

Blog for May and to the start of June 2020

The end of lockdown?

With the end of lockdown seemingly not in sight, I carried on working on my set goals.



I finally managed to get the main body of my Statement of Significance for *Bertha* into a finished state using the many guides, blog feeds and written reports on the vessel. Examples of other SOS's proved particularly helpful as it clarified how the structure and language should be presented in these documents, which had been a stumbling block at first. While I am waiting for feedback on task 1, the next stage is to start stage 2 which deals with vessel condition surveys. I look forward to starting the next unit and learning about what information can be gleaned from a vessel survey, and how you then use this information to guide your conservation decisions – very helpful for maintaining or conserving any future vessels I will meet.

Home Page

Course Information

News & Events

Student Forum

Case Studies

Mentors

Shipshape Hubs

HVC Course Blog

Tools

Help

Unit 1 - Understanding historic vessels

Unit 2 - Stabilising historic vessels at risk of decay

Unit 3 - Finding data relating to specific historic vessels

Unit 4 - Determining the appropriate route for historic vessel conservation

Unit 5 - Applying conservation plans to

Unit 1: Understanding historic vessels - Task 1

You will need to complete 2 separate pieces of work for your unit 1. Your first task will be:

Q1: Write a statement of significance for a historic vessel of your choice. Use a wide range of sources to answer the following questions:

- What is the vessel's ability to demonstrate history in her physical fabric?
- What are the vessel's associational links for which there is no physical evidence?
- How does the vessel's shape or form combine and contribute to her function?

The purpose of this assessment is to show us that you can research a vessel's fabric, associational links and function, as well as how you would use this evidence to demonstrate a vessel's significance, within the parameters of a Statement of Significance.

What is the purpose of a Statement of Significance?

The purpose of a Statement of Significance is to identify the various ways in which a vessel matters.

It consists of 3 distinct sections between which you can evidence a vessel's ability to demonstrate history in her fabric, as well as through her associational links and her shape and form.


Statements:


- are valuable data sources which help custodians understand their craft better
- assist in assessing the vessel in relation to other similar craft
- are used by funders to determine priorities for grant aid
- provide the basis for planning a sustainable future for the vessel


How can I prepare?

Familiarising yourself with the way information on a vessel is split across the 3 sections of a Statement of Significance will help you approach your course assessment. Our booklet 'Statement of Significance', as well as our manual 'Conserving Historic Vessels', help to ensure you ask the right questions about a vessel to answer each of the 3 questions above.

Before writing your Statement of Significance, make sure you:


To do


Activity


Progress

WEEK
1

WEEK
2

WEEK
3

Hi Charles, here's the last step you visited:

2.9

CURATING INNER CITY VIDEO (04:58)

Continue


WEEK 2: THE EXHIBITION TAKES CENTRE STAGE

About the Exhibition

Study of a contemporary art exhibition

2.1

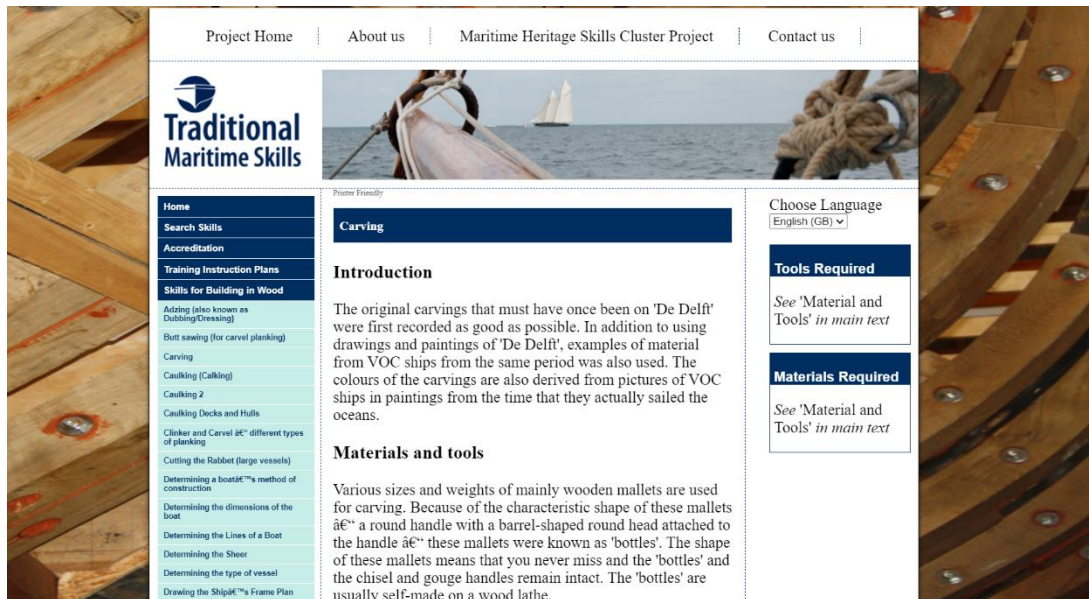
INTRODUCTION TO WEEK 2 VIDEO (01:04)



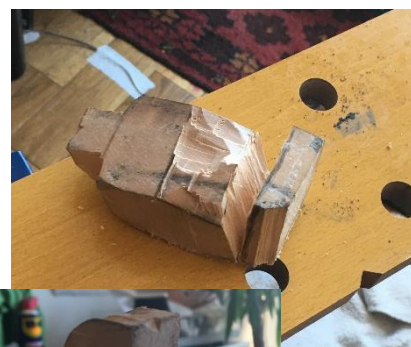
I am also making good progress on my online course and have reached the halfway point. So far, I have learned a lot about what kind of personalities and characteristics people visit museums with, whether it is as more individual explorers or as a social group. The course has even gone on to teach me about inclusivity and how to make approachable exhibits that a wide range of groups can enjoy. The discussion element of the course is remarkably interesting itself as many express their opinions about the best way to tackle the issue of accessibility. I personally feel that rather than trying to have one exhibition that caters to all, as often by trying to please everyone you please none, I think a more flexible system of different days catered to different needs of a particular group has great effect. For example, on certain days more staff who can communicate in sign language could help deaf people understand and connect more with what is on display. But of course, this issue is also strongly linked to the capabilities of each museum, which greatly varies depending on available

space and funding. Nonetheless it has been a really engaging experience trying to puzzle a solution out to this conundrum.

In other good news my workbench arrived in good condition, and so I have started a small carving project. I had to get to grips with how the gouges cut through the wood and then work out how to make them sharp before I could even make a start. After a lengthy search online for a simple design to replicate, I came across a design for a Falcon that resembled a basic figurehead without being as complicated as one.

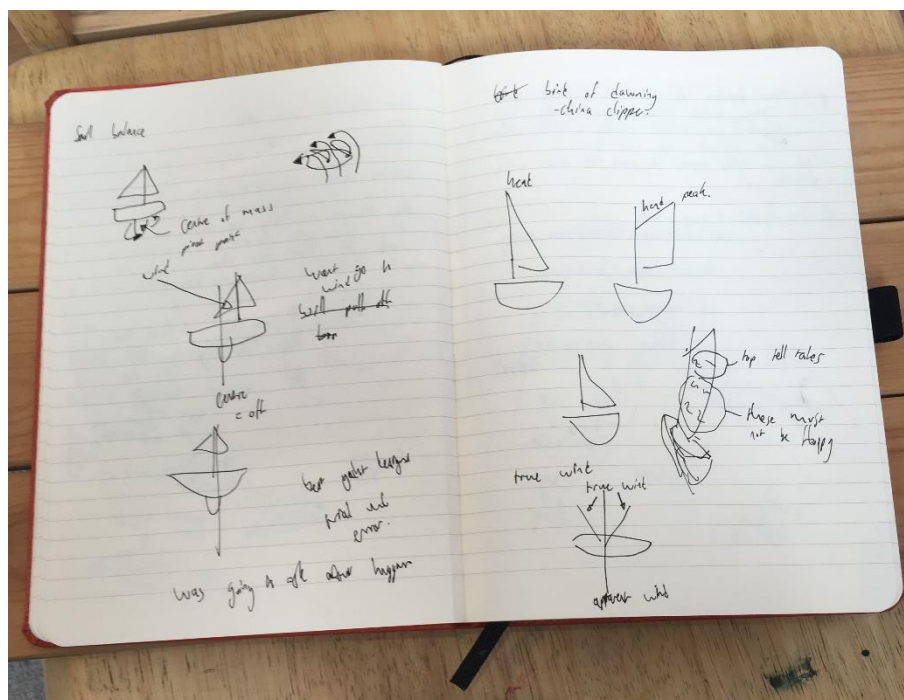


While also using the online resources, such as the one shown above for general help, I was able to find a rhythm and began tapping. After a good few hours, I managed to get a ‘recognisable’ shape to emerge. There are of course many learning curves to this craft, but I am only going to improve by continuing to do more of it. Aspects such as the strength used to hit the gouge and the angle that I need to cut into the wood in respect to the grain are all things that I am slowly learning. But it was great to be doing some hands on work in the flat and it certainly broke up all the computer time that I was doing.



The other trainees and I also took part in a masterclass session with Tom Cunliffe, who is a hugely interesting and knowledgeable character. The zoom conference talked about many different areas from the physics of sailing to the different rig types over the age of sail. Being able to learn about exactly how the wind works in relation to the sail was particularly fascinating to me. The wind going into the sail is just as important as the wind going around it like an airplanes wing. Tom also discussed how to find the centre of mass on a vessel, which depending on where the deepest part of the keel is in proportion to the mast will determine how well a ship can sail into the wind. The centre of mass acts as a pivot point and is something that has taken hundreds of years of trial and error to perfect, something which all modern sailing yachts and vessels take advantage of. I also learned about some interesting tips for sailing, for example that a good way to know where the true wind is coming from you should look at the ripples in the water.

As you can see below, I am quite rusty at quick and legible note taking, but I think it would only take a couple of hours to decode what I wrote.



Back to the Cutty Sark

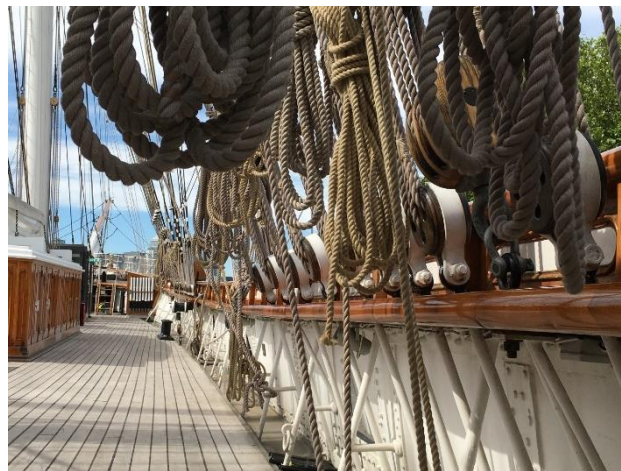
On the 29th May, a few of us are given the greenlight to go back to work on the Cutty Sark, starting on the 1st June. It is great news and I could not wait to get back on board!



With the beautiful weather it was a real sight to behold, but things have changed of course under current circumstances. The main difference being that we are not expecting to be open to the public until at least next month, which means that we can crack on with a lot of work and maintenance that simply would not be possible otherwise.



We even have a canopy setup to provide some lovely shade while we have our tea-breaks, in between work of course. But speaking of the work, this last week has mainly be focused on doing jobs that cannot be done with bad weather. For me this meant spending much of my time sanding the starboard main rail.



First, I had to work my way down the rail looking for spots where the varnish had blistered, a downside to the good weather, and with a Fein's Multimaster sander I worked the varnish back down to the bare wood. I had to be careful not to over work the wood to avoid removing any necessary material but also to continually change the sandpaper. But this is all part of the learning curve. Once the worst sections were cleared, I used a lighter grade of sandpaper to go over all the surfaces making the wood ready for the next stage. I also learnt how to use a

Makita palm sander, while sanding the fife rails and preparing them for their coats of varnish.

Next came the varnishing stage, this could require up a few coats due to the exposed position of the wood. We used Le Tonkinois for the varnish, which is an oil-based substance with linseed and tung oils in it. It leaves no brush marks and works well with teak to bring out the natural beauty. It is based on an old Chinese formula that dates back two or three hundred years.

We then worked our way round, keying in the forward deckhouse and both heads just behind the anchor deck and finally doing the same for Liverpool house at the stern of the ship.

I am glad to be back: we plan to press hard for the next few weeks to get as much done while the public are out and so I look forward to being outdoors and getting on hands and knees to do some nice work.

