



Chairman's Introduction

Feedback from the Royal Commission from Toby's talk at their Digital Past conference (15-16 Feb) and FoNS's efforts put into our sponsorship of the event and the visits that we set up for the conference delegates has been full of praise. We hosted 2 sessions at the Ship Centre for 45 delegates who were intrigued by the project and have since been sharing our facebook posts and tweeting about us. We hope that this will have encouraged political decision-makers into continued and potentially increased support for the project through the Welsh Government.

The big news is that the first sections of our Ship are being re-assembled and can be seen through the big windows in the conservation store along with the giant hanging knee shown in the last newsletter. See the report below with pictures of the timbers.



As ever, we are looking for more volunteers to help greet, guide and enthuse visitors to the Ship Centre. If you have the inclination, and can spare some time to join our happy crew, then please get in touch with me for an informal discussion during one of our regular open days, and we can see where we can best use your talents.

Thanks to the Richard III Society (Worcestershire Branch) who opted out of sending Christmas Cards last year and instead sent a cheque to us at FoNS. Also to the

estate of a former member whose executors decided to give us a small bequest. It's reminded us that this is a way of giving that could be of benefit in terms of reducing your Inheritance Tax burden – please see below.

I do hope you enjoy the contents of this newsletter. If you have any ideas about what you would like to see, or have any contributions of your own that we could include, we would be very happy to include them.

Phil Cox, chair@newportship.org 07411 149678

Testing the Re-Assembly

On 21st March we fastened four of the hull planks together for the first time. The holes lined up perfectly. We made a 1:1 scale model of the keel in the midships area to which the planks are fixed. We are trialling glass-reinforced plastic threaded fasteners which are strong, light and inert along with cushion pads to protect the wood itself. Other cushioning is inserted between the planks in lieu of the luting that would have created the watertight seal. Thanks to Bob Evans from FoNS for his help. You can see this planking model in our new conservation store when you next visit.

The fifth strake is still in the conservation process, but we are making a false 'bridging plank' so that we can then add the next five planks and then some of the frames to really



test all the new fixings including those that will replace the trenails. It's fantastic to see this section coming together for the first time in almost 15 years.

Dr Toby Jones, Curator toby.jones@newport.gov.uk

Project Library Wish List

Many of you will be aware of the huge library that we are holding in the conservation store following the gift from the late Colin Green. The process of cataloguing this has started thanks to the efforts of Sian King, our former secretary, and a full listing will be made available through the FoNS website, and in hard copy at the Ship Centre.

Toby has already identified 'holes' in the collection, books that would add significantly to the completeness of the



library. It has therefore been suggested that members might like to purchase these for the library. To avoid duplication, I propose that if you would like to donate or sponsor a particular book please contact Toby first. Such persons would have their names added inside the cover, highlighting the donation to the project library
First book: <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Conservation-Archaeological-Ships-Boats-Hoffman/dp/1904982824>

Fundraising – Bequests

We recently received a small bequest from the estate of a former member, thanks to the Executors of the estate, and this reminded us that this is a way of giving which would benefit not only FoNS but also reduce the potential Inheritance Tax (IHT) liability of a deceased's estate. You may not be aware that gifts to registered charities are exempt from IHT. Currently the first £325,000 of the estate of a deceased person is taxable at 0%, what is commonly known as the "nil rate band". The balance of the estate is taxable at 40%. Gifts to charity effectively increase the size of the "nil rate band" because they are exempt from IHT. There are additional reliefs from IHT such as the ability to apply for the "transfer" of the unused proportion of a pre-deceased spouse's nil rate band but this article is not intended to be a detailed technical description of estate and IHT planning. We merely wish to make members aware of the benefits of making a bequest to FoNS in their Wills because FoNS is a registered charity.

Rob Kenny, secretary@newportship.org

New Website Launch

Hopefully, several if not many of you will have noticed a totally NEW website at www.newportship.org! We are still tinkering with the content, but we are really pleased with the look and performance of the site. We have sought to retain the depth of information about the project (updating the text and images to bring it up to date) whilst making it more attractive and drawing in digital visitors and encouraging them to actually come and see the project for themselves. If you have any comments, or feel that we have missed something, then please let us know and we will seek to satisfy all the aspirations of our visitors.

Rhys Brooks, webmaster@newportship.org



As part of the annual UK-wide celebration of archaeology organised by the Council for British Archaeology, FoNS has registered our two events scheduled for **Saturday 22 July**. We are hoping to get wider advertising for our **Pirate Fun Day** (hosted by the South Wales Pirates as they skirmish and swash their buckles around our site – watch out you could be walking the plank!) and for our **evening talk** that same date by **Dr Evan Jones** who will build on some of our stories about the wine trade in which our ship was involved. Was there piracy on the high seas? Smugglers and bootleggers? Come and hear more!

Summer Talks at the Ship Centre

We will be restarting the programme of Wednesday evening talks at the Ship Centre and are currently confirming speakers for the following dates: **7th June**, **5th July** and **2nd August**, specially chosen to avoid clashes with other local history societies!

Talks will include: FoNS Basque Visit September 2017 (recounting our visit to Albaola and the rebuilding of the San Juan); The Restoration of Hay Castle; and the National Roman Museum, Caerleon and its future Redevelopment.

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.

I have now arranged the following four tours which will each commence at **11.00am**

26 April to see Conservation and Care of Collections

22 June to see Transport and Large Stationary Engines

20 September to see Transport and Care of Collections

15 November to see Conservation and Care of Collections

Booked tours are available for a maximum of twenty four people and each group of twenty four will be split into two smaller groups of up to twelve and will attend two talks, swapping over after 30-45 minutes.

Nantgarw is between Caerphilly and Pontypridd and it will not be economical to arrange coach transport, therefore those who wish to attend will need to use their own cars and possibly agree to take passengers who do not have their own transport.

If you are interested in these visits please email me at secretary@newportship.org or telephone me on 07718 751391 ASAP, **in particular for the April visit**. I have already noted the interest of people who replied to my previous announcements of these visits but would appreciate all who are interested confirming to me the visits in which they wish to be included.

Please indicate whether you have your own transport or would require a lift from someone else. Also if you have your own transport whether you would be prepared to take passengers without their own transport.

Robert Kenny, Secretary & Events Co-ordinator

Feature Article: The Woden Voyages

This an experimental archaeology project – a working construction of the past – to test new ideas on northern European migration routes to Britain and North Sea trade dynamics in the immediate post Roman period. The principal goals are:

- Over 3 voyages to test the sea keeping of a faithfully recreated Anglo-Saxon longship – using ancient navigation techniques, wearing contemporary clothing and eating period food!
- Giving a life changing experience to disadvantaged young people within the 40 strong crews.

The voyages will begin in Northern Germany and Denmark and terminate at Westminster, the Humber and Solent – the first landing points of the Saxons, Angles and Jutes c.AD418-50. The project is backed by a number of organisations including the Danish Embassy in the UK.

Introduction

Our collective consciousness of the Dark Ages is increasingly dominated by the Vikings at the expense of the Anglo Saxons through the prevalence of articles and documentaries dealing with the former – and one can appreciate the appeal of these fearsome seafaring raiders (while overlooking the fact that to their victims they were opportunistic rapists, looters and murderers of the helpless). The Saxons are often portrayed as the perennial fall guys to these Dark Age poster boys (although in proper, pitched, stand up fights the Saxons could best them). This point of view culminated in the incredibly irksome slogan of an exhibition in the British Museum a few years back - 'Vikings rock, Saxons suck'.

Partly to right this state of affairs our project, the Woden Voyages, will be re-enacting three voyages that follow the migration routes the Anglo Saxon tribes (Angles, Saxons and Jutes) took across the North Sea from Denmark and northern Germany shortly after the departure of the Romans from these shores.

Historical Background

The defence of Rome in the early fifth century against the barbarians called for the progressive withdrawal of troops from Britain, and increasing use had to be made of mercenaries to man the defences and to maintain the garrisons of the eastern towns against Pictish raiders. Saxon spearmen were among these mercenaries. Eventually it proved impossible to maintain a centralised army command in Britain, and in A.D. 410 the Emperor Honorius in a letter addressed to the chief cities of the province told them that they must look after themselves.

Then the Saxons and other Germanic peoples, primarily Angles and Jutes, escaping the poor soil of their homeland, came over in greater numbers and seized territory from their ex employers.

They knew that the days when the British could fight like Boudicea's armies were long gone. The Romano British were totally dependent on Roman troops and auxiliaries for protection.

The newcomers and their kinfolk set up kingdoms, amongst them Essex, Kent, Mercia, East Anglia, Sussex and Wessex. Over the next 500 years, warrior kings forged a united kingdom of the 'English'.

The Ship

The Saxons, Angles and Jutes voyaged across the North Sea from northern Germany and the Jutland peninsula. A pristine example of the type of ship they used was found in Nydam, Denmark in the 1860s together with 500 spears, bows, swords and round wooden shields - which is now in the Archäologisches

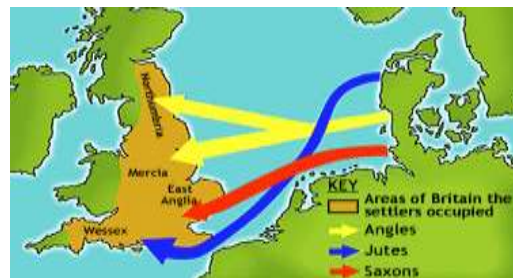


Landesmuseum in Schleswig Germany. c.25m long and built entirely of oak, the strakes are riveted with iron nails. Five huge strakes make up the sides, while a thicker bottom strake is scarphed to the stems. Rowlocks for fifteen rowers are lashed to each side of the ship with a heavy steering oar at the stern. The cleats were carved out which adds much to the materials cost of the replica but is required for authenticity. It is a pure rowing vessel and up to 60 people including rowers and their families would have been crammed aboard. The expedition craft will be of this design, with a crew of 40. The major risk associated with the design is it has a very low freeboard which may make it vulnerable on the open sea – this type was mainly for use on inland waterways and only used for sea crossings during the migration period. So Safety First! – A safety ship will shadow the voyages. The command structure will be Captain (author), Number 1 and three watch mates.

The Routes

The ship will undertake three voyages across the North Sea, following the migration routes of the three peoples that would form Anglo Saxon England:

- Voyage 1 will follow the red route the Saxons took from (modern day) north Germany to the Thames – approx. 450 miles.
- Voyage 2 will follow the yellow route the Angles took from (modern day) south Denmark to the Humber – approx. 450 miles.
- Voyage 3 will follow the blue route the Jutes took from (modern day) north Denmark to the south coast adjacent to the Isle of Wight – approx. 750 miles.



Mission Objectives

The voyages will take place in summer 2018 – 1,600 years after the first landing. The project has a number of goals the first of which is to test the sea



keeping abilities of the vessel. Another is to provide a true life enhancing experience for crew members including disadvantaged youngsters and ex-servicemen who have sustained injury through their service, and the ship will be a vehicle for charity fundraising. The crews and passengers will be representative of the diversity of the country today. It will be some experience for the crews! All

pulling together we'll propel ourselves over the sea, cutting through the swell with the salt spray in our faces feeling what our predecessors felt one and a half millennia ago – with no navigational aids apart from what sun, stars and nature can provide. Overall the project aims to re-connect with a fading portion of English history and will also highlight the plight of modern economic migrants with reference to our past – and there will be a lasting educational legacy.

What stage is the project at?

Currently the project has around 40% of its funding and we continue to present to companies, various grant organisations and city councils of the voyage terminating points. It is the intention that the voyage be televised, this being a key requirement for corporate funding, so we are speaking to a number of production companies.

John Crofts john.crofts@live.co.uk @SaxonVoyages

NB: I have asked John to keep us informed of the progress of the project and then to come and tell us all about the voyages, once completed – so that's a plan for 2019!

The Newport Ship's 15th Anniversary Concert: Riverfront Theatre, Saturday 19th August

Tickets are now on sale from the Riverfront at a cost of £20 per person, to include a glass of wine before the concert. Either call their box office on 01633 656757, or go online www.newportlive.co.uk

Charles Ferris, Patron

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:

Saturday 13 th May	7.30pm	Quiz Night. Teams of up to 4 at £5 per team. Bar & table snacks
Wednesday 21 st June	8.00pm	Acoustic music night. £5 per person entry. Bar & snacks
Saturday 22 nd July	10.30am until 4.30pm	Pirate Fun Day: South Wales Pirates will be capturing wayward visitors and making them walk the plank!
Saturday 22 nd July	7pm for 7.30	Dr Evan Jones to talk on 'Smugglers of the Severn Sea, c.1450-1600' £5 pp
Saturday 16 th Sept	7.30pm	Quiz night
Saturday 23 rd Sept	10.30am until 4.30pm	Medieval Life open day with Cardiff Garrison
Saturday 30 th Sept	2.00pm	FoNS AGM
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.

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	15th Anniversary Concert , 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

Reviewing the FoNS Trip to the Mary Rose.

We set off at 7am from Newport, for our visit to Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, it felt very early as the clocks had 'spung' forward only days before! However we were able to afford a breakfast stop and still arrive not long after 10am. For those of us that had invested in an 'all attraction' ticket this was indeed a bonus and a chance to visit most of the sites.

First stop was to the Mary Rose Museum, which seemed to be even more stuffed with the most incredibly restored artefacts and, of course the most important one, the remains of Henry VIII's favourite flagship. The Mary Rose is the first true warship of this nation's standing navy and is the world's only 16th century warship on display. The protective wall has been removed and after entering via an air lock on the upper deck it is possible to smell this remarkable survival.

It is now also possible to see what life was like on board from 66 vignettes, including battle scenes, projected periodically on to the hull of the ship. Professor David Starkey claims that the Mary Rose is Britain's Pompeii,



due to the many thousands of artefacts reclaimed with the hull.

Next stop, Vice- Admiral Lord Nelson's HMS Victory, which is undergoing a £35 million conservation project (pause for thought!). It's still very atmospheric and full of interest but I think it's lost some of its appeal because of the way visitors are organised through the ship. Much more satisfying is the Victory Gallery opposite that has everything from Nelson's personal belongings to the barge that carried his body along the Thames, watched over by the

beautiful, carved giant figureheads of great battleships like HMS Bellerophon.

The National Museum of the Royal Navy was next on the tour. It showcases treasures from the last 350 years, so I thought it best to wander through this museum settling on stories and items that appealed most, before visiting the glorious monster ship, HMS Warrior. The fastest, largest and most powerful war ship when she was launched, she was Britain's first iron-hulled armoured warship. Sadly she ended her working days as a floating oil pontoon at Pembroke Dock.

It's an astonishing ship carrying an arsenal of weapons and multiples of other kit but is worth exploring even to the stokehold to see the little 'drams' that carried coal to the stokers.

I then attempted to get a cuppa in Boathouse 4, which now houses a Boatbuilding Skills Training Centre but was too late. The restaurant overlooks the water and serves very appetising looking food, so one for the next visit.

Finally I visited '36 hours: Jutland 1916, The Battle That Won The War'. This temporary exhibition is in place until



Spring 2019 and chronicles the battle that involved 279 ships and 10,000 men, 8645 of which gave their lives. Both sides claimed victory. The British lost more ships and twice as many sailors but their long term strategy of denying access to the United Kingdom and the Atlantic did succeed. It was an exhausting but hugely rewarding day for me. Thanks to the committee for organising this visit.

Dr. Elaine Davey

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

Trip to the Loire Valley Chateaux and gardens

If anyone would like to join a 6 day guided tour of the Loire Valley to see Chateaux de Serrant, de Villandry, de Saumur, de Chenonceau, Chambord, d'Amboise, Abbaye de Fontevraud and their gardens, plus visits to the towns of Tours and Angers please contact *Elaine Davey* on 07890 499905.

We will fly from Cardiff Airport on Wednesday 26th July.

