

April 2021, Jess Clay.

SHTP2 Blog

Everyday's a School Day



I get a real buzz from packing the van ahead of another adventure. I often plan weeks in advance with to-do lists and little piles of items I've spotted around the house and thought "ah, I'll take that with me". But it always ends up being a frantic, last minute affair; 'Where is the thing? Do I really need 3 of these?? How did a packet of radish seeds get into my backpack?!' But once the boot lid shuts and I've checked for the 8th time that I have my keys, phone and wallet, there is nothing but pure excitement as I set off "up country".

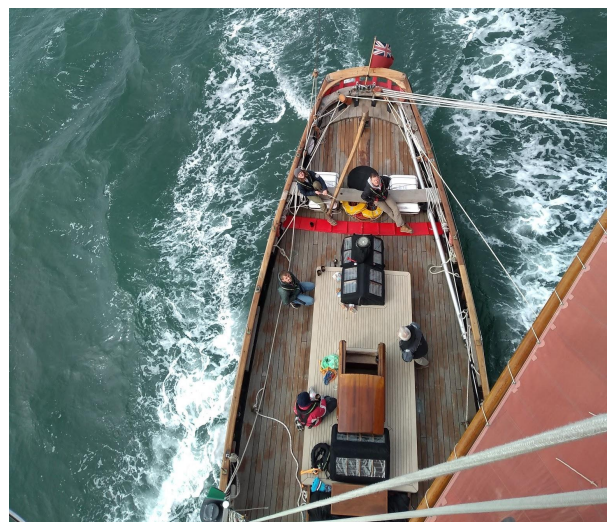


First stop was Brixham, where I spent 3 fantastic days on *Pilgrim*, helping Skipper Richard finish off some of the final tasks of the refit. This mostly consisted of painting; first putting a fresh coat on 2 of the starboard side guest bunks, but on the last day I had the honour of repainting Pilgrim's name on both the transom seat and on the outside of the transom itself. It was a really gentle re-introduction to the traineeship and felt great to just be back on a boat!



I continued East to Hamble to join the legendary *Jolie Brise* for 3 weeks, meeting up with my fellow Shipshaper's, Alanna and Belinda who were joining me for the first 2. Our time on 'JB' was a golden opportunity to catch up on some of the skills and practice we had missed out on last year due to the limited sea-time and I for one certainly made the most of it. We were welcomed aboard by Skippers, Toby and Adam, and after getting acquainted with the boat and settled in, we were tasked with provisioning the boat ahead of the upcoming Crew Training Weekend - we even came in under budget!

After bending on the mainsail and mousing all of the shackles we took her out for a shake-down sail around the solent. She went like a rocket; heeled over with plenty of water over the deck. I eagerly took the opportunity to climb the mast while underway, which allowed me to see the shape and placement of the sails from above and how the sheet tension of the headsails can affect the efficiency of the main. And of course while I was up there I had to get a photo or two!



The Crew Training weekend was excellent, covering everything from safety aloft, anchoring, medical emergencies and injuries at sea, soft skills, tender handling and 2 brilliant Man Overboard (MOB) drills, tethered and untethered.

Most boats regularly practice recovering a MOB, which is often a (lightweight) fender. We did the exercise with a 65kg dummy, Oscar, and it's a whole other experience - especially when Oscar was tethered to the jackstay and was being dragged 8knts, face down alongside - totally different scenario! It was a real eye opener and not something I had ever practiced before.

For the untethered MOB, Belinda and I jumped in the tender to observe the drill from afar and to take some photos of the manouvers. Not only was it useful to see the whole thing from a different perspective, it was also good practice at driving the tender; keeping up with *JB* when needed, turning at speed and getting up on the plane. It was also a real treat to meet up with Becky, our former SHTP2 Coordinator and fellow trainee Bronwen!





Our next trip was a special one. We were proud to welcome Karen Penny aboard and assist in getting her over to Bembridge on the Isle of Wight so that she could continue her amazing charity walk around the coast of Britain and Ireland, in aid of Alzheimer's Research UK

We were joined by the Hamble Lifeboat team who followed *Jolie Brise* out of the river. I was cheeky enough to ask if I could have a go in their (very fast) boat and they were kind enough to let me! Belinda and I hopped into the lifeboat and one of their team took the helm of *JB*! Once out the river, we swapped back over, but not before a blast at 30kn up the Solent!

Karen was a great sport and even climbed the mast! I wish her the best of luck with her adventure!



The rest of the second week was filled with maintenance work such as painting the cover board and re-caulking a couple of bad seams. We also had theory and practical sessions with Adam including a sail theory session and an engine maintenance refresher. The sail theory was brilliant, Adam knows a lot about race sail trim and it's no wonder *Jolie Brise* often takes home a trophy when they race! After half an hour with the whiteboard we went up and raised the staysail, reading the telltales and looking at the effect sheet-placement has on the shape (and therefore efficiency) of the sail. We said goodbye to Belinda and Alanna as they headed off back to Pioneer at the end of the week.

During my final week, Adam and I sanded down the cap rail and a couple other bits and re-oiled with Owatrol Deks Olje D1. D2, the varnish part, will go on once the D1 has soaked in. We did a chartwork session, looking at the solent chart to identify hazards to be aware of while piloting in and out of the Hamble River, such as the busy shipping channel and where potentially strong currents might form. We also did a tender driving session to show how the tender can be used to assist *JB* in maneuvering.





We took the cover off the outboard to see its workings and what to look for if there is an issue - damp spark plugs for example. The final job on *JB* was to replace the backstays and their tricing lines and Adam and I finished off the week with a trip to Gosport for a day of dinghy sailing - or so we thought! Ask me about it over a pint sometime, but I'll say here that it was a blustery day and it didn't quite go to plan but once we got back to the shore, we had a laugh about it over a cup of tea - which I reckon was a perfect way to finish my placement with *Jolie Brise*!

During my down-time from *JB*, I had been popping over to beautiful Beaulieu to help another of my Skippers get her boat ready for the season - *Amelie Rose*. Nic and I finished off the deck caulking, and with help from a couple of friends we sanded down the cap rail, painted the jaws and tips of the boom and gaff, sanded and oiled the bowsprit and bent on the mainsail! It was so great to see friends again and I was especially happy to get lots of cuddles from Nic's dog, Missy Boo!



Towards the end of the month I headed back across the Tamar Bridge to begin a 3 week placement on the *Lynher Barge*! We had stayed on *Lynher* at the beginning of the traineeship back in October 2019 (!!) during our induction and it was so good to be back and see all of the amazing work Dom and Barbara have been doing. *Lynher* has had a new electric engine fitted alongside her Beta-Marine diesel engine, running water installed, fed from barrels on deck and the galley has had a revamp too!



My week started with a Day Skipper theory session. I worked out the tide times and heights for Plymouth for the following day using the tidal curve in the Sailing Almanac before we headed over to "The Gym" - *Lynher's* office and workshop, to prep Dom's 16' Wayfarer dinghy ready for dinghy sailing the next day.



Having found the tidal info, we knew we had to be up early to get the Wayfarer launched at High Water, as the top of the river dries quickly. We put her in at the public slipway and paddled around to *Lynher's* mooring to get set up properly. We headed down the river, practicing tacking and gybing, sail trim and how to use it to power up or slow the boat down. We climbed aboard *Lynher* at lunchtime and

discussed how to use transits to check your course and the proper (controlled) way to approach a target, a mooring buoy, pontoon etc. Despite some frantic moments - getting muddled up while swapping sides after a tack for example, my confidence grew throughout the day and I was looking forward to practicing again the following day. I'm excited to see what the remaining time with *Lynher* has in store!