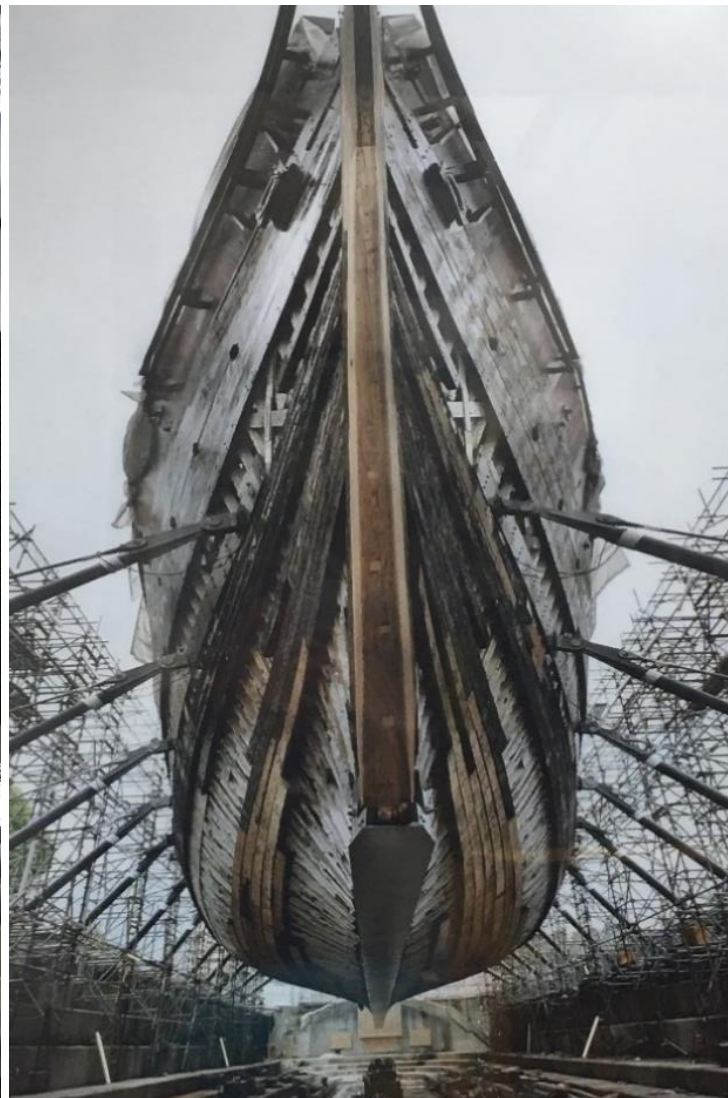
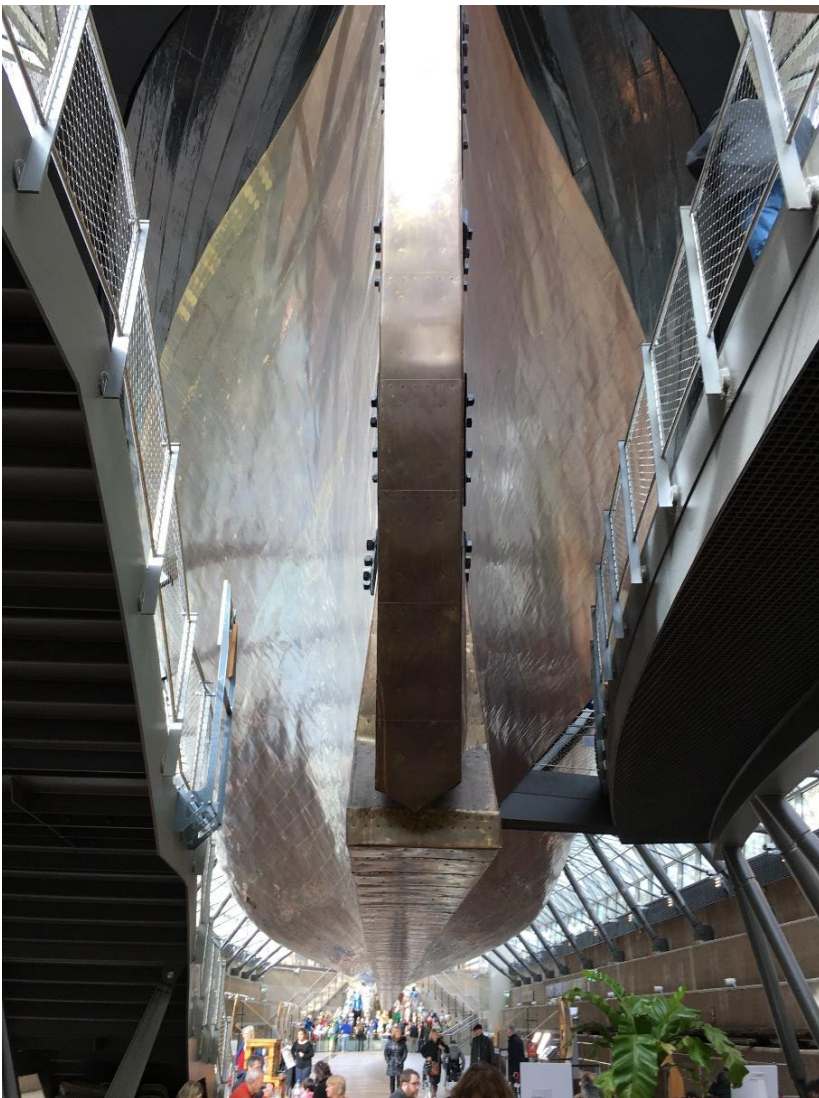


Charlie Carman, February to the start of March.
Beginning at the Cutty Sark.



A sobering shot of the huge scale and enormity that is involved in maintaining a vessel of this scale. Certainly, an eye opener while having your morning coffee. I think at that point, when I started my first day, I was only just getting my head around the task ahead, feeling both excited and ambitious, but also nervous about what was in store for me.

Although my time here so far has gone by incredibly quickly it has been filled with learning curves and new experiences throughout. Learning how to do things correctly, and learning a lot about the techniques and methods that the technicians use on the *Cutty Sark* to keep her in good shape.

A quick run-down of day to day jobs

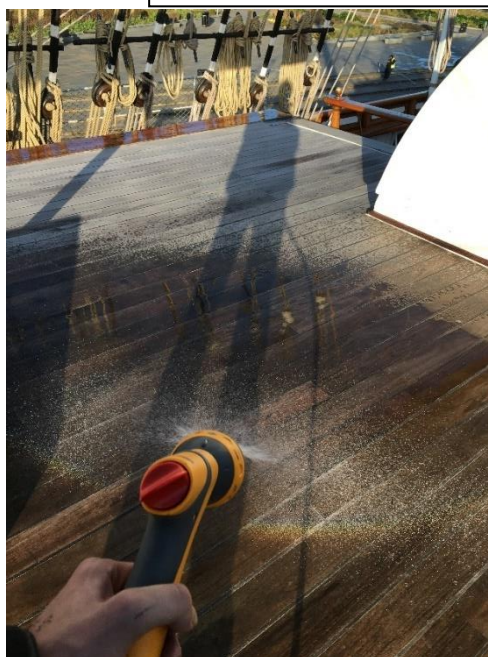
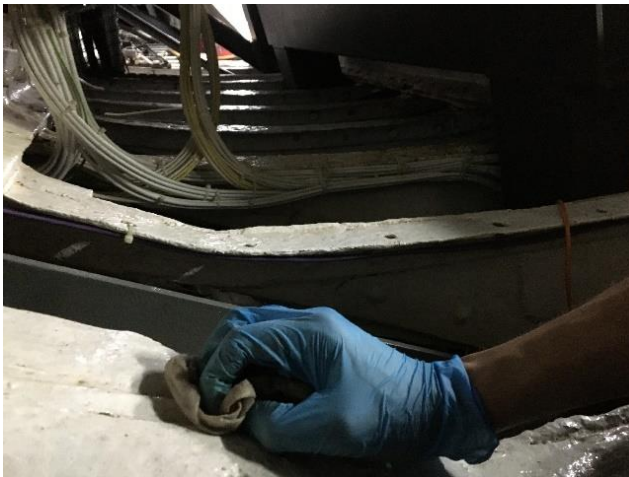
What quickly became apparent was the difficulties of maintaining and conserving a vessel of this scale that has visitors seven days a week. Tasks must be small and precise. However, what turns out to be a much more decisive factor in this matter is the weather. Rain often means scrubbing with Grimes or hovering down below on the Tween deck, the hold or down in the bilges if we're feeling brave.

In the morning we always scrub the decks for about two hours, trying to get everything clean and ready for when the public arrive.

Taking advantage of any sunshine that we get, often we'll sand areas before painting them, as with the skids that hold the lifeboats and the panels on the main deck. Learning the refined art of not dunking the paintbrush into the paint tub, as apparently there is a thing as too much paint.

Further sunshine or absence of rain means that we can crack on with more interesting bits of maintenance. Going down onto the glass to do caulking or keying is a favourite, the wind can be ruthless looking up at the *Cutty Sark* is an amazing view.

Side note, the bottom left image was taken inside the fore mast looking up.





Learning a new skill - caulking.

Although, a very fiddly job it can be hugely satisfying and rewarding (that or it will make you want to pull your hair out). The task breaks down into finding a weak spot in the hull (e.g. cracks and leaks) primarily in areas that have previously been caulked. Then removing the old section, after carefully marking it out, and filling in the space with fresh caulk.

An essential part to this is documenting what changes are made to the ship clearly and properly. This means taking photos of the section, numbering it, using a point of reference in the photograph to clearly locate where the work has taken place and for good measure a handy human for perspective. I've learnt that the *Cutty Sark* is such a fragile vessel, that any and all physical changes that are applied to her must be noted and documented properly. Helping keep track of all changes will avoid confusion when future work is done to the vessel.

The next stage is the actual removal of the caulk itself. This takes a lot of practise, and without care can devolve into a stabbing match. A reefing hook is great here, the 90-degree right angle of the metal means that it is ideal for grabbing the rubbery caulk and pulling it out. Then a combination of Stanley knives and chisels can remove any caulk that is left.

Then a quick coat of IMS liquid is spread over the freshly cut area, to clean the wood, and masking tape is used to outline the section. This is in preparation for the final stage - refilling the cut-out section with fresh caulk. Use a mastic gun and spread a good amount that doesn't go too far into the cut out, otherwise you would be filling forever. Then with a pallet knife you can slowly and carefully spread out the substance to create a lovely smooth surface. This was something that has taken me countless attempts to get not offensively bad at. Too much pressure and the caulk is pushed in so more is needed, too little and it sits out of the ship, the wrong angle can create a bad surface and so on... Trying to keep it neat and tidy is essential for the new caulk to follow the curvature of the hull and the surrounding planks.





Visit to a figure head craftsmen's

On the 26th February we visited Oxford to see the man commissioned with making the next version of the *Cutty Sark's* figure head, Nannie. It was great being shown around the different workshops and seeing the separate stages involved in a large project such as this. From a drawn design, to a moquette and finally to the product itself. It was interesting getting an insight into this craft and the work involved with it.

I personally loved seeing the amount and variety of tools in his collection. There was a chisel for every mark, angle and line imaginable. This made me really want to get involved with wood carving, something that I've done briefly before but would love to do in the future.





The next stage for Nannie, is to help setup scaffolding to support the figure while she is lowered and measured. This it to double check the shape of the figure head of course, but also to check how she sits and is bolted to the boat.

Looking forward to what may come next with the *Cutty Sark*, and hope to do some more wood work and carving in the months to come.