

BILL BROOKES

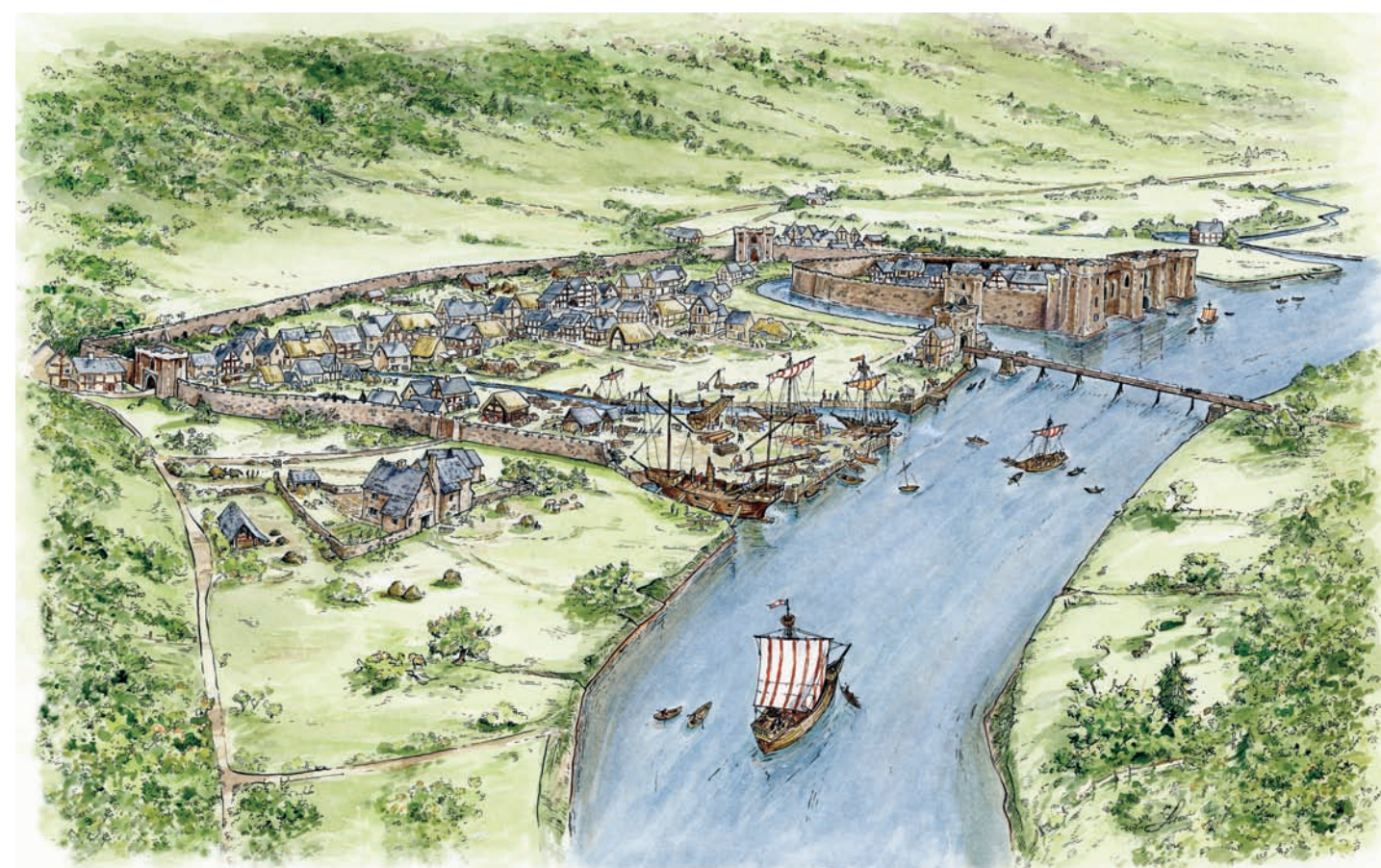
Bill trimming
the sail of a
Viking longship
as part of a
Friends visit to
Roskilde.

At the time of going to press we heard of the sad news of the death of our committee member and a long term supporter of the Newport Ship, Bill Brookes. After a distinguished career in museums Bill provided the Friends with much appreciated expert advice and common sense. Bill was a keen sailor and owned an historic ice-breaking narrow boat. He will be greatly missed.

S.O.S.



the Newsletter of the
Friends of the Newport Ship



This conjectural reconstruction by Anne Leaver shows what medieval Newport may have looked like when the Newport Ship was undergoing an attempted repair. It is noticeable how the Castle (which survives in part) and the Ship, would have dominated the landscape.



CADW

Printed with grateful financial
assistance from the Civic Initiatives
Grant Scheme



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Inside this edition

- A conjectural view of Medieval Newport by Anne Leaver
- A letter from our Chairman
- Editorial - future events
- Christmas Meal 13th December 2008
- News from the Albaola Society
- More thoughts on the Warwick letter by Bob Trett
- Two merchants' marks from the Newport Ship
- Learning with the Ship by Neil Stevenson
- A Merman Timber by Stuart Churchley
- Maritime Newport and Caerleon by Alan Smith
- Notes from a Small Corner by Jeff Brooks
- More on Newport's Town Walls by Hadyn Davis
- An appreciation of Bill Brookes by Emma Lewis

No. 13

Autumn 2008

£2.00

Free to Members

The Friends of the Newport Ship
C/o FWD Law, Clifton Chambers,
12 Clifton Road, St. Woolos
Newport, NP20 4EW
www.thenewportship.com
Telephone: 01633 215707

*The views given in this newsletter are
those of the contributors and do not
necessarily represent the views of the
Friends as an organisation.*

EDITORIAL

This a bumper issue and we apologize for not being able to include all the contributions we have received. Please be patient and await further issues of the newsletter. Also note that although further open days are planned after the October 5th Open Day we are restricted by the conservation process on what we can do. As a result there will Open Days in Newport Museum on Saturday 1st November and Saturday 6th December 2008. 11am-4pm. Check with our website for future updates.

CHRISTMAS MEAL 13TH DECEMBER 2008

Last year saw us dine in grand medieval style at the beautiful Caldicot Castle before the Lord and Lady of the night, Charles Ferris and Kate Hunter. A fine time was had by all; the carolling, the mead, the plentiful wine, the delicious food and the fantastic atmosphere all resulted in a truly memorable night. This year we dine a little closer to home (but still within our seafaring tradition) by choosing the acclaimed award winning Chandlery Restaurant in Lower Dock Street, Newport.

The atmosphere here is one of relaxed elegance, created by dining within a beautifully renovated Georgian building with high ceilings, soft lighting, wooden floors, exquisite food and flawless service. Each course can be enjoyed at your leisure, allowing every mouthful to be savoured and relished in an amiable, convivial environment. The choice of dishes is wide and tempting enough to satisfy the most discerning of palates; allowing both the traditionalists who prefer a roast meat meal and Christmas pudding and the more adventurous among us, to eat to their hearts desire.

Our party will dine at 8 o'clock so please be at the restaurant by 7.30. There is a very comfortable lounge in which to enjoy an apertif and soak up the atmosphere whilst waiting for guests to assemble. Parking is available directly opposite the restaurant in the large area in front of George Street Furnishers.

To ensure your place for this wonderful evening please send payment of £26.50 per person along with your choice of dishes from the extensive menu. We must notify the Restaurant of final numbers and meal choices by early December so please secure your place by making your payment by the end of November at the latest. Cheques should be made payable to the Friends of the Newport Ship c/o Rosi Hollister at our usual address.

Once again it promises to be an extraordinary meal and most enjoyable night - please join us!

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends

Thanks for supporting us, and being a part of this extraordinary venture. In the long hot August of 2003 (a distant memory) we'd just "Saved Our Ship" and six years later the Friends remain an integral part of the Project.

This year has seen the end of the first tranche of Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) funding and the need to obtain new finance. We must continue our visible support, to ensure the Ship Project, and its facility (which is now at the forefront of recording and conserving waterlogged wooden items) remain viable, despite the current economic climate and the potential restrictions on HLF budgets for the 2012 Olympics. The Ship Team continue to develop world leading expertise, and the education and communication outreach activities are considered best practice, and win praise continually. The Friends are integral to supporting these activities.

Despite allegations in 2003, the Ship campaign and the Friends were never politically motivated, or followed a Party line. In recent years I have been gratified to see the enthusiasm and support we received from elected Council members of all parties when they realised the significance of the Ship (regrettably, in some cases it took some time). Now Newport has a recently changed council with some early Ship supporters elected and in positions of responsibility (Congratulations). We look forward to working with the new administration. I wish all our political supporters in all parties well, and thank them for their continued support.

The Friends must continue to pull together to support the Ship Project during the research, conservation and display phase, and thanks to YOU for making it possible.

Yours Sincerely, Simon Rutherford (Chairman)

PS. And then there's the question of the Ship Museum.....

More on Newport Town Walls

This intriguing issue was discussed by Bob Trett in edition No 11 (summer 2007) of this newsletter and now gives rise to the following expansion of the subject.

"Did Newport have a Town Wall?" sounds like the type of question put to a school debating society and Bob Trett has dealt with it in a positive and unambiguous way. May I therefore offer my humble opinion on the subject?

My feeling is that if through ancient eyes Newport was seen to have walls, it was merely the extended walls of the fairly new and unsullied castle that was being described. This illusion might have been enhanced when the weary traveller took his first step through the mighty stone gate that protected the western end of the bridge. Once through this portal the first impression of the visitor might have been that of a tower and a long stone wall on his right and to his left virtually nothing but the river and the emptiness of the castle baileys and fields as far as the Austin Friary. Remember that we are still talking 12th or 13th centuries and most of Newport's tiny serf population lived off the beaten track in rude shacks, hidden from view of passers-by behind the castle in Mill Street, accessible only through the unobtrusive narrow lane that was to become Thomas Street. Is it any wonder then that, not seeing any semblance of a town outside, our ancient friend might easily have assumed that the castle was a walled town?

The curtilage of the castle in those days probably extended farther westwards because in 1907, when the Savoy Hotel was being built on the corner of Station Approach, excavation exposed stonework of great antiquity which was presumed part of the castle. This discovery caused the architect of the project to exercise his over-ripe imagination by producing a plan of Newport as a town completely enclosed by a great wall complete with several watchtowers and a wide patrol way on the top! So much for the theories – now to the realities! In the 1,000 years of Newport's existence nobody has ever admitted to actually seeing a town wall, either complete or ruined.

A murage tax has never been mentioned in connection with any wall other than those of the castle.

The 18th, 19th and 20th centuries saw great swathes of excavation carved all round the castle and town centre

areas for the construction of the canal, the railway and the Old Green improvements. No one revealed the slightest trace of the type of masonry associated with large walls!

The subject is one of local history's many imponderables but "did Newport really have a town wall?" Rightly or wrongly, for the reasons and my (fanciful?) conjecture given above, I am convinced that it did not!

P.S. Has anyone thought of sending for the Time Team?

Haydn Davis

Bob Trett replies:

Many thanks for your contribution Haydn. First of all we have asked Time Team but unfortunately they decided to pursue other projects.

As for the theories on the town wall I have not space to repeat all the arguments in favour of a wall existing. In summary they are based largely on evidence of early property boundaries and their relationship to the oddly shaped curtain wall that once went round the castle. This is backed up with some documentary evidence. The archaeological evidence is weak but if no one has really looked then it is no different from countless other "lost" town walls and castles that are known to have once existed. In fact there is some physical evidence for stone walls – in particular in the cellars to the west of High Street.

Most of the population of Newport appears to have lived along High Street and Stow Hill. At least some sort of defensive barrier would have been needed to protect the market town, which documentary evidence shows gave considerable income to the lords of Newport. Newport was attacked on occasions, including a siege of four days in 1321. You also mention murage tax (a tax used for repair of walls). In 1324 the then lord of Newport, Hugh Despenser, secured a release for his burgesses and tenants in Newport of this tax, with many other privileges. This would relate to town walls, not castle walls. I feel that more work needs to be done before we can hope to find out what was really there. I suspect that the town was defended at least in part by a stone wall, although maybe not as substantial as some other town walls.

RARE 17th CENTURY MERMAN TIMBER CARVING SCANNED BY SHIP TEAM

The Swash Channel Wreck is a little known wreck site on the entrance to Poole Harbour in Dorset. Detected in 2004 by side-scan sonar, the ship was quickly designated by the Protection of Wrecks Act 1973. Surveyed by Wessex Archaeology for the next year and a half, the site was then entrusted to Bournemouth University's Department of Coastal and Marine Archaeology under the leadership of David Parham and Paola Palma.

With a continued effort from the students and staff diving the wreck site some 40m of timbers along the keel line with further upper works, rudder and portside were discovered. The wreck also has six large cast iron cannon dotted around the site.

With the wreck lying so close to the ferry channel to and from Poole Harbour it was deemed a site useful for understanding the complex relationship between ship remains and the marine environment.

During the 2008 summer diving season, what was deemed to be a small carving of leaves was discovered approximately 12m along the keel. With further investigation Senior Lecturer David Parham found the carving to be much larger, and that of a Merman.

With a large helmet, floral attachment, beard, possible breastplate and scaled tale the Merman is some 1.4m long and made of fast growing good quality Oak.

Although found unattached to any other timber it is believed, due to its distinctive shape and mortises on its opposing face, to be the upper end of the main port side head railing. A similar example, but from the starboard side, was found on the Swedish Warship the Vasa which sank in 1628.

During the renaissance era new emerging kingships of Northern Europe such as Sweden, Holland and England began to explore the waters of the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. As the wealth of these nations grew they adorned their ships in exuberant carvings depicting ancient gods and figures from Greek and Roman mythology.

It is believed a merman first appeared in ancient Greek texts as the god Triton the son of Poseidon and Amphitrite god and goddess of the sea.

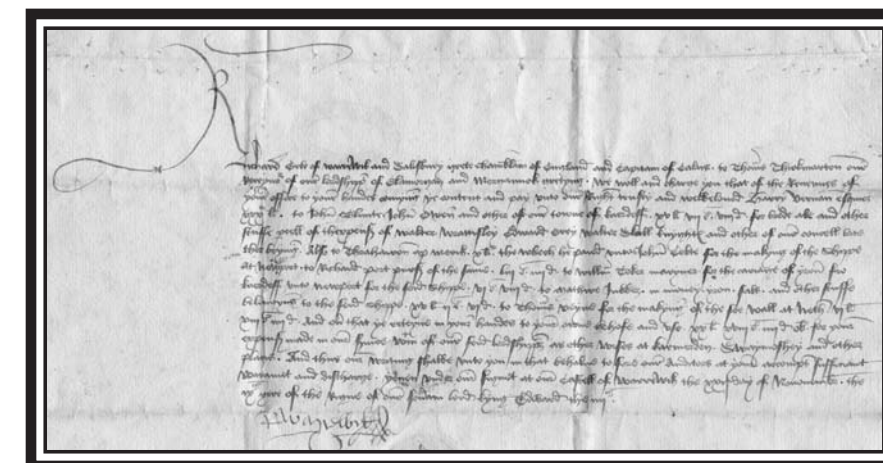
Being a graduate of Bournemouth University, I discussed the possibility of the Newport Ship team scanning the Merman with David Parham. Without much deliberation we decided to do it three weeks after its raising at the Ship centre in Maesglas using the Faro arm partly funded by the Friends of the Newport Ship (see the last newsletter).

This provided a unique opportunity for The Newport Ship and University. Students were given a tutorial in how to use the scanner while Mr Parham was provided an accurate record of what seems to be an immensely important timber carving on a prestigious 17th Ship.

The Newport Ship team were given the chance to provide their expertise and establish links with the University and English Heritage. Ultimately this has created national acknowledgement of the expert handling and technical know-how of the Newport Ship team, illustrating the quality of experience the faro arm has provided them.

Stuart Churchley

MORE THOUGHTS ON THE WARWICK LETTER



In S.O.S. newsletter No.7 (Autumn 2005) there is photograph of a letter dated 22 November 1469. The original letter is in the Warwick Record Office (CR 1998/J2/177). It is an instruction from the **Earl of Warwick** to **Thomas Throckmorton**, his receiver in the lordship of Glamorgan and Morgannwg to make certain payments. A "receiver" was an agent who literally received rents and income and undertook various financial and administrative duties.

The payments to be made included reimbursing **Thrahawron** (or Traherne) **ap Merik** 10 pounds he had paid to **John Colt** "for the making of the ship at Newport". They also include payments he had made of 53 shillings and 6 pence to **Richard Port** purser for the same, 6 shillings and 8 pence to **William Toker** mariner for the carriage of iron from Cardiff unto Newport for the said ship, and of 15 pounds, 2 shillings, and 8 pence to **Matthew Jubber** (or Jubbz), in money, iron, salt and other stuff belonging to the said ship.

The Earl of Warwick in question is Richard Neville, famous in history as "Warwick the Kingmaker" and the letter was written during a critical period in the Wars of the Roses. Warwick had played a crucial part (culminating in the Battle of Towton on the 29th March 1461) in the deposing of the Lancastrian king Henry VI, and in replacing him with the Yorkist king Edward IV.

Warwick was by far the most powerful noble in England and Wales and for a time dominated the new king's governance of the country. However Edward IV gradually began to upstage Warwick and favour other supporters, including **William, Lord Herbert** of Raglan Castle. Herbert was created Earl of Pembroke in 1468 and his rivalry with Warwick eventually led to open warfare. On 26 July 1469 a battle was fought at Edgecote near Banbury. The forces of Warwick and his supporters defeated an army led by Pembroke, who was executed after the battle. By August 1469 Edward

IV was also a prisoner of the Earl of Warwick, and for a short time Warwick, with the support of the king's brother George Duke of Clarence, controlled most of England and Wales.

Warwick was unable to effectively maintain his control of the kingdom and needed Edward IV's support in defending the country from attack and internal strife. Thus the king was soon allowed to go free, and in March 1470 Warwick and Clarence were themselves upstaged and forced to flee the country. In September 1470 Warwick and Clarence returned to England and Edward IV in turn had to flee the country. Henry VI was then restored as a puppet king with Warwick holding the real power.

In March 1471 Edward IV himself returned from exile, and with the aid of the turncoat Duke of Clarence defeated Warwick at the Battle of Barnet on the 14th April. Warwick was killed and Edward IV was restored to the throne.

The Lordship of Newport (including the town and the castle of Newport) was a part of the vast estates of Henry Stafford, second Duke of Buckingham. Buckingham was still a boy in 1469 and he did not receive control of his inheritance until 1473. His grandfather, the first Duke of Buckingham, had been killed in 1460 and during the early years of the minority of the second duke the Lordship of Newport was "farmed" by the Earl of Warwick. "Farming" involved having control of income from the estates and could be very lucrative for the "farmer". However in 1462 Edward IV had transferred custodianship of Newport to William Herbert (created Earl of Pembroke in 1468) and this no doubt displeased Warwick. After the Battle of Edgecote in July 1469 control of Newport briefly passed back to Warwick.

This then was the political situation at the time that **the Newport Ship** was brought to Newport. But why did the Newport Ship come to Newport rather than Bristol or some other port? Also exactly when did the ship

come to Newport (was Pembroke or Warwick in control?), who owned it and what was it called?

We already know a good deal about the ship. It was a large ocean going clinker-built merchant vessel, maybe up to 35 metres long and it was probably constructed on the southern Atlantic seaboard of what is now France, Spain or Portugal. A small French coin called a petit blanc was inserted in a small recess in the keel of the ship when it was built. This dated to 1446 – 1451 so the ship can be no older than 1446. The ship was repaired, probably in England or Wales, sometime after 1459. When the ship was brought to Newport, it had a badly damaged mast step, although no surviving mast was found in the hull. Also sometime after the winter of 1467/8 there was an attempt to repair the ship, but this was at some point abandoned.

The ship probably had a chequered career before being brought to Newport. Inside the hull was evidence of the probable cargo included cork from Portugal. Also found were Portuguese pottery and coins and a German jetton (a token used in the cloth trade). Other finds include cereal grains, hazelnut shells, walnut shells, grape pips, fig seeds, fish and animal bones as well as barrel staves with incised marks used to identify individual merchants. It is also likely that the ship was involved in some sort of warfare. Stone shot was found in the ship, as well as high status items, including an engraved inscribed brass strip probably from a helmet, and a finely decorated leather archer's bracer.

There is little evidence for shipping at Newport in the 15th century as the town was not a "staple port". A staple port was a designated major port where customs were paid wool, cloth and other "staple" merchandise and these goods had to be exported through a staple port. In Newport local ships would have been much smaller than the Newport Medieval Ship and would have been primarily used in coastal trading or fishing. However Newport did have inlets and pills where large ships could be repaired. In 1469 it would have provided a secure place to repair a large ship for whoever controlled Newport and its castle.

The Warwick letter could be referring to the medieval ship discovered in 2002. It is the right date and it is the only known documentary reference to ship building in Newport at the time. One question that has been asked is why does the letter refer to "the making of the ship" rather than the repair of a ship? This could be because of a change in the use or style of English over the years - but in any event it would appear impossible for

Matthew Jubber to be paid in "money, iron, salt and other stuff belonging to the said ship" if the ship was brand new. The amounts paid would not cover the cost of building a large new ship, but would appear about right for the recovery and abortive repair of an existing ship.

If we assume the letter does refer to our Newport Ship it provides a number of clues that might help to sort out the story of the ship. For a start the people mentioned in the letter may be associated with other events at the time.

Thomas Throckmorton was a member of the Throckmorton family of Coughton Court in Warwickshire. He was probably the same man as "Thomas Throgmerton" who was sheriff of Warwick in 1466. In 1471 he was pardoned by King Edward IV for offences committed during the king's struggle with the Earl of Warwick.



Warwick the Kingmaker

could alight at Newport or carry on to other Channel ports and Bristol. Once again, a steady stream of traffic between Caerleon and Bristol existed. By the 16th century, some of the vessels that were sailing out of Caerleon could be identified.

In 1539 Henry VIII had a ship from Caerleon called the Trinity and with ten mariners from Caerleon. The Trinity went to join Henry VIII's fleet assembling at Portsmouth with his flagship the Mary Rose that was ready to do battle with the French. Charles I also had a ship built at Caerleon.

Sir William Herbert of St. Julians also sailed ships out of Caerleon with one called the Green Dragon.

The Morgan family also had connections with the sea and two members of the family will be remembered; Sir Henry Morgan Lt. Governor of Jamaica commonly called the buccaneer, and Miles Morgan who in 1578 accompanied Sir Humphrey Gilbert on his ill-fated expedition across the Atlantic. Miles Morgan sailed on the Red Lion, a Tall Ship of 110 tons and it was highly probable that the crew was from Newport and Caerleon.

Caerleon's heyday came in the mid-1700s when Nicolas Blannin's tram road reached Caerleon. Horses hauling drays of iron, coal, building materials and tin plate came down the valley to the port. Part of the old tram road and a turntable still exists under the path of



Beaufort Wharf no. 2

the bungalow by the stone bridge at Caerleon.

The coming of the tram road and the building of the Brecon and Monmouthshire canal almost certainly sealed the fate of Caerleon as a port and the last commercial ship to leave Caerleon was the Black Prince. In 1800 a new stone bridge was built at Newport restricting large vessels reaching Caerleon. A new town dock opened in Newport in 1843. Such was the increase in shipping a new deepwater dock, the Alexandra Dock, was built and the port of Caerleon has been silent ever since.

Alan Smith August 2008.

A Print For All Your Printing Needs

A PRINT
& DESIGN LTD.

Contact Us Now On

01633 264815 www.a-print.com

Unit 23, Enterprise Way, Newport, South Wales NP20 2AQ

- Full Colour Printing
- Letterheads / Compliment Slips
- Leaflets / Business Cards
- Invoices / Statements
- Booklets / Programmes
- Wedding Stationery
- CD & Video Covers
- Laminating / Photocopying & More!



MARITIME NEWPORT AND CAERLEON

Newport’s maritime history dates from the earliest of time; in pre-Roman time legend says that strange men in strange craft came up the River Usk to barter their goods from the Orient. Evidence of small settlements at the mouth of the river and footprints discovered at Goldcliff dating back some 5000 years is evidence of man’s connection with our shores for many centuries past. The River Usk continued to be the mode of transport right through Roman times and they built a substantial port at Caerleon. Their port was further down River towards Newport than the present port. Over the centuries, the river course has changed and their port now lies inland. A steady stream of traffic existed between Caerleon and the Bristol Channel Ports . Caerleon was said to be the first city in the land but the Romans never called it a city, to them it was the Second Augustan Legion Fortress. However, it is possible that some from Caerleon some of the first words of Christianity were said on these shores. Two local citizens, Julius and Aaron came from Caerleon. They were martyred for their Christian beliefs.

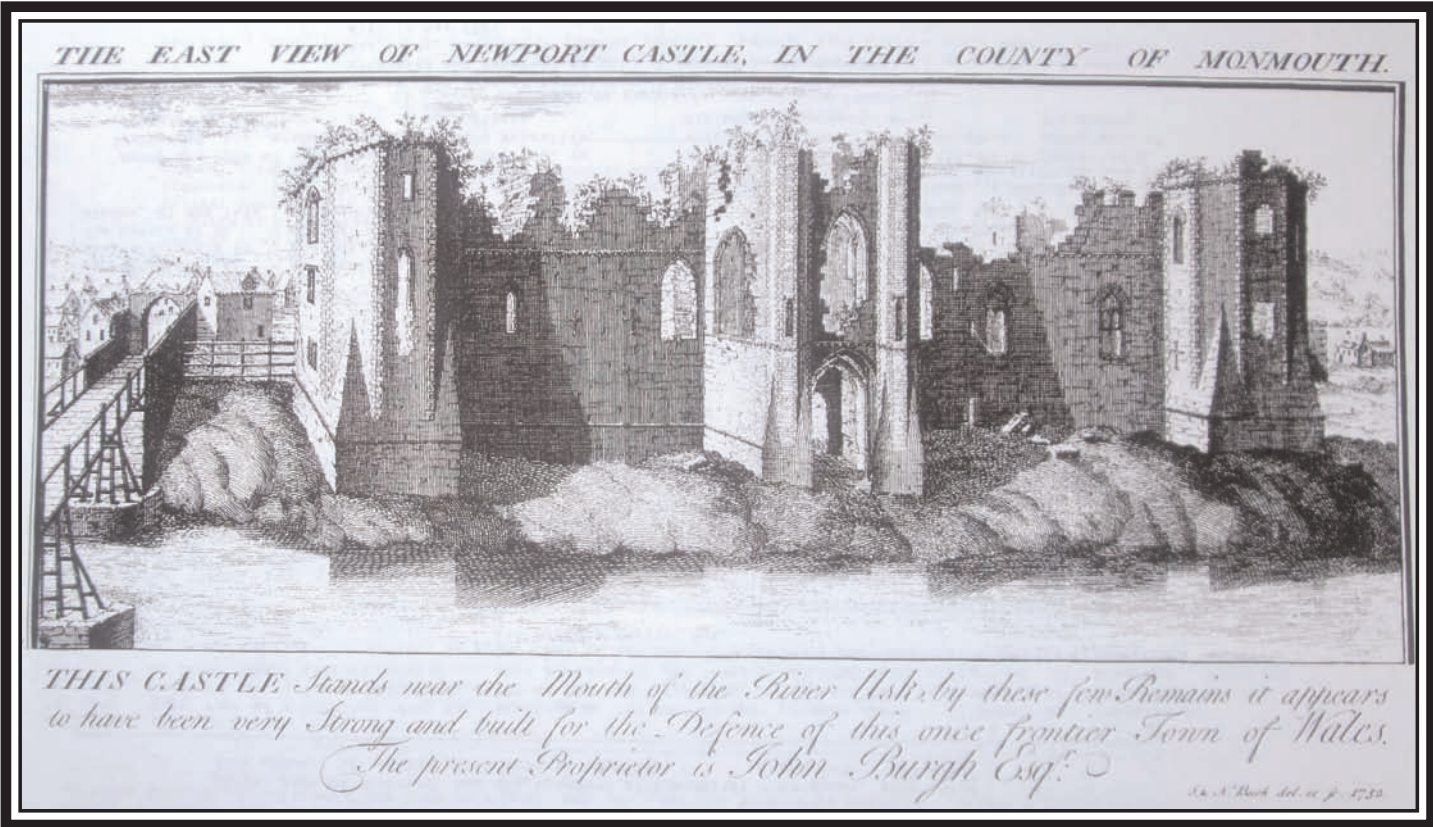
At one time, the districts of Christchurch, St. Julian, Nash and Goldcliff were all part of Caerleon and three of the suburbs were accessible by the river.

After the Romans left, Edgar King of the Saxons came and gathered a great fleet at Caerleon. After the Saxons, life on the River seemed to go very quiet with



very little commercial traffic, the port became silted up and unusable but by the 11th Century Caerleon had become a port once again. Records show that wool was being transported from Caerleon before 1275 and it was wool that was first recognized as an article suitable for taxation. Commercial and passenger traffic continued to flourish. Welsh butter, coal, iron and tin plate were regularly exported from Caerleon.

By the beginning of the 12th century, a bridge had been erected over the River Usk at Newport and a stone castle built. Small wharfs were beginning to appear along the river, a landing stage by the wooden bridge had been erected and passengers from Caerleon



He was born in about 1412 and according to the probate of his will he died on 13th July 1472. The Throckmortons were a long established family of gentry, owning estates in Warwickshire and elsewhere. It is not surprising that the Earl of Warwick should have entrusted him with the important position of receiver in South Wales.

Thrahawron ap Merik is probably Trahagren ab Ieuan ap Meuric who was receiver for the Lordship of Newport on behalf of William, Lord Herbert, between 1461 and 1469. From the letter it would appear that he kept this office after the defeat and death of Herbert.

Trahagren ab Ieuan ap Meuric was an important supporter of Welsh literature and he praised in Welsh poetry as a “lion-heated stag”. He had his own collection of Welsh manuscripts and was noted for his “learning and love of literature”. His home was at Penrhros, on a hill overlooking the town of Caerleon, about four miles from the town of Newport. He is recorded as owning land in the lordship of Newport, and in 1481 was the deputy steward of the Lordship of Caerleon.

John Colt was an important retainer of the Earl of Warwick, but with no other known Newport connections. In 1471 he was granted a pardon at Calais by Edward IV, following the defeat and death of the Earl of Warwick. He was described as a soldier of the town of Calais, a yeoman of the county of Northumberland, formerly a merchant of Newcastle on Tyne, formerly a “gentleman” of London and of the county of Essex. He was allowed to keep all lands, possessions and offices that he had formerly held.

Colt must have been a wealthy man in his own right because in 1464 had spent £51 and 8 pence of his own money on the expenses of Edward IV’s household when the king had visited York. In return he was granted lands near Sedgfield and elsewhere, seized from Sir Ralf Grey who had rebelled against Edward IV.

The Colts were a family of landed gentry and it may be that our John Colt was related to another John Colt, of Nether Hall, near Roydon in Essex. This John Colt died in 1521 and was the father-in-law of Sir Thomas Moore.

Richard Port appears to have been a Bristol merchant. In 1462 he had been in trouble with the king for not providing victuals to the town of Calais and had a letter

of safe conduct revoked. He was referred to as Richard Poort alias Port alias Richard Robert. By 1479 he was regularly receiving at Bristol cargoes of fish from Ireland, as well as wine from Spain.

William Toker appears to have been another Bristol merchant, usually referred to as William Toket. He is recorded as importing iron from Spain in 1476, fruit and grain from the Algarve in 1479, oil and wax from Lisbon and woad and wine from Bordeaux in 1480. He was a bailiff in 1470-71, constable of the staple in 1481, sheriff of Bristol in 1480-1481, member of Parliament in 1489-90 and mayor of Bristol in 1491-1492

The name **Matthew Jubber** does not seem to appear in contemporary records of the area, but variations on the name **Matthew Jubbz** do. In 1494 – 1495 Matthew Jubbbs (also referred to as Matthew Jubb) was sheriff of Bristol. He had also been a candidate for the office of sheriff of Bristol in 1491, 1492 and 1493. With spelling being arbitrary at the time Matthew Jubbbs could also be Matthew Jubbz.

The fact that Richard Port, William Toker and Matthew Jubbbs were important figures in Bristol suggests that the ship referred to in the Warwick letter may have Bristol links. Newport had trading links with Bristol and in 1480 a scholar called William Worcestre recorded that ships, boats and skiffs came from the Welsh towns, including Newport haven, Usk haven, Caerleon haven, Tintern Abbey and Chepstow haven. The ships were moored at The Back in Bristol on the rising tide to be unloaded.

As both William Herbert and the Earl of Warwick were ship owners it is possible that the Newport Ship could have been brought to Newport by either of them. Herbert had two ships trading in wine, and had Portuguese wine available at Raglan Castle. This is testified by the Welsh poet Hywel Srdwal. Herbert also had owned a great ship called the “Gabriel” which had been wrecked on the coast of Ireland in or before 1465.

The Earl of Warwick controlled a more substantial fleet, including a ship called the “Trinity” that was newly built in 1469 at Sandwich. His involvement with Newport and possible ships that could be the Newport Medieval Ship will be discussed in a future article.

Bob Trett. August 2009
(adapted from a documentary history of the Newport Ship being written for future publication)

NEWS FROM THE ALBAOLA SOCIETY

I am writing to you on behalf of Albaola Society. Albaola is a non profit Basque maritime heritage society based in the port of Pasaia (Pasajes), 5 km east of San Sebastian, Spain. We specialise in the study, construction and experimental archaeological sea-trials of historical and traditional Basque boats.

The purpose of this letter is to let you know of our great interest in the Newport Ship that you support. We are interested because we think that the Newport Ship could originally be from the Basque country. The little we know about the ship matches the technology used by Basque shipwrights in the 15th and 16th centuries.

Three years ago we had the opportunity to restore the Urbieta wreck. A 15th century, 11 meter long, Basque pinace entirely built out of oak except for its beech keel. Moreover, the garboard planks cover the keel just like I have seen in the drawing that you display in your newsletter, and the 2nd strake has the same roof-tile-like curved section.

We also have a strong relationship with Parks Canada’s Underwater Archaeology Department, led by Robert Grenier, who discovered and researched various 16th century Basque shipwrecks off the coast of Labrador. One of the wrecks, a galleon known as the San Juan, originally from the port of Pasaia, was built with a beech keel as well. What is more, the mast step of the Newport ship features a hole meant to fit the bilge pump; the San Juan mast step has the same unusual feature.

Some historians, notably Wendy R. Childs of the University of Leeds, have remarked on the very intense commercial relationship between the Basque Country and the United Kingdom. Moreover, Professor Childs, in her remarkable article “Commercial relations between the Basque provinces and England in the Later Middle Ages, c. 1200 – c. 1500”, mentions that most of the Basque ships that frequented the Bristol Channel were originally from the Basque province of Gipuzkoa, of which Pasaia is the main port.

Concerning the absence of any Spanish coins in the Newport wreck: this does not rule out the possibility of the ship being Spanish, as during most of the 15th century Spain didn’t produce any coin of its own and therefore coins from other countries like Portugal or



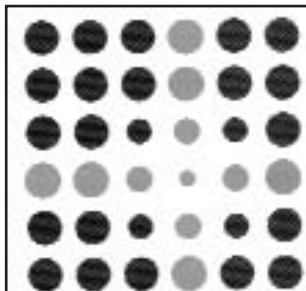
15th Century Basque ships

France were used instead.

If you think we could be of any help, we would be delighted to share information with you, or collaborate with you in any way, with the aim of elucidating the origin of the Newport ship. Albaola is made up of professionals such as historians, archaeologists, shipwrights, educators and maritime illustrators, and also a group of enthusiastic volunteers. Our passion for everything maritime has taken us to various events in Ireland, Canada and Brittany, among others. For more details, please go to our website at www.albaola.com.

We are very fortunate in having the interest of a famous countryman of yours, John Benjamin Toshack, who has strong links with our country; he is looking forward to seeing if the hypothesis of the Basque origin of the ship is confirmed, in which case it could be the start of a great cultural relationship between Wales and the Basque country, based on our common maritime history.

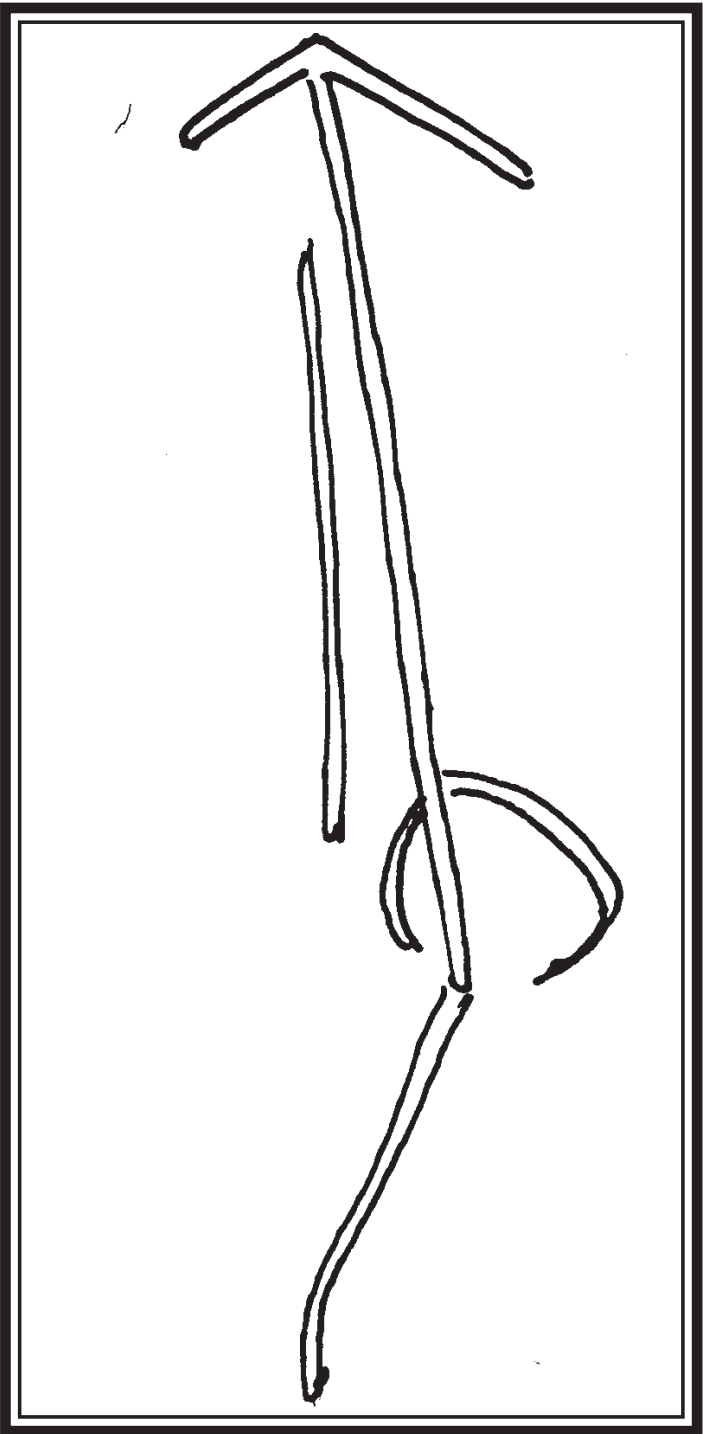
Xabier Agote, President, albaola.com



fwdlawassociates
your local legal service

conveyancing
will writing
executor services
mediation
business legal services
employment advice
personal injury services

fwdlaw *People who care about people*
Clifton Chambers, 12 Clifton Road, St. Woolos, Newport NP20 4EW
telephone: 01633 660440



historian Alfred Hudd from an original seal dated to 1479. Differences between a drawing made by Hudd and the ship mark may not be too significant. Our ship mark was roughly incised, not stamped, and if many were quickly made there could be variations.

The chief differences of Hudd’s drawing with the ship mark are:

- (1) The circle on the ship mark is smaller – but the original seal could well have been tiny so this may have no significance.
- (2) One leg on the cross on the ship mark is longer than the other – but this is hardly of any significance.
- (3) The left side of the cross on the ship mark has an

additional inverted chevron with a central line. The chevron is certainly contemporary with the rest of the mark and must be a deliberate feature. In which case it could either signify it is the mark of another merchant (and whose mark is not otherwise known) or it could signify something else (such as a particular batch of Robert Baron’s cargo or a variation on his mark at a particular time).

In short we cannot say beyond any doubt that this is the mark of Robert Baron but on the basis of the evidence there is a strong possibility it is his mark.

The smaller mark is about 50 millimetres long, and consists of a single line crossing part of a circle at one end and with an arrow point at the other end. The circle is very crude, and the line through the circle appears to have slipped and it goes on at an angle to the main line. There is also a second smaller line alongside the main line – but this could be either a previous mark on the wood or the result of a botched job.

There are no recorded merchant marks exactly like this, but some similar ones are known. For example in 1498 Richard Ferrou, a dyer from Norwich, had a similar mark - but with only a half arrow head using two lines. However there is a mason’s mark from Blythburgh Church, Suffolk that is very similar to the ship mark, but this is probably a co-incidence as it is a fairly simple design.

These marks add to a small group of other merchant marks found from the ship, some of which have been illustrated in previous editions of SOS.

Stuart Churchley, Ben Jennings and Bob Trett
August 2008.



**ARTHUR GAIT
& COMPANY**
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS



Accountants
Club Member

A Professional and Personal Service For All Types Of Business

Audit and Accountancy
Corporate and Personal Taxation
VAT Return Preparation
Payroll Calculation
Business Plans and Start-up
Computer Hardware and Software Advice
FREE INITIAL INTERVIEW

18, GOLD TOPS, NEWPORT, SOUTH WALES. NP20 5WJ.
Tel: 01633 262352 Fax: 01633 250478
Email: admin@arthurgait.co.uk Web Site: www.arthurgait.co.uk
Partners: David E Hayes FCA - C Janet Pritchard FCA

TWO NEW MERCHANT MARKS FROM THE NEWPORT SHIP

During the excavation of the Newport Ship in 2002 a large, probably elm, plank (3358 millimetres long by 597 millimetres at its maximum width) was found underneath the port side of the stern of the ship. The timber's condition appeared reasonably good, with a heavy coating of tar and possibly caulking on both sides.

The archaeologists at the ship have spent many hours sampling the 'caulking' like material, discovering small bone fragments, wood chips and animal hair within it.

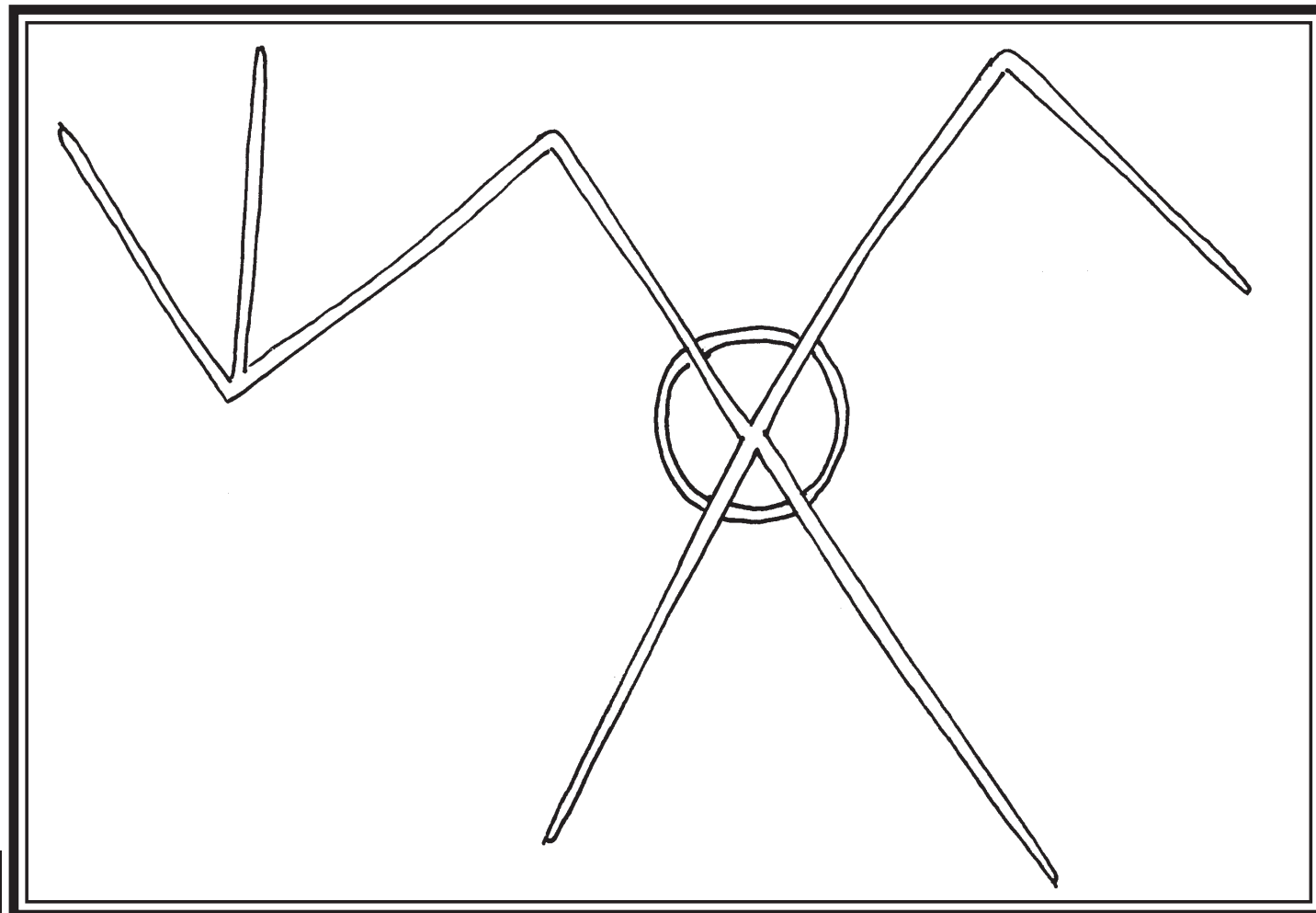
During the cleaning and recording process saw marks were found across the surface of the timber, and also sporadic axe marks. In addition what appear to be two merchant marks were incised into the surface of the timber.

The larger mark (approximately 250 millimetres across) consists of a relatively roughly incised design showing a circle crossed by two lines. One line is similar to a runic "I" or upside down tick. The other

line is a mirror image but with an extra tick attached - making the end look like an inverted chevron. A further scratch mark in the chevron may be associated with the design.

There is a very similar merchant mark known to this - stated as belonging to Robert Baron, a Bristol merchant. Robert Baron is an interesting person as there are several documentary references to him. These include references in the Bristol Customs Accounts that he imported 2 tun and 1 pipe of Spanish iron into Bristol on 26 May 1461 aboard the Marie of Spain, 2 tun of Spanish iron on 16 September 1461 aboard the Marye of Guipuscoa (possibly different ships as they had different masters). In 1466 he was shipping in large amounts of wine and other goods with William Canynges and other top Bristol merchants, customs free, in repayment of a loan to the crown. In May 1480 he was importing cloth and dyed hair from Ireland, cloth from Fuenterrabia in Spain, and salmon from La Rochelle in France.

Robert Baron's mark was identified by the Bristol



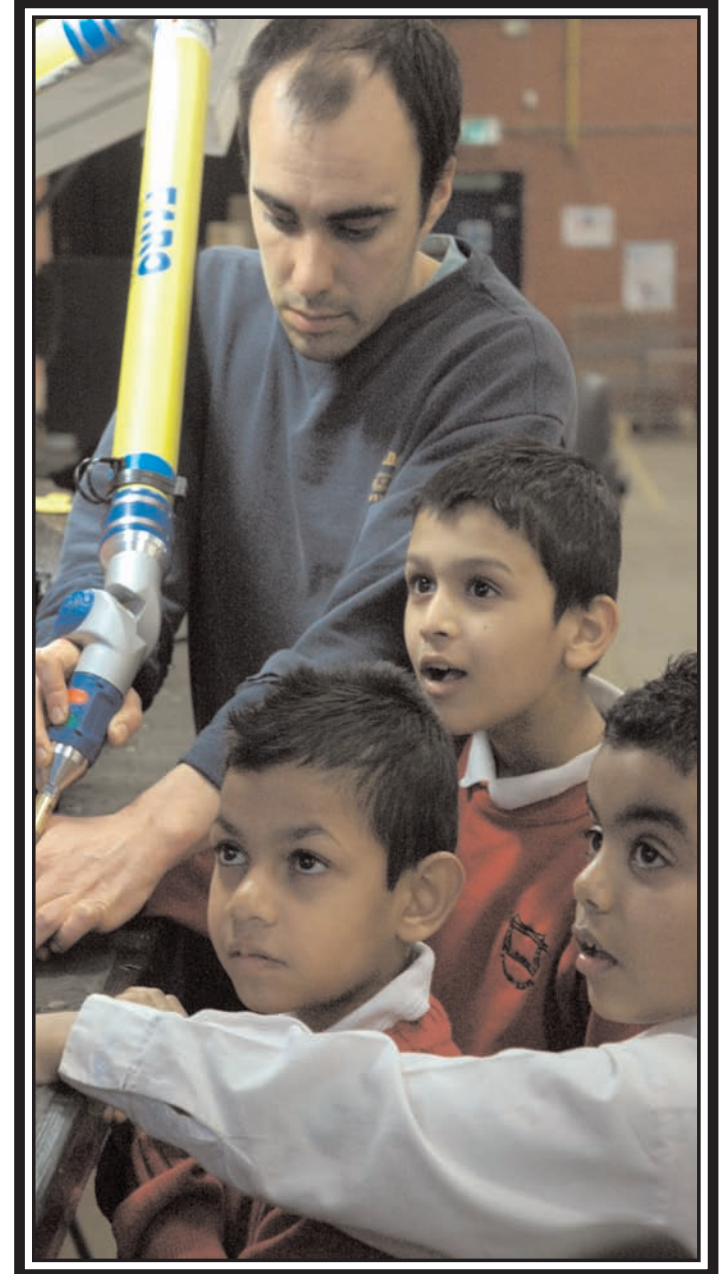
LEARNING With the Ship

The Learning and Access element of the project continues to go from strength to strength. We have engaged over 33,000 people during the last 2 years, including 14,000 school children. A significant achievement for the project! We find ourselves in a very fortunate position in that interest in the project continues to grow.

A new and exciting addition to the ship project has just been completed. Our new website has now gone live and can be accessed at the following web address www.ngfl-cymru.org.uk/eng/newport-ship-project. The website was produced by myself and Matthew Geary from the National Grid for Learning Cymru. Although putting together this resource was a challenge I am pleased to say that we now have an excellent and fully interactive website that can be accessed by all. It is a great resource for the classroom and I would strongly recommend teachers use this when teaching about the ship. Why not have a look at the website. Any comments or feedback would be greatly received.

The 'Learning With the Ship' educational resource now contains over 20 different workshops, assemblies, educational films and loans boxes. The service has been accessed by many thousands of children and young people in education from pre-school through to University level. We have recently launched an e-learning service which allows us to work with school children and young people via email. If you are interested in the education service then please do not hesitate to contact me for a chat and information pack. We are able to work with any school regardless of geographical location within the United Kingdom (or World!) so if you have any relatives or friends that work within a school environment please let them know about us.

You may have seen the ship team and the Friends of Newport Ship out and about at various community events during the summer. We have tried to take part in as many events as it has been possible to attend. On behalf of the whole team we would like to say 'Thank You' for those who have supported us and shown an interest whilst we have been travelling around. Let me know if you have a community event you would like us to attend.



Unfortunately Jane Mcleod, Learning Facilitator, will be leaving the project to begin a new job at Rogerstone Primary School from September. Jane has been an amazing asset to the project and her dedication and enthusiasm will be greatly missed. We wish her the very best of luck with her new job.

As always, please feel free to contact me if you have any suggestions or ideas about how you would like to interact with the project. Group visits and lectures/talks can be booked using my contact details below.

Neil Stevenson
Learning and Access Officer
01633 215708
neil.stevenson@newport.gov.uk

NOTES FROM A SMALL CORNER

THE FONS AT THE NATIONAL EISTEDDFOD

Cool, cloudy and damp; Friday mid-morning. Two cars negotiate the fairly strict outer security around the *Maes* (the Eisteddfod field) and then bump along the rutted rain-soaked temporary track that circles the site. Will we need to make the traditional Eisteddfod decision; sandals or wellies?

We arrive at our pavilion to find Charles Ferris, our unstoppable medieval merchant and part-time pirate, already off-loading his props into our rather small display space.

The Gwyddoniaeth Y Technoleg (Science and Technology) Pavilion is half-empty. Lots of stands will need to set up pretty quickly; we open for business tomorrow, but at least we are here.

Robyn Wheldon-Williams, the Chair of our Pavilion, appears with a small problem. Can he check our passes, as forgeries are in circulation? Charles is amazed;

"They make forgeries (expansive gesture towards the Maes) for this !"

But we get away with this tiny *faux pas*.

Jean rapidly establishes her cheery dictatorship so as to get our stand up, equipped and ready to go. John is deputed to bring in the table and set up the display stand and Rhys and I look incredibly busy humping boxes of information packs and newsletters and a small assortment of props on the trolley. Charles continues to wander in with more essential medieval bits and pieces.

Saturday. Emma has come as reinforcement for Rhys, Charles and myself. But it is incredibly quiet. Our neighbours, the Institute of Biomedical Sciences, suddenly appear and start laying out lots a "freebies" to attract children of all ages and carefully unwrap their £12,000 microscope.

But it's still quiet. Emma wanders onto the Maes on a scouting expedition (or perhaps to order visitors to our stand immediately). I say this because people suddenly begin to arrive in small numbers. They come

in very cautiously as if expecting imminent attack. Our first visitors approach the stand and we launch into a simple routine. We speak respectfully in English, but deftly pass them on to Rhys or Bethan if they want to speak in Welsh. On two days, Monday and Thursday, this wasn't possible; but produced no problems.

At one point Emma and Rhys abandoned their colleagues to visit Doctor Who in the other corner of the pavilion. They held a brief and very serious discussion on Time Travel, but have not yet worked out a way of getting us and our Ship back to the mid-15th Century. That would make an Open Day to really remember !

Tuesday produces Peter and Trish Hayward who have never been to an eisteddfod before, but launch into their duties with cheery confidence. They rearrange our stand to make our small display of artefacts more accessible. Their watch also produces the only "English not" speaker of the week. A mild, cheery and rather broadened out version of Eric Morecambe approaches, ignores Peter's English greeting and is quickly passed to Rhys for a very serious conversation about where the Ship's timbers came from. He is quite surprised to find that we don't yet know.

Wednesday morning and now we are really into our stride. Alan Aberg reports for duty and proves to have a quietly cheery, confident approach with everyone. He seems to have a real rapport with small children who ask for Owain Roberts drawing of the Ship in increasing numbers.

Thursday is busy, so is Friday, although not without lulls in activity partly caused by heavy showers. Charles is surprised at the relatively low number of replica Welsh coins he has sold, but things do improve a little when he decamps to a space alongside the GGAT stand at a crossroads on the middle of the Maes. Our lowish coin sales puzzle everyone.

And so to Saturday. More rain, thinning crowds and the end of all things for another year. Jean and John turn up to help take the stand down (and very welcome they are). Pouring rain, but we manage to get



A Medieval Merchant plies his trade.

everything loaded into the two cars fairly quickly.

What went well ? The cheerfulness and enthusiasm of everyone on the Stand. The genuine curiosity of those who came, the questions they asked (including the little lad who wanted to know if we would build a new Ship and take him to Spain), the welcome extended by our Pavilion chairman, Robyn Wheldon-Williams and by Guto Roberts. They approached us on the Friday asking if we could bring some timbers and a FARO arm to Ebbw Vale in 2010. I had to be very non-committal.

And what were the problems ? We need to be better prepared with illustrated material that we could not take this time due to the transitional phase of the project. We desperately need MORE volunteers (how about YOU?) And we need more Welsh speakers. If you are a FONS member *and* a Welsh speaker, please staff the stand with us in 2010.

We need to gain greater publicity for the Ship. Awareness of the vessel among our Eisteddfod visitors was very high, but knowledge of Ship (and even its location) is very, very low.

We all enjoyed ourselves. My grateful thanks to Emma, Jean, John, Trish, Peter, Alan Aberg, Bethan and Rhys for making the FONS presence possible. And, of course, to Charles, for publicising the Ship Project with his enthusiastic efforts throughout the week.

Jeff Brooks.



Heads Or Tails ? The replica "Petit blanc" and the artefacts attract attention.