

## SHTP2 Monthly Report 4 – April 2019

Sean Chilton – Scottish Fisheries Museum

### Introduction

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April has been a great month for my traineeship. I have had some fantastic experiences this month, including learning lots of practical skills and becoming a lot more confident in my ability and understanding. It has been a busy month, not only for the museum in terms of visitors and events, but also for myself.

### Competent Crew

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Thanks to the development fund I had leftover from last years induction, I was able to book in for my Competent Crew course with Go West Sailing at the start of the month. This was an intense, yet fantastic experience and I found it incredibly valuable for improving my sailing skills. At the start of SHTP2, I felt a bit like a headless chicken when it came to sailing. Now, I can confidently say that I have the knowledge and the skills to be a competent (excuse the pun) member of crew. It does not stop there however as before I can feel truly competent I would like some experience on as many types of rigs as possible, both traditional boats/ships and modern yachts.

We sailed out from Largs at 12 00 on Monday the 8<sup>th</sup> after having received all safety checks. The plan was to sail around Scotland's Islands of the Firth of Clyde (Arran, Bute etc) and take part in lots of exercises. We had 2 Day Skipper hopefuls on board with us, so often the Day Skippers would be taking the helm and calling the shots, while the rest of us stood-by ready to follow instruction. There were man overboard drills, picking up buoys, points of sail practice, mooring/pontoon-ing/anchoring, rope-work, night-navigation, tacking, jibing and lots more. We were extremely lucky with the weather, not a cloud in sight, +20°C, and gusts of 20mph winds, hitting around 11/12 knots maximum. I really enjoyed working with the crew, and felt that the instructor was great. We arrived back in Largs after a quick 3 hour sail from Port Bannantyne on the Friday, and sadly that was the end of the course. I couldn't help but think back to the selection day, sailing (well, drifting...) around Scotland's West from Oban with Trinity on Leader – Where it all began!



(Sailing on NORTH STAR, a Bavaria 44 Yacht, with the Isle of Bute in the background.)

## Curatorial

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It has been a very busy month from a curatorial point of view, with lot's of events springing up with the increase of visitors. I have been appreciating the skill of time management and also delegation to help things run more smoothly.

I finally completed the Forbes Collection Project! This involved going through each item (367 in total!) and giving them a number, taking a photograph for reference, and then collecting everything together on the museum's server so that we know exactly what we have and can search for any items that we are looking for. While it was a long process, I thoroughly enjoyed going through dusty old boat plans, and getting to know the ins and outs of how a commercial boatyard would have operated around the 50s and 60s. This was excellent practice, as this month Leonardo had asked me to find some wheelhouse general arrangements from our stores to assist a gentleman who had acquired a historical boat and was needing information – though these were not from the Forbes drawings, the practice I had with the project meant that I knew exactly what I was looking for, and where to find it!

This has been a big month for me within the museum, as I hosted my first museum event on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> as part of the Easter holidays. It was a traditional skills workshop, where anybody could come along and try their hand at ropework (knots, whipping etc), net-mending, and caulking. I'd had some experience with this at various events, such as last months visit to Waid Academy, and this months visit to the East Neuk Family Roadshow. I had a few volunteers helping out on the day, so I personally gained some experience with volunteer management. Everybody was a pleasure to work with, and it was an enjoyable experience for all. I discovered that I really like working with children, and enjoy finding ways to describe things to them in a way that they will relate and understand. This has also boosted my knowledge, and as a result my confidence.



(East Neuk Family Roadshow, happy faces!)

This month I was invited along to the Curatorial Committee to discuss my progress with the Museum Boatyard Conservation Project. It was daunting initially as it was my first time talking in such a formal environment about my work, and with the curator, trust chairman, director, and others all attending, I was certainly a bit nervous. Nonetheless, once I started talking you'd have a hard time stopping me, and it seemed to get a good discussion started about the project, which I will mention in the "PRACTICAL: BOATYARD & SHIPKEEPING" section of this report.

I have still been taking the helm with the museum's social media platforms. This has been going well, though I am still learning new things pretty much daily. We enjoyed Trinity Sailing's "Meet the Team" idea, and we have started our own. It's a great way to show the human element behind the museum. This, along with our photo Friday, Selfie Sunday, 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary posts and others has really helped boost our followers. Since I started here, our Facebook, Instagram and Twitter followers have increased by 261, 164 and 79 respectively. I have been struggling a bit with twitter, however the other two platforms have been increasing at an exponential rate.



(Pictures from the SHIPSHAPE: TRADITIONAL SKILLS WORKSHOP)

## **Practical: Boatyard & Shipkeeping**

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We finally have a new boat in the boatyard! Her name is Antaris, though sadly I have not been involved much with her. The boatyard volunteers have been focused on getting White Wing, one of the museums operational luggers, up to scratch for the up-coming season. The staff (Leo and Sean) have been more focused on the conservation work being done to SHIRLEY II which I believe I mentioned in one of my first reports.

The conservation work and stabilisation work being done to SHIRLEY II has been absolutely fantastic to be a part of. It is tied in perfectly with the HVC course and has seriously prepared me for UNIT 2. On a side note, that is one of the main reasons I would say that the Scottish Fisheries Museum is an incredible place for practical experiences to go along with the knowledge learned. We have been treating SHIRLEY II with boron salts to tackle woodworm and rot, and the metal fastenings (which have seriously rusted) have been treated with "Aquasteel" which converts the remaining rust into a compound which will protect her from further degradation, as a newbie, I am amazed by this. In terms of Stabilisation, we have been working on her cradle some more, which will provide the required support for the vessel, as well as being an aesthetic piece in-keeping with the museum. We have almost completed the cradles arms, after that we will move on to supporting the keel so that in the future, if the boat need to be relocated, we can do so by following NHS's guidelines of "Moving the cradle, not the boat." This cradle work has been conducted within one of the museums other buildings (about 2 minute walk away) called the Empire building, named after it's old use as a cinema.



(Working on Cradle for SHIRLEY II, not quite as relaxing as it looks!)

The aforementioned Museum Boatyard Conservation Project has been going very well. After some 42+ collective hours of cleaning, it has sadly been confirmed that two of the three boats I have been paying special attention to have active woodworm. This is bittersweet news, as it will hopefully get the ball rolling. Once I have the "Go-Ahead" from the Curatorial Committee, and a conservation route for the boatyard has been decided, then it's time to start the treatment phase. I am especially keen to get the treatment started as soon as possible, as my personal favourite museum object, SILVER SPRAY (who I will ultimately be writing up a conservation management plan for) is currently in the same gallery. She has not shown signs of woodworm, however the items that were initially around her (crutch, some oars) were significantly bad, with the woodworm frass literally pouring out the objects.

(Working on Cradle for SHIRLEY II, not quite as relaxing as it looks!)



(JUBILEE: Before and After pic of conservation work.)



(Fatigued, yet proud stance after some hard grafting)