

Friends of the Newport Ship

Registered Charity No 1105449

www.newportship.org

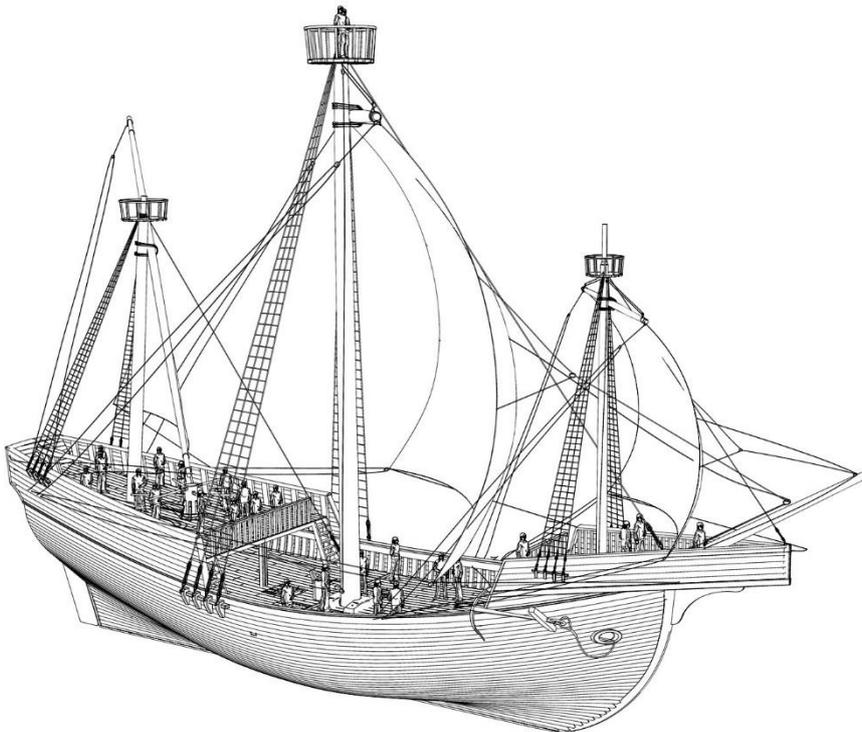


News-sheet July 2013

What did she look like?

As we said in the last Newsletter, we have now established the position of the bow, stern and decks of the Ship with a high degree of confidence. Expert Pat Tanner did this by careful study of the contours of the 1:10 scale model of the surviving parts of the Ship, coupled with an analysis of how

she would have behaved under sail. He's now gone further and produced superb detailed drawings of the Ship and an image of what she looked like. Of course we've had artist's impressions before, but they have inevitably been based on lots of guesswork rather than scientific analysis of the hull.



If you would like a large-scale copy of these drawings, come to the next Open Day or contact our Treasurer, Jean Gray (jean.gray1@ntlworld.com or 01633 766206). Perhaps we'll now have to change the depiction in the FONS logo!

What's happening at Maesglas

The Ship Centre now looks radically different. To reduce rental costs, the warehouse has been split in two, with Parcelforce taking over one half. Volunteers from FONS worked with the Ship Team to dismantle some of the tanks that were no longer required and move the rest into the right half of the warehouse. Not as easy as it sounds, as each tank sat on a ton or two of sand which had to be shovelled up.

Otherwise work on the Ship continues apace. The final stage of the timber-conservation process, freeze drying, is progressing well but taking much longer than expected. Getting through all the timbers is going to take at least three more years, and even that may only be achieved by taking some of the timbers up to York, to be freeze dried there.

We are still storing timbers from the 17th century Swash Channel wreck, but their team of archaeologists is now working at the Ship Centre to record them. You may see them on Open Days. The Ship Team is busy working towards publication of the full archaeological report, and hopes to make the thousands of electronic drawings of the timbers freely available online.

The long term future?

Anyone who buys the South Wales Argus will know that the future of the Ship featured regularly in the last few months. Currently, Newport City Council's only long term plan appears to be finding someone to store the timbers once freeze drying is completed. If that's the final destiny of our Ship, FONS members will, we are sure, be outraged. It would be a golden opportunity lost and a tragic end for such a magnificent find. At



last October's 'Resurgence' conference in Cardiff, the consistent message coming from all the successful regeneration schemes based on maritime heritage is that the key requirement for success is not money but vision and drive. They're not much in evidence in Newport at the moment.

If we are going to re-build the Ship once freeze-drying is complete and put it on display, work on a building to house it should already be under way. As there seems little likelihood of the Council driving this forward, your Committee is exploring other possibilities. A Ship museum could be incorporated in part of a commercial venture which would benefit from that museum. This approach has been hugely successful with Titanic Belfast, which is the centerpiece of a large public-private redevelopment scheme, but it depends on finding an appropriate commercial venture. An alternative is to transfer the Ship to a charitable trust which would be tasked with re-building her and putting her on display. This is how the Mary Rose Museum has been created, but we'd need a feasibility study to confirm that the museum could be financially viable in the long term, and we'd also need to find trustees with a range of professional skills.

New Committee member

We've been delighted to welcome a new co-opted Committee member, Sian King. A Librarian who has recently retired to Newport, she is keen to help FONS and has offered to take on some of the Secretary duties.

DATES

Saturday 27th July

Ship Centre

11.00am to 4.00pm

Open Day. Your chance to see the latest work on the 1:10 scale model, Pat Tanner's superb drawings and some freeze-dried timbers.

Saturday 7th September

Ship Centre

11.00am to 4.00pm

Last Open Day this year. Persuade your friends and neighbours to come!

Saturday 21st September

Swansea Waterfront Museum

10.00am to 3.30pm

Joint meeting of the South West Maritime History Society and the West Wales Maritime Heritage Society. Talks on the Newport Ship, schooner builders on the River Dyfi, restoration of a Tenby lugger and the replica Wye trow 'Hereford Bull' which took part in the Thames Royal Pageant. £7.50. For further details, contact Dale Thomas at dalethomas_52@hotmail.com.

Saturday 19th October

Malpas Court

2.00pm

AGM of the Friends of the Newport Ship

Wed/Thu 16th/17th October

Swansea Waterfront Museum

Maritime Heritage Trust Conference – see <http://www.wherewatersmeet.org.uk/>

As the Ship Team is down to just two, they are relying heavily on us to run the two Open Days. If you can help, please contact Peter Hayward (peter@hwd.me.uk or 01600 712864).