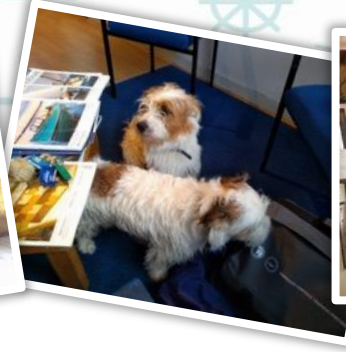


TRAINEE BLOG: BELINDA CREE

NOVEMBER
2019



FIRST MONTH AT IBTC

So we've made it to IBTC! The International Boatbuilding College is in Oulton Broad, Lowestoft – which is a part of England I'd never been to before, but I'll have the chance to get pretty familiar with the area as the ship I will be joining for my placement is also based here – just around the corner.

Our first week here we hit the ground running with some timber and boatbuilding technology in the classroom with some of the other students. This was a great way to get acquainted with some of the most common terminology that will come up over the course of our time here. I enjoyed getting an insight into the background of where boatbuilding materials come from and the considerations that go into selecting and preparing materials before they are made into something beautiful that floats!

We also did a day of knots and splices in the classroom – which I've been practicing because although I understood what was being taught – my splices were a bit of an aesthetic mess! I can do better. But apart from that, we've been in the joinery workshop. Most students who come here spend a minimum of three months in joinery, but we're keeping the pace up with a shorter three-week version which covers the basics/methodology.

I had a sprinkling of woodwork experience here and there, but even at that I would've been reaching for a power tool long before finishing any of the practical exercises we've completed so far. It's been really special learning how to use hand tools properly. Everything is a process, and the more I practise some of the techniques, I think the more that rings true. I think this is gonna be a great foundation for me to build on later on in the placement/in my career.

It's also made me more mindful of some of the points covered in the Historic Vessels Conservation guidelines. The decisions made right at the beginning of a ship's life as it's being designed and built, everything from the materials to the framing style, must have some impact on the vessel's potential restoration/conservation much later down the line. That's something I'd like to look into more myself.

We're out of the joinery workshop and into the boat house in December, how time flies! I'm looking forward to learning how to caulk – that's been on my radar since before I applied for the programme, and I think it's a very useful practical skill to have. I'll also get the chance to do some wire work just before the Christmas break which is something last year's trainees have spoken very highly about.