

TRAINEE BLOG: BELINDA CREE

DECEMBER 2019



FINISHING THE FIRST HALF OF IBTC

A mere 6 weeks at IBTC and we have reached the half way point!

We've finished our time in the joinery workshop, which although isn't a skillset exclusive to boat building/maintenance, feels like a great foundation to have before we move on to more specific practices in the boatshed. My highlight in joinery would probably have to be the mallet I made. Although I appreciated the time and materials we had at our disposal to practice basic skills such as planing and sawing, it was great to produce something practical - especially a tool that once completed I go then go on to use in the next exercise with a chisel.

There's been a few examples I've noticed of homemade tools in the college. The tools required in traditional boat building and in the maintenance of a historic vessel don't always overlap with what's available in your local Homebase... Small, specific things like: a serving mallet for parceling lines; a heaving mallet for tightening up a wire seizing; a blunt chisel reshaped into an iron for removing oakum from seams when caulking... the list could go on.

I've been taking photos of these 'artefacts' as I've come across them in the college (much to the staff's patience!) because I'm sure that's the kind of information that'll come in handy when I go to do a job aboard Excelsior or another historic vessel. If we can't buy the right tools, I will build them!

Just at end of term there - Alana, Bronwen and I did a 3 day short course on wire splicing. I'd been looking forward to this, especially after the knots and splices we'd learnt at the beginning of the course. This felt like a (very cool) step up. I got a really good sense of what you would use different splices and wire types for, but when it comes to the actual splicing itself? Practice makes perfect and I need more practice! But to be fair even comparing my first and last attempts I could see an improvement - it's definitely more about technique than brute force.

Apart from that I've also been taking some time recently to just go over everything that we've covered so far. I've learnt more in the last month or so that I ever thought that I would - and that's not because I didn't have high expectations of the college, I did - but because I didn't think I'd personally be able to take this much in. It's been a lot of work, I take a lot of notes and revise them to keep new concepts clear in my head, but the instructors here are just second to none. Previously, in school for example, I would have struggled to ever ask for help if I didn't understand something. Whereas at IBTC, I feel totally comfortable putting myself out there, to learn new things and ask as many questions as I need to. Looking forward to coming back after the Christmas break!