

Blog for July and the start of August 2020. Charlie Carman

Return of the public



The last few months have been focused on getting as much work done while the weather holds, and with the public back.

General work/ brightwork

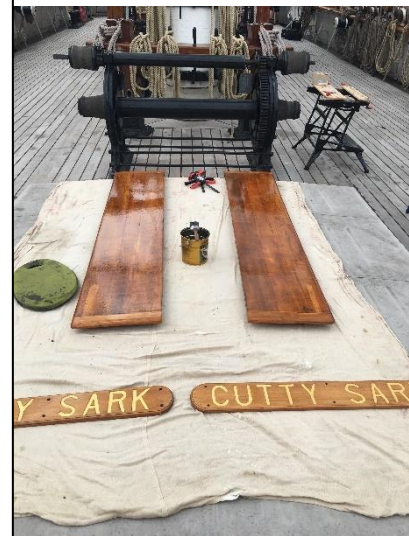
One thing that can be worked on with the public being back is the outer pin rail. In the images here we worked along the entire rail, from where it begins at the bow down and around the back of the poop deck. Often using harnesses to dangle over the edge as shown on the left, but where this was more difficult, we used steps to get up to the rail.

We used 80 grit and the Makita to sand down the varnish back to the wood, before using 120 grit to smooth off any markings left. Once this was done, we de-greased the wood using white spirit and an old rag, finally applying the Li Tonks varnish oil. The first two coats were applied with a rag, as the wood absorbs a lot more oil for the first few coats. Then we brushed on the last few coats.

Other work that we got on with included finishing the last touches for the steering gear. On the right you see how I sanded and oiled the two lids and name boards. Which while not necessarily historically significant to the ship's history, were there on the day the *Cutty Sark* came into London and are a favourite spot for tourists. As a result, they and the rest of the steering gear needed extra attention and care.

To the left you can see the reassembled steering gear, minus the wheel which is still being worked on. But both are looking great after a dozen coats.

Down in the bottom left you can see the steering wheel going from being sanded to having its first coat of oil applied. On the bottom right is the front face of the forward deckhouse which we have also started sanding and oiling. This was after the coat of oil was ragged on.



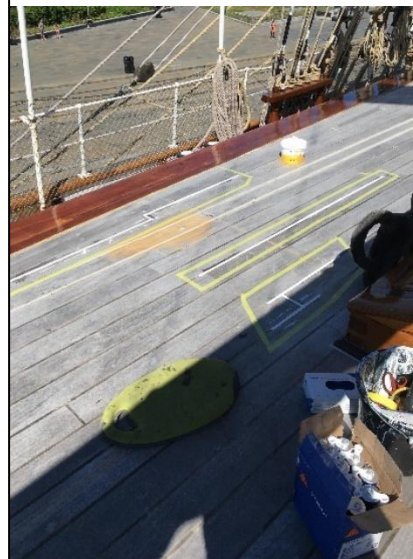
Learning to caulk on the main deck



This is much the same as caulking the hull, something I did back in February, but there are a few small changes. Here I was working on the Liverpool house roof deck, which had its own unique caulk to the rest of the deck. This is because traditionally it is where the sail maker worked, and white caulk was used to avoid any black marks being left on the sails as they were being repaired. We use a like for like modern alternative here called white Sikaflex.

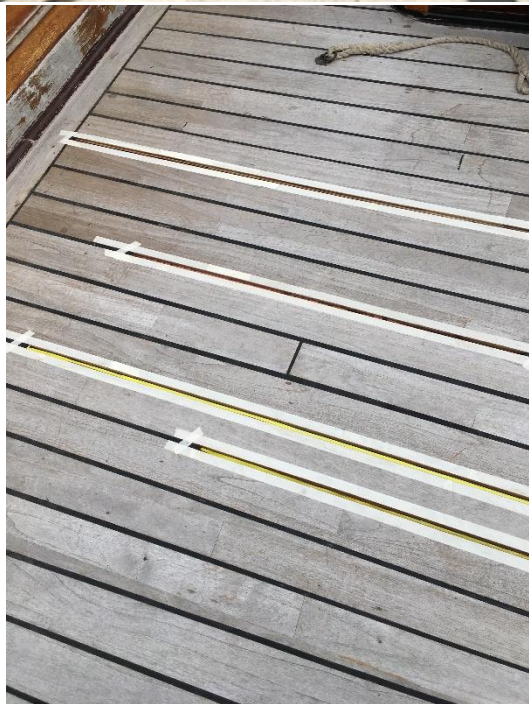
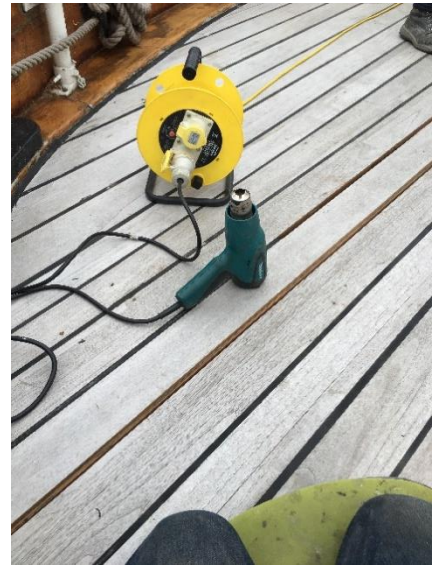
Here you can see where I have marked, cut and clawed out the caulk that needed to be removed. With the seam being dry, due to the great weather of late, I then used masking tape to run down the border of the seam, cleaned it with Acetone and applied a specific primer for the caulk to accept the wood. I then laid out bond breaker tape along the bottom of the seam. This was to prevent the caulk from sticking to the bottom, which if pulled from three directions (as the wood expands and contracts) will split the caulk and allow water through. The bond breaker tape means the caulk is only pulled in two directions, which significantly reduces the amount of strain present.

Finally, came the clean-up stage which involved using a pallet knife to smoothen out the caulk surface and make sure it was a tight fit into the seam. This is where the masking tape came in handy, for pulling off excess caulk. At the very end yellow tape is used to mark out the area, and to (hopefully) warn people not to step on the fresh caulk.





Here on the poop deck, on the portside of the steering gear I did much the same although this caulk was the same used on the main deck. This being the Teakdecking Systems SIS440. After a bit of rain, I had to use the heat gun to speed up the drying process for the seam. This works by applying extra heat to draw out all the water from the exposed wood.



The hot temperature during the afternoon became the biggest issue as the planks became almost untouchable to exposed skin. Which made working on them more difficult. Besides that, I am very happy with how the caulking turned out here, as I did the whole process by myself. It's a good feeling of contribution and achievement, even if it is only for a small repair.

