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The Newsletter of the SOUTH WEST MARITIME HISTORY SOCIETY
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Edited by Jonathan Seagrave

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WEBSITE. <http://www.swmaritime.org.uk/>

Next copy date February 5th 2013

FUTURE MEETINGS AND OTHER EVENTS

Feb Sail Revival postponed

March 8-9th SS Gt. Britain New Researchers (see details at end)

April 6th 2013 South West Shipping Show, Portishead- Society stand

Sat. 11th May Buckland Abbey Drake, Nelson's surgeon

Sat. 13th July South Yard, Devonport Navy Base Capt. Walker, figureheads etc

June 8th. AGM Topsham. Student presentations

September 10-12th Deck to Dock Exeter University Conference ffi Maria Fusaro

September Swansea details tbc

October Watchet details tbc

(Italics indicate an event of interest but not organised directly by the Society)

Confirmation of events will be published either in the next edition or in calling notices for bookings, which will be sent to members at the appropriate time.

A very warm welcome to new members. A list will be posted in the next edition.

Email bounces: We have had a large number when we sent out the last *Echoes*. Please let Gill know if you have changed email address recently. If you missed *Echoes*, with an extensive list of events ,and want a resend, email Gill and copy to me.

EDITORIAL AND MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

The Committee has again been considering the finances and subscription. Our sub has remained unchanged for 10 years, a real achievement in these hard times, but the recent postage increases have finally made an increase necessary.

From April, the regular subscription will be £ 15 p.a. We want to change as soon as is practicable to direct debits which avoids the problem of untraceable standing orders, and avoids payments dragging on at different dates, all of which makes more work for the volunteer administrators. This will apply at least to all new subscriptions . **Further details of what to do will follow in the Spring edition.**

For other payment methods the rate will be £ 20. This includes cash and , cheque. Students will pay £10.

We badly need a new Treasurer. Dale has carried on but wishes to stand down. The changes above and the tidying of the membership list should make the task easier in future. Our finances aren't complex, but we do need someone who can reclaim Gift Aid and do the Charities Commission return as well as handle routine payments.

The Committee have discussed developing a role for the Society in education for some time. A small group, initially consisting of Martin, Mike Williams, Dee Holladay and Robert Stone and myself will now start progressing ideas. One idea is publishing an anthology of extracts of a series of adventures linked to the SW from across the years to the present day, aimed at around 10-13 year olds. The ideal piece would be exciting, brief, say 1-3000 words, self explanatory, and out of copyright ! There are some clear possibilities, but more suggestions are very welcome (send to me). We would aim to add support material, quizzes, maybe even computer games, etc to make it attractive for use in class.

Finally, the Committee will be deciding on our annual Awards at our next meeting in the New Year. Please send nominations to the Chair.

Our best wishes for the festive season and the New Year.

Jonathan and Gillian

REPORTS OF MEETINGS

Sidmouth 3rd May 2012 *Titanic*

Some 33 members met at the Norman Lockyer observatory to hear something of the history of the *Titanic* from both a maritime and meteorological perspective.

Julia Creeke started by introducing the observatory. Norman Lockyer had a very distinguished scientific career. He was the first scientist to appreciate that spectroscopy could be used to identify the composition of stars, and thereby started modern astrophysics. He also founded the premier science journal, *Nature*, which he edited for 50 years. When he retired, aged 76, from directing the Solar Physics Observatory (a predecessor of Imperial college), he moved to his wife's hometown of Sidmouth, and built a private observatory on her family land to continue his work. It became part of Exeter University, and when no longer required by them was saved for Sidmouth by local activists, including Julia.

Roland Hasell then gave us a personal perspective of the sinking of the *Titanic*, drawing on his experience as captain of *Queen Elizabeth II*. He related a number of failings, poor quality rivets and steel, design flaws, the odd meanness with lifeboats when the davits could have carried 4 times as many. He considered the hybrid 3 shaft design with a small rudder made for a hard to manoeuvre ship, unlike the earlier 4 shaft all turbine Cunard ships. The emphasis was on the luxurious fittings rather than navigation. The isolation of the steerage section was however a requirement of the US immigration authorities, not a specific White Star decision, though it certainly chimed with the class distinctions of the day.

He thought Capt. Smith often maligned. He had taken appropriate action on information received, changing course and setting lookouts. The biggest failure was communications, before, during and after the disaster. Had the detailed telegraphed warnings been received on the bridge there would have been a much sharper change of course, a consequence of “outsourcing” of the radio service to Marconi, swamped with passenger requests. It was also very unusual to have a large ice field so far south. In the end, it was exceptional in many ways.

Prof. Brian Golding then updated us on the science of ice. We looked at where the *Titanic* icebergs had come from, and the dramatic recent changes in Arctic sea ice with major implications for climate and weather. We can, however, rest assured that the Greenland ice won't entirely melt whilst we are still around. From the floor, David Pulvertaft mentioned his own experience under the ice on only the third nuclear sub venturing below the shelf, and showed scans of the under sea ice projections, which were much deeper than might be assumed from the surface.

After a satisfying lunch, we then toured the facilities, the three telescopes which are extensively used by public and schools as well as the active local astronomers. Our hosts explained the differences between them, and the significance of some of the results. We saw the radio telescope and live radar images of meteors burning up, captured incidentally from the very expensive euro satellite junk monitoring radar. We finished with the planetarium, and an explanation of the gentle art of fixing position by stars, which had been developed by the rarely credited French.

Finally, we saw the sky above the *Titanic* on the fateful night, a reminder of the dangers of hubris, and the perennial hazards of the sea.

Many thanks are due to Julia and Roland and our hosts at the Observatory for organizing an excellent event, one with a real difference.

Jonathan Seagrave

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

Our Maritime Heritage – an uncertain future

A number of the SW Maritime History Society committee and other members attended three important meetings this autumn. The conference at Exeter University was followed almost immediately afterwards by 'The Britain & the Sea' conference at Plymouth University in early September, and then on October 29th. Plymouth City Council held a 'heritage' conference to celebrate 60 years of the Plymouth & West Devon Record Office. All three events, in various ways, endeavoured to address the problem of this nation's current 'sea blindness' [to quote Harry Bennett, the organiser of the Plymouth Conference.] As Chair of SWMHS I was invited to be involved in the Exeter Conference, and I also gave a paper at the Plymouth event. As citizen of Plymouth I also attended the 29th. October event. Below I list a few thoughts and ideas arising out of these gatherings – much 'networking' going on! Your committee would be interested in member's comments (please e-mail to 'Chair SWMHS' on the website.) Our next committee meeting will be in early February.

At Exeter it was generally agreed that new on-line and interactive ways of learning were gathering pace, but also, although internationally maritime research was increasing, in the UK historical maritime research was being squeezed. Many post graduate students now seem to be mature or even retired. Perhaps the traditional British relationship with the sea has been lost within the last generation. Mike Duffy hoped that old craft skills could be recorded and that universities could foster links with the great number of 'non academic' researchers, who often had great post career technical skills and expertise.

A keynote speaker did strike a note of optimism pointing out that there were many new opportunities in the UK in marine science. This was a theme echoed at Plymouth University a few days later. Quite recently the Duke of Edinburgh opened the new Marine Science facility at Plymouth University (which incidentally celebrates 150 years this autumn since the founding of the old School of Navigation in the city.)

The Plymouth Conference, like the Exeter one, spanning two days had a

wide range of speakers including a number representing political & RN history, ranging from FOST Plymouth to the defence correspondence of the BBC. It was, I think, generally agreed that the current RN was probably more efficient than it had ever been, but that the understanding of its place in the 'defence of the realm' was now **not** understood at all by present day politicians and the general public. 90% of our exports and imports travel by sea. Our coastal waters could provide much 'green' wind, wave and tidal power; our waters also need to be protected, be it for the rich archaeological heritage or to provide sustainable fish stocks for future generations.

Concentrating on 'maritime heritage' in the south west I think that we are at a 'tipping' point. We have lost '*Kathleen & May*' to Liverpool, but hopefully not to overseas. Our Vice Chairman has recently sent a strong message of support regarding '*SS Shieldhall*' to the Lottery Grant organisation. '*Shamrock*', at Cotehele Quay on the River Tamar is a concern. Shaun Blight, 4th generation of a waterman family on the Tamar, reports that fresh water has severely damaged her decking and hull. He is trying very hard to repair her. Shaun would also be most willing to give advice to others. (See more in News section). Further afield it seems that '*HMS Victory*' will need tens of millions of pounds for repair and ultimately will need to be completely covered. When I visited in August the masts and yards had just been removed – before they fell down according to one expert!

Going ashore I now come to the state of play in Plymouth. The city wishes to apply for 'UK City of Culture' status for 2017, and of course there is the 2020 '*Mayflower*' anniversary on the horizon. However after over 25 years of dithering the City risks losing its archives, to the national body, by this time next year, maybe to a salt mine in north Wales?! Currently the records are held in an industrial unit in Coxside, Plymouth, adjacent to other units with much inflammable material all round. The cost of moving to an as yet unconverted building in the old Royal William Yard has been put at £30 million – clearly in the current economic climate a non starter.

Having said all this there was a very good turnout at the 'Future of our Heritage Conference' in the Plymouth Guildhall on 29th October. Keynote themes were 'Future User – Tourism & the Visitor Agenda', 'Digital projects', 'The future is together' and 'The future of funding'. Taken as a whole the message seems to be for the great many voluntary bodies to group together to fight for specific aspects of local 'heritage'. Speaking personally, and having organised SWMHS events in the Plymouth area, we have a

wealth of untapped history here.

There are bright spots. The small but energetic history department at Plymouth University and marine science post graduate students there are, along with local divers, helping 'ProMare' the USA based marine research & exploration charity to map the wrecks of Plymouth Sound – 700 and still counting to date. Hopefully an exhibition relating to this, and to the US Liberty vessel sunk in the Sound, will be mounted for 2014 at Mount Edgecombe House to celebrate the D Day anniversary. (For members who missed this year's meeting at Mount Edgecombe we hope to join with ProMare again to celebrate the local events from 1944 and our shipwreck heritage in 2014.)

Addressing 'Sea Blindness' amongst the younger generation your committee now have a sub committee to produce educational material. I wish to extend my personal thanks and support to Jonathan Seagrave who, as a school governor of some 20 years, has some excellent ideas. Would any SWMHS member wish to join the group or make useful suggestions? David Clement has in addition pointed out that the National Lottery do give out small grants to local groups. We have the details. Linking in with what a senior speaker from the Heritage Lottery Fund said in Plymouth recently, projects containing digital material and reaching out to cultural and local communities will be favoured. Applicants need to apply before the end of February 2013. The 'pot' for the South West is £10 million available to 2018. We could apply for small grants - £3 to £10,000.

In conclusion, I personally feel that since SWMHS has national, indeed almost worldwide, recognition that we as a Society should, joining with other like minded groups, campaign to promote our maritime heritage.

We should use not just local but regional and national media. The press loves a good story – even more so doom and gloom?! The loss of our maritime heritage is surely one such story. What do you think?

2013 dates for your diary:

Sat. 11th May – at Buckland Abbey – talks to include topics such as Drake, Nelson's surgeon, and Will Stirling's latest exploits.

Sat. 13th July – at South Yard, Devonport Navy Base – to include RN ship figurehead conservation & RN in WW2, with a keynote presentation on 'Captain J Walker, RN, the officer who defeated the U boats', by his grandson, Capt. Patrick Walker, RN.

Please send any comments to 'Chair SWMHS' via website.

Thank you **Martin Hazell**

Password enquiries are normally dealt with by our membership secretary Gillian Seagrave who can be emailed via the Contacts page on the website or by direct email to membership@swmaritime.org.uk

Photo of Amazon

The graceful lines of *Amazon* of 1885 have added to the charm of the Floating Harbour, Bristol, for the past few weeks. Built in 1885, part of the National Historic Fleet, she has the distinction of being the only vessel to attend both Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee Royal Fleet Review and the Queen's Jubilee parade this year.

Ramblin' round the Clay Country and Its Ports

The wish to get away for a couple of days, coupled with an unwillingness to drive very far, took me, somewhat unwillingly, down to a hotel near St. Austell, but as an exploration of the china clay country it turned out to be more rewarding than I thought.

The town itself hardly inspires confidence. One is hard pushed to imagine the china clay wagons rumbling through the town on the way to the ports such as Pentewan and Charlestown.

To make sense of it, head off to the Wheal Martyn China Clay Country Park, where there is a good museum. China clay extraction, developed after 1746 when Cookworthy found kaolin in the hills around and worked out how to make porcelain. A short walk takes you to a working pit. Ask directions to the road to the West of the museum which leads up a hill, with a breathtaking view of the huge, white, triangular slag heaps - the "Cornish alps".

Now orientated, you realise the problem, common to all Cornish minerals, was how to get the stuff out. Charlestown harbour was originally constructed in 1790 to Smeaton's design by a Rashleigh to export copper, but then was mainly used for the china clay. The main street is very straight and was designed to take three wagons abreast, and as one descends, one is greeted by the time warp of sailing ships' masts, since it is now the base of a film hire company. (Square Sail, now for sale)

Pentewan, a bit further south, at one time shipped a third of the clay. Between 1818 and 1826, Sir Christopher Hawkins built the harbour, the lock gates and the entrance channel. The entrance channel is now silted up and unuseable, but the harbour remains. Mevagissey and Gorran Haven, going further south, were always fishing villages. If you want to get away from the visitors to Meva, you can have lunch at the sea's edge over the hill at the Red Lion in Porthmellon, where a sign indicates the site of Percy Mitchell's boatbuilding yard. The completed boats were hauled across the road and launched over the sea wall.

Don't get too carried away to miss out a walk on the Dodman, the headland that closes off Looe Bay. One of the largest iron age earthworks in England guards it and there is a disused coastguard lookout, plus a huge cross, with magnificent views down to Falmouth to the West and Rame Head to the East. If the sun's shining, cool yourself in Vault Bay on the Dodman's eastern flank. Anne Treneer's *Schoolhouse in the Wind*, covering her childhood just after the turn of the twentieth century, describes life in Gorran Churchtown, the nearby village.

If accompanied by those uninterested in maritime history, Eden and the Lost Gardens of Heligan are nearby. You need a decent guidebook to get the most out of the area. Because this is Southeast Cornwall, I found food prices pleasantly lower than elsewhere.

Mike Bender

Photo of Charlestown

Credit Wikipedia

REVIEWS

[New members note: we will always try and review members' books but will usually need a review copy. We distribute members' flyers free of charge. Also please note that members' books are listed on the website – if you have a publication you would like listed, send details to Dave Hills. All reviews are published on the web. webmaster@swmaritime.org.uk]

Traditional Fishing Boats of Britain & Ireland by Mike Smylie. 352 pp, illustrated. Amberley Publishing, The Hill, Merrywalks, Stroud, Gloucestershire, GL5 4EP. Price £19.99. ISBN 978-1-4456-0252-3 Website - www.amberley-books.com Orders – orders@amberley-books.com

This in-depth study of coastal fishing craft round the British Isles, is a slightly revised edition of Mike Smylie's earlier book of the same name published by Waterline Books in 1999. In his preface to this second edition Mike candidly admits that it is essentially this earlier work, with some new material, and I have to say that those who have a copy of the former edition will have to search diligently for the additional material. Many of the photographs have been re-formatted and the line drawings rearranged, but it is essentially the same.

Even so it is a major review of our coastal fishing craft, and to a lesser degree the communities that fostered them. After reviewing the history of the Herring fishery [considered by many to be our prime home fishery], Mike takes a regional view of different parts of the coast, examining the adjacent shallow-sea and long-shore conditions. Along the way he makes observations on the different types, shapes and rigs of boats that were adopted by practical men to enable traditional fishermen to meet these conditions and wrest a living with a reasonable chance of survival. It was never an easy life, and while there were cycles of feast and famine, historically our seas were plentiful.

For anyone unfamiliar with the development of our fishing craft, communities and traditional fisheries, this book is a remarkable source. Remarkable for an understanding of those fisheries; for, without such an understanding of our past there can be no constructive way into the future. If you don't know where you've been you can't tell where you're going.

As a great admirer of the work of the late Commander Henry Oliver Hill, and Philip Jesse Oke, two stalwarts of the Coastal Craft team of the Society for Nautical Research, who in the 1930s tirelessly set about recording the last days of sail and oar, in photographs and drafts. My regret is that while Oke's drawings and plans are well known, Oliver Hill's work has still not achieved the public recognition due. Specifically Mike attributes a large number of the photographs he uses to illustrate the different craft to the National Maritime Museum Greenwich – a great number of these were in fact Oliver Hill's work, who gets no mention.

With a handy bibliography, and index, extremely well informed and widely researched, Mike Smylie's *Traditional Fishing Boats of Britain & Ireland*, is a must for anyone interested in our near-water fisheries.

Tony Pawlyn

The Boats of the Somerset Levels, by Mike Smylie. 128pp, illustrated, Amberley Publishing, The Hill, Merrywalks, Stroud, Gloucestershire, GL5 4EP. Price £12.99.

ISBN 978-1-4456-0389-6 Website - www.amberly-books.com Orders – orders@amberly-books.com

In this profusely illustrated book Mike Smylie takes an in-depth look at a regional type of boats peculiar to Somerset. A few of these were built by time-served boat-builders, but many many more were the products of village carpenters, or scratch-built by farmers and others. In times gone by, when water levels were less rigorously maintained and waterways infrequently cleared, large areas of the Somerset levels were flooded for large parts of the year.

Relatively shallow waters, in windy weather they could frequently throw up a sharp slop. In such an environment a variety of craft were developed to meet the every-day needs of the inhabitants. Some were for fishing, but the great majority just enabled the movement of people, raw materials, and food-stuffs for both the human and animal population. Some were little better than dug-out logs, while others were quite complex constructions, designed to meet differing conditions and usage.

In this work Mike looks closely at six different types of these craft, or more correctly the different craft that were developed in six specific localities. This book gives a fascinating insight into the distinctive way of life followed in this part of rural Somerset, and the variety of craft developed to service their needs. If you want to know more – buy the book.

Tony Pawlyn

LETTERS NOTES AND NEWS

Irish Notes, ----November 2012.

Your writer is firmly back in Dublin, after spending a fruitful year at Exeter “Uni”. I am a long –serving member of the Maritime Institute of Ireland, which functions in a similar manner to South West Maritime. I feel that some information on marine happenings on my side of the Irish Sea may be of interest.

For the Maritime Institute, the highlight of the past year was the re-opening of the maritime museum at Dun Laoire, the ferry port to the south of Dublin. The museum situated in an old mariner’s church had been closed since 2005, for extensive renovation. A superb job was done and the museum was re-opened last July by the president of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins. Among the many interesting exhibits is one on the “Great Eastern” when she was a cable –layer, and under the command of her Wicklow master Captain Robert Halpin.

On 21st of September last, Commander Bill King R.N. died in County Galway in the west of Ireland at the ripe old age of 102. He left the navy in 1948, after a distinguished war career. We remember quiet vividly the sailing circumnavigations of Sir Francis Chichester, and Sir Alec Rose in the late 1960’s. With a west country interest the exploits of Donald Crowhurst and his ill-fated “Teignmouth Electron” can be recalled. Yet Bill King got around virtually unnoticed at his third attempt in 1973. He was a brave gentleman who lived a very full life.

On the week-end of 19th -21st of October last, your correspondent attended a “Small Navies” conference at Maynooth, a university town to the west of Dublin. Returning home on the suburban railway, I fell into conversation with Michael Paszke, a Polish gentleman who was a presenter at the conference. I asked him did he know our chairman Martin Hazell. Not only did he know Martin, but he had just finished a favourable review of the new edition of “Poles Apart” for the Polish Review, the quarterly journal of the American Institute of Arts and the Sciences. The power of coincidence !

Can I wish all readers and SWMHS members a happy and prosperous 2013.

Joe Varley

Mike Bender writes re *Marine Quarterly*:-

Members may be aware of the launch in 2011 of this "journal of the sea" by Sam Llewellyn, author of numerous yachting thrillers and humorous pieces. It is published four times a year and the subscription is £40. Which is a bit hefty, but for that you get issues of around 112 pages and Llewellyn does seem to be able to get the best contemporary writers across the range of matters maritime to contribute - so there's stuff on the oil industry, tales from merchant navy skippers, history of fishing vessels, a couple of brilliant articles on yachting history etc.

If you are thinking of visiting the *Cutty Sark*, the most recent number (7) has a withering attack on the restoration by Julian Harrap, and the next number will contain a reply by the chair of the restoration work, Maldwin Drummond.

If you enjoy reading widely across matters maritime, well worth looking at with a view to a suggestion for a useful and *enjoyable* insert in your Christmas stocking.

Bruno Pappalardo writes:-

I am writing in regards to the Navy Board project. I am pleased to inform you that the resubmitted business case for the continuation of this project has been approved by The National Archives User Participation panel board.

This whole process has revealed that there is a lot of support and interest in the project, however there is still a large amount of material that remains to be catalogued by a very challenging deadline.

Bearing this in mind I am exploring the possibility of photographing the material and making this available on line to see whether there are any volunteers who would be prepared to catalogue this material in their free time from home.

Moreover I am also looking to see whether there are any volunteers who live near to Kew who would like to work on this project.

I would be most interested in your comments on the above.

Ffi contact Bruno.Pappalardo@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

Julia Creeke writes:-

Members may be interested in the 12th Eddystone Charity Sailing Pursuit on Saturday 13th July 2013. It is the most Corinthian event with boats raising sponsorship for their chosen charity, and then sailing an offshore 26 mile course for prize money (£15,000 in total)- all winnings must go the charity. Organised by the Royal Western YC the 2012 event raised £42,000 for 40 charities with an entry of 74 yachts. The yachts taking part are as varied as the skills and ages of their crews. Do encourage you friends who sail to come and take part as it is very much "a Fun Chase to Fund Raise" and every one seems to enjoy themselves - there is a supper and Prize Giving at the Clubhouse afterwards with a great atmosphere. So far the 11 Pursuits sailed since 2002 have raised a total of £305,000 and 123 charities have benefitted. The more participants the more money and the better for the charities! For more info. go to the Pursuit's own website: eddystonepursuit.org

Tony Pawlyn writes:-

Ancestry have just brought on line digital scans of 'Great Britain, Maters and Mates Certificates. 1850-1927.' Searchable by name, or browsing by Certificate number groups. It is a magnificent resource, and includes scans of any correspondence filed with the original application and certificate, including lists of vessels served in to obtain the required sea-time. BUT - of course - you need to subscribe to Ancestry.co.uk

New Naval Books shop for Portsmouth....

Maritime Books of Liskeard (www.navybooks.com) are branching out....they have just refurbished the former Tourist Information Office at the Victory Gate at Portsmouth Naval base into a specialist Naval Bookshop and Maritime Art Gallery. If you are in the area why not pop in for a browse at their huge range of books on offer – with many at heavily discounted prices. Open til 6pm daily but closed on Sunday. Owner – former naval officer and member Mike Critchley expects to attend every Thursday – Saturday in the run up to Christmas. Any queries please ring Mike Critchley 07977 534949.

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has announced a further commitment of £15million to support heritage skills through its Skills for the Future¹

initiative.

Building on an already substantial investment of £26.8million, Skills for the Future will be open for business again from 1 November 2012. It will support work-based training in a wide range of skills that are needed to look after buildings, landscapes, habitats, species, and museum and archive collections, as well as equipping people to lead education and outreach programmes, manage volunteers or use digital technology.

A substantial amount of HLF money has been announced for memorializing WWI. It isn't totally clear yet how this is to be disbursed or what it may be for, but the HLF has a scheme that runs from 3 K to 100 K. David Clement has the details and experience in the art of HLF applications. Any members with ideas on how we might use this resource, please get in touch with David and the Chair. Although the SW wasn't the focus of major surface naval battles, unlike the North Sea, there may well be good possibilities in areas such as the impact on local trade, the role of SW men, sinkings and rescue, etc.

Greenheart to visit Bristol in 2014

The Greenheart project for a new sail/solar vessel is close to starting to build, but is still raising final funds. The vessel is scheduled to visit Bristol in 2014 as part of its round the world tour.

Ffi <http://www.greenheartproject.org/en/>

Oldweather.org update

The weather recording side of the project has moved on to US ships. The archive of WWI RN ships and extended log recording is now at:-

<http://www.naval-history.net/OWShips-LogBooksWW1.htm>

End of the Bristol Ferry Company

In November it was announced that the Bristol Ferry Co. was going into liquidation. Although there are two other ferry companies, the distinctive blue and yellow boats provided much of the scheduled services, which seem not to be viable. It was seen as a considerable blow to the city's new Mayor, George Ferguson, who was also a shareholder. With huge budget cuts a rescue seems very unlikely.

It Had to Happen ...

In the summer, the media covered Australian mining billionaire Clive Palmer's plans to build a replica of the *Titanic*, which he appears to be comfortably able to afford. His ideas for authenticity are interesting. He is quoted "We've retained the essence of the *Titanic* by having first, second and third class. I think that's very important," said Mr Palmer. "So if you book on third class you can share a bathroom, sit down at a long table for dinner every night, have some Irish stew and a jig in the night." She will however, apparently have air conditioning and plenty of lifeboats.

Mr Palmer declined to say what the project might cost, "We don't want any partners. This is just for me to go for a little sail around the world in". a5A further launch event is due in New York in December.

I am not sure whether we should plan a meeting onboard, but do hope there might be a bit of cash left over to complete the restoration of *Nomadic*, her surviving tender, still half restored in Belfast. She will need a tender after all, in some ports.....

The big question for the media, though, will be "Have Kate and Leonardo booked on the maiden voyage for a reprise of *that* kiss ? "

BBC News. / internet sources

Naval Monument Monmouth

Also back in the summer, the rather splendid monument at The Kymin overlooking Monmouth, dating from 1800, and celebrating British naval admirals and victories, has been refurbished by the National Trust and was formally reopened in August. It is a reminder of the huge public expectations placed on the RN throughout history.

New Finds from *Royal Charter* for the SS Great Britain Museum

Divers led by Nigel Cossons discovered a model of the *Royal Charter's* propeller, beneath 150 years worth of wreckage. The find helps piece together the *Royal Charter's* story, showing the technology used at the time and confirms links between the *Royal Charter* and the *Great Britain* (which also used a screw propeller).

The team of divers have generously donated the propeller, along with other objects to the ss Great Britain Trust so that they can be cared for by curatorial staff and made accessible to the public.

In addition to the propeller, the divers had a collection of exciting pieces that they wanted to donate. This included three pieces of gold, two spoons and some tableware, the design of which was very similar to that carried on the ss *Great Britain*.

The *Royal Charter* was built as a result of the famous gold rush to Australia and took the same route as the *Great Britain*. Launched in 1853, just 10 years after the ss *Great Britain*, the *Royal Charter* was owned by the same company – Gibbs Bright - and in a sense they were ‘sister’ ships.”

SS Great Britain.

HERITAGE BOAT NEWS

Shamrock proposals

I visited Cotehele on the Tamar & found the boatshed open. I spoke at some length with Shaun Blight, the new '*Shamrock*' boatmaster. He hails from a well known Devonport family & is a 4th generation boat repairer/sailor on this river. He is hoping to raise the profile of '*Shamrock*' (built in Plymouth in 1889), and at the same time to raise cash for the NT. [The National Maritime Museum will be selling off their 30 shares in her shortly - the NT hold the other 34.]

We may be able to work with Shaun's plans. I list his ideas below:

- Since *Shamrock* has suffered from fresh water rot (the deck was sealed with a non breathable chemical sealant) and he wishes to, after an extensive repair of the rot, to sail her again into salt water down river to Plymouth Sound on a regular basis. He would like to get a BoT certificate for commercial day sailing. Maybe SWMHS could look at 2014 for a day sail down the Tamar on 'S'?
- The Cotehele boat shed (& slipways) is now available for owners to self repair, with Shaun often there for guidance. Rental fees would go to the NT.
- He has put down two moorings off Cotehele Quay to encourage classic boat visitors.
- He wishes to open up '*Shamrock*' to tourists etc.. if volunteers can be found to 'man' the dock where she is berthed. All this will enhance the interpretation of the river site, and bring it back to life, to echo its heyday in the late 19th century. Could SWMHS members consider volunteering ? - Cotehele being 15 miles from the centre of Plymouth, 8 off the A38.

Contact me if you are interested

Martin Hazell

Bessie Ellen has a charter programme in the Canaries, which your Editor is due to join for a week in January. She returns to UK waters in the Spring, and will be day sailing from Plymouth in May. Member Nikki Alford is offering discounts to SWMHS members on the UK summer programme. *[If interested and you email me I'll forward details, which will also appear in the spring Echoes email newsletter.Ed]*

Irene is moored in the Tamar for the winter. The New Dawn Traders are mulling a further trading trip, if they can get round the bureaucracy that dogged their Caribbean trip this year. You can keep up with this at the NDT website.

The *Shieldhall* trust is working hard on a lottery bid for the major repairs needed. She had a good season with good loadings.

Kathleen and May lost to Bideford?

Having seen the *Kathleen and May* in the Albert Dock at Liverpool during the summer when visiting the archive of the Merseyside Maritime Museum, I took the opportunity on Friday 12th October to see if there was anyone available to give an update on her current status. I was fortunate to find Cindy Grice on board; Cindy and her husband Jeff, are agents for the owner Steve Clarke. Over a welcoming cup of tea I was told how the unacceptably high mooring fees of £25,000 per annum asked by the Council had forced the vessel to leave Bideford and seek a permanent home elsewhere. A decision much regretted because of all her friends and supporters there.

The vessel left Bideford on 20 May 2011 and arrived in Liverpool two days later where she has received a great welcome. The hospitality extended to the vessel in Liverpool has been overwhelming. The Canal and River Trust, who are responsible for the Albert Dock, provide a 50 per cent discount on the mooring fee, a concession also afforded to the vessel at Canary Wharf when she attended the Queen's Jubilee Regatta, and local businesses have provided support in the form of free services and equipment supplies. Examples include Cammell Laird's shipyard across the river who provided free dry docking for a statutory hull inspection, worth an estimated £60,000, and carried out many jobs free of charge while the vessel was in the dock; jobs which included repainting the hull, antifouling, refurbishing the prop shaft bearing and re piping the toilets.

Another local concern, Seaforth Haulage, provided all the staff and transportation to take their topsail spars, which had been brought as deck cargo from Bideford, off the vessel in Liverpool to Pickfords where they are stored free of charge and ISP (International Safety Products), a leading lifejacket supplier in Liverpool, invited Cindy and Jeff to their local factory to demonstrate how jackets are overhauled and presented them with ten of their latest design of jackets carrying the vessel's name. They have also made a recent donation of 27 of their top of the range full immersion suits.

The reception by the public at large has also been outstanding. Following the dispersal of the crew, after the arrival last year, volunteers were required to help with the everyday jobs and an appeal on a local radio station produced 45 people in a matter of days. The vessel is regularly open to the public and in the first year attracted 16,000 visitors followed by 22,000 this year. In addition the vessel is let for corporate events and wedding receptions and welcomes school parties on board as part of a collaboration with the adjacent Merseyside Maritime Museum on their educational programmes. Liverpool clearly appreciates the value of the *Kathleen and May* as an important piece of our maritime heritage and is pleased to have her there.

Cindy did say, however, that despite the generosity shown in Liverpool there is still a need for further funding to meet maintenance costs and one-off items such as fuel costs to attend non sponsored festivals; further sponsorships and individual contributions are therefore always welcome.

When the *Kathleen and May* left Bideford on the 20th May last year the North Devon Gazette reported that hundreds turned out on the quay to wave farewell to the vessel, wondering whether she would she ever come back. On the evidence of the hospitality she is receiving in Liverpool this seems unlikely in the foreseeable future.

As a short tailpiece, I also met Topsy Toner of the sailing vessel *Ruth*, a Baltic trader, who also came on board to share a cup of tea. He is wintering in Liverpool but expects to be returning to the wet dock in Penzance next summer.

Peter Skidmore

WEBERY

Members' Publications, Articles and papers by Alistair Roach on model ships are now listed on the website.

Members' Sales and Wants. Steve Dent has a large collection of naval and maritime history books for sale. Many copies of annual 'Warship' and quarterly 'Warship International', as well as much else. A proportion of proceeds will go to charity (Cancer Research and RNLI). Lists, prices, enquiries to SWMHS member Steve Dent email: sfdent@dircon.co.uk

New links

Board of Trade Wreck Reports 1876-1951, full text available online see:
<http://www.plimsoll.org/WrecksAndAccidents/wreckreports/default.asp>

Master and Mates Certificates 1850-1927 now online see:
<http://search.ancestry.co.uk/search/db.aspx?dbid=2271>

Searchable by name, or browsing by Certificate number groups. It is a magnificent resource, and includes scans of any correspondence filed with the original application and certificate, including lists of vessels served in to obtain the required sea-time. Searching is free on the Ancestry website but viewing the details requires an Ancestry subscription, or via a computer in a participating public library.

Enquiries received by email

We have had an enquiry from the Archivist of the Montrose Port Authority who is preparing an article on vessels carrying cargoes of beer. He is searching for a photograph of the Danish coaster "C Herup" which used to deliver to Topsham. If anyone can help, please contact John Aitken email aitkenjm7@aol.com

A Selection of Items from the Forum

Identification of early ship photographs

From SWMHS member **Roger Bunbury** who writes:

I have been asked for help in identifying the subjects of 5 photographs taken I would guess early in the 20th century. The originals are glass plate negatives. Any information on the names/types of ship, their location (they are all in harbour) and approximate dates would be appreciated.

[The photographs appear on the website alongside Roger's forum query dated 5/10/2012]

The "First" Mayflower the *William and Thomas* 1618

In answer to a previous request from Plymouth's Mayflower Project, a researcher in the USA gave a reference to what he believes is the only documentation on the *William and Thomas* voyage.

WW1 Navy log book entry - LTI

From non-member Su Startin who writes: I am hoping to be able to pick your brains on behalf of a fellow Old Weather transcriber who is working on the logs of HMS *Acacia* for 1915. The 19 July page contains the entry "L.T.I." at 5am. The ship is at sea, approaching Scapa Flow to dock approx 1pm. This is not an abbreviation any of us have seen before. Does anyone have any idea what this might mean?

Rochefort and the frigate *Hermione* (SW Soundings No.61 Oct 2004)

Non-member R Moore tells us:

Hermione is now afloat in the next door dock to that in which she was built. Looks good with the bowsprit and lower portion of the fore mast stepped. As of today's date progress has been slow, however it is hoped she will sail for trials next year.

Gorran Haven Crabber Project (SW Soundings No.86 Apr 2012)

Non-member Martyn Jarvis writes:

I am this winter having a new Gorran Haven crabber built on the plans of the *Cuckoo*. She is being built at Millbrook by Chris Rees. Would like any information on the *Cuckoo* you may have. Hope to come to regattas next summer. Hope to meet.

Chasing the X (Originally posted to the Forum by non-member Gerard Dreyfus 14/10/2012)

In Sir Henry Newbolt's (1862-1938) poem "Song of the Sou'Wester" (one of the "Songs of the Fleet"), the following lines are obscure to me:

"A dozen of middies were down below
Chasing the X they love,
While the table curtseyed long and slow
And the lamps were giddy above."

What does "chasing the X they love" mean?

SWS member **Roger Bunbury** replied:

I put your query to a friend who is very knowledgeable about naval lore. He has replied as follows:

"Cor! That's an interesting one - basically, I think your definition is correct.....I think the verse refers to Midshipmen under instruction, probably in astro-nav. As you say, an x-chaser was someone who was something of a swot, and the "chasing the X they love" is ironic - the one thing Mids don't love is x-chasing."

Cornish oysters to London

From SWMHS member **John Seagrove**

In 1870s [±/-20] small coastal sail ships transported fresh oysters from the Fal estuary wharves [eg Flushing] to Thames estuary harbours and Billingsgate market, London. Does anyone have any knowledge to share about this trade: type of vessel used [not smacks] and how adapted, ship owners names, oyster quantities carried, return freights, etc etc ...? Any info/details/leads would be of interest to researcher into this particular maritime activity.

SS *Cato* (Originally posted to the Forum by P Hodge 29/11/2011)

I am trying to trace any information on the steam ship *Cato*. It travelled between Bristol and Dublin, its cargo was Guinness. It got blown up in the Bristol Channel 1939.

SWMHS member **Gary Hicks** replied suggesting a search of the National Archives digitised war-time movement cards BT 389.

Dave Hills
webmaster@swmaritime.org.uk

UPCOMING EVENTS

***Echoes* has been sent to email members with an extensive list of upcoming events, far more detail than can put in *Soundings*.** If you have changed email address do let Gill know if you wish to continue receiving this list.

New Researchers in Maritime History Conference 2013

Brunel Institute SS *Great Britain*, Bristol 8-9 March 2013

The twenty first New Researchers in Maritime History Conference, run by the British Commission for Maritime History and sponsored by the Society for Nautical Research, will be hosted by the Trustees of SS Great Britain in Bristol. The conference gives new researchers the opportunity to present their work in a constructive atmosphere and the conference is open to everyone with an interest in the subject.

The conference starts on Friday evening with registration at 17.00 and at 18.00 Professor John Armstrong and Dr David Williams will deliver the keynote lecture. This will be followed by a reception on board the ss Great Britain. On Saturday there will be papers from new researchers on a wide range of topics. The day will start at 9.00 and finish around 16.30.

There is also an opportunity on Friday afternoon at 14.00 to visit the recently opened Brunel Institute at the ss Great Britain and view the McGregor library and see some of the Brunel collection.

COST for the conference: £30, Students £25 (includes buffet on Friday evening, and lunch and refreshments on Saturday). To secure your place, please contact :

Helen Small, Conservation & Education Administrator,
ss Great Britain Trust
Great Western Dockyard, Bristol, BS1 6TY

helens@ssgreatbritain.org

SOUTH WEST MARITIME HISTORY SOCIETY

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