

Friends of the Newport Ship

Registered Charity No 1105449 www.newportship.org

News: May 2015.



FoNS @ Fortress Wales, Caldicot Castle (Spring Bank Holiday weekend).



We braved the weather, set up our Viking-style tent on the field on Saturday and returned on Sunday morning, grateful that the wind and the rain hadn't blown it away. Supported by a new Friend, John Putley from Gloucester, we were able to set up shop and were ready for the first visitors at 10am. Sunday remained dull and showery, but our trade was steady. Merchant and Money-maker Charles was striking the replica silver 'petit blancs' and enticing many of the re-enactors from all ages to buy his coin collections to compliment their outfits. Phil and 3 Johns were able to get out and talk to passers-by and hand out our leaflets. Monday was a much brighter day and the crowds were out in full to enjoy the battles, whether they were Viking, medieval archers and men-at-arms, Victorian prize-fighting, WW1, WW2 or even the Vietnam War all heralded by lots of loud bangs and shouting! Our primary task was to promote our future routine of regular Open Days – starting on the last Friday in June (26th) on just Fridays thereafter until the last weekend in July from when we will open weekly on both Fridays and Saturdays. Please see the section below for more details.

Thanks to all those who helped out at the event – it was a good start to the season!

Cutty Sark Visit

It was a small but perfectly formed crew who mustered bright and early at the Ship Centre for the trip to London to visit the Cutty Sark. Built as a 'Tea Clipper' to bring the first China tea harvests back to Britain, she was one of the last of her type working for only 8 years on her designed routes until the advent of steamers and their ability to use the new Suez Canal forced her onto new routes that took advantage of the fair winds eastwards around the world to Australia carrying general goods outbound and wool on the continuing east-bound route – circumnavigating the world, pushed along by the powerful winds in the southern seas. It was this route that Sir Francis Chichester was later inspired to follow single-handed in Gypsy Moth IV.



Some of the party took time to visit the Royal Observatory and straddle the 'prime meridian' from which all places east and west are measured. It provided a fascinating history of time and astronomy.

It was a struggle to get out of London – some minor celebration of Victory in Europe caused gridlock in the capital, but other than that it was a great day.

The question now is.... 'where shall we go next year?' Some have suggested staying more local and visiting SS Great Britain in Bristol, whilst others are more ambitious and proposing a longer trip either to see the Vasa in Stockholm, or the museum at Roskilde to see the Viking Ships Museum.

Please let us know what you would like to do.

St. Fagan's Weekend.



Over the Spring Bank Holiday weekend the FONS joined some of our fellow members of the Fforwm Hanes Cymru (Wales History Forum) to explain our aims and plans to visitors. This year we were accommodated in the Reading Room of the Oakdale Miners Institute (above). This is directly alongside the main entrance and ensured a constant flow of visitors in to and an equally satisfying flow of our new leaflet (complete with opening times insert) out of the

Reading Room. We took around five hundred copies and had precisely thirteen left at the end of Monday's session. Some were handed out, but many were simply picked up, looked at and taken by visitors. We hope this is a good sign for visitor numbers when we "open for business" towards the end of June.

Many thanks to John Davies, chair of the Fforwm and to Rhys, Terry and Margaret who turned up to help. The latter two were newcomers to volunteering with the FONS. They assured us they knew very little (!) but by the end of the day their personalities and enthusiasm made for an impressive start with us.

As usual Rhys handled our Welsh speaking visitors and John pitched in to help when necessary. Our leaflets are now in Chile, Portugal, Poland, Greece and several other countries. They may be few in number, but even one leaflet helps to spread the word.

Preparations for our Opening of the Ship Centre.

We will be opening the doors of the Ship Centre to visitors on a regular basis from the end of June 2015. Initially, this will be 'low key'. We will be building new displays, new ways of telling the story of our Ship and showing what she would have looked like, where she would have voyaged, what cargoes she would have carried and hopefully, much more.

We have built a new 'shed' within the warehouse to be our retail store and office, and we are currently decorating it – once we decide what colour to paint it inside! We know what we are planning to do on the outside and it will look rather eye catching!

We are planning a 'Grand Opening' for sometime later in the summer when the new displays are all in place, and we will also have a series of special members' events to allow all of you to come and see our progress.

As the members of the Friends of Newport Ship, we need your help. We need you to come and see the new Ship Centre and the developing displays; we need your feedback, what do you like, what else would you like to see? More importantly we need **volunteers** to come and help tell our stories to our visitors. We need you to help inspire and enthuse them – just as we hopefully inspired and enthused you in the first instance. If you can help, please contact Phil on 01633 810209 or email chair@newportship.org

An Introduction to Maritime Archaeology

17 October 2015

M Shed

£35/£30. Age 16+

10.30am – 4pm

Find out about the work of a maritime archaeologist. Learn how shipwrecks and other underwater sites are investigated and discover what happens to the objects that are found.

Led by Dr Toby Jones, Nautical Archaeologist and Curator of the Newport Medieval Ship Project.

And lastly for this issue...6 June 2015, Abergavenny Medieval Fayre

Medieval Fayre in Abergavenny Castle, with medieval pastimes, costumes, music and medicine. The Freemen of Gwent will appear, blacksmiths, stonemasons, archers and archery and more. Once again, our Pirate Patron will have the medieval tent at this event, telling the story of the Ship.