

## March 2020 Blog Update

This month I have been spending most of my time carrying on with the brightworks and paint which takes time if you are to do a prop'r job. And this being the first steel vessel I have worked on, I've had a full introduction to two-pack paints. There is no real difference from any other paint except that you can't stop for lunch until you've got through it all!

There was also a point where we had to get underneath the barge, which was achieved by parking ourselves in an invention which I think is mostly described as a floating dry dock. The dry dock operates by drying out with the tide and then as the tide comes back in, sluice gates are opened so the dock submerges. Once the tide is high enough, vessels can enter the dock and wait for the tide to go back out again. Sluice gates are then closed and the dock floats again whilst the vessel stays high and dry chocked up inside.

Being an engineless vessel, our standard procedures are rather different from anything I have experienced before. I was amazed with the way in which our vessel only takes a light tug on a line to get moving in the water. It seems obvious so long as you know that the hull shape is completely flat bottomed, but it still feels quite strange that one individual's strength can move 100 ton of steel.

Yet with the help of a 20ft dory nudging us away from danger we managed to slot ourselves from the marina pontoon into the dry dock, with a few well placed lines and the help of the Dolly (a small winch above the windlass which is used for pulling the barge forward through the water. Barges seem to have a well placed, cleverly geared winch on every quarter. Unapologetically mechanical).

Once in the dry dock, the hull was jet washed and we all got stuck in with antifouling the half-acre of surface underneath and painting on the Draught marks along with having our registration number permanently riveted to the hull. All commercial cargo vessels are required to have Draught marks to confirm how much weight has been added to the vessel and to indicate how close to the maximum registered weight the vessel is.



After leaving the drydock, we were back to ticking off tasks on deck. Painting the rails, mast and bowsprit. Also, a task which had to be undertaken was having our Leeboards moved a foot further forward. This was the case because as it stood beforehand, the vessel had too much Lee-Helm. Setting the Leeboards forward by a foot should move the pivot point so that the vessel's lateral resistance harmonises. If anything, Weather-Helm is preferred. Two men from the yard made this happen by cutting two new slots into the rails and welding brackets on deck, where the pins of the leeboard fix securely and the leeboard swings on the pin itself. Moving the leeboards forward was an interesting manoeuvre using halliards and Handy Billy's - a block and tackle left spare which one can use for any purpose where an extra purchase is needed.

Finally, Serving and Baggywrinkles. Serving is done to seal and protect sections of rope or wire, particularly on splices or wear prone areas. By wrapping sting treated with linseed around a wire which had been lathered with tallow and mummified with cotton strips, we created a submersible stay. One which will lead from the stem out to the end of the bowsprit. And now I can proudly say that the



forgotten art of baggywrinkles has not been lost on me. These are used as chafe stoppers on shrouds or ropes which may rub against the sails a lot. Making them was quite a pleasant process of tying half hitches along a 6ft length of string with hundreds of 6inch strands from the lay of a rope. Although time consuming, it's a pleasure to create a system whilst doing it. It's nice to of learnt how to make baggywrinkles because they're one of those things you can find plenty of evidence of being used in the past, however they have now fallen out of favour and are rare to see.

