

Friends of the Newport Ship

Registered Charity No 110544

www.newportship.org

News : March 2014



Mary Rose Visit



There are still a few tickets left for our visit to the Mary Rose on May 9th. The ticket price of £30-00 covers entry to the Mary Rose and the cost of the coach. Please send cheques made payable to the FONS c/o FWD Law 12, Clifton Road, Newport, Gwent, NP 20 4EW. And your personal details to

treasurer@newportship.org

The timings for the Mary Rose visit are;

7.30 a.m. Coach leaves Newport (probably Unit 22 at Maesglas).

c.11.00 a.m. Arrive in Portsmouth.

5.30 p.m. Leave Portsmouth, arriving at Newport at c.8.30 p.m.

“Medieval” or “Newport”?

Two visitors to the September Open Day suggested our Ship might have a bigger “pull” if it was re-named “The Medieval Newport Ship” or simply “The Medieval Ship” (in Newport). It seems the word “medieval” has a bit of extra mystique for the public and might do our publicity no harm. This has generated some discussion, but we need everyone to contribute.

We need to think about this because we have to set up a completely new body to safeguard the future of the Ship. That body will need a name and it cannot be “Friends of the Newport Ship” because that would cause confusion. So what might it be? And what use should be made of the term “medieval”? Do you have any views?

Meeting with Debbie Wilcox

On 27th February representatives of the Committee met Councillor Debbie Wilcox, Newport City Council (NCC) Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture. She was adamant that even though the budget passed by the Council two days previously made no financial provision for the Ship from April 2015, the Council remained committed to discharging its responsibility to the Ship and finding somewhere to store the timbers. We discussed possible sites, and urged her to choose one that would allow us to keep the Ship centre accessible to the public for the next few years. This would help us maintain the necessary public support for a new charitable body to take over the Ship, and it was in the Council's interest that we should succeed in this. We felt we received a sympathetic hearing, but we are not expecting to hear the outcome until mid-April.

Looking further ahead, Debbie accepted that for FONS to be successful in applying for grants, it was important for the Council to be showing their support for the project. She also agreed to consider re-vamping the display about the Ship in the Museum entrance, possibly also adding something in the under-utilised ground floor area. That would be a valuable opportunity for us, and we are awaiting further discussions.

The World of the Newport Ship

This is the title of a conference being organised by Bristol University's Department of History over two days, 17th – 18th July 2014 in conjunction with the Newport Ship Project. The conference has already attracted an international array of speakers and participants. There is a nominal charge of £10-00 to cover lunch and refreshments on both days. The Conference dinner on the evening of the first day is extra. If you are interested in attending contact Dr. Richard Stone directly at richard.stone@bristol.ac.uk

The Vikings are coming!



The British Museum has an exhibition from March 6th. – July 22nd. on the above theme. The centrepiece, to the wry amusement and envy of some of us, will be a real Norse longship (*above*) from the Viking Ship Museum at Roskilde. It is displayed as we would hope to display our Ship one day.

But only for twenty weeks before it is dismantled and returned to Roskilde!

The ship is the largest Viking vessel known, which currently prevents its display at the Roskilde museum. The exhibition is supported by British Petroleum (BP).

Now, if we wrote BP a nice letter.....??

The FONS are proposing to organise a visit to this exhibition on WEDNESDAY 11TH. JUNE if there is sufficient interest among members.

If you would like to participate, please contact jtbbt@btinternet.com with your name and 'phone number in the first instance.

National Assembly debate

Tuesday March 4th.

A group from the FONS' committee attended the Senedd on Tuesday March 4th to meet with AMs ahead of a short debate on the future of the Medieval Ship led by William Graham, an AM for South Wales East

With our main display, plus colourful pop ups, guide books and literature about both the Ship and the FONS there was a lot to interest those that stopped to speak. Charles Ferris and his coin strike came too; although he had to be given a rubber mat to deaden the sound as the reverberation threatened to knock out the sound system in the Senedd chamber!

Wednesday March 5th.

On Wednesday March 5th two of the committee also went to hear the debate.. Eighteen AM's, nearly a third of the Assembly, heard William Graham speak. This is an impressive number for a short debate at the end of a mid-week day. Some of the speakers used the Ship guide books, coins and literature to help emphasise the importance of our vessel.

William Graham was well informed and the speech laid out why the Ship was unique, had progressed knowledge massively and was passionately supported by the Friends and the public at large. He also said that if the Assembly was to back the campaign it would be a big tourist pull for south Wales and the whole country would benefit. He covered the history of the Ship, her international connections and how she was a link between so many nations. All the while there was a visual display playing on two large screens for the AMs to look at whilst he spoke.

Both Nick Ramsey AM and William Powell AM spoke eloquently in favour of the Ship and how they had been impressed by the passion the Friends had shown on the previous day.

John Griffiths AM, the Minister for Culture and Sport, said that the Welsh Assembly had paid £3.5m for the excavation, preservation and display of the Ship but that NCC and HLF had also been very generous. He mentioned that there was massive public support, illustrated by the numbers that turned up at Open Days and other events. He also said how passionate the Friends were and that they were hoping to move forward with plans to preserve the Ship and were looking for support for that. He went on to say that Newport City centre had a wealth of history, in both architecture and artefacts. That meant it could be a vibrant core where not only the Ship but many other vessels from the area (the Barland's Farm boat and Magor Pill Ship were mentioned by name) could enhance the developments taking place now.

He finished by saying that he was in full agreement for the preservation and display of the Ship and William Graham could rely on his support. This is excellent news and surely should give us hope for the future of the Ship.

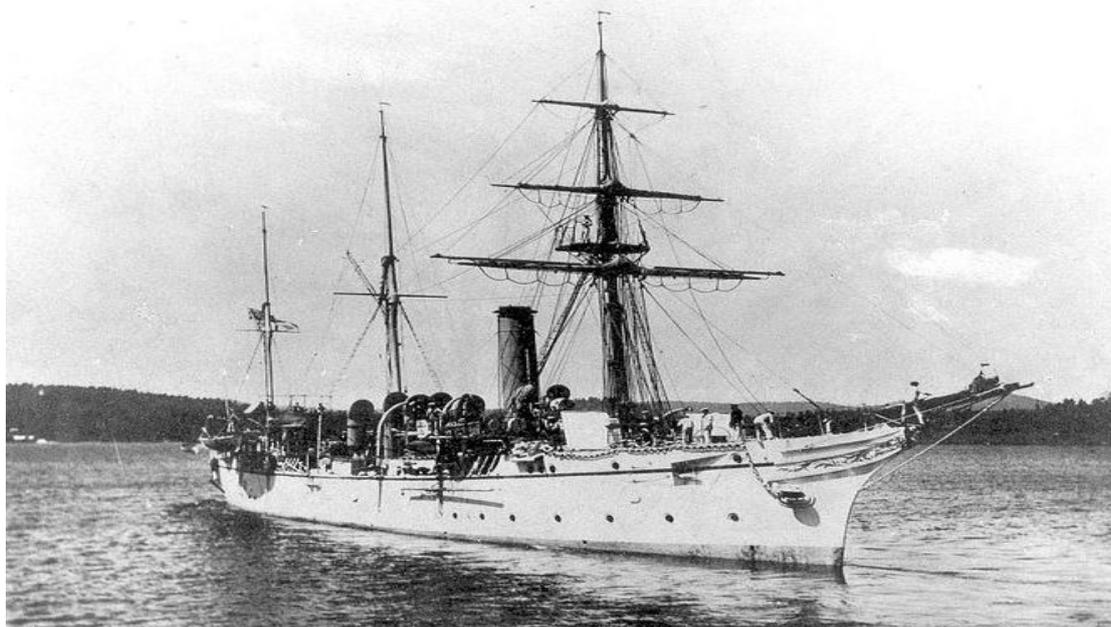
Everything Online

The Ship Team have been working hard to get all material relating to the Newport Medieval Ship Project uploaded to the Archaeology Data Services website where the file, running to tens of thousands of pages, will be freely available to all. It's not there yet, but the web address is

archaeologydataservice.ac.uk.

Logging on now and searching for "Newport Ship" will bring up the IJNA article mentioned in the January 2014 News Sheet. Hopefully, there will be much more soon.

The Last St. Julian's Pub Talk of the season



The steel sloop **HMS Algerine** (1895-1923) was patrolling the Malacca Strait on census night.

The last talk of the winter sequence was given on March 19th. by Jeff Brooks. The talk looked at the Royal Navy on census night 1901; a period at which the navy was at the height of its power and influence. The talk focused on a set of ships of various kinds and their locations on census night. This approach helped to clarify the Royal Navy's size and roles at the start of the 20th. Century and was well received by the audience.

Blog Site

Two FONS Committee members, Phil Cox and Rosi Hollister, have set up a blog site. You can access the site at fonspr.wordpress.com

Why not use the blog to express your views on the "Medieval" versus "Newport" discussion?

And lastly for this edition...

Open Days 2014 All 11.00 – 4.00.

April 26th.

May 24th.

August 12th.