

S.O.S.

the Newsletter of the

Friends of the Newport Ship



Royal Links to Mediaeval Ship

12 months after the discovery of the 15th century mediaeval ship at Newport, researchers have uncovered links with Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick. Long known to students of Shakespeare as 'the Kingmaker' because of his influence in royal circles and the part he played in deposing King Edward IV following the Battle of Edgecote in 1469. It was Warwick who the following year freed Henry VI and restored him to the throne.

New research by Bob Trett of Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust (GGAT) the organisation that carried out the excavation of the ship timbers has uncovered references to a Newport

Ship in 15th century documents held at Warwick.

The Earl of Warwick, was granted custody of the Lordship of Newport in 1460 and, in his role as Chancellor of England, was authorised to make payments for "the defence of the realm". Bob Trett uncovered a document in the Warwick Records Office that recorded Warwick making a payment of £10 to one John Colt "for the making of a ship at Newport". Ten Pounds may not seem much in today's terms but in 1469 this represented nearly half the value of the town of Newport as recorded in the manorial rolls for the period.

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photograph: Ron McCormick

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Free to Members

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...STOP PRESS...

Ship Manager Resigns

Mr. Ron Inglis, Head of the Newport Museum and Art Gallery and responsible for the mediaeval ship since its discovery has left Newport to take up another post at Nottingham.

Rumours circulate that all was not 'ship shape' prior to his departure. Is there any truth in the story that his former office at the Museum has been declared out of bounds and records impounded? Is it true that the door has been sealed with forensic "No Entry" tape and restrictions imposed requiring two senior key holders to be present before the room can be entered?

Can it possibly have anything to do with the impending legal battle with the Council's archaeological advisors GGAT?

Watch this space !!!

S.O.S. COMMENT

In future years the Newport Mediaeval Ship will prove to be one of Newport's greatest assets drawing visitors from across the world. It may be 10-15 years before we are able to see the ship in its full glory but its eventual reconstruction will reward the growing interest and the phenomenal commitment of the local community that has campaigned for it.

There should be no compromise in the effort to properly conserve and display it in a manner that befits its world-importance. In appointing Mary Rose Archaeological Services to prepare a Conservation Management Plan for the vessel, council leaders have demonstrated a commitment to finding a positive solution. This council has a history of trying to do things "on the cheap", it is in danger of failing to actively seek advice of respected independent experts, relying instead on its own internal resources.

Critically it remains stubbornly committed to its original plan to 'shoehorn' the ship into the Art Centre basement despite the strong concerns expressed by a wide range of experts and professional bodies.

It will be a hugely expensive project (an estimated £30 million has been suggested) but nevertheless one that will reap immeasurable tourism and economic benefits for Newport. So it was with some dismay that we received news of the Corus decision that the timbers must be moved to another temporary store. Any move involves risk and can only disrupt the recording process and lead to further damage and loss of information.

So we welcome the recent news that MRAS has been successful in its argument for the development of a conservation resource here in Newport. A large industrial building has now been identified and the ship will be safely relocated in September ready to start the complicated process of recording and conservation.

The Editor

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www.thenewportship.com

ONE YEAR ON

12 months since building workers first stumbled on the timbers of a mediaeval merchant ship the collective efforts of the **Save Our Ship** Campaign group and later the **Friends of the Newport Ship** have made this ship known around the world.

The campaign has experienced unprecedented success in that over 95% of the ship is now recovered despite the early threat to abandon the timbers. The initial protest with its constant 24/7 roadside vigil and a 10,000 signature petition was influential in persuading **Newport City Council** and the **Wales National Assembly** to fund its full recovery.

In the following months while archaeologists wrestled to separate the timbers, members of the Friends manned an observation platform and exhibition display and an estimated 40,000 people visited the site.

The later campaign to **Save Our Stern**, while a disappointing outcome in respect of the stern did nevertheless result in the prow being retrieved. Subsequently, constant pressure for a **Conservation Management Plan** resulted in the appointment of **Mary Rose Archaeological Services** as advisors.

But the future is far from secure - a panel of expert advisors has yet to be appointed and there remain deep reservations among members and in the profession over the viability of the proposed subterranean display. Calls for a dedicated maritime museum are ignored by the local council.

Good News

There are however encouraging signs of progress with the Newport Council decision to fund a dedicated **Conservation Centre** where the timbers can be preserved. A national shortage of conservation facilities for wood means that Newport has the potential to become a major centre that would satisfy the requirements of not only this ship but archaeological finds from elsewhere. As such it should provide a continuing source of income for the project.

Newport City Council is to be applauded for its recent efforts to secure the future of the project once and for all. The strategy is intended to satisfy the expected 10-15 year timescale needed for recording and conservation before the ship can be placed on public display.

Archaeology Trust issues writ

ARCHAEOLOGISTS who rescued a mediaeval ship older than the Mary Rose from its riverbank resting place have instructed their lawyers to issue a writ against the council that employed them, claiming it owes more than £100,000 for the work. The Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust (GGAT) says Newport City Council should have paid it the cash for five weeks work lifting the 15th century vessel timber by timber.

The dispute dates back to last December when GGAT completed the difficult job of recovering the ship. Acting director of the Trust, Andrew Marvell said, "We have instructed our solicitors to issue a writ against Newport City Council for the recovery of the sum of £102,105 together with associated costs. "It relates to payment for works in connection with the removal of the Newport ship - the extended work necessary to actually remove it timber by timber."



Mr Marvell said the Trust had initially been asked to remove the ship in sections, but that the painstaking process of extracting it piece by piece had taken much longer. Archaeologists worked for 10 weeks in the autumn to complete the task, although the Trust's claim only relates to five weeks of that period. A spokeswoman for Newport City Council said it would be inappropriate for her to comment on the issue.

UPDATE CONSERVATION PLANS

Introduction:

All that is going to be recovered from the site [for the time being] is now in safe storage and what happens next has to be managed. The MRAS objective is to make available to the archaeological community the experience, facilities and resources that have been acquired by the Mary Rose Trust over the last twenty-five years. This will be the largest maritime archaeological conservation project since the Mary Rose.

The Proposition:

MRAS proposes that the post excavation project should be divided into 10 stages and each stage should be separately specified and contracted. NCC and MRAS would manage each stage in sequence except where they overlap, in which case they would still be separately specified and contracted but in parallel. The idea of the division of the project into 10 stages is to facilitate planning, cost and time scheduling. The idea of not contracting the complete job is that this is going to be a long project and circumstances will change.

The MRAS expertise is in maritime archaeology and conservation, the financial and funding aspects of the project should be a separate contract.

The 10 stages:

- Planning and agreement of methodology
- Audit and recording of recovered timbers and artefacts
- Biochemical and degradation analysis of timbers and artefacts
- Conservation methodology
- Conservation process
- Conservation QC and monitoring
- Reconstruction visualization and methodology
- Publication of archaeological record, archive, conservation strategy & record, research findings, historiography, reconstruction record & visualization
- Full scale reconstruction
- Display

Supervision and monitoring:

MRAS think it is in everyone's interest that there is third party monitoring. This is principally to satisfy the concerns of outside observers. This third party monitoring could be a panel of independent maritime archaeologists or it could be Cadw.

What Happens next?

The first stage is planning and agreement of methodology. Advice on cost effective best technical practice is being sought on three important parts of the project.

Preservation of the Newport ship poses numerous problems and conservators will need to call on expertise developed in similar projects elsewhere in the world. Experience with the 17th century Swedish ship the Vasa, has revealed major problems with incorporated iron and sulphide deposits in the timbers. There is increasing concern about the effects of humidity and ambient temperatures in the ship hall causing chemical reactions with the materials. The Vasa Trust is now investing hundreds of thousands of kroner to install environmental controls that maintain an optimum temperature and relative humidity required to stabilise the timbers.

The news is cause for increased concern about Newport's proposals for a subterranean display as the published plans for the Arts Centre basement show no provision for the backroom facilities necessary to accommodate environmental controls.

Mary Rose Archaeological Services (MRAS) have now agreed a Conservation Management Plan with Newport Council and secured an adequate budget to enable the timbers to be recorded and conserved in a controlled manner. While the plan does not address the ultimate issue of display it is a strong advocate for a panel of expert advisors. The essence of the plan is outlined opposite.

photograph: Ron McCormick



What alternatives exist to:

- Hand drawing the timbers;
- PEG treatment to bulk-up degraded timbers;
- Vacuum-freeze-drying to remove excess water?

Additionally an important part of the planning is getting agreement on where the project is to be based. And then to plan how to put that concept into being.

Method and timing:

Specialist advice is being sought from national institutes in Germany, Sweden, Denmark and The Netherlands, supplemented by consultation with UK Institutes, Museums and Universities. The report on the technical methodology is expected to take three months.

In parallel, MRAS think that it would be appropriate to commission some biochemical analysis of the condition of the timbers, in case there is activity requiring immediate remedial action. There are signs that there may be ferrous and sulphide contamination and there is some biological activity, which will need to be inhibited.

Planning on location headquarters will require negotiation with a number of national and NCC agencies and departments.

*Report based on Mary Rose Archaeological Services conservation report to Newport City Council.
Courtesy of Charles Barker and Newport City Council*

Royal Link *continued from front page*

It was a turbulent time in English history. The Wars of the Roses led to frequent changes of King and Neville was thought to be engaged in piracy to pay for the wars and invasions that mark the period. Anxious to defend England and Wales from an invasion organised by the deposed King Edward IV, Warwick had to use his own resources to support the royal household and large numbers of Spanish, Portuguese and Breton ships were captured.

Evidence suggests that the Newport ship, previously tree ring dated to 1465, is possibly much earlier and may have come from Portugal.

Records show that Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick wrote to Thomas Throkmorton receiver of the lordship of Glamorgan and Morgannwg on the 22nd of November 1469 authorising various payments. These included "to Traherne ap Merik £10 the which he paid unto John Colt for the making of the ship at Newport, to Richard Port purser of the same 53s 4d." This is likely to be a part payment for work already done on the ship. Warwick also authorised a payment of £15 2s 6d to Matthew Jubber "In money, iron, salt and other stuff belonging to the said ship".

Tony Hopkins of the Gwent Record Office, who helped translate the document, says that the statement "has no clear meaning but it probably means 'in respect of' i.e. looking after the contents of the ship whilst a refitting is carried out." This is a strong indication the ship was not new and supports the archaeological evidence from the excavation of the Newport ship. "The large sum paid to Matthew Jubber suggests the ship may have had a very valuable cargo".

Bob Trett commented "to find someone of such political significance paying for repairs to a ship at Newport at exactly this time is tremendous". "It is not known whether the Newport Ship was captured (perhaps by the Earl of Warwick) or was a trading vessel coming to

Newport for repairs. Either way it is likely that she would have been involved in warfare, particularly given the assortment of helmet pieces, cannon balls and an archer's wrist guard found inside the hull."

Timber shores found under the ship have been dated no later than 1468 so the ship must have been laid up for repair at about that time or shortly thereafter. The reason for it being abandoned may be associated with Warwick's death at the battle of Barnet in April 1471.

Special Eisteddfod Lecture

Bob Trett will be talking about his research in a special commemorative lecture to raise funds for the 2004 National Eisteddfod to be held in Newport.

Archaeology of early ships found in Gwent

The lecture will take place at:

Allt yr yn Campus
University of Wales College Newport
Allt-yr-yn Avenue,
Newport.

Monday, 8th September 2003 at 7.30 p.m

Admission: £3 (£2 to students, £1 to schoolchildren) payable on the door or Tickets may be obtained in advance from the Eisteddfod Office, Bridge Street, Newport.

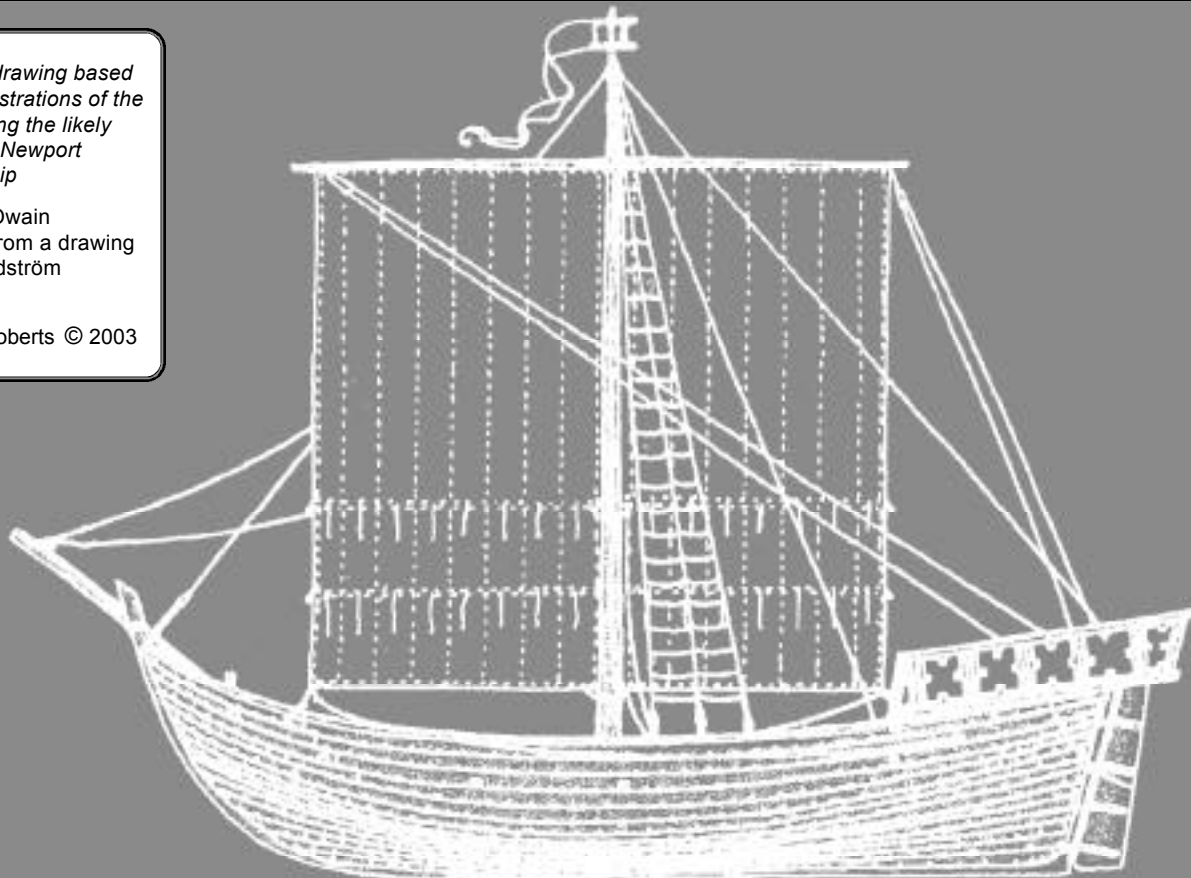
Telephone 0845 1209555 to guarantee a seat.

This is the first of a programme of lectures dealing with the history of Newport and the South Wales Valleys. For further details of the series please contact the Eisteddfod Office.

Speculative drawing based on known illustrations of the period showing the likely profile of the Newport mediaeval ship

Adapted by Owain T.P.Roberts from a drawing by Björn Landström

Courtesy of:
Owain T.P. Roberts © 2003



Caerleon Conference Report

The Newport Ship in its Context - *Research, Conservation and Display*

Overview and Summary

Arranged jointly by the Archaeology department at University of Wales College Newport and the Friends of the Newport Ship, this ambitious event brought together a number of international experts in maritime archaeology, nautical history and the conservation of waterlogged wood with the field archaeologists and conservators working on the project.

Keynote speakers included George Lambrick, Director of the Council for British Archaeology and an early critic of the municipal arrangements for the vessel; Professor Sean McGrail of Southampton University, a maritime archaeologist of international standing; and Gustav Milne of University College London and the Museum of London, known for his work on the maritime archaeology of the City of London mediaeval riverfront.

Research reports were delivered by members of the archaeological team that excavated the vessel including Nigel Nayling (Lampeter University), consultant archaeologist and dendrochronology expert; Kate Howell, site archaeologist for Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust; and Kate Hunter for Newport Museum & Art Gallery, who now bears the responsibility for the care of the timbers and other artefacts recovered with the ship.

Participants were treated to a film about the reconstruction of the Bremen Cog, a 14th century Hanseatic ship, presented by Chris Plaister of the Risca Industrial Society. The film graphically underlined the immensity of the undertaking that now faces Newport in the conservation and reconstruction of its own ship.

Growing public concern about the loss of the vessel's stern and inadequacies in the post excavation process and plans for display were reflected throughout the event. Key themes were identified early on and quickly established a potent agenda for the day. In general these

seemed to arise from an apparent lack of transparency and inadequate communications on the part of the custodians of the ship, Newport Council, regarding its plans, management of the project and the lack of expert advice. Fundamental questions were also raised about the over-arching role of the Wales National Assembly and Cadw, its heritage advisors, in safeguarding the national heritage.

The primary issues can be defined as follows:

1. Concern about the plans for the management of post excavation work.
2. Perceived inadequacy of the funding requirements for a project of this magnitude.
3. Need for an advisory panel to assist with development and implementation of a management plan.
4. The role for specialist archaeological / early ship consultants.
5. The requirements for re-assembling a ship of this size and the constraints imposed by the subterranean display.
6. The role of other interested parties such as the National Assembly for Wales, Cadw, National Museum & Galleries of Wales, the Universities and community based groups or an independent charitable trust.

Concluding Plenary Session

The conference ended with a plenary discussion chaired by Alan Aberg of the Society for Nautical Research. A range of questions from the floor sought clarification on a number of points arising from the presented papers.

An initial query regarding the recovered prow section revealed that, although badly damaged by recent piling, another framing timber had been recovered and the angle of the composite stem post confirmed. The recovered ship was now approximately 26 metres in length.

Post-Excavation Research Plan

Concerns were voiced about the arrangements for management of the post-excavation process

and surprise expressed that Cadw seems to have been excised from the project and appears not to have a 'formal' role in monitoring the monies given by the Wales Assembly. Sean McGrail queried the City Council's current position of taking advice from only one expert source - Charles Barker of Mary Rose Archaeological Services. George Lambrick advised that it was essential to develop a "Conservation Planning Process" that consults with a wide range of expert advisors including specialist archaeology and early ship consultants.

Overall it was felt that the discovery of the mediaeval ship represented an immense educational asset for the wider community and an unprecedented economic opportunity for Newport through enhanced historic status and tourism related activities.

Severn Maritime Heritage Museum

Strong concerns were voiced about the adequacy of the subterranean gallery which has been constructed prior to the recording process and before the size of the ship determined. The requirements for re-assembling a ship of this size had not been fully appreciated at the time of the decision and its effective reconstruction will be compromised by the severe limitations of the proposed display area.

Opinions were voiced that the significance of the ship for the advancement of knowledge and the role of Newport in 15th century trade would be under exploited by the proposed plan. Participants called for a major museum of Severn shipping that would enable the display of not only the Newport Mediaeval Ship but also the many other finds excavated in the area. These might include the Barlands Farm Romano-Celtic boat, the Magor Pill barge, the Bronze Age sewn plank boat and the Tredunnoc canal barge as well as many other maritime and industrial related artefacts.

Charitable Foundation?

The limited resources of Newport Council was appreciated and participants felt that the setting up of a charitable foundation to fund the development could be a way forward. Overall, contributors felt that Newport Council had failed to appreciate the significance of this important discovery and had lacked transparency in the communication of the plans for its future development. Participants endorsed Professor McGrail's view that an advisory panel of experts be established to oversee the post excavation management of the project and called for a more open and constructive dialogue between the Council and all concerned.



UWCN - 10th May 2003

For a full report on the conference and contributors papers visit our Website

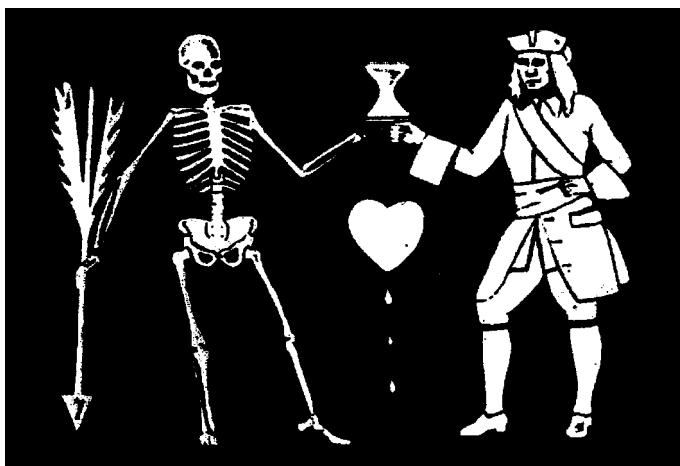
www.thenewportship.com/research

BOOK REVIEWS

The Book of Welsh Pirates & Buccaneers

This is the third of Terry Breverton's books to be chosen by the Welsh Books Council for its 'Book of the Month' promotion.

In certain circles Wales is synonymous with pirates and Newport can boast links with one of the most successful of them, Sir Henry Morgan. Former Governor of Jamaica, Sir Henry Morgan was described as a "murderous monster" a "depraved, vicious, treacherous, almost unparalleled human brute, who was born of respectable people in Wales...". Eldest son of Robert Morgan of Llanrymney and related to the Kemeys family the Morgans also owned the great Tredegar House on the outskirts of Newport and comprise one of Newport, Monmouthshire's oldest families.



Beyond the local links, Terry Breverton's book is a mine of information about this nefarious occupation and recounts tales about Morgan, Black Bart Roberts and Hywel Davis and the infamous Colyn Dolphyn who terrorised the Bristol Channel during the late 15th century at about the time the Newport Ship was laid up in the Usk.

Operating out of Lundy Island one of Dolphyn's most notorious conquests was the capturing of Sir Harry Stradling who was ransomed for a price of 2200 marks and forced to sell his manors of Bassaleg and Rogerstone and other estates to regain his freedom. Despite this there are too few references to the pirates of South Wales in a book which naturally focuses on the rich history of the West Indies.

Nonetheless it is a fascinating read and well worth the money if only for the extensive (nearly 90 pages) glossary of definitions of ancient nautical and seafaring terms, many of which have been handed down over the centuries and now form a part of our every day language. 'Booby prize', 'born with a silver spoon', 'above board', 'wasters', 'piss artist', 'barbecue', 'chew the fat'; 'let the cat out of the bag'; 'Dutch courage' and 'passed with flying colours' are a few of the hundreds of everyday phrases explained.

The Book of Welsh Pirates & Buccaneers

By Terry Breverton

ISBN 1 903 529 093

Wales Books - Glyndwr Publishing 2003 £17.50

The Coastal Archaeology of Wales

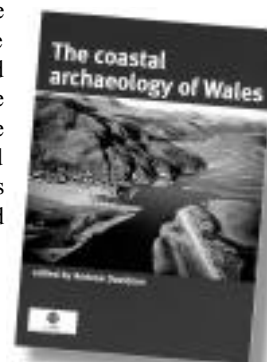
This book was published before the discovery of The Newport mediaeval ship which, had it been found earlier, would have provided a significant contribution to the theme. Nonetheless the report provides a fascinating and extensive overview of the archaeology of the Welsh coastal zone. It contains a chapter on 'The Archaeology of Shipwrecks' with references to locally excavated boats including the Magor Pill and Barlands farm boats. The Gwent/Newport area is also well covered with chapters on 'Fish Weirs and Fish Traps' and 'The Gwent Levels' by Nigel Nayling the consultant archaeologist who worked on the recovery of the Newport ship.

Overall this report follows the completion of a series of surveys, funded by Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments, which were designed to record the archaeology situated within the Welsh coast zone. The project was driven by the desire to allow proactive management of natural and man-made threats to the coast and the need to record the location, type and importance of the endangered archaeological resource. The chapters set out the definitions and methodologies of coastal archaeology, as well as describing the detailed chronological and thematic findings.

Research Report Series RR131

ISBN 1902771 27 3

Council for British Archaeology £19.95



WEBSITE

www.thenewportship.com

The Friends website was awarded the "Site of the Month" accolade by the prestigious Sapling Internet Portal within four weeks of being launched. It is one of the highest ranking websites as voted by visitors to Sapling and now outranks many other long established sites.

The site is a comprehensive collection of information, images, and press articles about the Newport Mediaeval Ship and has a section on the history and various campaigns to save the ship. The **VOYAGE**, **RESEARCH**, **FUTURE** and **MEMBERS** sections are supported with easy links to the latest-news pages. **ON THE HORIZON** monitors current issues and a comprehensive list of associated press articles is available online via **NEWS REPORTS**.



A search facility, **PORT**, is linked directly into the archives of the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich. The **MEMBERS** section has reports and photographs of member events and activities and online versions of the newsletter. There are extensive links to a wide range of associated organisations including, the Council for British Archaeology, Newport City Council, the 24 Hour Museum, and the Mary Rose Trust and a host of community organisations, local history and archaeology groups.

Designed by Aled Singleton of Communimedia and Ron McCormick (Vice Chair of FONS) who both donated their services for free. The site is hosted through the immense generosity of Robin Davis and Camarthen Computers. Our thanks and appreciation to them all.

New Artefacts Identified

Further items are now being identified as Newport Museum conservators work their way through the hundreds of artefacts recovered from the ship.

The engraved brass straps reported in the last issue (No 2) have now been identified as decorative pieces from a military helmet, including a right cheek guard.

One of the latest finds has now been revealed as an archer's lined leather wristguard with an embossed decoration of hearts, flowers and a Latin inscription. A second item has been identified as a fragment of an hourglass which would have been used for navigation.

Further details to follow in a future issue of S.O.S.



A Life on the Ocean Wave

A members' visit to Bristol started with a guided tour of Brunel's great iron clad sailing ship SS Great Britain and ended with an evening cruise around Bristol's floating harbour on the replica of John Cabot's 'Matthew' in which he discovered Newfoundland. A rare opportunity as the Matthew usually spends the summer months cruising British waters and visiting the many tall ship festivals.

The two organised trips were a sell out and members enjoyed some of the best weather of the year. It was a good opportunity for people to meet and ages ranged from nine-year-olds to a spritely octogenarian. Members enjoyed a personal tour below decks (at least those of us who could manage the ladders!) getting a taste of what life might have been like on the 14th century vessel. The rudder mechanism was the subject of much interest as members speculated about how the Newport ship might have been steered.

Some think that the Newport ship built 30 years earlier would have been similar in size and shape to the Matthew. This can only be conjecture as there are no surviving plans and the replica Matthew was newly designed by a contemporary naval architect in the 1980s. Nevertheless it did give everyone on board a real sense of what Newport's ship might have been like.

Picture top: A couple of our youngest members, Joseph and Josh Sullivan from Caerleon.
Left: Joe Williams from Liverpool and FONS Committee member, Sherry Parker from Newport.

Eisteddfod Invite

Friends of the Newport Ship have been invited to participate in the 2004 National Eisteddfod. This prestigious festival of Welsh culture is to be held in Newport next year. FONS was also invited to witness the Eisteddfod Proclamation Ceremony held at Newport's Tredegar House and participated in the ceremonial parade through the city centre on Saturday 6th July.

The Eisteddfod is a unique celebration of Welsh language, art, culture and heritage, an eight day cultural festival that attracts about 6000 competitors and 170,000 visitors. It is the largest popular festival of competitive music-making, poetry, fine art and crafts held in Europe. The 2004 National Eisteddfod will be held in the splendour of Tredegar Park on the outskirts of Wales newest city, Newport on 31 July - 7 August 2004

The Friends have also been invited to present an exhibition about the Newport Mediaeval Ship to celebrate the city's heritage during the 2004 festival.



Left to Right:
Emma Lewis,
Charles Ferris, Sheila
Dyke, Sherry &
Grace Parker and
Terry Underwood in
front of the parade of
Bards as it proceeds
past Newport's 17thC
Tredegar House.

Youngest Member

The newest member of FONS entered the world at 59 minutes past midnight on Monday 18th August 2003

William Raymond Michael Rutherford was born to Friends of the Newport Ship chairman, Simon Rutherford and his wife Amelia at Newport. I am sure you will all join us in wishing them all, the very best of health and good luck for the future.



Annual General Meeting

The first AGM of the **Association of Friends of the Newport Ship** will be held at 2.00 pm Saturday 25th October and will take place in the Rathmell Lecture Theatre, University of Wales College Newport. The meeting will elect a new committee and officers. Members unable to attend may vote by proxy if registered for this purpose by 1st October.

The meeting will be followed by the screening of a short film about the **Viking Ships of Roskilde** and a discussion about future policy of the association.

Copies of the constitution will be available on the day of the meeting or may be viewed on line at www.thenewportship.com/members/constitution.html Members who would like a copy sent to them should send an A5 self addressed and stamped envelope to:

The Secretary, Friends of the Newport Ship, 3 - 4 North Street, Newport, South Wales NP20 1JZ
A person will not be entitled to vote unless a fully paid up member for the year 2003 / 04.

Membership Fees are due for renewal on 23rd August 2003

Chairman: S.C.Rutherford

Welsh Navigators

125 Years ahead of the Rest of World? by Bill Morgan

The Newport 15th century merchant ship is unique in Europe and archaeologists have described it as an international treasure. The main section of the hull was finally recovered in November 2002 after a five-month battle to dismantle timber joints that remained solid and unyielding after five centuries protected under the heavy silt of the River Usk.

The subject was of intense public interest and a heated campaign by the local Friends of the Newport Ship group backed by the Council for British Archaeology (CBA). Protests forced the Wales National Assembly to announce a £3.5 million grant to preserve the vessel and led to an estimated forty thousand people visiting the excavation.

It is with regret that the important stern section was not excavated for it is this part of the ship that holds the clues to the design and shape of the vessel and its means of steering. Equally important is the possibility that important artefacts might have been recovered that would help shed

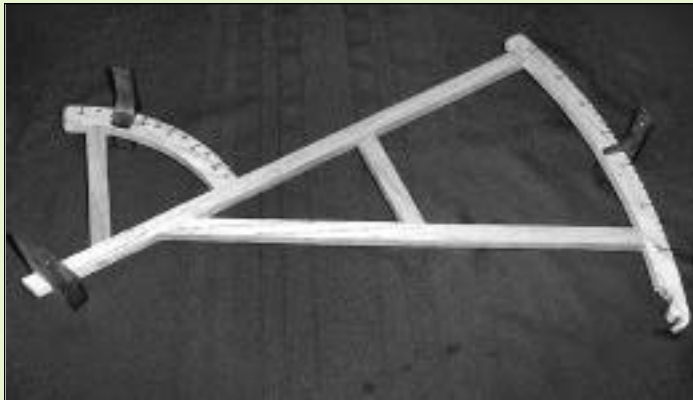


Illustration: Replica of John Davis's Quadrant - original circa 1590 ©William Morgan

light on the navigation systems used by these early sailors.

The remains of the Newport Medieval Ship might have proven that early Welsh navigators may have been over a century ahead of their peers in the rest of the world. The wooden instrument shown here is known as a Backstaff. The credit for this invention has commonly gone to an English explorer named John Davis who hit upon the idea around 1590. The device, also known as the Davis, or English quadrant, was so practical and so elegantly simple that it remained in use for more than two hundred years. But, was a similar device already in use a hundred years earlier? If anything is to be found it will be in the area of the stern.

Finding remains of this instrument on the Newport mediaeval ship would change all that is known about the history of maritime navigation, and at least one of the great feats of nautical advancement commonly attributed to the English would have to be reassigned to the Welsh. It would place the Welsh knowledge of navigation 125 years ahead of the rest of the world, and may also have significant effects on credit for various discoveries.

Some evidence of the navigation systems has already been retrieved in the form of a fragment of an hour glass, found near the stern section and recently identified by the National Museum of Wales. Nautical historians tell us that navigational instruments, ships logs, and more expensive or important items were normally kept in the stern section of ships. This means that as far as the Newport Ship is concerned, any relics that may have proven such an exciting discovery remain buried along with the stern.

Bill Morgan is an American member of the Friends of the Newport Ship and an associate of the National Mariner's Museum.

<http://www.mariner.org/>

1465 Commemorative Card

Printed in full color and featuring the archaeological recovery inset with an illustration of a 14th century ship. (centre) The reverse side has the Friends logo and a brief descriptive history. (2 sided card)

Supplied with envelopes in Packs of 10
£8.50 + £2 Post & Packing

Mediaeval Ship Greetings Cards

Folded cards (bottom left) printed in red and black, the back is printed with the Friends logo and a brief descriptive history of the ship. The inside is left blank for your personal message.

Supplied with envelopes in packs of 10

Large Christmas Card £12.00
Small Greeting Card £8.00
Small Notelet Card £6.50

Plus **£2 P&P**

whatever the quantity.

(except overseas orders)

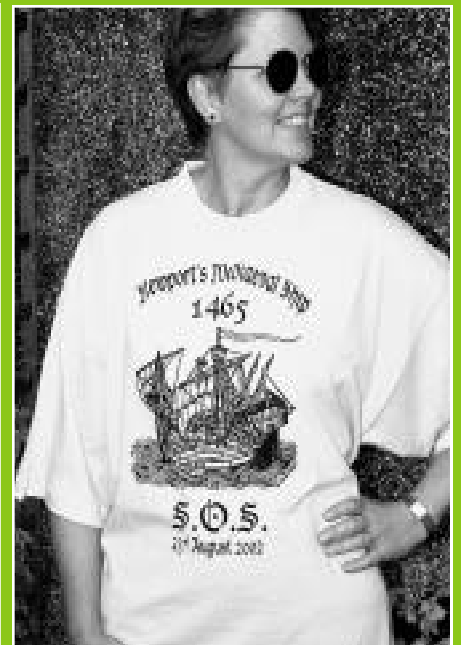


The Friends of the Newport Ship is now able to offer a range of gift ideas for members including, a special Commemorative T-Shirt, Coffee Mugs and Tankards featuring an embossed image of the ship (below), and a range of Greetings Cards, Postcard and Bookmarks featuring our ship logo.

To see the full range visit our website
www.thenewportship.com/members

All items can be ordered by post from
Sales at Friends of the Newport Ship
3 - 4 North Street,
Newport,
South Wales,
NP20 1JZ UK

Make cheques payable to
Friends of the Newport Ship



Special Edition - Commemorative T-Shirt

Black ship design on yellow cotton.

Original S.O.S. brand with the date that the Welsh National Assembly announced a financial package to save the ship. All sizes except XXL

Only a few left! £10 + £2 P&P

Child Size £8 + £2 P&P