

TRAINEE BLOG: BELINDA CREE

SEPTEMBER 2020

ON THE FINAL STRETCH

It's been an odd month – we were expecting to go sailing for 4 days, which would have been the most sailing we'd had arranged in one go since the start of lockdown. However, the day before this was scheduled to happen the new 'rule of 6' was announced.

This has meant more time to do things on the boat. I'm keen to make the most of the opportunity to get the vessel in the best position possible I can before the winter refit. So that's been a slight change in priorities, as the focus previously would have been specifically on jobs that needed done to make sailing possible.

Here's some photos demonstrating what I've been up to, and then some more information about a cool opportunity I had this month that took me a wee bit further afield.



Climbing up above the spreader bars and onto the topmast.

I went up to check on the topsail traveller ring, make sure it was able to run free.

There was no problem... But I *really* enjoyed climbing up there to check it out!



Giving Excelsior's signal flag collection some much needed TLC. Here you can see a little patch I've added along the edge of signal Kilo – using some recycled yellow off a much more worn flag to repair and reinforce a small hole in this newer flag. On the right, I've attached some of the new lanyards to Englefield clips with a seizing of whipping twine.



On the 3-stranded rope, I just used a splice instead of a seizing. The bottom, tapered end of the splice fitted nicely into the top of the seam where the flag is wrapped around the lanyard.



Some of the older flags were destined for the bin, so I cut a bit of red off one of them and made myself a little Bravo patch for my ditty bag (Y'know, for my first name...)



I decided to do a proper overhaul of the paint job at the helm! I'd repainted the bench in advance of our charter customers arriving – and some of the dark green areas had been done by our volunteers. But the blue covering boards needed a little love...

I'm really pleased with how this all turned out, the lines are looking really crisp and I'm happy with the angles I chose to cut the blue into the butterscotch colour at – it looks consistent.

On the left, that's a before photo for reference.



In the carbide locker: (this sits on deck, in front of the tiller by the helm)

A - Attached clip for hand-held microphone/speaker

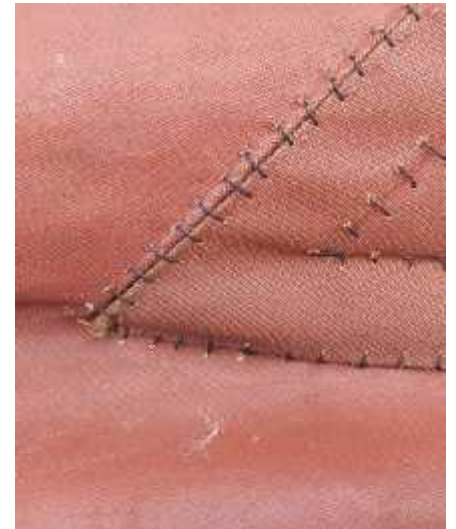
B - Cut a hole in the shelf to allow the VHF to sit lower in the locker in this recess

C - Cut semi-circular holes for the cable so the shelf so they wouldn't sit as proud at the back

D - Cut the shelf and secured the box in a way that would allow the lever to move freely



I re-did this splice, taking out the hard eye and leaving it soft instead – so that it would sit better on the transom of the ship's boat.



I fixed this patch on the mainsail – the stitching had worn away and it was at risk of ripping off completely, maybe even damaging the sail further. It took a couple days, I taught 3 of our volunteers some of the basic of sewing and sail repair – but I think we would all agreed that understanding what you need to do next doesn't make getting the needle through 4 layers of sailcloth any easier!

I had the opportunity this month to visit Pioneer Sailing Trust, based down in Harker's Yard, Brightlingsea. I had an AMAZING time – I was there for 8 days altogether and it was an incredibly valuable experience for me. I definitely left there feeling a lot more confident about myself, and optimistic about what I could be doing after my time on this project ends.

We went sailing on *Priscilla* one morning, making some instructional videos for their people about sailing smacks. That was very fun, it was great getting to sail on another vessel, and put in to practice a lot of the sailing craic I've been waiting to use! I also motored out to *Pioneer* with Alanna (their SHTP trainee) to check on the beautiful gal.

The rest of the time I was in their boatshed working alongside either their full-time boatbuilding apprentices or commercial boatbuilders. It was a great environment, I felt really comfortable there to ask questions and everyone was incredibly generous with their time and forthcoming with some top tips!

In the first week of October, I'll be travelling to Bristol with some of the other trainees to meet up with everyone else for a masterclass/end-of-this-stage-of-the-project event. I am looking forward to seeing everyone 😊!



'Lady Nancy'



Ever the consummate professional – chiselling out some space for one of the legs in a sawhorse.



In order to make batons long enough for one of their projects, I cut some feather scarfs to join two shorter pieces together.



Attaching the new batons – this allows us to check for fair lines before the planks go on.



Testing out one of the new sawhorses I put together! 80kg says it was well made...



Motoring back from Pioneer (in background)
First time I've driven a tender since
Powerboating Level 2!