

## Letter from the Chairman

Dear Friends,

I am delighted to be writing my first newsletter piece as Chairman of the Friends of the Newport Ship, and thank Simon Rutherford for his many years of sterling service. As the new Chairman, I am humbled by the work of so many of the volunteers working with the ship in one way or another over the years and very aware of the challenges ahead.

2010 is an exciting year for Newport; Festival Year, and the year the Ryder Cup comes to the city; a year in the spotlight for Newport. Yet as I type, very few of the timbers of the ship are visible - , thankfully the incredibly accurate model is growing apace. At our last committee meeting a few days ago, I checked up on the timbers and found some already in a solution of the PEG wax, which will stabilise the timbers and stop them warping as they dry out.

The wax will push the water out of the timber and keep the shape and strength of the timbers for the future. After this, the timbers will be freeze dried (just like frozen food, but much more carefully) and they will be ready for reassembly and display. We will have our ship back as a ship, and out of the tanks of water, and it will be so exciting to see her in one piece again.

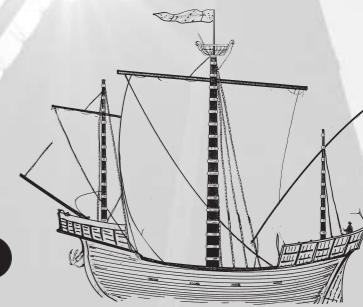
Now, as there is little to see and much still to do, the

ship team has been pared down to the minimum and we are very aware that at this time, she is in a vulnerable position, with future funding and a suitable museum to display her in still to be secured. While Toby looks after the ship's conservation, we are missing Neil who brought the ship to the community and the community to the ship and we are preparing for our Open Days this year with so little of the ship to show people. The 2010 Open Days will, consequently, be more alive than ever, and we will have many aspects of medieval life on show, with different things to see each time.

I am very much looking forward to the future and to working with everyone concerned to ensure the best possible future of the Ship. My thanks to Jean (Treasurer), Ann (Secretary) and Peter (Vice Chairman) along with the rest of the Committee and other volunteers for their hard work and support, with which the future of the ship looks safer.

**Emma Lewis**  
Chairman

# S.O.S.



the Newsletter of the  
**Friends of the Newport Ship**



## Kate Hunter 1954 -2010

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

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## Kate Hunter by Bob Trett

It is with great sadness that we report the death of Kate Hunter, as a result of a brain tumour. Kate was involved with the Newport Ship since its discovery, first as Keeper of Conservation for Newport Museum and then as leader of the Ship team.

She had a career in archaeology spanning 30 years. She had previous jobs with the Lincoln Archaeology Trust and with the University of Wales, Cardiff. She went on to be senior conservator in the department of archaeology at the National Museum of Wales, and was involved with recording and making casts of the prehistoric footprints from Nash near Newport. In 1991 she became the Keeper of Conservation at Newport Museum and Art Gallery.

It was at Newport where she made the greatest impact and where she became involved with the recovery and conservation of a wide range of material from The Severn Estuary, including fishing baskets, Bronze Age boat planks, and Iron Age structural timbers from Goldcliff. She was also responsible for organising the conservation of the Romano-Celtic boat from Barlands Farm, Magor. While Kate conserved and managed many important historical objects and paintings her greatest joy was the Newport Ship.

It was her last and most notable work. She was instrumental in ensuring its proper excavation, recovery and storage, as well as in caring for the artefacts. She championed the international importance of the ship as the most complete fifteenth century vessel recovered in Europe, and was delighted when Timewatch chose to follow the research into its origins. Appointed Ship Project leader in 2004, she won major funding from both the National Assembly for Wales and the Heritage Lottery Fund. However she always gave the greatest credit for the Ship's successful rescue to the passion of the local community, who queued for hours for a glimpse of the site. She actively encouraged the Friends' involvement in the Ship Project, and appreciated the importance of their role.

Outside archaeology she was heavily involved in the campaign against the Cardiff Bay Barrage, putting her expertise in water-logged soils to use as part of a small group who forced the developers to make changes that protected households in low-lying and often deprived areas of Cardiff.

Many members of the Friends will have their own memories of her and her infectious enthusiasm. Her dedication and hard work, her academic ability, her common sense, and care for others earned the highest respect from friends and colleagues around the world. She will be sorely missed. A new guide book to the Newport Medieval Ship, due for publication by the Friends this summer, will be dedicated to Kate.

## Kate Hunter by Emma Lewis

'Along with other The Friends of the Newport Ship, I was personally saddened to hear of the death of Kate Hunter, who did so much for the Newport Ship as a visionary, enthusiastic and very professional curator for the vessel. Our gratitude to her for her huge, positive impact on the future of the Newport ship will remain with us; Kate was a friend to many of us and will be missed greatly. We are comforted by the legacy she left us in the Ship and many happy memories of times we spent with Kate. Our thoughts are with her family.'

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## John Sicolo by Charles Ferris

It is with great regret that we report the passing of Mr John Sicolo. John is famous as having been the proprietor of TJ's nightclub and rock music venue.

Fewer people are aware that John was one of the founder members of the campaign to Save our Ship (SOS). John was on the rostrum of the Dolman Theatre when the first public meeting to launch the campaign was held. He also organised a march through the Town by the young people of Newport, culminating in a noisy protest at the Civic Centre.

John was a Pilgwenlly boy who joined the Navy at an early age. Coming ashore after many years he opened El Deico's, that later expanded to become the legendary TJ's. John returned to the sea for one great adventure when he served as cook aboard the replica of Cabot's ship, The Matthew, on one of its voyages.

A generous man, John supported many charities with benefit events at TJ's and other venues. He supported the Merchant Seamen's Association by running charity stalls on

their behalf.

John is renowned for having given many, now famous, groups and artists their first opportunity to perform by booking them to appear at TJ's. He was an honest, down to earth friend to so many people, a father figure and social teacher to successive generations of youngsters. Newport is much diminished by his loss.



The Music Man John Sicolo

## Who is the new Chairman?

Hello. I'm the new Chairman of the Friends of the Newport Ship, and as some of you have no idea who I am (yes, I was voted into post, but not everyone gets to the Committee Meetings, AGM or Open Days) I think a bit of an introduction is in order.

When I first heard of the ship and queued up to see her still in the river bank in Newport I was thrilled by the news, but frankly more involved with other ships in Newport; at the time I was the manager responsible for Cargo Operations at Newport Dock - cargo on and off ships, into and out of cargo sheds (technically 'Transit Sheds') and on and off lorries and trains. It was a demanding, 24 hour a day operation and I loved it; among the perks were a real-life, full size train set. I had volunteered in the past in scouting, community and Church events, and just after the roadside protest (which I wasn't part of) I signed up as a 'Friend' and was on the committee soon afterwards initially as Membership Secretary (not a job I was cut out for and then for some years as Vice Chairman until I was elected Chairman at the last AGM.

I am now working at Milford Haven Port Authority, where I started in January 2008 managing Milford Dock and Marina - my own Dock - how exciting Last October I transferred to work directly for the Commercial Director as Projects Manager, and while I do miss day to day cargo operations and dock life, developments at Milford Haven are looking very interesting.

Outside work, I volunteer on the ship at committee meetings, open days, Eisteddfodau and other events

and assistance and am delighted to continue with the team in my new role, confident in the more than capable support of Jean Gray (Treasurer), Ann Horton (Secretary) and Peter Heyward (Vice Chairman), along with our colleagues on the committee who work hard for the ship and have done for years.



I am a Londoner by birth and have lived in Wales for over ten years; I consider myself to have emigrated and have no intention of leaving the land of my choice and my forefathers (I am a Lewis, after all) and although I'm living in Pembrokeshire I'm back in Newport for the Committee Meetings, Open Days and so on, where it is good to be working with a great team of Friends and professionals on the ship.

I look forward to meeting more of you as time goes by.

**Emma Lewis**  
Chairman

# What did people eat in the 15th Century?

For the more affluent a variety of food was available - some of it surprising. When did pine kernels start to be available in the UK? You don't remember them before the 1980s? What happened in the period between the Middle Ages and the C20th? We seem to have lost them, but they were certainly available in the C15th. Garlingale is an even more recent re-introduction. Take this recipe from the Harleian Manuscript 279 of c1430. This is very simple and a tasty variation of toast and honey, just the thing to get you started on medieval food:

Pokerounce

Take Hony, & caste it in a potte tyl it wexe chargeaunt y-now; take & skeme it clene. Take Gyngere, Canel, and Garlyngale, & caste ?er-to; take whyte Brede,& kytte to trenchours, & toste hem; take ?in paste whyle it is hot, & sprede it vppe-on ?in trenchourys with a spon, & plante it with Pynes, and serue forth.

In modern terms: warm some honey, add ginger, cinnamon and garlingale.

Slice some white bread and toast it.

Spread it with the honey mixture and sprinkle pine nuts on

it.

Eat it!

Hints for deciphering early recipes:

Try reading them aloud: sounding out words rather than just looking at the printed form helps to work out what they are. Think around words: 'plante' as in putting something – we still use the word for putting something deliberately, albeit often in a crime context.

Remember that at this period there was till some Old French influence hence we have 'trenchours' – we still use the word trencher and trencherman in association with food. 'Canelle' is French for cinnamon and similar sounding words are still used on the continent - 'Kanelbullar' are Swedish cinnamon buns.

People often ask about the sort of food eaten in the C15th and then proceed to tell me that 'the food was heavily spiced to disguise the taste of tainted meat'. So I thought I'd start to put such ideas right and give a few recipes to give you a taste of medieval food.

**Trish Haywood**

## PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Hello I'm Morwenna Perrott and I am Project Assistant at the Newport Ship. I have been working at the Ship for five months now, before which I was at Cardiff University where I gained my undergraduate degree in Archaeology and my postgraduate degree in Care of Collections. Although I mostly studied prehistory for my undergraduate degree, the Medieval Ship offered me a fantastic chance to get involved in a different period of archaeology that I didn't know much about. Even during my few months here so far I have learnt an immense amount about the context and culture in which the Ship was used, which has really brought it to life for me. At the project I help primarily with the ongoing conservation work, which involves monitoring of the environment that the Ship is being kept in, as well as rinsing the timbers and replenishing the chemical solutions that it is currently being treated with. I have also been working on conservation of some of the small finds, which has been a great learning curve. Finally I have been involved in the project's education and



Morwenna Perrott

access programme, which has enabled me to work with some great people and discover skills I never knew I had! So far I have thoroughly enjoyed my time with the project and I very much hope it continues for the foreseeable future.

## Dolls' House Note

Children and adults alike visiting the Newport Ship will be able to get a giant's eye view of life in a typical Medieval house, thanks to a dolls' house that was recently found in the warehouse and put together as part of a new educational resource. The house, which may represent a typical middle class merchant's house such as those in Medieval Newport, as built by the Ship's project assistant with the much appreciated help of Bethan Brooks, a work experience student. Also put together was an activity sheet with an "eye-spy" activity and questions inviting visitors to think about what life would have been like living in a medieval house. A few Spartan pieces of furniture were also constructed. However it is hoped that a few more pieces may be obtained. Therefore a request is being put out to anyone who has any unwanted or spare pieces of medieval style dolls house furniture, fixtures or fittings, for them to phone the Ship or email the project assistant at morwenna.perrott@newport.gov.uk

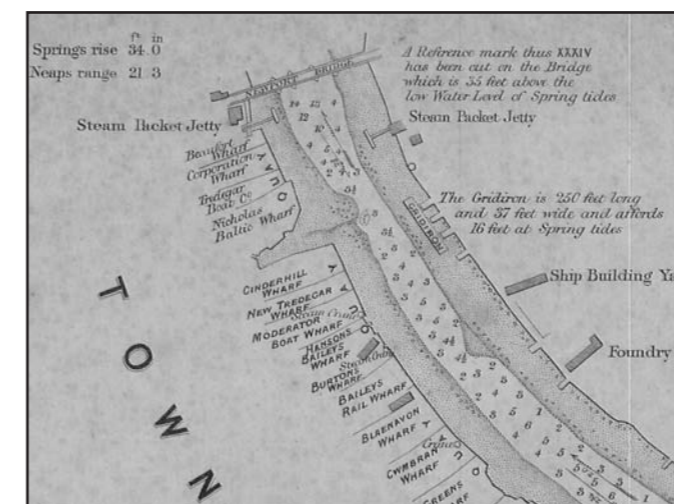
**Morwenna Perrott**

# FOS Newport Ship Project Update

11 March 2010

Members of the Newport Ship Project team have been working steadily to record, model and conserve the ship. In January we hired Erica McCarthy as project archaeologist to work on the modeling and recording. Work on the 1:10 scale model is progressing, with over 400 timbers now fastened to the model. We have produced all of the hull planking and many of the frames. Using small screws called micro-fasteners, we are adding strake after strake of planking and joggled floor timbers and futtocks to the model. The 'miniature' hull is now over two metres in length and around 70 centimeters in width. We are currently creating the rest of the floor timbers, and then it is on to stringers and the mast step!

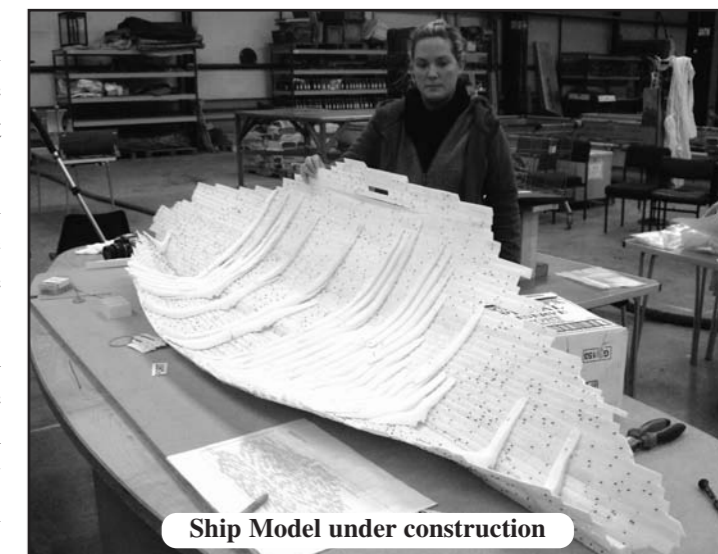
The Ship Project has featured in the media recently, with several television and web stories and interviews. Artefacts from the ship, including the Portuguese coins, have featured on the BBC 'A History of the World' television programme and website. Numerous local historical groups and service organisations have booked lectures and visits about the ship. We are keen to talk to as many people as possible about this amazing ship, so please spread the word that we are happy to give lectures and group tours.



Newport Wharfs in 1867

After a recent lecture, one of the attendees donated a historical map from 1867, showing, in great detail, all of the wharfs and quays stretching from the town bridge down to the mouth of the River Usk. We will have a copy of it on display during the open days!

Some time ago, the project was involved in a grant application to obtain funding to study the wood tar and pitch found on the ship timbers. This grant has been awarded, in the form of a Marie Curie



Ship Model under construction

Fellowship. The study will commence in the latter half of 2010.

Five open days have been planned for 2010:

17 April

12 June

31 July

21 August

18 September

They are all on Saturdays and run from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

We are planning on completing the model in the autumn, and then work on laser scanning the rest of the wooden small finds and any other interesting objects.

Thank you for your continued support!

**Toby Jones**

**Curator  
Newport Medieval Ship Project**

# Charlie Ferris & Cremieu

I have spent the last four years attending fetes and fairs striking replicas of the coin found in the bows of the Newport Ship. The coin was placed there when the Ship's keel was laid down at the start of her construction. When it was discovered during the recording of the timbers, it was identified by Mr Edward Besly, the Keeper of Numismatics at the National Museum of Wales.

It is a "Petit Blanc" from the time when Louis XI of France was a prince (a Dauphin) ruling the south of France. It dates to about 1440 and demonstrates that the Ship cannot be earlier than that date. It is a strong clue, but not absolute proof, that the ship is of French construction. From the coin's mint marks we know it was struck at Cremieu, a small town about 25 miles east of Lyon.

I've wanted to make contact with Cremieu, as I believe we should tell them where one of their coins ended up. I'd like, one day, to visit Cremieu and strike the coin at the place where the original was struck.

If you look up Mediaeval Cremieu on Wikipedia, you find that it was an important commercial centre: "The ancient city was the residence of the Dauphins of Viennois, the nobility who ruled the Dauphine Province.

As early as the 15th Century it had an important Jewish Community. Raoul de Gaucourt, Governor of Daupiné renewed the privileges of the Jews in 1441, for seven years, in consideration of the sum of 50 florins, which Moses Dandéle of Cremieu and Aquinet Solomon of Saint-Symphorien were to collect from their coreligionists. The Jews of Cremieu refused to pay the sum and emigrated in large numbers. The Dauphin, Louis XI of France recalled them in 1449, and promised them that if they would re-open their banking houses, he would tax them

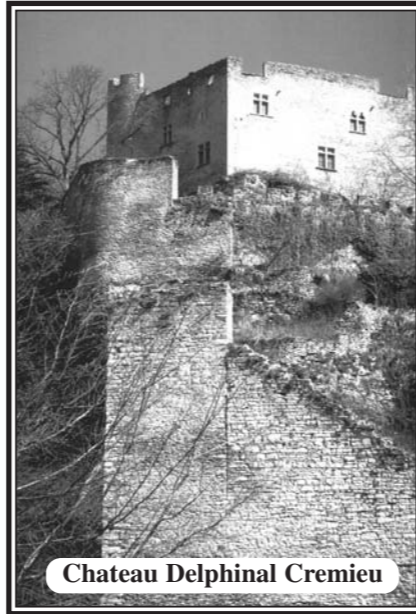
only one ounce of fine silver in the future, instead of the half mark that they had formerly been required to pay."

Although Cremieu has a small population (3,400 people) it has a well attended mediaeval fair. For those who don't want to re-enact there is scope to join in the fun by catching the Plague for the weekend!

One of the organisers has sent me information regarding the mint: Site of the mint (the fountain of our Lady of the Cloister) – At this site a mint functioned for more than 200 years. The origin for the privilege of having a moneyer in Cremieu is attributed to a Charter of Dauphin Humbert II of the 28 July 1337. Founding the economic expansion of Cremieu the princely, then royal mint, was closed in 1554. A collection of houses succeeded the mint, however, none earlier than the 16th Century. On this site a fountain of dressed stone, the Fountain of Our Lady of the Cloister, recalls the existence of a chapel of the same name erected in 1837.

Cremieu Town Council has an excellent website detailing the Fete – Google search it on Mediaevales de Cremieu.

There are a host of clips filmed at the Fete on YouTube. Amongst my favourites are: Festa



Chateau Delphinal Cremieu

Medieval Cremieu that shows the parade through the town with a "slow" juggler – the balls seem to be in zero gravity! Keep your eyes open for a few Plague victims.

Visite de Cremieu (38) Pour les Mediaevales 2009 – nice shots with the evocative theme music from "Les Visiteurs", that great mediaeval French romp. Mediaevale de Cremieu – it's that juggler again, performing while the band plays "Douce Dame Jolie" – sweet pretty lady.

Another rousing medieval "estampie" can be found on La Carité de Guingamor-Cremieu. The most informative clip (given that you can understand French) is Cremieu, Village Mediaevale Isere – a short documentary showing the spectacular covered market that dates from the time of the Ship. I wonder what Nigel Nayling, our Dendrochronologist, would make of a sample of those timbers!

The film explains that Cremieu was a frontier town between France and the Duchy of Savoy. It was also close to the great commercial centre of Lyon, with its trading partners the northern Italian City States of the Renaissance. Further shots of the market hall are on Mediaevales de Cremieu 2009 – Banquet Spectacle du Soir – it looks like a great party and music is supplied by Tempradura, an excellent mediaeval group from Nancy. There are a lot of Tempradura's clips on YouTube, with a favourite being Tempradura Cremieu – Una Matica de Ruda. This is a Sephardic song, a Spanish Jewish ballad, telling of passion conquering reason, sung with such expression by "Sandrine" who certainly gives it everything she's got with her true Gitannois (gypsy girl's) voice.

It's remarkable that Cremieu, less than half the size of Caerleon, can inspire so many films. It is obvious they are so proud of their mediaeval heritage, and even though Cremieu may not be a famous place, I'm glad we have a link with them.

So Allez la France, Allez Cremieu et la Fête Mediaeval!

## STOP PRESS!

The Town Hall in Cremieu have put me in touch with Mme Edith Raymond, who is President of the "Fleures de Cremieu" a local history society. Mme Raymond has informed me that "Petit Blancs" were struck in Cremieu on two occasions. The first was by an order of the Dauphin dated 15 March 1446.

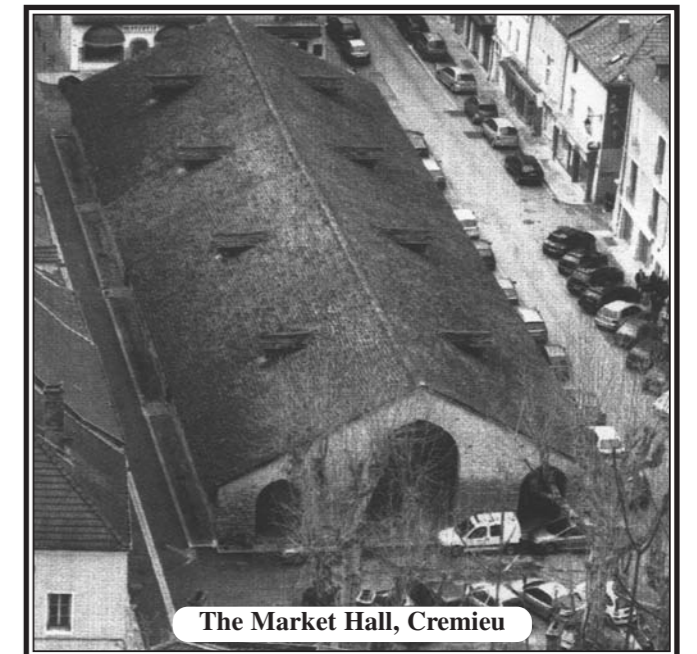
Work commenced on 27 May 1446, and finished seven weeks later on the 16 July. During this time,

Jacque Vincent, the town moneyer, struck 65,000 coins (a good moneyer could produce 2,000 coins in a day). Sadly, Jacques went blind after a long working life striking coins in Cremieu. Given the age of the Ship, it is most likely that Jacques was the moneyer who struck the coin that had been embedded in the bows of the Newport Ship by the shipwrights to bring it good luck.

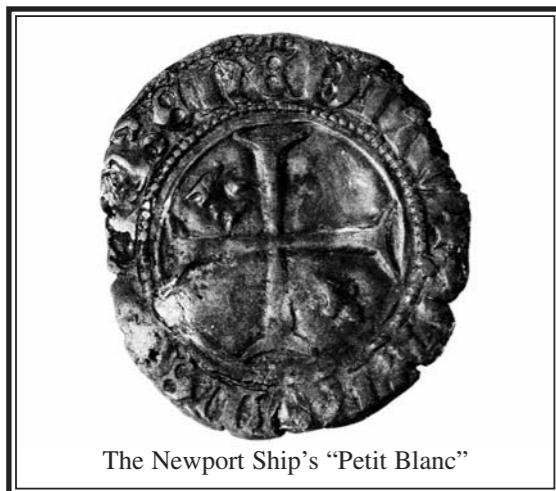
The Dauphin next decreed that coins should be struck on the 6 December 1456. A new Moneyer, Francois le Marechal, started work on the 6 May 1457 and finished on the 15 March 1458. During this ten month period only 13,000 coins were produced, as an epidemic of plague had struck Cremieu and disrupted the work.

Mme Raymond has been kind enough to send some pictures of the site where the coins were struck, views of Cremieu and a picture of the town's Coat of Arms. The shield is surmounted by a crown in the form of walls – this shows Cremieu's rank as the chief town of the region. The principal design is of a dolphin – the personal badge of the Dauphin. Also featured are three Bezants – these were plain coin shaped pieces of gold bullion, said to have been the coinage of Byzantium that had been brought to Europe by the Crusaders.

It seems entirely appropriate that the town, which provided the good luck coin for the Newport Ship should have coins on its Coat of Arms!



The Market Hall, Cremieu



The Newport Ship's "Petit Blanc"



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