

Ellis Bell. Progress Report. Autumn 2021

Since my last report I have been working on a selection of different projects for Spencer Rigging and have been able to add to the skills mentioned in the March report. I have illustrated some examples below.

I have been helping with the un-rigging of rigs and un-stepping of masts in Southampton Docks, working with the two most experienced riggers in the team. This is on several new catamaran sailing boats that have to be prepared for export to Australia. I have had to help with the careful dismantling of the masts, booms and rigging screws prior to the crane operations. The masts are wrapped and stored on the deck of the ships before shipping. This has helped me to see the scale and variety of work we need to undertake and the importance of being able to do this work in time to fit in with the shipping movements. The photo below shows one of the unrigged catamarans prior to loading onto the ship.



The Lee Valley white water canoe course has needed maintenance work on the slalom course this Summer. This has been required in order to allow Lee Valley to continue to operate the courses in a safe way. The Lee Valley courses were built for the London Olympics and continues to be a major project for Spencer Rigging. This rigging work has involved me working in a different environment and using different materials. Including small sizes of stainless-steel wire in combination with rope and pulley systems. This is an extension to the skills I mentioned in the earlier report. This has helped me to see how systems and components can be made to work together. The photo below shows the layout of the site.



In Cowes we have installed a number of reefing systems to masts for headsail reefing. I have been shown how to access these rigs at height in a safe and controlled manner. Working again within the experienced team here in Cowes. The picture below shows an installed reefing system.



Spencer Rigging is also involved with the testing and certification of fittings and assemblies on commercial workboats that are made in Cowes on the River Medina. I have helped to arrange the materials and equipment we need to test these parts on board. I now have experience of working with lifting slings, chain blocks and load cells. Some of these workboats are for servicing windfarms and some are actually for the MOD. This picture below shows a water-bag load test on an installed crane on a wind-farm support vessel.



In the rigging loft I have continued to work on projects for the RNLI including some new business that is for their anchoring systems. This has involved splicing larger diameter ropes than before and adding the leather marker tags that they use for gauging the amount of rope deployed. This work has to be done in a robust and accurate way and I appreciate the importance of consistency and care

involved. I am pleased to be involved with work that continues to support the RNLI in their work and operations. The two pictures below illustrate some of the work I have done recently.



Spencer Rigging carried out a re-rig of a classic gaff rigged yacht which is now based in the south of France. We completed a new set of standing and running rigging. I was involved in the rope work. This involved some traditional finishing, including leathering to the splices and three examples of this are shown in the photos below.



For one of our industrial customers I have been involved in a project to seize some cable. This is similar to the whippings I have done with rope, but more complex and intricate as it is done with a special seizing wire. The picture below shows the finished seizing.



At the college they are continuing to support me in learning new skills and are working with Spencer Rigging to provide suitable training in the areas highlighted in the recent meeting with their training manager.

As this year has progressed some of the challenges I faced in the spring have diminished as I have become more confident and faster in my work. I have also been able to tackle a different variety of work through the year.

I am continuing to have a better understanding of how materials work together and to see the positive outcome of the projects I have worked on.

I am looking forward to continuing to add to my skills and to see what projects we have in the future.

Ellis Bell.