

# TRAINEE BLOG: BELINDA CREE

JULY 2020

## SUMMER, SPLICES, SANDING...

Quite a pattern with me is putting what happens at the end of the month into the next month's blog... so with that in mind, last month two awesome teenage volunteers joined me on board! They live locally in the marina, and have been lending a hand for 2 hours, 4 days a week in the mornings - which has been great, it's like having 6 hands! So we've been working away steadily together, doing things like cleaning, sanding and painting (when the sunshine permits it).

On the 5<sup>th</sup> July I travelled all the way back to Northern Ireland for 2 weeks holiday. I got to see my family and friends again which was absolutely fantastic when there's been so much going on both in the world and with them since we last got to be together in person.



An English summer is still better than a Norn Irish one.



The Cree family checking out Belfast Lough



Baxter the dog keeps watch as I work at the dining room table



Socially distant bagpipes in the front garden

On my return, our Mate was coming back to work part-time so he and I have been able to work together on a few things that are new to me. For example - working on the ratlines (say: rat-lins) which are connected to the shrouds running from the bulwarks to the top of the main mast. This was actually really good craic. It was great learning something new and also getting to practice splicing - because that's a skill I'd only done the once before, (and that was in the IBTC classroom) so it was good to finally get the chance to do that 'for real', (and I was impressed I was able to remember how to do it) especially because of how much time had passed since I was taught (6 months) and how little I'd looked at it since.

I'm a bit more restricted in what I can do when it's just me aboard - same as it would be for any of the crew, no one should be working outside of the bulwarks or aloft when they are alone. But there's still plenty of things I can turn my hand to during those times, such as the monthly checks. I'm also trying to plan ahead a little, maybe prep a job I know we will do when the volunteers are here so we can make the best use of that time when we're all together. There is also the potential I could do some work on

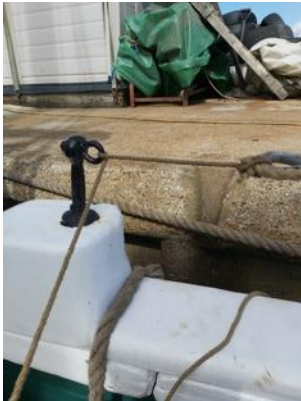
*Excelsior's* statement of significance based on National Historic Ships UK framework, which would be a slightly more academic task (i.e. sitting down and typing!) but I'm up for it and keen to read what's already there.



The aforementioned splicing. You can see here I'm using a Swedish fid to make a hole between the strands large enough to push one of the loose ends through. Then the next photo is the finished article, I could have tapered off the ends to make the difference in thickness a bit smoother but that wasn't necessary for this job, and actually would have gotten in the way of the clove hitch too.

### **Replacing the life lines** (Safety barrier which goes around the capping rail)

1



2



3



4



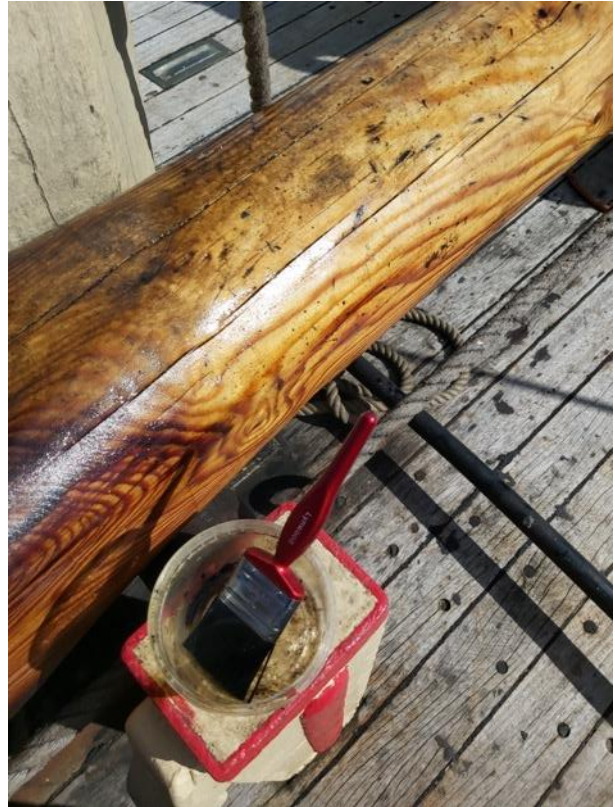
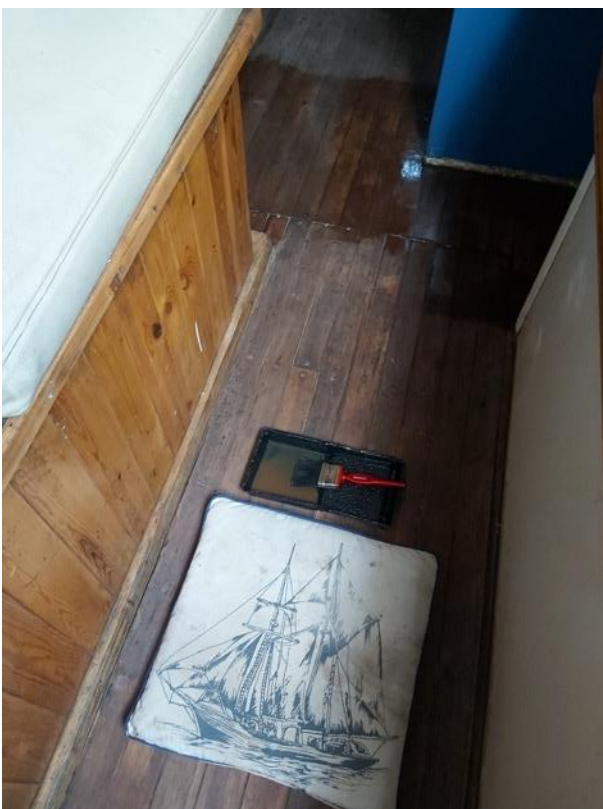
1. Rather than attaching the line to the eye here with a soft eye splice, it's been decided with should end the line with a hard eye splice (i.e. with a metal thimble) and then seize this to the eye instead. That way we can easily remove the line without having to undo the splice when we need to.
2. Finishing up with some frapping turns, now I'm using my spike to help take the end from the inside of those last 3 turns, to the outside, then back inside on the other end. I'll finish with a simple overhand knot to stop the end working its way back through this loop that I've created.
3. The finished article - note that the combined thickness of the seizing is at least that of the rope the actual line is made out of, otherwise the seizing itself would become a weak point, which is not ideal.
4. A close-up of the finished seizing including frapping turns. I've left the extra bit at the end on because it's not too long to be untidy, and it also means I can keep the whipping that's already there (win win).





Slush oil! A 70/30 mix of boiled linseed oil and Stockholm tar. I've treated one of the main mast shrouds with this concoction so far – applying it with a paint brush to the twine serving to protect it. I don't HATE the smell, but I don't love it either.

I've sanded and varnished all the soles this month. I decided to roll on some white spirit after I'd sanded and cleaned the 'floor' to make sure it was squeaky clean and the best possible surface for the new varnish.



Oiling the bowsprit with raw linseed oil – it takes much longer now to dry than it used to, as the wood is basically saturated now. The next day I then covered the whole thing in tallow (beef/mutton fat, grosser than it sounds in the sunshine...)

I've put the floorboards, fenders, lines, and some of the rig back in the ship's boat. I also put the pin cleats back in. Now she's basically ready to be launched again, and then we can bring her down to Excelsior where she lives on the deck.

