

## Behind the Scenes at the Museum

### Shipspace Heritage Training Project Trainee, Hannah Fraser

After being on lockdown, it was great to get back to working on site at the museum. September started with more collections-based work, accessioning new objects into the Museum collection and onto the database.



One of my favourite new objects was this Fisherwives Basket, used by women who carried the baskets full of fish on their backs.

I also started re-packing the Gansey collection which is part of the *Knitting the Herring* project. The *Knitting the Herring* project consists of workshops, events and exhibitions to record and celebrate the unique knitting heritage of coastal fishing communities across Scotland. Our main focus at the Museum is to develop a digital database to record this which includes the Gansey collection held at the Museum. It was a great opportunity to get more hands on experience with a textile collection.



One of the Ganseys in the collection I re-packed using acid-free tissue paper inside the Gansey and in between the fabric to ensure protection. I folded the arms of the Gansey and placed rolled up acid-free tissue paper in the fold.

I also had a training session with my Supervisor going over environmental monitoring. We discussed how the Museum records the humidity levels and temperatures across the different galleries and stores. Along with the various equipment that can measure humidity, temperature and light levels. This was a great session to learn more about the various preventive measures that are available to protect historic collections.

October started with all of the trainees finally meeting up again in Bristol, it was great to see everyone again. During the Bristol trip we visited M Shed, got an amazing tour of the collections stores by the Curator. Also had tours of their working vessels and had a presentation and talk from their Senior Curator. We also got the opportunity to visit *SS Great Britain* and had a really interesting talk with the ship's Conservation Engineer and Director. It was really interesting to hear about their conservation plan and how they look after the vessel's historic fabric.



The amazing collection stores at M Shed and on the right aboard fire-boat 'Pyronaut' with 'John King' in front.

Back at the Museum I have been completing the re-packing process of the Gansey collection. I have also been updating the storage system so that the Ganseys are more easily accessible in the future.



On the left in the process of updating the Gansey storage, re-packing the Ganseys into individual trays and adding photos of the individual Gansey patterns to make it more accessible and easy to see for future use.



I also completed some collections cleaning which was great for me to focus on and get more experience with. I cleaned out display cases and the various collections items such as the model boats along with recording any pests found.

I also had the opportunity to give a training session to staff on how to complete the accessioning process and adding new objects onto the Museum database. This was a great opportunity for me to broaden my skills and add another skill to my CV.

I also attended an online training session with Fife Voluntary Action about volunteer management. It was a really helpful and detailed session where I gained new knowledge about the fine details and policies relating to managing volunteers. This training added vital knowledge that I can now bring forward into my career.

Through October and November I completed conservation work on one of the static boats on display in the Museum; the boat had been badly attacked by woodworm. I

treated the wood with a boron salt insecticidal treatment, brushing over the affected areas and left to dry before applying another coat.



Above showing the boat I treated with boron salt treatment and on the left a close up of the signs of woodworm.

The most exciting update for me was receiving news that I had been given an extension for my traineeship until December. I was looking forward to gaining more experience and learning even more skills.

In the final weeks I carried on packing ganseys and updating the Modes database, adding labels and photographs to the storage trays. I also completed internal and external requests related to the collection, including sourcing photographs for possible use in a student exhibition planned for next year and taking photographs of conservation work that I had done with the Boatyard team on the *Shirley* and *Research* to record the work. I also had training sessions with my supervisor going over emergency plans, copyright, and image reproduction requests.

Now that the traineeship has ended, I am looking for jobs in museums. Wherever I end up, I want to be working with collections and now have some useful skills and experiences to bring with me.

I just wanted to end by saying a huge thank you to National Historic Ships, The National Lottery Heritage Fund for making the traineeship possible and of course The Scottish Fisheries Museum.