lead to as well.

By the end of my first placement, I'd actually accrued quite a bit of knowledge about the sector and traditional seafaring - but I was painfully unconvinced of my own competency, and not confident at all that I had what it takes to succeed in the industry. My lack of practical experience at sea felt like something I just couldn't get away from no matter how hard I tried to learn the ropes while stuck in port.

Now, after the second placement - I'm there. While in my first year of the traineeship I soaked up all the knowledge from partners I worked with then... having the opportunity to get stuck in at Pioneer on day sails and residentials was really extra time (and support) I needed to get me to a place where I was ready to move on from the traineeship. Now, I *know* I'm competent, and I'm employable too!

I was told, right at the beginning of this journey, that after some time passed - I would have knowledge that I didn't even realise I *didn't* have before I started with SHTP2. It would all become so second-nature to me, I wouldn't remember ever learning a splice or seizing - what was once new would become normal.

I *really* took this to heart, and while I was already pre-disposed to keeping comprehensive written notes of, well... everything! I made sure that I kept a list of every. single. thing. I was learning for the first time, both to make sure I could make the most out of the incredible opportunity to learn from these industry pros - but also, in a way - just to show myself on reflection how much I had grown during the project. And honestly, it's a lot!

I want to take this opportunity (in writing and on the internet!) to thank the team at NHS and the shipshape network for their amazing, sincere, and knowledgeable support throughout my time on the project. I came looking for a new job and the makings of a career - and I'm leaving with that and so, so much more.



HOW IT STARTED



HOW IT'S GOING