

My second stretch at Pioneer consisted of maintenance jobs and working on the mould for the new rowing gig. I got my own set of overalls, which I am very happy with!



For maintenance I was employed in painting. I painted the windlass barrel, the deck box, and the hull's topsides and bulwarks.



I also repainted the lettering on the bulwarks.



Unfortunately my help was not needed for the rigging, sail repairs or caulking the deck. This was too bad because these are the traditional skills that our traineeship is about; things that we learned at IBTC. So it was a shame I couldn't put these into practice.

Instead, I was put to work on the gig. The gig is made of fibreglass and finished with wood. This is called 'composite' and we are supposed to call it as such. I worked with Caroline and Madi to get the mould ready for laying up to create the first unit for the first composite gig that we are building. The terminology of modern boatbuilding doesn't appeal much to us, but as we are doing it as professionally as we can with the help of White Formula, we better get into the groove of things.

To make a mould, as you would with any kind of metal casting or cuir-perdu method, you must create the sacrificial form first. Our form was the interior floor which had been made by Caroline and Madi. It went to White Formula<sup>1</sup> for a spray paint of Durabuild.

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<sup>1</sup> WF henceforth



Then it came back to us and we had to sand it until it was super super shiny.



We started with 280 sandpaper and worked the whole thing up to 800 grit and a lot of elbow grease.



Then we buffed it with 1000 grit and 2000 grit.

Next, we had to mask the areas that we did not want gritty. It went back to WF and they sprayed



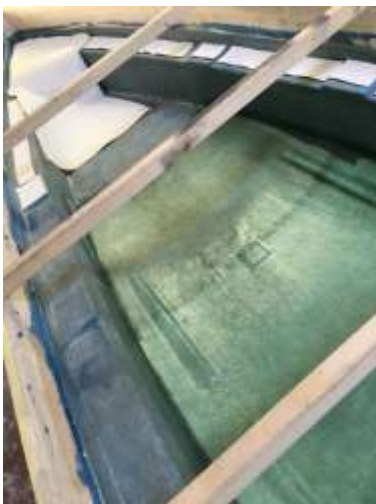
grit on the non-slip areas.

We got it back and then it was ready to receive sealant and honey wax. Two layers of sealant and eight coats of wax. It was a nightmare to get the wax on the gritted parts but on the upside, I was able to channel my inner Karate kid for four whole days – wax on and wax off.

When the floor was properly waxed we took it back to WF and they could start laying up the



first layers of the mould. The next day we helped out at WF by ‘consolidating’ the ‘chop strand’.



In other words, we worked the air bubbles out of the glass mats and epoxy with a little stainless steel roller. We cut pieces of core mat to fit the various areas, which give the mould strength and stiffness. We put more chop strand and epoxy on top of the core mat. We also reinforced the gunwale areas with two ribbons of woven glass. When those layers were dry the next day, we added another two layers of chop strand and epoxy and let those dry. The next day, we brought it back to Harker's Yard and made bulwarks at the thwart stations to strengthen the mould. We glassed those in over the next day. Rob also suggested that we make some fore-and-aft reinforcement to prevent flex at the bow and stern ends of the mould, so we did that too. The mould was then ready to come off. We left that job to Rob, who was going to use air pressure to pop it off.



The next day we picked up a sky blue mould. It looked like the coach roof on a plastic boat.

From right to left: Tom, Josh, Fraser, Madi, me and Caroline

Now the whole circus could start again, because we needed a UNIT right away! Our mould was ready to produce some offspring. So again, sealant and honey wax and back to WF for the laying up of the fibreglass. My mom had arrived from Holland and she helped out with the



waxing.

Once the mould was laid up she needed backing pads on the parts that would receive a wooden thwart or stanchion on the other side of the UNIT, so Tariq and I shaped these from some 5mm ply. The first UNIT was born once the fibreglass had cured enough and wasn't 'green' anymore, so it could be popped off. UNIT and mould came back to the yard after it was weighed.



In the meantime I had also been making the gig's rudder from iroko.  
And the cox's knees...





We also steamed in the gunwales on the gig.



And then it was Good Friday and it was time for Pioneer to come off the grit. She had been completely rigged and anti-fouled as I was working on the gig. We had a high enough tide and she came off nicely around 1pm in the afternoon. My mom was there and she sailed her



mooring in Colne Creek.

I went up the mast in the bosun chair to fix a jib halyard. It was quite windy but the view was amazing. Couldn't wait to go sailing again!

