



## **Bradley Drinkwater, Apprentice Marine Engineer**

### **Cotswold Boat Hire, Buscot.**

### **Mid-year report, February 2022**

**<https://www.cotswoldboat.co.uk/>**

I am Bradley Drinkwater, Apprentice at Cotswold Boat Hire,

In my employment at Cotswold Boat Hire I am involved in every single aspect of the Boat yard work, and it means the days can be very varied.

When I first started my apprenticeship, it was pre-season and a lot of my time was spent time cleaning boats, this was fairly easy to learn.

We then went on to Antifouling where I came home a different colour every week....

This was more to think about, preparation work, moving jacks and ensuring that no part is missed.

I actually love Antifouling and painting boats; I find it really satisfying. I really like to see how a boat can be brought back to really good condition by my work.

I started learning about how to treat boats that had damaged hulls, needing Osmosis treatment. This is also interesting.

I attend college one week in 6 and stay locally as it is a long way from where I live and work. This was new for me too, as it was the first time I stayed away from home on my own, a week at a time. Their workshop is a nice one with a big lorry in it and we have a boat in our classroom. It is not your everyday college. I like the practical workshop stuff we do but I find the paperwork hard going. I have really improved on this, but still find it very difficult and is an area I am still working on.

I like learning about the engineering and mechanical side of things, and this is still on going, we are looking at propellor pitches/diameter left or right etc which is interesting. We are working on a boat at present which needs a new P bracket for the cutlass bearing – it is tricky. This is a long learning process as there is always something new. We have hire boats in the yard but also 80 or so visiting boats in for work over the winters.

The company benefits from my apprenticeship because they are a family run company with only limited staff, as I learn new things the workload can be spread out between us. Before I joined the owner never had a day off, we now have a better balance of staff which means

he can take days out to do other things or have an office day or a day visiting suppliers. I sometimes meet with suppliers too, particularly those supplying electric engines and components as we are working on prototypes and new ideas for the hire boat propulsion. We also went to The Boat Show in Southampton which was both interesting and fun.

One thing I am really good at is dealing with customers. When I first started doing this I was quite nervous, but now I really know what I am doing in doing a boat handover and it is really satisfying getting all the boat out for the day. Seeing them come back all happy is very rewarding. The Company tell me they have never been as busy as this year. This also has a knock on effect to the local economy as the customers come to the area for boat hire but stay and eat in the local pubs and shop in the local shops. The Company are very involved in a local business club, and I have met lots of other small businesses in the area – I can see how businesses can support each other and that is a very good thing in our area as a lot of the businesses work together. Due to the Pandemic many people have stayed in the UK to take holidays and day trips and the hire boats have been very busy and I have been very involved in this.

So far, I have learnt:

How to clean Boats

How to paint Boats.

How to build pontoons and moorings.

How to landscape the yard, tree work, freeing up river navigation.

How to unsink a sunken boat.

How to handle a callout for an emergency.

How to Tow a boat (backwards!)

How to remove and engine and Prop shaft.

I have taken my forklift driving licence and banksman's Papers.

I know how to Crane out and relaunch boats.

I have undertaken a first Aid Course.

I have learnt how to deal with grumpy customers and colleagues.

How to maintain and service the Hire fleet.

How to unblock a toilet by reversing the Pump.

How to fuel up different sorts of boats.

The next thing I am moving on to is learning how to fibreglass boat hulls and we are going to the Birmigham NEC Boat Show.

There is always something new so I am sure the above list will be much longer in my final report.

I thank you for your Sponsorship Support.

Brad

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