

TRAINEE BLOG: BELINDA CREE

FEBRUARY 2020

EXCELSIOR AHOY!

Well, after a jam-packed final fortnight at the International Boatbuilding Training College (IBTC) – where we managed to fit in sail making and repairs; welding and lofting – the time has finally arrived for us to join our placement vessels for the season! For me, that means a 200m walk down the road from the college to where *Excelsior* is parked up for her winter refit in Oulton Broad. The Excelsior Trust also have a large tent nearby in the yard, perfect for keeping large projects dry, AND a massive concrete barge which acts as both seasonal storage and extra workshop space.



Working on the new bowsprit with volunteers



Skipper the dog laughing at my jokes

I am enjoying living on board – and not just because of the lack of a commute to work in the morning. I thought I'd find it useful to start living there before the rest of the crew moved onboard for the start of the season, as I haven't spent more than a week or so at a time living on a vessel before, and I want to get used to it while we're not moving!

In addition to painting and some bits and pieces on board, the bulk of my time has been spent up in the tent. Here we are working on the new bowsprit, after the previous bowsprit snapped (on the way to France, for maximum inconvenience ...). I am very excited to be so involved in this project. We covered spar-making in IBTC, and it's exactly the same theory but on a much larger scale. For example, we're using a spar gauge (of which I made one of my own at college), and an adze (a traditional tool similar to an axe which was practised in class). Progress is speeding up, as once we started cutting the corners off the timber, it started to take a more recognisable shape quite quickly. Now we're up to 16 sides, it actually looks like a bowsprit!