

# TRAINEE BLOG: BELINDA CREE

JUNE 2020

## LOOKING SHIPSHAPE

Hello again, it can't be nearly July already - can it?!

Right at the beginning of the month I managed to secure for myself a spot of sailing! One on my nightly walks in the park I came across a family working on the rig of their river boat and we had a great socially distant conversation. They offered me use of their boat the next few days if I could bring someone with me (that I was isolating with) that could show me the ropes.

So the next morning Nick and I took to the water! It was amazing, such a valuable learning experience for me, definitely. My first go at helming from one end of the area we were in to the other took 12 tacks, but then the next time it only took me 6!

I felt much more confident about where I knew I could take the boat, like how close I could come to the wind, how quickly I'd be able to move her through the wind etc. So I could spend more time on each track, sailing closer to other boats and the shallower water.

So that was quite rewarding. It was really lovely to get to put the theory I've been learning into practice. It's one thing understanding sail theory and the points of sail - another thing entirely to make a decision on the water!



The rest of the month has been very full, with a lot of maintenance on the vessel. With just me and the Skipper on board and no other crew we sometimes feel limited in what we can take on from the refit lost we are working on - but this doesn't stop us completing what we can.

I've been spending a lot of time on my own, so I've grown quite a sense of ownership over the work I've finished here. I'm quite invested in doing a good job that will serve the vessel well in the future, especially as I currently have the time to do these things. So there's been no shortage of cleaning, sanding, chipping, anti-rusting, priming, scraping and painting! Here's some examples of what I've been able to get to so far:



One of the many rings on deck – this was unrecognisable when I started. You could see the ring, but the rust had formed a dome around the rest of it. First photo is with the galvanised steel primer, second, it's the bituminous paint.



Part of the mounting bracket for the Lister/Donkey engine, this just needed a really good clean! Over time there was just a lot of dust building up, and it also meant you couldn't see any new leaks etc. forming.



After sweeping the floor in the forepeak to within an inch of its life, I realised that the rusty ladder was the source of a lot of the mess, so promptly started chipping away at the rust – and made a bigger mess of the floor too! It looks much skinnier now, entire chunks came right off!

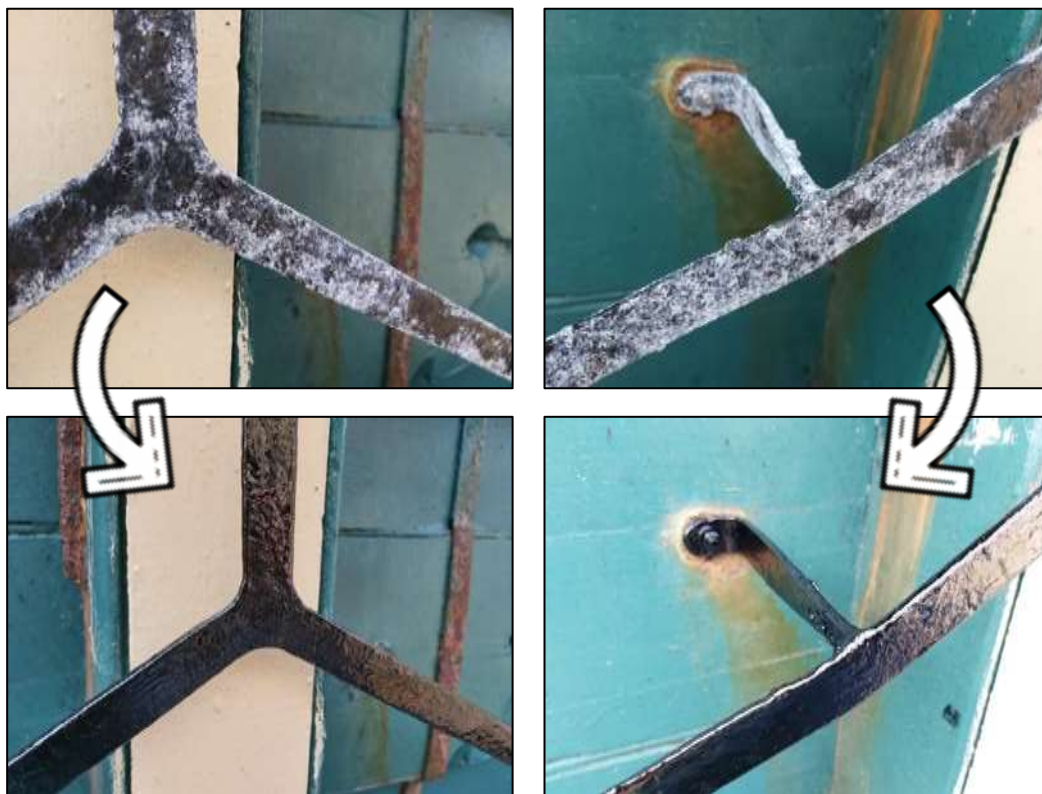


Perhaps this looked like a bigger difference in real life – but I swear there is a difference in these two photos! You can see the edges of the nut coming back into view now that I've chipped away some of the rust that had built up, and brushed it off with wire bristles.



This was a fidgety task, but I painted the pipes in the saloon which contain hydraulic fluid. They are painted orange so they can be easily identified as part of the hydraulics. These lead from the engine room up to the capstan on deck.





Giving the life-ring holders some much needed TLC on deck

I also serviced the lister/donkey engine for the first time, which took me a long time as I was so unfamiliar with it, but it clearly a very useful exercise. It can be frustrating sometimes learning by failing, but I try and stay focused on the end result - for both the equipment which is now in a better state than when I got to it, and for the knowledge gained.

One change we made to the fuel system was adding in new and extra gaskets/O-rings beside the secondary fuel filter. I'm still keeping an eye on this when I start the engine everyday as it seems to be seeping, but it is certainly a lot better than it was.



Like a weird sort of 3D jigsaw, this is me taking the entire secondary fuel filter casing off when I actually just needed to take the lid off the bottom....

The fuel filter back in place, I've tried a few different combinations of gaskets at this point – this looks like 2 metal ones, but I think I settled on 2 rubber on the outside end and 1 metal on the inside.



But there's also been lots of little things that needed done on board - there's a few miscellaneous examples below. We have a refit list we're working to at the moment, we had a four-hour meeting to go through this this month and see what could be ticked off and what was still on the priority to-do list. There're a few things I've sort of 'claimed' for my own in the coming weeks, which is kind of exciting. Just good, self-contained projects that will involve at least one of the skills I want to practice - such as fitting the new safety lines (rope splicing), and making canvas covers for the two lift rafts that sit on deck.



I did an audit of all the bunk lights on board – but bizarrely, this one wasn't even connected? So I connected the light fitting to the nearest switch... Success!



Mate Isaac tightened up this shroud lanyard recently – but we were in a rush, so he secured it with a cable tie. So I've just gone back at added a seizing here instead.



And finally... to make it easier to do a quick but accurate stock-take of the spares we are meant to carry, and so anyone can easily identify which part is for which piece of kit – I've organised and labelled all the lockers in the aft cabin ☺