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Shipwrights

## Case Study – Owen Hughes – Boatbuilder apprentice (funded 2019-20)

Oarsome Chance, Gosport, Hants

<https://oarsomechance.org/>



Owen joined Oarsome Chance in the Summer of 2017, having not really fulfilled his potential at school. Established in 2015, Oarsome Chance was conceived as a way to help disadvantaged young people. We sat down with Owen at the end of his first year to discuss how things were progressing...

### **Making his mark...**

*"I have had a good first year of my apprenticeship. When I first came to Oarsome Chance I was mentored by one of the carpenters and from that took a keen interest in boatbuilding and helped build one of their 16ft rowing boats. I also took the opportunity to sail – I've developed the maritime bug!*

### **Skills and Knowledge...**

*Before the new travel restrictions came into place, I was involved in the refit of a Coypu called for the Hythe sea scouts. This involved a sanding of the hull, filling, fairing, more*

sanding, priming and painting. We also replaced sections of the gunwale and scarfed the new sections in and riveted into place. We renewed the rubbing strake and I made the teak plugs and they look good! I did a glass fibre repair on the bow tank that needed cutting back and reinforcing which was interesting to learn how to cover a large area with heavy duty glass matt and epoxy resin. There was also lots of varnish work.



I spent more time at Oarsome Chance Leigh Park venue during lockdown as it is a lot closer to where I live and I could travel there independently either walking or riding my bike. I helped build up the second workshop and change the original workshop into a post 16 area and service centre where people can bring in their bikes for repair or recycling. I enjoyed working with other instructors and using engineering tools.

Since I have been back at the boatbuilding and carpentry workshop I have had further training in using the machine shop. I have helped build a memorial bench for another student and a wooden wheelie bin hut.

I have been working on a new 16 foot rowing skiff. She is built using the stitch and glue method which means you must line the planks up and drill precise holes then feed wire through and twist it to bring the joints together. Once this is all done, we put the frames in including fixing the inner and outer gunwales and fitting the buoyancy tanks and glass taping all the joints. We used the router to round the edges off so the tape made a better seal around the angles without getting air bubbles.

Our college has been closed for most of the last 6 months and I have struggled with online learning as I find it much better to work in the workshop. I did carry on my English lessons with Harriet (Paragon Skills) online. I have now passed my Functional skills level 2 in English.

I have had almost 100% attendance at Oarsome Chance, even through the lockdown and I am always early or on time. I can be a good mentor to younger students as I have patience with them and enjoy showing them the right way to use tools etc.

*I have led some offsite carp fishing activities this year with some of our students. I really enjoy carp fishing and am good at it and understand how to get the best out of the equipment.”*

