



### Chairman's Introduction: Exciting times

We are entering our 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary year and we will be celebrating throughout the year at the Ship Centre, but also with a special concert at our Ship's find site, the Riverfront Theatre on 19<sup>th</sup> August 2017 (see below) The winter period has seen the construction of the extended conservation store, with big windows giving new views into the developing displays inside. However, this gives us reduced display space, so we've used the frontage of the stores to show as much as possible of the previous panels.

We have reopened our doors to visitors for the 2017 season; opening times are 10.30am to 4.00pm on Saturdays, with Fridays and Bank Holidays from Easter onwards. We will also be experimenting with opening on occasional Sundays and would welcome your reactions to this. As ever, we can only do this if we have enough volunteers to host and run the Cabin. If you can spare some time and enjoy telling stories, please get in touch. A booming first weekend saw over 80 visitors giving very positive feedback – come on down and see what's going on! We have some fabulous new items in stock in the Cabin, including new white vases, *Crosscurrents*, a lovely anthology of stories and poems inspired by the Newport Ship and an excellent book by our friend Dr Evan Davies *Cabot and Bristol's Age of Discovery*.

We are now trying to get schools involved with the project, and we are in urgent need of volunteers to help out with hosting these visits and developing the supporting materials. If you can help, please get in touch.

Phil Cox, [chair@newportship.org](mailto:chair@newportship.org) 07411 149678

### Fundraising 1 – Seeking Promotion?

Since August the Friends have committed expenditure in support of the project to almost £4,000. This includes paying expenses of Toby's intern (£750), sponsoring the engineering specification for the display cradle (£2,000 contribution), and direct support for the curator (over £1,000). We anticipate further calls on our resources as the project nears the end of the current conservation stage and the costs of rebuild and display will need to be addressed (grant aid applications cost money as does expert advice) and government funding is further constrained.

To address the gap this leaves in our reserves we are looking for a number of existing supporters to donate sums of £100, £250, £500 or more on an annual basis. We are currently looking at a scheme (similar to that employed by the Mary Rose) whereby such donations would be recognised by a publicised rank of **Commodore, Rear Admiral, Vice Admiral** and **Admiral**. If you are able to consider such donations, please contact me as above.

### Fundraising 2 – Newport Uskmouth Rotary Raffle

We now have our annual allocation of raffle tickets from Newport Uskmouth Rotary. This fundraising stream is intended to bring in £2,000 of much needed income to directly support the project. But we can only achieve this if we sell all the tickets. Prizes of cash amounts of £500 and £200 and an original watercolour painting can be won. £1 Tickets are available from committee members, volunteers and also at the Ship Centre, and, as in previous years we will sell via post. Please send your name, address, phone number and a cheque (payable to FoNS) to Phil Cox (FoNS), 5 Goodrich Grove, Newport, NP10 8SY for multiples of £5 and I will write out your stubs and if you want the tickets sent back, then you can have them. If you win the big cash prizes you could consider donating half of it back to FoNS and claim gift aid!



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### Curator's Report

It has been a busy winter here at the ship centre. We have just completed construction of the second timber store. This new store doubles the space available to safely store the conserved ship timbers and artefacts. There are large double-glazed windows in both stores and lights that are switched on from outside of the store. We are currently constructing cradles to hold various ship timbers and small sections of the hull as we test various fastening methods.

We have collected the 'giant' knee from the Mary Rose Museum in Portsmouth. The 400kg timber was a little too large for the big freeze drier at York Archaeological Trust, so we contracted with Mary Rose Archaeological Services to complete the conservation of one of our biggest ship timbers. It will soon be on view in the new timber store.

The artist David Jordan has completed his ship painting *Final Resting Place*. I am going through the motions to formally acquire it for the museum. We are planning on hanging it in the new acquisitions area of the Newport Museum in the near future. Prints of this excellent portrait will be available soon. See the article further down in this newsletter

Archaeological intern *Xenius* has spent the last

six weeks at the ship centre documenting conserved timbers. We are re-measuring the dried, conserved timbers and comparing them to the waterlogged measurements in an effort to quantify shrinkage and distortion. As we re-record more timbers and the data set grows we will gain a better understanding of how the hull timbers will line up and fit together during the full-scale reassembly phase.

In conjunction with our re-recording efforts, we (Newport Ship Project and FONS) have entered into a partnership with Swansea University. They will shortly be conducting a four month feasibility study concerning the design and construction of a 'hidden' steel cradle to support the conserved ship in a museum.

I have scheduled the 15<sup>th</sup> annual Expert Panel Meeting for Friday 21 April 2017, with a dinner the previous evening Thursday 20 April 2017. The dinner will be open to all, and I will send out more details shortly.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

*Dr Toby Jones*

*Xenius* Nielsen joined the Newport Ship Project for a 6-week internship to help re-record the Newport ship's hull planks post-conservation. It was expected that there would be some shrinkage in the plank's various dimensions (length, width and thickness), along with some distortion compared to their discovered waterlogged states. This work is important because it will guide the construction of the final structure that will cradle the Newport ship come exhibition.

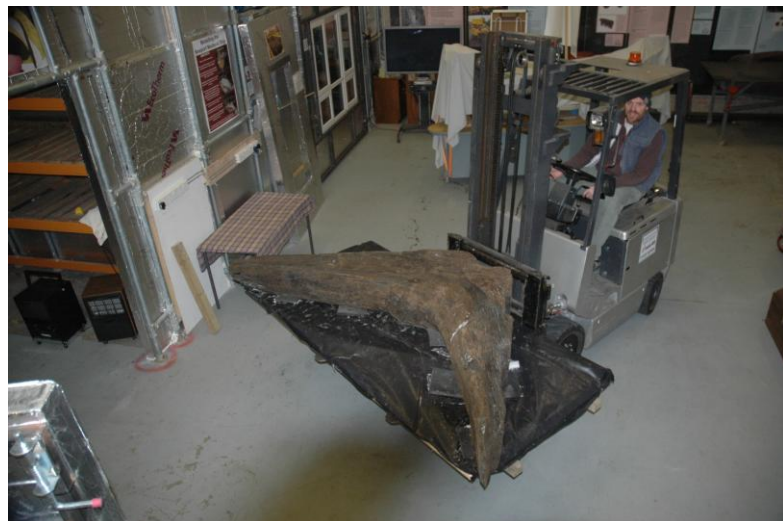


Conservation of the ship's timbers and planking focused on the removal of the water from the wood in a manner that would have the least effect on their original discovered form. The conservation process was successful overall, but as expected some shrinkage has been observed in those planks re-recorded to date. An initial trial by Toby Jones, curator of the ship, has shown that a plank's length has shrunk by an average of 0.1% or less, width by an average of 4%, while thickness is showing a larger range with an average shrinkage of 8%. In short, the shrinkage appears to be minimal for each individual plank, but this is amplified and needs to be considered

carefully when the nearly 350 main hull planks are reconnected during the reconstruction phase of the ship.

A little background about Mr. Nielsen and his research background: he lives and works in Canada, but is a graduate of the University of Southern Denmark and holds a Masters in Maritime Archaeology. His thesis work entailed completing a post-excavation analysis of Dock Island's wreck 3, described as a clinker-built medieval wreck, construction dendro-dated to c. 1420, and built with Polish-sourced radially-split oak. The estimated 13m long small cargo-vessel was discovered in 2001 in Denmark's capital Copenhagen, during the construction of its new National Opera theatre under a 2.5 m of overburden. Wreck 3 can be seen as contemporary with the Newport ship (built after 1449), but it was constructed in the Baltic region versus the Basque country, and spent its life criss-crossing the Baltic Sea with trade goods versus the Bay of Biscay.

Kind regards to Toby Jones and all the friends of the ship for your wonderful Welsh hospitality, and the great opportunity to work on this extraordinary ship project! I look forward to seeing all of you in the future.



## New Painting of the Ship: "Final Resting Place"

At a simple gathering at the Newport Medieval Ship Centre on Saturday (28 January), artist David Jordan handed over his new painting of the Newport Medieval Ship being hauled into what turned out to be her final resting place in a side pill (inlet) downstream from Town Pill and Newport's castle and bridge.

The painting has been created following extensive research and discussion with the project curator and other members of the project's expert panel, and is probably the most accurate depiction of the event that we can achieve. The painting will be on display in the Ship Centre for all visitors to see. Copies will be available for purchase in a range of sizes in due course.

### THE NEWPORT SHIP AND ME

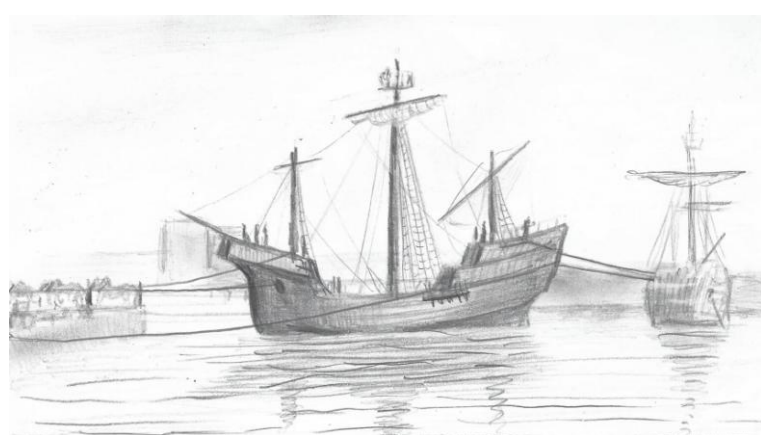
My association with the Newport Ship Project began some time ago. My wife Ruth and her family were all born in Newport and Ruth had heard of the ongoing project. She suggested that I would be very interested in

it, as not only have I studied warships, tea clippers and spritsail barges for most of my life, but I have also become, among other pursuits, a marine artist specialising in ship portraits.

Needless to say, we arranged a visit to the warehouse during a visit. This took place on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2016, and from that date the whole idea of preserving and portraying a unique piece of maritime archaeology fired not only my interest but also my imagination. Ruth and I were very impressed by the whole project, and during our visit were shown round by Phil Cox and members of his team. I noted the artwork on show and in the guide we purchased (the guide has been lent to many friends in Beckington, Somerset, where we live, and has generated many positive comments and promises to visit the project). While considering a possible portrait of the ship at that time, I studied Ann Leaver's panoramic view of the town with some interest and not a little trepidation. How to incorporate key features like the town bridge and the castle at river level? How to show what in fact was a busy and very important medieval port and repair yard? How to accurately depict a ship of which only the lower hull had been found? During our visit I looked at the conjectural drawings and plans created by Pat Tanner, studied the 3D model and gradually an idea began to formulate. That evening I roughed out some sketches which proved to be quite close to the final design.

On my return to Beckington, having applied to become one of the Friends, I decided to try to contact Toby and Nigel and ask if they would help me to answer a battery of technical and practical questions regarding the ship itself and the manner in which it entered its final resting place. They both replied, and Toby finally agreed to help. Over several months I sent a number of emails containing such specific questions as "how did they pull the ship into the dock"? (a critical problem). Did they use rowing boats? Winches or capstans? Men? Animals? I finally sent Toby a very rough sketch of my idea, which he liked.

On 29<sup>th</sup> October Ruth and I had the remarkable experience of actually touching the ship itself. We met Toby at the warehouse and were shown around the whole project. This visit made me determined to tackle the picture I had in my mind, and I began to research all the relevant aspects that I had to take into account.



Then there were questions about the ship itself? Would it have been unloaded first (including much of the ballast)? What did the fore and stern castles probably look like? Was the stern castle a single or a double structure? The ever-patient Toby passed my questions on to experts on medieval ship technology and they came up with the sort of answers which enabled me to begin detailed drawings. I finally put together the large sketch which I forwarded to Toby for circulation last autumn (which was well received by the FONS and used for publicity). How did I get to this stage? By much research and help from others,



for which I am very grateful. (*This sketch was used by Cwtsh for the cover of their Crosscurrents book - Ed*) To put together the large sketch, I drew extensively on Ann Leaver's study of medieval Newport and then checked some details on the internet. I tried to find plans and illustrations of the castle, and had some idea about the original structure. I had to make up the top part based on other castles existent at that time (around 1470) - in fact it was a bit like rebuilding the top part of the ship itself! I then looked into the town bridge and used Ann's structure as closely as I could. The carts were taken from illustrations I found on the internet.

The banks of the river and the format of the wharf and dock in the background were a combination of Ann's suggestions and my own imagination. Finally I had to bite the bullet and decide from Toby's research how they pulled the ship into the pill. We agreed that the only way they could pull a ship of 200 tons burden across a tidal river into a small dock was to wait for the 15-20 minutes of slack water at high tide and have thick hawsers attached to teams of horses on the dock side to balance and counterbalance the movement of the ship on the river. I collated photos of heavy horses and medieval illustrations of working horses pulling loads and put together groups of them about to haul the ship forwards.

Finally, I tried to make the scene as lively as possible. To that end I looked at medieval flags and ships from the period. Many of the flags relate directly to the emblems associated with the famous Earl of Warwick (the "kingmaker") who may have owned the Newport Ship. The costumes worn by the crew and controllers of the operation are also from that period. Finally I tried to imagine how a busy town and dockyard would appear at that time, and concluded that they would be pretty smoky places. There were houses within the castle walls and the dock workers would have made tar to coat the hulls and probably the ropes for the ships.

I created the scene using two different media. The sky and the smoke were depicted using soft pastel (chalk) and then fixed using a traditional formula invented by Degas. The remainder of the picture was painted in "Gouache" water-colour. I have used this technique for nearly 30 years, as it provides the sort of contrasts in texture which I feel reflect reality (chalk dust for skies, water colour for water!).

This picture has evolved over many months. I hope that the results will help to advertise the amazing work done by Toby and the FONS to make the general public aware of the importance of this remarkable project.

*David Jordan, Artist*

### **Visit to the *Mary Rose***

Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> March 2017 we have planned a coach trip to Portsmouth Historic Dockyard primarily to visit the Mary Rose Museum. The coach is now booked and there are still places available. I will keep it open for Members and their friends/family only until Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> March and then offer the remaining places to other organisations/groups.

There is a choice of entrance tickets and associated admission charges. It is possible to pay for entry to the Mary Rose Museum only – an Individual Attraction ticket. Alternatively, it is possible to pay for an All Attraction ticket which permits entry to the Mary Rose Museum and any/all of HMS Victory, HMS Warrior, National Museum of the Royal Navy, HMS M33, Action Stations (interactive displays) and Boathouse 4 (ship building skills). Senior citizen prices are for persons aged 60 and over. Group discount ticket charges permit entrance for one day only. Individual entrance tickets are valid for 12 months from the date of the first visit enabling individuals to make return visits as many times as they may wish during the year. I am hoping to arrange a "behind the scenes tour" but this is still to be confirmed.

#### **Group Discount Tickets** (permit entry for one day only)

	Standard	Senior
Mary Rose only	£14.20	£13.50
All Attraction	£22.10	£20.60

#### **Individual Tickets** (valid for 12 months from date of first visit, permit unlimited return visits)

	Standard	Senior
Mary Rose only	£18.00	£16.20
All Attraction	£28.00	£25.20

In addition to the above ticket prices there will be a charge of £15 per person for the executive coach (with on-board wc).

I am aware that some Members have already visited the Mary Rose and have individual tickets which are still within the 12 month validity period. These Members are very welcome to join the group and will be required to pay the coach fare of £15 only.

The coach will depart from the Ship Centre in Newport at 7.00am with anticipated arrival in Portsmouth at 10.00am. The return trip will start at approx. 5.00pm with anticipated arrival in Newport at around 8.00pm. The ticket prices do not include refreshments or meals but there are plenty of establishments serving food and beverages within the Historic Dockyard.

If you are interested in this trip please email me **as soon as possible** at secretary@newportship.org or telephone me on 07718 751391.

### Visit to the National Museum of Wales

For a very different kind of visit, the National Collections Centre in Nantgarw stores thousands of fascinating objects that are not on display. The Collections Centre is not open to the general public but they offer exclusive access to groups. There are four tours/talks available each of which lasts between 30-45 minutes:-

**Conservation:** a small team of conservators and engineers preserve the Welsh national industry collections, ranging from delicate old photographs to 22-tonne machines.

**Collections Storage and Management:** this talk is held in the large industrial objects store, alongside objects ranging in size from bricks to engines and explains how they store, record and manage the national industry collections.

**The Transport Collection:** a collection of bicycles, motorbikes, cars, buses and even an air sea rescue helicopter, with a talk by one of the collections management team.

**Gas Engines and Large Stationary Engines:** a talk on the larger engines and the challenges of cleaning, conserving and eventually rebuilding the parts into a restored engine.

Booked tours are available for a maximum of twenty people during the following times 11.00am-12.30pm and 2.00-3.30pm, Monday-Friday (excluding bank holidays). Each group of twenty would be split into two groups of ten and would attend two talks, swopping over after 30-45 minutes.

I am still in the process of finalising arrangements for these visits but there will probably be only four visits in total – April, June, August and October – with a possible “open day” visit in September. I will provide further information as soon as arrangements have been confirmed.

If you are interested in these visits please email me at secretary@newportship.org or telephone me on 07718 751391.

Robert Kenny, Secretary & Events Co-ordinator

### Crosscurrents – short stories & poems inspired by the Newport Ship

Inspired by the Newport Medieval Ship, Cwtsh Creative Writers have produced a fascinating collection of tales and poems. Imagination is stirred as these talented writers take you to eclectic visions from the past. A treasure trove of fired imaginations, heads got together to fuse a cauldron of creativity.

*Crosscurrents* is the first anthology of Cwtsh Writers who have woven magic through their fingers. These stories and poems will surprise and delight with their variations on a theme. They bring to life the vibrancy of fifteenth century living in Newport and touch upon mysteries surrounding this enormous ship that found its way here quite by chance.

Copies of the book are available for sale in the cabin at just £4.50 with profits split between Cwtsh and the Friends of Newport Ship.



### The Newport Ship's 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Concert: Riverfront Theatre, Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> August 2017

A concert to celebrate the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the discovery of the Newport Medieval Ship will be given by St Woolos Sinfonia at the find site of our Ship, the Riverfront Theatre in Newport. A “happy blend of professional

and student musicians, teachers of their instruments and enthusiastic amateurs” (South Wales Argus 2011), St. Woolos Sinfonia have been successful in bringing the joy of classical music to a broad range of people. Many acclaimed performances were given in venues across South and West



Wales. Charitable since 2012, the orchestra in the City of Newport accepted the invitation to become “Orchestra in Residence” in Newport cathedral in 2015.

Under the baton of its exceptionally talented New Zealand Principal Conductor Tianyi Lu, the orchestra plans to mark the occasion and treat the audience with a “Maritime – themed” programme featuring old and newer music including from Handel's *Water Music*, Strauss' *Blue Danube*, living composer Gareth Glyn's *Anglesey Seascapes*, and Mendelssohn's *Hebrides Overture*.

St. Woolos Sinfonia's Chairman and Leader of the orchestra Christoph Mädler: “We are honoured to be invited and proud to contribute to such a great occasion in the City to highlight its rich heritage.”

Tickets will be on sale from the Riverfront at a cost of £20 per person, to include a glass of wine before the concert.

Charles Ferris, Patron

## Our new Guide Book for 2017

Work on the new guidebook has been underway at a steady pace since late November 2016. The decision was made to write and design an entirely new book, as opposed to simply reworking the old one, reflecting the sheer amount of fresh information and illustrations that we now have available. This includes Nigel Nayling's work on the ship's origins and the superb paintings by Peter Power and David Jordan.

In order to accommodate all this, the new guidebook will have 50 pages (10 more than the old one) and will feature more full-page images to bring the ship's story to life. The ship will be placed within the context of late-medieval shipping and the British-Iberian trade route, emphasizing the vessel's international importance. There will also be a 'Visualizations' section, explaining the thinking behind each of the various illustrations of the ship since 2002.

As the initial conservation stage of the Newport Ship Project approaches its end, and the all-important task of ensuring the ship gets a permanent and satisfactory home looms, I hope that this new guidebook will fulfil its role in spreading awareness and maintaining interest. The majority of the book is now written, and we aim to have it ready for printing in May 2017 – in time for the summer rush of visitors and the Friends' 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary activities.

*Simon Hickman, FoNS Archivist*

## Ship Centre Activities 2017

We are building a series of regular events at the Ship Centre to attract visitors old and new to come and see the exhibits, but also learn a little more and enjoy some new experiences:

Easter: Good Friday, Saturday, Sunday & Easter Monday		Children's Easter Egg Hunt
Saturday 13 <sup>th</sup> May	7.30pm	Quiz Night. Teams of up to 4 at £5 per team. Bar & table snacks
Thursday 22 <sup>nd</sup> June	8.00pm	Acoustic music night. £5 per person entry. Bar & snacks
Saturday 22 <sup>nd</sup> July	10.30am until 4.30pm	Pirate fun day
Saturday 22 <sup>nd</sup> July	7pm for 7.30	Dr Evan Jones to talk on piracy in evening £5 pp
Saturday 16 <sup>th</sup> Sept	7.30pm	Quiz night
Saturday 23 <sup>rd</sup> Sept	10.30am until 4.30pm	Medieval life open day
Saturday 30 <sup>th</sup> Sept	2.00pm	FoNS AGM
October		History talk
December		Christmas Fayre

If you have any other suggestions, or could help with these events, please get in touch with our new Inside Events Coordinator, *Lewis Griffiths*

## Events Diary 2017

The Friends will be out at these events during the summer season. These events can only be run provided that we have sufficient volunteers to fulfil all our commitments, especially the regular opening of the Ship Centre. If you can help out either at the Ship Centre, or at any of the events below, please get in touch.

30 March	FoNS Trip to visit the Mary Rose
29 April	Radyr Fete
1 May	Llangwm Medieval Fayre celebrating 'De la Roche' Day, Llangwm, Pembrokeshire
20-21 May	Kings Lynn Hanse Festival
16 & 17 June	Benjamin Britten's "Noye's Fludde" at St Woolos' Cathedral, Newport
8-9 July	Tewkesbury Medieval Festival
12-13 August	Spetchley Park Festival, Worcester
Saturday 19 August	<b>15th Anniversary Concert</b> , Riverfront Theatre, Newport
19-20 August	South Wales PIRATE Festival, Caldicot Castle
16-17 September	Ammanford Medieval Festival
September – December	Art Exhibition at Newport Museum & Art Gallery
25-26 November	Ludlow Medieval Christmas Fayre

If there are any other events that members have heard about, and consider would be good for FoNS to attend with our travelling exhibition and coin-strike, then please get in touch with Events Coordinator, *Rob Kenny* [events@newportship.org](mailto:events@newportship.org)

## Spotlight on Volunteers

This edition ..... we failed dismally to get another of our volunteers to step up to the mark! Can you tell us why you were inspired to join FoNS or volunteer? Just send me a photo and a few lines about how you came to join us would be more than welcomed. It's nice to read about real people and what rocks their boat!

**There is so much more going on in the world of the Newport Medieval Ship. To keep up to date, please check out our blog and follow us on Facebook (@newportship) and Twitter (@FONSnewportship)**