

Janice – February 2019

01.02.2019 – 03.02.2019

This weekend we're in Chatham, visiting the Historic Dockyard, and it has been so interesting! We spent Saturday with the head of Ship Keeping, who showed us around the historic warships they have in the yard: *HMS Gannett*, *HMS Cavalier*, and *HM Submarine Ocelot*.



HMS Gannett

These vessels were AMAZING to look round. I think the most interesting bit for me was seeing the comparison between *HMS Gannett* and *HMS Cavalier*. Considering there was only about 70 years between these vessels being launched, it was insane to see how much more advanced *Cavalier* was, compared to *Gannett*.

Ocelot was also incredible to look around, and it was only slightly terrifying and claustrophobic to think of how many guys would live in that tiny little tube for such long periods of time, without even seeing the light of day.

One of the highlights of my day was to look around 'The Victorian Ropery', which is the last of the Royal Navy Ropeyards to still produce rope. It was so interesting to see the machinery and the processes used. I don't think I've ever appreciated before how much effort goes into making ropes!!!

We finished the day by looking around the RNLI exhibit, seeing the evolution of lifeboats. It was terrifying but also really heart-warming to see the sorts of wee sailing/rowing vessels people would have ventured out into presumably horrific weather to try and save others.



The next morning was our long awaited masterclass in different types of rigs and traditional navigation with TOM CUNLIFFE. I can honestly say he is one of the most inspirational people I have ever met!!!!



I think what made this masterclass so good was how much excitement he speaks with, and you can clearly see how much love he has for what he does because he still gets so excited talking about sailing, navigation, rigging etc. even though he's been doing it his whole life!!!! This masterclass has absolutely been a highlight of the traineeship so far!

04.02.2019 – 08.02.2019

This week we're being taught by one of the other students at college, Lucy, about sail making, sail repairs, and leatherwork. She's a really incredible teacher, and after learning about darning and patching sails, I feel like I could actually fix a sail that had torn now! I've been finding it pretty challenging because college doesn't have any left-handed palms, which are the tools you use to help push the needle through the sail, so I've been doing it backward at the moment, which isn't ideal, but I guess I'll just be even better when I can use my dominant hand to do it!

Leatherwork was also great!!



We stitched leather covers around some oars, and Lucy has let us do some personal projects for the rest of the week. I was able to make a sheath for my knife and a wallet for my Dad!

11.02.2019

We were supposed to be doing metal forging, but there was a problem with getting the forge at the International Boatbuilding Training College (IBTC) up-and-running, so instead we headed down to the local marine fabricator's shop to do some welding. It was minorly disappointing that we couldn't do forging,

just because that's a pretty cool, unique thing to have a try at, but realistically welding is probably a much more useful skill to have, so it's probably for the best.

The guy teaching us was really nice; he showed us the basics of MIG and arc welding, and let us have a practise.

As the daughter of a welder/ fabricator, I would like to say I was amazing at it. But when I sent my dad a majorly cocky text about how I was a natural, his response was not positive - so maybe I need a little more practise.



We spent most of the rest of the day mucking around with off cuts, and Jenna and I created an artistic masterpiece, which we have named Ken.

14.02.2019

Plumbing course!!! Learning about marine toilets all day was weirdly interesting. And I feel a little bit less likely to end up covered in something gross if I'm asked on *Excelsior* to fix a toilet.

15.02.2019

Our last day at IBTC!! It was weirdly sad to be leaving college, even though I'm literally moving onto a ship which is moored right beside it. We just did a little run-down with Mike and another instructor about what we'd done, how we had found it etc. I'm now fully excited to join *Excelsior*!!!

18.02.2019

My first day of work onboard *Excelsior*!!! The first half of the day was spent with John Wylson doing induction and briefings and whatnot. The atmosphere on board is so nice and homey, and I already feel quite settled in, which is lovely. Everyone has been super nice so far, and don't seem to mind my endless stream of dumb questions!!

20.02.2019

The past couple of days have been spent de-rusting and re-painting the metalwork on deck. It's weirdly satisfying to hit the metal pins and stuff with a hammer and have like 2cm of rust flake off!! We finished work at 12 today as we're going to take the ship out of the water this evening, and it's gonna be a late night!

21.02.2019

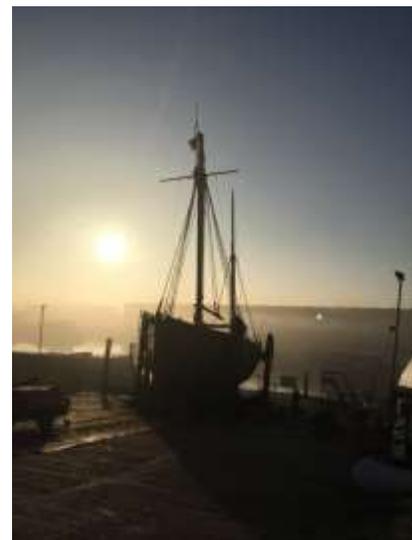
So, slipping didn't exactly go to plan last night, there was a problem with the cradle that the ship goes into not being low enough in the water, so we're back alongside again and are going to try again this evening.

Slipping went well tonight!! It was really *really* cool to see the process of how the ship comes out of the water, now I'll get to use my caulking skills from IBTC on the hull!!!

22.02.2019

I went back to IBTC this morning with John to see the new Ships Boat, which is going to become my side project!! We went with two guys whose organisation funded the building of the boat to let them have a look at it!! It's basically finished, and we're going to have it delivered to the yard sometime next week, so I can start to paint it, and get it ready for the upcoming season!!

When we went back to *Excelsior*, Ariel (a volunteer) and I spent the rest of the day greasing seacocks, which was interesting, and not as difficult as I would have expected, which was nice.





25.02.2019

I got to put my caulking lessons from IBTC into practice today!! I got to learn first-hand how gross old oakum smells when you remove it from the seams, and see how much harder work it is to rake out seams on a hull, rather than on a flat practise board like we used at college. It's been really cool to actually put the training from college into practice though!!!

Also, the Ships Boat got delivered today!! It's beautiful!!! I'm really excited to take on the challenge of

getting it ready for the season, and also VERY thankful that another volunteer, Leon, who is the ships carpenter, is going to help guide me!!!



01.03.2019

My first two weeks on *Excelsior* have totally flown in!! I spent a lot of this week helping with the caulking of the hull, and we have just finished putting the first coat of primer onto the port side of the hull (I have also quite successfully primed most of my hands, and arms, and have some lovely silver streaks in my hair now!!)

