

# TRAINEE BLOG: BELINDA CREE

JULY 2021

## BACK TO SCHOOL

Previously I mentioned the primary school day sails - we had some intrepid rookie sailors joining us from a couple of local schools... but there was one class that didn't get to make it during that programme - so rather than them miss out altogether - I brought some of the craic we would have had on Pioneer to them!

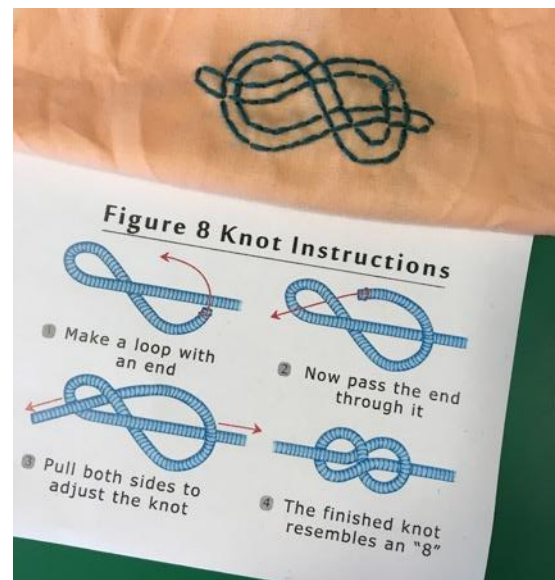
One weekend, I was invited to Elmstead Primary School, in Elmstead Market. Some of their staff had decided to host an activity weekend for their Year 6 class (that's P7 in NI), this was to make up for them not being able to go away on a residential with other schools as would be the norm before they all move on to secondary school. For a couple of hours that Saturday, I taught a workshop including a couple of knots, and how to sew - so that they could embroider their new 'knot knowledge' onto a piece of material to take home. There were 31 kids, so it was a very full classroom, and we had a great time!

When I arrived, everyone was out in the playground, so I decided to make use of this space that I don't usually have aboard Pioneer and play a game with them to get them thinking about what it'd be like to be on a big heritage vessel like Pioneer *before* I introduced the knots, so I could place them in a more practical, nautical context - I didn't want it to come across at any point that we were only learning these knots for the sake of it. The knots I'd chosen to cover were:

- **Figure 8** (a simple stopper knot)
- **Bowline** (the always-useful loop)
- **Reef Knot** (easy to tie, but easy to get wrong)



One of the pupil's finished reef knot patterns



I brought along some printed instructions with me as a visual aid to hand out so folks could re-tie everything at their own pace.

This was an incredible opportunity to do something creative with my new seafaring skills I've acquired since the start of the Shipshape project. I planned, shopped, prepared for and delivered this workshop all by myself - and the kids were so engaged and receptive to everything I'd introduced for them to try... It was just a really successful day and I'd be keen to deliver something similar again in the future. I liked being able to bring a bit of Pioneer to them on their patch even though they couldn't make it down to us. I really enjoy working with young people, teaching and crafts so it was cool to take the lead on a project like this off the boat too - I was still in my element!

## **BITS AND BOBS!**

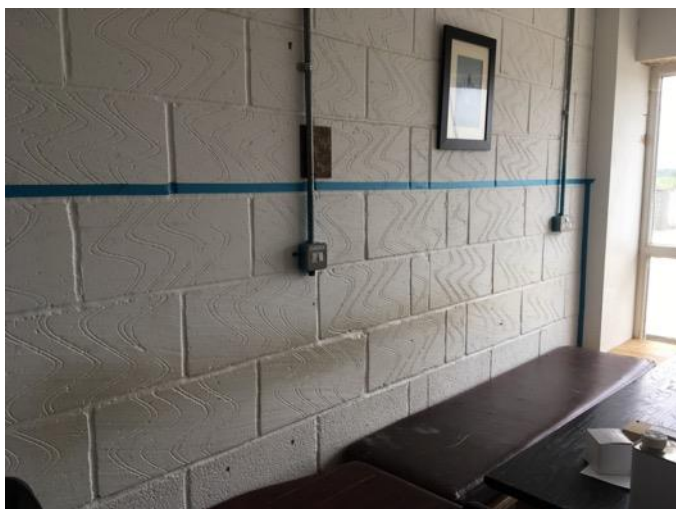
It's been a busy month for me, but it's not all been teaching and sailing. Here's some of I've been up to on land...



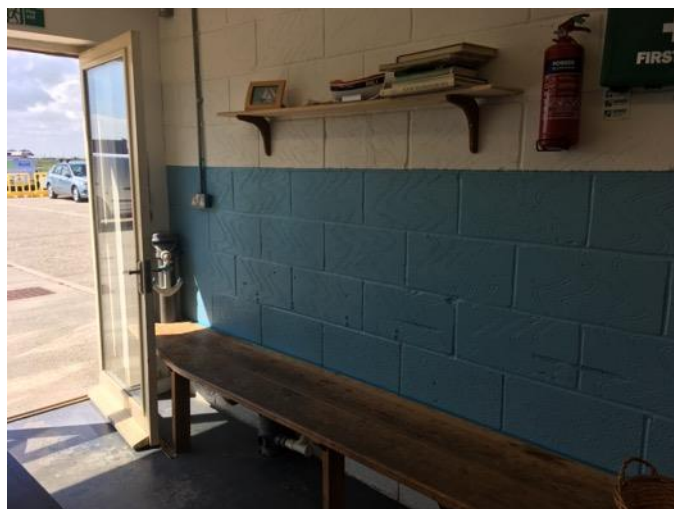
Making sure the 4-stroke outboard is seaworthy! The 2-stroke one we had been using instead wouldn't go back into neutral once you were in forward, so this was a welcome swap.



As much of the grid as I could scrap mud off by myself until I needed a water break. Not pictured: the blazing sunshine!!



Before: the break room was looking rather worse for wear - I had cleaned it up at least twice the previous week but the (not) white walls were letting it down...



After: The newly painted break room - rather than just covering up the stains with white, we went with a darker colour that would be more forgiving in future.



How do you clean the hull underwater? You don't! When I arrived, Pioneer was up out of the water on the grid - but that takes a really high tide to accomplish - an alternative is the posts in the harbour. So one high-enough tide, we brought Pioneer in off the mooring and tied her to these posts. Then when the tide went back out, she stayed upright, and Alanna, Oli and I scrambled to clean her hull between tides!





Charles the tender was looking a little worse for wear so Alanna had left on my to-do list that I should paint the insides before our first residential, which would begin at the end of July.

So, I first cleaned out the tender - this involved lifting all the boards and spraying on a marine-safe cleaning spray before scrubbing everything down (and repeating this until done!). It was very sunny when I was doing this job so once I'd bailed out the soapy water, the rest evaporated quickly in the sun so then I was able to get sanding. Then all that was left before painting, was to rub the entire boat down again - this time with acetone to remove any of the dust left.

It was an awkward job at first, lifting the boards while still giving myself somewhere in the bottom of the boat to stand - but the Hempel paint went on really well, the coverage was very thick even when mixed with thinners, so it was a simple job overall - just one coat to cover up some superficial scrapes.

Something not on my to-do list but which was catching my attention every morning I went down to the pontoon to bail rainwater out of the boats - was the state of Priscilla's tender, *Camilla*. So I boiled the kettle and gave her some TLC too!



BEFORE & AFTER:

**Top:** Sanded and painted, and the damage caused by the rowlock swinging about has disappeared... **Bottom:** Camilla really needed that scrub!

## DACON TRUST

One of the groups I've had the absolute privilege of Sailing with is the Dacon Trust - through their social enterprise, The Level Best Art Café, they provide work and life skills training to adults with learning disabilities.

They have a long standing relationship with the Pioneer Trust, and most of their group members have been on Pioneer for more day trips than I have so far! So far they've been out with us 4 times this season.

One of the most exciting activities we've been doing with the Dacon Trust is *dredging*. That is after all what Pioneer was built for! We can cast a small dredge over the side while we are under sail and bring up all manner of sealife from the sea floor. It's brilliant getting to show people just how much there is going on in that mud...

One thing that really stood out to me when I first visited Harkers Yard in October 2020 was management's commitment to people and the local community - it's a very people-focused environment and that really shows in the type of work they do and how they go about it. I think the relationship with Dacon Trust is a testament to that. I think they must see how much of a positive impact this time aboard has for their group for them to keep coming back multiple times a year - it's really encouraging to see and I find it meaningful to be a part of this valued time.



Ipswich the dog! He was our mascot for the day, brought along by one of our crew from the Dacon Trust.