



# Friends of the **Newport Ship** Newsletter **December 2017**

## **Chairman's Introduction**

The festive season is upon us once again and I wish all our friends and other readers, very best wishes for a happy Christmas and prosperous New Year 2018.

I hope that many of you were able to attend our very first FoNS Christmas Fayre that took place on 9<sup>th</sup> December at the Ship Centre. We had an excellent range of stalls to satisfy the hungry, thirsty and the creative, all thanks to our Ship Centre Events Team. We are making the most of all the extra space we have at the Ship Centre now that all the wet timbers have been removed to our conservation partners at York Archaeological Trust. From now onwards, our curator, Dr Toby Jones will be making trips up to York to collect completed batches of timber for storage in our own store, and for further tests on the rebuilding of sections of the hull to prove the efficacy of the fixings that we will be using for the complete reconstruction.

Thanks for your support throughout 2017, and we look forward to seeing you at our open days and events over the coming year.

*Phil Cox*

## **Ship Centre Opening 2018**

The Friends of Newport Ship will reopen the Ship Centre to visitors on

**Saturday 17 February 2018,**

and thereafter every Saturday until mid December.

Also every **Friday** and **Bank Holiday Monday** from

**23 February 2018 until 2 November** (half term)

## **FoNS Exhibition: The Newport Ship through Artists' Eyes**

We had a celebration event at the Art Gallery to raise the profile of the exhibition to the great and the good. Our thanks to those who were able to attend including some of our current sponsors and many who have helped the project with their influence and good words around their own circles. There's still time to visit this lovely exhibition at Newport Museum & Art Gallery; it closes to the public on 21 January 2018.

## **2018 Calendars**

Once again these are proving very popular and are selling well. At just £5, they are cheaper than last year and have all the best features on the monthly pages with new images taken from across the Newport Ship Project. As would be expected they have all the dates for next year, in the right order and on the right days.

They are available from the Ship Centre when we are open, or we can post them to you if you send us a cheque for £5 plus £2.50 postage and packing.



## **Fundraising – Newport Uskmouth Rotary Draw**

Once again, we will be participating in this annual draw – which means we will be selling raffle tickets to everybody to whom we can reach out. There are usually at least a dozen excellent prizes and in past years we have always achieved a very good percentage of success for our own buyers. Tickets will be available in mid-February and have to be returned by 25 April. More information will be sent out in our next edition of this newsletter.

## **Fundraising – Online Donations – PayPal**

Just to give you a quick heads up, we've signed the FONS up to the PayPal Giving Fund. If you follow this link <https://www.paypal.com/uk/fundraiser/charity/2379206> it will take you to a page where you can donate to us free of the standard PayPal fees. It also means that periodically we will show up during customer's checkouts as a charity they might want to donate a few extra pennies to round up their purchase.

## Fundraising – Sponsor the Chairman’s Wife for the ABP/Newport 10km

Following her spirited performance at the Cardiff Half Marathon back in October, the chairman’s new wife Naura Cox, is now signed up for the ABP Newport 10km run on 29 April 2018.

To spur Naura on to achieve a personal best time in this event, we are asking members and visitors to sponsor her for either a fixed total amount or for a per km amount. Seeing that she completed the Cardiff Half in 3 hours 11 minutes, we have no doubt that she will finish, but will she come in under 2 hours?

Sponsorship forms are now at the Ship Centre and any other pledges can be sent either via email to [chair@newportship.org](mailto:chair@newportship.org) or via post to ‘Naura’s 10km Run’, c/o Newport Medieval Ship Project, Unit 20 Estuary Road, Queensway Meadows, Newport, NP19 4SP.

## FoNS Membership

We will continue to ask renewing members to move to payment by standing order rather than via PayPal on the website. For all such payments, PayPal take a percentage of the total for providing this service whilst neither your bank, nor FoNS bank (HSBC) do not. As they say.... ‘every little helps’!

## This Month’s Feature

*As I was sitting in the Cabin at the Ship Centre awaiting our next batch of visitors, I reached into the bookshelves and sought some light reading. I picked out the Monmouthshire Antiquary and delved (for the very first time) into ‘A Topographical Survey of Medieval Newport’ and was fascinated.*

*We have so much history of this town/city of which, as a late arrival into Wales, I have been unaware. I was so intrigued that I thought that others might also like to read, or re-read some sections – or perhaps buy their own copy to browse the whole book*

**Newport Castle** (*reproduced from The Monmouth Antiquary 2009-2010 with kind permission of the author, Bob Trett and the Monmouthshire Antiquarian Association*)

The Newport Castle surviving today consists of the east range which faced the river. Originally there would have been a curtain wall, roughly rectangular in plan, behind the east range. There would also have been a surrounding moat with presumably drawbridges for entrances that were on the north and south sides. This stone castle is believed to date to the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The east range was the most impressive part of the castle, with three towers linked by straight walls, the main hall, a water gate, a vaulted audience chamber, and a kitchen block. The north tower has two stories on a solid square base, and is thought to have been the quarters of the constable or



Newport Castle as portrayed by Ann Leaver in her wider illustration of medieval Newport

steward of the castle. This tower was attached to the hall which stood at first floor level over a vaulted cellar or undercroft. Very little now survives apart from two windows and part of the fireplace in the eastern/riverside wall. There was a chamber between the hall and the central tower, with a spiral staircase attached to the corner of the tower.

The central tower is the largest tower. It contained an impressive vaulted chamber over a water-gate allowing ships direct access to the castle. Above the vaulted chamber there may have once been a chapel. The vaulted roof of the chamber has a central boss with a ‘Tudor’ rose, although it could predate the Tudor dynasty. It would have been used for important occasions and meetings. To the south of the central tower was a smaller room, probably the withdrawing room for the lord, as a gallery then leads to the south tower, which is where the lord of Newport would have stayed on his visits to Newport. The kitchens are thought to have been behind the gallery.

The castle was the administrative centre for the lordship of Newport and in its heyday it would have dominated the view around Newport. However there is uncertainty about when this castle was built and whether the earlier Newport Castle that was known to have existed was on the same site. It is recorded in the Welsh *Brut Y Tywysogion* that in about 1172 AD King Henry II visited *Castell Newydd ar Uysc* (New Castle on the River Usk). In 1185 the king’s accounts show that six pounds fourteen shillings and sixpence were spent on

repairs to the castle of Novi Burgi (i.e. Newport) and its buildings and bridge. This does not sound like the motte or castle mound known to have existed on Stow Hill which was outside the borough's boundaries, and it is unclear how the bridge or town could have been properly defended if there was no castle close to it. There are various references in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries to Newport Castle and town, including details of a siege in 1321 by Hugh Audley and other lords. The damage was so bad that in 1322 an order was given for 300 oaks "fit for timber" to be felled to repair and construct the houses and fortalices (outworks) within the castle. This would seem to suggest that at this time the castle may have been constructed of timber, but the reference does not specifically refer to the main castle itself, where presumably the structure survived the assault.

The first plan surviving of the castle is on a town map of 1750, where the curtain wall is shown, but the main buildings on the riverfront are shown out of the correct alignment. A plan for William Coxe's *A History of Monmouthshire* in 1800 appears to have been based on this plan since it shows the same mistake. In 1885 Octavius Morgan published a surveyed plan of what then existed in *Archaeologia Cambrensis* and up to date plans were published by Jeremy Knight in 1991.

The archaeological evidence largely consists of a coin of Edward III excavated in 1834, and some roofing slate and some 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup> century pottery excavated in 1970. Architecturally the surviving castle does not appear to be any earlier than the 14<sup>th</sup> century, but it seems clear that the present castle is the same castle that was severely damaged by Owain Glyndŵr in 1403. After this attack there are good documentary records showing work on the castle. In 1405 emergency work was carried out to the castle ditch, the gatehouse and the "Great Tower". In 1427 the lord, Humphrey Earl of Stafford, granted Newport a new charter at the castle. In 1465 work was being carried out on the south tower, and in 1447 and 1448 work was being carried on the castle chambers and the north curtain wall.

The possibility of the north curtain wall being part of a town wall is discussed elsewhere, but there were clearly different building periods to the castle. The relationship of the town to the castle is also a matter of debate, with many references to the great bailey and the small bailey within the town.



Other documentary evidence to the surrounds of the castle include a building called "the long stables" outside the castle gate in 1452, the rabbit warren in 1484, and various references to the castle green which appears to have been on the north, west and south side of the curtain walls. By the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century the castle appears to have been neglected and a survey of 1522 refers to "a fair hall, proper lodgings after the waterside, and many houses of offices; howbeit, in manner, all is decayed in coverings and floors, specially of timber work."

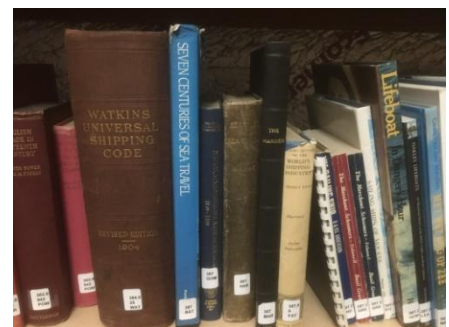
**Bob Trett**

*The current remains of Newport Castle are much reduced after years of neglect, re-purposing and some repair. It would be wonderful if visitors could be allowed to enter the site and get a real feel for the history of the building.*

### **Newport Ship's Library** *in the process of being catalogued by Sian King*

As reported in previous newsletters, the newly formed ship centre library is slowly taking shape. It is primarily made up of a range of books donated or purchased for the project over fifteen years. Many of the books and journals are technical archaeological titles which were, and still are, essential to the team working on the conservation of the Newport ship. There is also a variety of other material, including items in foreign language (Basque, Portuguese, German and French), classic texts on medieval social history, conference proceedings and local maritime history. The vision, for the future, is to have this collection available to the public who visit the Ship Museum, perhaps in a dedicated search room which will also contain archival material about the project itself. Some of the books will be available for loan.

To date, about 200 items have been catalogued, thus revealing a few titles for which there is no other copy in the UK. This in itself demonstrates the unique nature of this library, and value to scholars, interested amateurs and posterity. There are many more to come, possibly several







thousands, which are stored in plastic boxes in the Ship Centre. A basic software package (*Handy Library Manager*) had been purchased for cataloguing, together with a laptop computer and associated equipment. The books are being classified by subject using the Dewey Decimal system (familiar to those of you who use public libraries), so browsing in particular subject areas will be possible. Eventually the library catalogue will be available for all to consult on the website.

Once processed, the books are



currently being placed on shelves in the timber store, which provides excellent conditions for them and facilitates retrieval.

We want this library to be a living, growing collection – there are always new titles in the field, and many of the more technical ones are very expensive. We have already received very welcome donations, and Toby Jones, Project Director, is not short of suggestions for purchase! One of our regular volunteers, John de Caux, has designed a lovely bookplate on which we plan to write the donor's name (if they wish) and then insert it inside the specific volume they have funded. Please contact Rob Kenny at [secretary@newportship.org](mailto:secretary@newportship.org) if you are interested in donating or funding future volumes, or would like further information about the library.

Sian King

*I found this through my old shipmates from HMS Ambuscade (F172)...*

### Jack and the Beanstalk (by 'MOZ') – a maritime pantomime

One day, while Jack was eating his dinner, he turned over an egg to see if it really was cooked on the other side, and to his amazement discovered three beans underneath. Now Jack, being at sea for some time, had never seen a bean and being an inquisitive little sailor, took them back to his mess deck for a closer inspection.

In Jack's mess deck lived an Ogre of a man who went by the name of Harry who didn't like strange things in the mess and so he told Jack to ditch them. Being frightened of the Ogre, Jack threw the three beans into the dark recess behind his bunk bed.

After a couple of days, a little green shoot appeared from the darkness. The



following day a lovely small flower bloomed on the shoot. Jack thought that it was the most beautiful thing he had ever seen and he watered it every day.

Harry the Ogre couldn't see the growing plant because he lived in the bunk above Jack so everything continued happily until the plant pushed up through to Harry's bedside. Suddenly there was an almighty roar of anger that could be heard the length, breadth and height of the ship.

Jack felt very frightened. Harry the Ogre told Jack to dig the plant up and

throw it away. By this time the plant was rather tall and Jack had great difficulty in getting it out. Harry the Ogre considered himself to be a big strong fellow (certainly not allowing for all the canned beer he drank daily) pushed Jack aside and attempted to rip out the now very sturdy beanstalk with his bare hands! But it was not to be, for no matter how much he huffed and puffed, he could not shift the plant.

Harry called for Alfie – a big lad from North Wales, but even with his stomach full of muscle the plant would not budge!

The plant grew so quickly, it escaped from the mess deck, up through the main passageway and up the ladders towards the upper deck. The ship was soon covered in flowers and great lengths of vine. The rest of the ship's company loved Jack because they didn't have to work so hard; no more scrubbing decks or painting bulkheads. All they had to do was carry watering cans around and watering any thirsty-looking stalks.

The Admiral came round to inspect the ship and said it was the prettiest he had ever seen, and he presented Jack with a medal. Harry was posted to submarines and Alfie spent most of his time working out on the flight deck trying to increase his muscles.

Everybody on board lived happily ever after – and the ship became the most expensive plant pot in the world.



## FoNS Events 2018

We are currently building our events lists for 2018. We will be hosting a number of 'special events' at the Ship Centre, and we are already getting booked up for events out at about, both near and far, to spread the word about the project and encouraging greater footfall at the Ship Centre

<b><i>At the Ship Centre</i></b>	<b><i>All evening events will now take place on Saturdays</i></b>
<b>Saturday 17 February</b>	<b>Cardiff Garrison on site</b>
April tbc	Drama at the Ship Centre
<b>Saturday 26 May</b>	<b>Music Night featuring Danielle Lewis</b>
June tbc	Talk
July tbc	Comedy Night
August tbc	Talk
September tbc	Music Night
<b>Saturday 29 September</b>	<b>AGM</b>
<b>Saturday 15 December</b>	<b>Christmas Fayre (last day opening)</b>
<b><i>Out and About</i></b>	
<b>7-8 February</b>	<b>Digital Past Conference 2018, Aberystwyth</b>
<b>24 March</b>	<b>University of Wales, Trinity St David, Medieval Fayre, Lampeter</b>
<b>12 May</b>	<b>Swansea Maritime Festival</b>
<b>19-20 May</b>	<b>Hanse Festival, Kings Lynn</b>
<b>30 June</b>	<b>Tintern Show</b>
<b>7 July</b>	<b>Monmouth Show</b>
<b>14-15 July</b>	<b>Tewksbury Medieval Fayre and Battle Re-enactment</b>
<b>3-11 August</b>	<b>National Eisteddfod</b>
<b>11-12 August</b>	<b>Harlech Castle 'Pirates of the Cambrian'</b>
<b>11-12 August</b>	<b>Spetchley Park (M5) Medieval Fayre</b>
<b>24 – 25 November</b>	<b>Ludlow Medieval Christmas Fayre</b>

For further information on any of these events, please contact Rob Kenny at [events@newportship.org](mailto:events@newportship.org).

## Future Attraction: Tall Ship Diaries

We have recently been in contact with a young man, Aleksandr who is currently a member of the crew of the



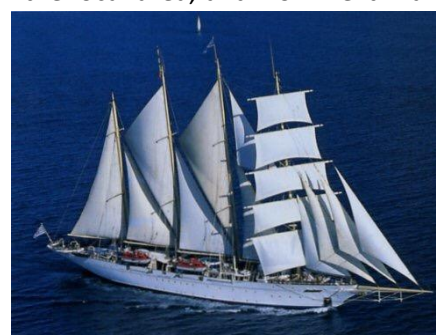
replica Russian frigate *Shtandart*, based in the Netherlands; she was laid down in 1994, being a replica of the original built in 1703. She went on her maiden voyage in 2000.

His wider interests include historical sailing vessels, and he's fascinated by the Newport Medieval Ship and is keen to learn more.

He spends much of his leisure time creating drawings of ships that have intrigued him, and has so far sent us some drawings of the *Shtandart*, two of which are shown here and there are others he has in his sights, including the Newport Medieval Ship.

Aleksandr has agreed to write his diaries from his daily life, currently from the *Shtandart* and from detached duties working on other tall ship projects in the local area, and from next March when he transfers to 'Star Clippers' to join the crew of *Star Flyer*, shown below.

I think that this presents us with a unique opportunity to get a view of modern tall ship sailing



compared with a replica 18<sup>th</sup> century frigate.

## Commemorating the Forgotten U-boat War around the Welsh Coast 1914-18

### Can You Help?

We are looking at the possibility of hosting some of the Community Stories Exhibition panels/large MBES images of the wrecks captured by Bangor University, at the Newport Ship, and perhaps host an event where a story-



Comisiwn Brenhinol  
Henebion Cymru  
Royal Commission on the Ancient  
and Historical Monuments of Wales

teller can introduce us to the project and lead us through some of the local stories that have been gathered. Essentially, the project has three partners – School of Ocean Science, Bangor University; Nautical Archaeology Society, and RCAHMW undertaking a programme of marine geophysical surveys to enable 3d interactive models to be generated. The NAS are to undertake 2 underwater fieldschools and the Marine Conservation Society are to work with their volunteers to undertake marine ecological surveys. We are at present developing Activity Agreements with the network of Welsh museums with maritime collections to undertake various outreach activities relating to the Welsh experience of the Great War at sea.

One of the options for groups and individuals taking part is to research and collate material for a display panel for the 'Community Stories' exhibition which should be available from November 2018 for display at various venues. It occurred to me that the Friends of the Newport Ship might wish to contribute a panel about a some aspect of Newport's Great War at Sea contribution?

It might be story about one of their ancestors who served in the Royal Navy or Merchant Marine; Newport registered ships that was lost to enemy action (our present research at Gwent Archives suggests the AUKLAND CASTLE as one of the vessels); or some other aspect relating to the port.

***If you have any connections with WW1 mariners, whether from Newport or elsewhere around Wales, then please get in touch with Toby and we can see what we can build up as a future display at the Ship Centre, telling the stories of our ancestors.***

**Stories being sent to us: as the U-boat project becomes more widely known, stories are emerging.** For example a photo and information has been sent from the nephew of Arthur Morris. His mother tried to stop him going on his last journey on the HMS Marmora from Briton Ferry. He lost his life when the Marmora was sunk by a German torpedo in July 1918. He was planning to get married during his next leave.

*And Finally....*

### Noteable December Dates

**6<sup>th</sup> December 1954.** The former royal yacht *Victoria and Albert* arrived at Faslane for breaking up. Following custom, coins of the realm had been placed beneath her three masts during construction at Pembroke Dockyard. These were recovered; all are dated 1899, the year of her launch.

**13<sup>th</sup> December 1711.** The wall around Portsmouth Dockyard completed. 'This WALL was Begun the 4<sup>th</sup> June and finish'd ye 13<sup>th</sup> December 1711.' 'In order to meet the needs of modern road traffic and with the approval of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty this gate built in 1711 was increased in width from 12ft to 22ft, November 1944' – plaques at Victory Gate.

**15<sup>th</sup> December 1805.** The body of Vice-Admiral Viscount Nelson, preserved in a cask of spirits after Trafalgar, transferred into an elm coffin on board *Victory* at anchor off Dover while on passage from Portsmouth to The Nore. On 21 December, Mr Whitby, Master Attendant at Woolwich, and Mr Tyson, Nelson's former secretary, arrived at Sheerness with the 'exterior coffin'.

**16<sup>th</sup> December 1921.** *Victory*, first rate, moved into No. 1 Basin, Portsmouth Dockyard; the first move towards her restoration and preservation.

**29<sup>th</sup> December 1860.** *Warrior*, the first British seagoing ironclad, launched at Blackwall. Became tender to HMS Vernon, was reduced to a fuelling hulk at Pembroke Dock and subsequently restored at Hartlepool. She returned to Portsmouth as '*Warrior 1860*' on 16 June 1987.