

TRAINEE BLOG: BELINDA CREE

OCTOBER 2020

TIL WE MEET AGAIN?

So I left my placement vessel *Excelsior* at the beginning of this month. Then after that was the long awaited and thoroughly enjoyable masterclass with the other SHTP 2 trainees in Bristol, wrapping up this portion of the project.

I didn't get up to too much on my last 2 days at *Excelsior* - I stitched up the last of the signal flags I could find on board, well... I did as many as I had Englefield clips for. This was good practice - although I am very proficient when it comes to general needlework and sewing, the splices I did on the 3-stranded rope and the seizings I put on the more modern, multi-stranded line are still much 'newer' to me. And I do agree with the old saying that practice makes perfect!

John explained the history of Lowestoft to Isaac and I, including how the smack fishing industry came to be and the impact this had on the development of the town in its current location.



Quick visit to Lowestoft Ness (Ness Point), the most easterly point in the UK. We were looking at the distances inscribed in the ground to far away ports...



One last look at the old gal before I headed off to Bristol! The rest of the crew will be coming back and then starting the winter refit in the coming weeks.

Another last job was chalking out where there was a leak in the deck but unfortunately, due to the weather, I wasn't able to get the pitch out and start some caulking and paying up the deck seams that needed the most attention.

BRISTOL

From the 7th-9th October, I was in Bristol with the rest of the SHTP 2crew. It was brilliant - I really enjoyed the visit to M-Shed, and I found the feedback session we did really useful. It was lovely to hear about everyone else's experiences, although it was a very different year than we expected. I had some nice conversations with people about how they felt about their next steps and any sailing that was able to go ahead.

One of the highlights for me at M-Shed was hearing about the 3 vessels they maintain and operate in house, and in particular - getting to step aboard their amazing little firefighting *Pyronaut*. I was just really taken with the boat, it reminded me of one of Gerry Anderson's 'Thunderbird' machines - it was really cool!

And we also got to visit *SS Great Britain*. We heard from their Chief Conservation Engineer about the work she's been doing, their VERY high tech low humidity system protecting the hull, and their upcoming projects both with the ship and the surrounding dry dock areas.

It was very interesting, quite inspiring really, how they approached the problem of how to keep the metal hull in an environment where the humidity was low enough to halt further degradation to the material - WHILE also keeping the entire ship so accessible to the general public! It's a really cool (no pun intended...) solution that they implemented and I'd highly recommend anyone who's interested in that sort of thing to check them out!



Becky, Hannah and I onboard *Pyronaut* with its ensign flag.

The usual ensign flown on civilian and merchant ships in the UK is a plain red ensign, looking like this one with the union flag in its canton. But you can see this one is 'defaced' with a design on the fly side – this badge singles *Pyronaut* out as registered as National Historic Fleet.