

Kate Tatlow – update on Cutty Sark placement 01/08/18

Since my last report, I got to go on rotation to the Scottish Fisheries Museum, one of the other partner organisations in the SHTP2 project. The Scottish Fisheries Museum is vastly different in scale and location to Royal Museums Greenwich and I had an absolutely amazing time. The museum tells the story of the innovation and development of Scottish fishing and its impact on the lives of so many Scottish people. The museum is extensive and the collection encompasses 22 vessels, including two which are operational, objects including ship models, clothing, nets, engines, tools as well as a large amount of amazing art, photographs, negatives and slides.

I was given a tour from curator Linda Fitzpatrick before being able to help Assistant Curator Minna do some retrospective documentation work. Over the week, we checked the collection store for two boxes of tools and net needles, confirming their location and photographing those which did not have complete information on the museum's online collections catalogue.

Tools in the museum collection (below):



Photographing objects in the collection (below):



I also got to help the collections volunteers to accession new museum acquisitions. In this case it was ganseys (woollen pullovers, traditionally worn by seamen and fishermen and often hand-knitted) from the Moray Firth Gansey Project so this involved carefully sewing a label with the accession number on into the neck seam of each gansey (left). Gansey patterns are often specific to different fishing communities or areas, have different meanings or incorporate the initials or details about the person they were designed for! For more information about the Moray Firth Gansey Project: <http://www.gansey-mf.co.uk/index.html>



During my rotation I also helped Eilidh, Learning and Engagement Officer, to put on different workshops for young people. These were based on how the features of fishing boats have changed over time (by crafting model boats and then floating them!) and on the features of different underwater creatures (by crafting them out of clay, see picture on the left!). As it is the Scottish Fisheries Museum 50th anniversary, this latter workshop celebrated the fact that the museum used to have a large aquarium! I learnt a lot about how to work with young people, which I have not previously had much experience of, and about putting on informal events in a museum context. Thank-you Eilidh!

Whilst at the museum, it was good to help with the conservation of museum vessels and to learn about the boats being worked on in their (very neat) boatyard (below, left). I scraped the coated surface of museum vessel 'Jubilee' (below, right) in order to remove loose paint and therefore places where moisture or pests could reside or gain access to the wood.



Exciting for me, being a keen photographer and darkroom user was to be able to help with the museum's extensive photographic library, collections and digitisation project. I helped scan negatives and key word them as to help those searching the collection in the future to find a specific photo or photos that could help them with their research.

A big thank-you to everyone at the Scottish Fisheries Museum who shared their knowledge so generously with me and ensured I had a great time. I fell in love with Scotland and it's beautiful landscape on my visit too, here's a picture from the Fife Coastal Path at Earlsferry:



Since coming back from Scotland, I have attended a course given by Jane Henderson on Effective Monitoring and Management of the environment for museums, libraries and archives. I learnt a lot about the agents of deterioration and ways that a space can be managed to safely house a collection, especially those spaces, such as ships, which aren't purpose built and may be historic themselves. I learnt how to take, read and analyse data on light, temperature and humidity and to think about what decisions can be made based upon it. It was great to learn about preventative conservation in a formal setting but also in a way that acknowledges the real-world practicalities of managing different collections.

I am back at the Cutty Sark now for a few weeks before my next rotation and am looking forward to getting stuck in with the summer maintenance on board plus continuing with the Historic Vessel Conservation course!