

# S.O.S.

News from the

## Friends of the Newport Ship



### Chairman's Welcome

Ship Centre events have brought in more visitors with different interests. Our Quiz Night didn't go well (although it did clash with Eurovision !), but "Folk @ the Ship" in June was very successful and will be repeated on Saturday 23 September, featuring Danielle Lewis (see [www.daniellelewis.co.uk/about/](http://www.daniellelewis.co.uk/about/) for more info). Medieval groups (Cardiff Garrison and the British Plate Armour Society), Pirates and Talks have all added to the colourful patchwork of themes.

The FoNS events team have been 'Out and About' with stalls at local or medieval-themed fayres. Specifically we have been at the Kings Lynn Hanse Festival, the Monmouth Show, the Tewkesbury Fayre (and re-enactment of the 1471 battle that effectively ended the Wars of the Roses) and the magnificent Spetchley Festival. Smaller local events have also improved the spreading of knowledge about our project. If you are in touch with any major events where the Newport Medieval Ship might stretch our reach, then please get in touch with me.

We now have a stronger core of speakers who can go out and visit groups and talk about the project, and with Allan in that group we can now present in Welsh as well !

I managed to hit the BBC news with the suggestion that a full-size replica of our Newport Ship could sail up the River Usk within 10 years, built by our Basque friends at Albaola. Their current project to build the San Juan (1565) will be complete within the next four years, and we could be next to be replicated.

Watch this space !



Prints of the new painting by David Jordan that was prepared after a huge amount of research with Toby and others are now available in the Cabin. Available in A2, A3 and A4 sizes they are very reasonably priced for you to take away and frame yourself. There are also postcards of the print at just 60p.

This image also features on the front cover of our new Guidebook which has its own section on page 2. I must express my huge thanks to the major contributors and all those who 'added value' to the publication as it was developed. It is a magnificent replacement for our aging edition which is now consigned to our archives !

Phil Cox, Chairman, FoNS

### Notice of AGM

Advance notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the Friends of Newport Ship will take place at 2.00pm, Saturday 30 September at the Ship Centre in Newport.

Directions will be included with the agenda and associated papers.

The guest speaker is Dr. Sian Rees and the Cabin will be open for retail sales.

## No. 25

September 2017

## £3.00

Free to Members

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Queensway Meadows Industrial Estate  
Newport NP19 4SP

Telephone : 01633 274167

Charity No. 1105449



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

[www.newportship.org](http://www.newportship.org)

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## Our new Guidebook is Published

The Friends are delighted to report that the new guidebook is now available for purchase.

Work on this revamped book began in November 2016, when the decision was made to start from scratch in order to make the best use of all the newly available information, pictures, and illustrations. This includes Nigel Nayling's work on establishing the Basque Country as the ship's likely place of origin, as well as the reconstructions produced by Pat Tanner and the paintings of Peter Power and David Jordan.

This book seeks to present both new and old information from a fresh perspective. Among other things, it sets out the context of medieval seafaring and shines a light on what life would have been like for the crew-members.

One of the book's key features is a chapter called 'Visualising the Newport Ship'. Since its discovery in 2002, illustrations of the ship have changed almost beyond recognition. This chapter takes the reader through the various stages in visualising the vessel and explains the reasoning and evidence that underlies each illustration.

Writing this book has been a collaborative effort. Each member of the Friends has their own particular area of interest and we were able to use this to our advantage by bringing together the collective knowledge of our volunteers. I hope that this book will play its role in continuing to foster public interest in this fascinating ship of ours !

Simon Hickman



## The growing Ship Library

As many of you know, the Newport Ship project was gifted a large collection of maritime history and archaeology books from the estate of Colin Green, a local maritime historian. Cataloguing work is currently being undertaken by FoNS volunteer Sian King. It is hoped that these books will form the core of a future reference library adjacent to the re-assembled ship. In addition to those books the project has been steadily acquiring further relevant works, which has been enabled by dedicated donations from FoNS members.

Recent acquisitions include:

- Conservation of Archaeological Ships and Boats: Personal Experiences
- *La Belle*: The Archaeology of a Seventeenth Century Vessel of New World Colonization
- Nicolaes Witsen and Shipbuilding in the Dutch Golden Age

Watch the bi-monthly FoNS newsletter for future book requests. Thanks for your support.



## Events

Our 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations began with a grand Concert on the 19th August at the Riverfront Theatre (where our ship was discovered).

We will also have a fabulous Art Display at the Newport Museum and Art Gallery from September to January, featuring all the collected artwork created for the Newport Ship.

Ludlow Medieval Christmas Fayre is on 25–26<sup>th</sup> November.

## Recruitment

As ever we are looking for Ship Centre Guides and Retail Staff for our regular Open Days. If you can spare some time (half days are fine) then we would love to have you as part of the crew,

We desperately need an Education Coordinator to spearhead our campaign to get into the schools' curriculum and encourage schools visits to the Ship Centre and for our team to get out into classrooms and work with children.

# 15<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY CONCERT



**Friends of the Newport Ship**

The Newport Medieval Ship was discovered in August 2002.  
As part of the 15th Anniversary Celebrations,  
The Friends of the Newport Ship present

## An Evening of Music on a Maritime Theme

Saturday 19th August 2017 Riverfront Theatre\*

Reception at 6.30pm, performance commences at 7.15pm

Tickets £20.00 including a glass of wine at Reception  
tickets.newportship.org.uk • 01633 656767

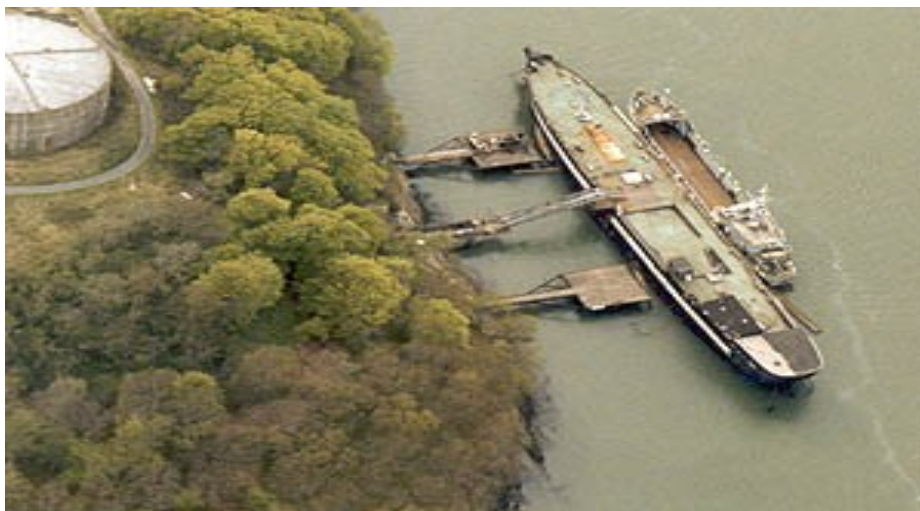
Performed by St Woolos Symphonia under the baton of Principal Conductor Tiaoyi Lu,  
programme featuring old and newer music including Handel's Water Music, Strauss' Blue Danube,  
living composer Gareth Glyn's Anglesey Seascapes, and Mendelssohn's Hebrides Overture.

Registered Charity: 1105449      www.newportship.org      \*where the Ship was found



## HMS Warrior's Locust Years 1929 – 1979.

By far the largest of the museum ships at Portsmouth naval dockyard is HMS Warrior. Built between 1859 and 1861 the ship is unmissable; you have to pass it to enter the dockyard and its graceful lines, masts and yards make it difficult to ignore. Warrior was the World's first seagoing all-metal (iron) warship and in the early 1860's was, along with its sister ship HMS Black Prince, the most powerful naval vessel in the world. The design of these ships made them obsolete within fifteen years, but also ensured their long term survival; Black Prince until 1923 and Warrior is still with us.



*The Warrior as fuelling hulk C 77 at Llanion on the Cleddau river in west Wales. A photo from the 1970's with a naval auxiliary ship alongside. Fuel was piped through a tunnel from the naval depot in the top left of the picture.*

The Royal Navy identified them as 'armoured' frigates', but they are also known as 'broadside ironclads' to distinguish them from the 'central battery ironclads' that followed them into the navy. If their main gundeck was cleared, the broadside ironclads built in the 1860's had an immense open space that made them useful as naval school ships, accommodation vessels, floating workshops, store ships and as coaling and oil fuelling hulks. In 1883, two of Warrior's masts were condemned and, with no replacements available, Warrior was removed from the effective list of naval warships.

Between 1883 and 1925 Warrior was used as a floating power station, a radio school (until 1923) and was put up for sale in 1925. As there was no interest from commercial shipbreakers, the Navy converted Warrior into a floating oil jetty (with accommodation for a ship keeper and his family in the stern). This work was carried out in 1927 -1928 and Warrior was then towed to Llanion on the River Cleddau in Pembrokeshire, arriving in March 1929. (This anchorage is almost directly opposite the small village of Burton and its 'Jolly Sailor' inn).

Over the next fifty years Warrior is estimated to have refuelled around 5,000 ships by pumping fuel oil from the Llanion depot on the hill above the anchorage. During World War II it also served as the depot ship to a flotilla of coastal minesweepers. In 1942 the ship lost its name to a new aircraft carrier and became Hulk C77. Still maintained by the Royal Navy, C77 was dry docked every ten years for essential maintenance that kept its hull watertight and in excellent condition. At some point in the 1930's the ship also acquired a concrete deck weighing 200 tons which remained on the ship until removed in the early 1980's. By the 1970's the ship was almost empty apart from the fuelling pumps and associated machinery plus various items that had not needed removal and had survived ignored, plus the living quarters of the shipkeeper and his family under the poop deck at the stern.



*Warrior as Hulk C 77 at Pembroke Dock in 1968.*

So, why did Warrior survive? The official answer is that the ship continued to perform a useful function at minimal cost in an easily accessible but relatively remote anchorage. However, it is possible that a succession of

senior officers and government ministers were reluctant to send such a significant ship to the scrapyard and conveniently failed to draw attention to C77.

The decision by the Ministry of Defence to close the Llanion fuelling depot by 1978 triggered the successful campaign to formally preserve the vessel and to (almost) restore Warrior's name. Formally the ship is now known as HMS Warrior (1860), although I doubt many folk call it that.

Jeff Brooks



*Transformed and on the move.....HMS Warrior (1860), approaches the dry dock at Portsmouth for its decennial hull maintenance .*

## Shipbuilding and medieval engineering skills

By Dr. Peter Purton\*

Humans have built ships since prehistoric times and many of the skills required have been handed down from generation to generation, often with very little evidence of change or development over centuries. But marine archaeology now analysing ancient shipwrecks – especially when linked to old images of ships preserved on numerous ancient and medieval artefacts – confirms that boats were usually entirely fit for purpose and made best possible use of the technology that suited the environment in which they operated.

The wonderful discovery of the Newport ship shows what skills were needed to construct a vessel to carry bulky cargoes across open seas in the middle of the fifteenth century. That century actually witnessed some of the most significant changes in ship design of the whole medieval period. A significant new element was a great increase in size: the warships ordered by King Henry V (1413-22) to be built at Southampton included possibly the largest clinker-built vessel ever (the *Grace Dieu*), 62 metres long and 15 in the beam, much larger than the Newport ship but of similar design, with three masts – another development of this period. Construction began in 1418. Because this was a royal ship records exist of who built it. In charge was a master carpenter. Other specialists were involved in other key tasks (such as caulking). The first master was John Hogekeyn who with Robert Beerd led a large team of carpenters, joiners and labourers. The names of those who succeeded them are also recorded, identified now as shipwrights. The workers were people who made their living from shipbuilding in Southampton. It is almost certain that people with the same skills were employed in this trade at every seaport in Britain – and every seaport in Europe, including those who built the Newport ship in Portugal (if that is where it originated).

Bob Trett wrote in *Newport Medieval Ship: A Guide* that 'the builders were incredibly skilful' and this certainly seems to have been the case with shipbuilders everywhere. One of the challenges I set myself when researching my forthcoming book, *The Medieval Military Engineer*, was to identify not only what skill levels were required for engineering tasks across the Middle Ages, but to ask how people obtained those skills. The level of knowledge possessed by these crafts-people was staggering but it is just not known whether it was all carried in their heads, or whether the masters had been educated and could read. A clue that some at least were literate is that there were books devoted to showing how engineering tasks were to be done – ranging from books on making gunpowder and wooden siege engines to those describing, in close detail, how to build ships of different types and sizes as well as books insisting that master masons must be able to read, these books becoming increasingly common from around 1400 (while the invention of printing meant much wider circulation in the last years of the century). It is unlikely that anyone would go to the trouble of writing if no one else could read it, but equally there is no evidence reporting that masters at this level did !



On skills, one question is, how did engineers, including shipwrights, get the dimensions and the proportions of their work right? Naval historians have argued for many years whether the fact that each of the main parts of a ship were usually proportional to another (mast height to beam, for example) meant that the builder had geometrical knowledge. At one end of the scale, most had learned this through their on-the-job training (perhaps apprenticeship) and carried on applying it, although this must have included the ability to measure lengths and to be able to scale these up and down to achieve the intended size. No doubt this could be done without formal education of any kind, but this surely increases rather than reduces the skill levels they must have possessed.

The same question has been debated for medieval castles and cathedrals. Modern studies confirm that the builders created structures where precise ratios were routinely applied (very frequently, the popular medieval ratio of  $1:\sqrt{2}$ ). But we will never know whether a building design (or a ship's proportions) was the result of deliberate, mathematical design, or the application of inherited knowledge of approximate proportions of one part compared to another, or just chance. I think that very few masters would have been to school and learnt to read, and even fewer had access to the few copies of relevant books: the majority learnt on the job but were capable of applying that knowledge without needing to see it written down.

15<sup>th</sup> century changes in ship design saw the emergence of a new type of ship, the caravel or carrack, originating in the Mediterranean. By the end of the century these ships were beginning the long ocean voyages (enabled also by big improvements in navigational technology) that began the age of European overseas expansion. Henry V's new ships were mainly built in England but both he and the kings of France found that their own shipwrights did not have the skills to build the new type, and they had to outsource (as we would say today) the work to shipbuilders from the south: the Genoese shipbuilders hired by the French to build ships at Rouen (until it was captured by Henry V) were regularly paid at a much higher rate than the local workers, and Henry ordered his next monster ship from Bayonne.

The Newport ship shows a wide range of craftsmen were needed but the key workers would have been carpenters and a master carpenter would usually have been in charge. It is interesting that records show shipbuilding carpenters earning less than those working on terrestrial projects. Wages reflected social status so shipbuilders seem not to have been so highly rated. The reason may have been supply and demand. Medieval ships had a relatively short life and required continuous maintenance (as the Newport ship seems to confirm) so there was always work to be done and always workers available to do it (or to be hired in).

A final point about the weapons found on the Newport ship: with the exception of oared galleys, mostly there was little distinction between merchant and warships in medieval times. Kings could not afford to maintain navies in peacetime. When they needed ships, the usual method was to press merchant ships into service. The design of types such as the cog (12<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries), with its fore- and aft castles, was easily adapted to fighting purposes with archers or crossbowmen on the deck and the mast top to shoot down on an enemy, while foot soldiers would seek to board it. Along with castles at bow and stern, our ship carried bowmen, and at least one gun. At this date the only way to use gunpowder weapons on a ship was to shoot smallish weapons from the main deck or the castles; it must have been very difficult to score a hit from such a shifting base. It was not until well into the sixteenth century that piercing the hull itself with gun embrasures was begun (and as the sinking of the *Mary Rose* suggests, some more time before they got it right). The possible link between the Newport ship and the Earl of Warwick,



England's admiral, adds another fascinating element to the significance of this vessel in understanding the maritime history of western Europe in the fifteenth century. Long may the research on this fascinating vessel continue !

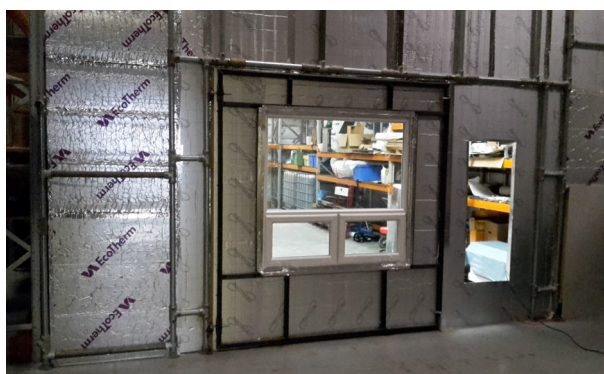
\*Peter Purton is the author of *History of the Early Medieval Siege* and *History of the Late Medieval Siege* (Boydell: Woodbridge 2010). His *The Medieval Military Engineer* will be published by the same publisher later in 2017.

## Newport Ship Annual Project Update – 12 July 2017

The summer of 2017 marks the 15th Anniversary of the discovery of the Newport Ship. Over the years the project has transitioned from archaeological research to conservation and, as we near the end of conservation, the focus has started to shift towards reassembly and display. The past year of the project has seen some important milestones, with the construction of a new timber store, a conservation assessment of the conserved artefacts, and a feasibility study of a cradle to support the ship in a museum.

Over the winter we 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 now which allow visitors to see inside. A special thank you to Martin and Rob from the Transporter Bridge for all their help in the construction process !

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 is now on display in the new timber store.



Over the last several months we have been inspecting and repackaging the hundreds of small artefacts found during the ship excavation. While they all had been expertly conserved, it is necessary to periodically inspect them and ensure that they are stable. Students and faculty from Cardiff University and the University of Wales Trinity Saint David spent around 200 hours reviewing and repackaging the finds. This work was supported by the FoNS, who provided refreshments for the students.

Archaeological intern Xenius Damborg spent six weeks at the ship centre documenting conserved timbers. We measured the dried, conserved timbers and compared 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. FoNS generously supported this work under our archaeology/conservation internship scheme.

In conjunction with our re-recording efforts, we (Newport Ship Project and FoNS) have entered into a partnership



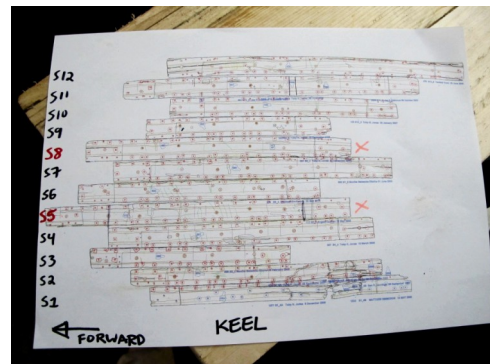
with Swansea University. A four-month feasibility study concerning the design and construction of a 'hidden' cradle to support the conserved ship in a museum started on 1 May 2017. We are currently investigating the suitability of constructing a fibre-reinforced polymer cradle to support the ship. A post-graduate student from Germany, Elena Stein, has been selected for the fellowship. She is based in Swansea and is working closely with project staff to create a feasibility study of the proposed ship cradle design. The project is being supervised by Professor Wulf Dettmer. I have arranged for Elena to give a presentation of the work on Wednesday 30th August at 7 p.m. at the Ship Centre.



With the help of FoNS volunteer Bob Evans, we have been fitting conserved hull planks together to test fit and alignment. Results have been positive so far, and the growing display is popular with visitors. We will shortly be testing the fit of framing timbers to this trial reassembly.

With FoNS support, I recently attended meetings at the German National Maritime Museum in Bremerhaven. The focus of the meetings was the monitoring of archaeological ships that are currently on display in museums. Many of the conserved vessels are deforming within their cradle structures. There were a number of engineers present at the meeting and the group is working together to find better solutions of supporting and displaying these vessels in a stable and sustainable manner.

This collaborative research is critical as we are soon going to have to make a decision regarding cradle design.



We are preparing for the imminent arrival of more conserved timbers later in the summer. With FoNS support we have built bespoke pallets for the timbers to rest on in the new store. We will take any and all volunteer help for the upcoming big move – we will let you know when once the dates are finalised.

The Newport Ship Project will feature in an upcoming episode of BBC One's *Escape to the Country*! There will be a short piece about the ship project in the local culture/heritage section of an episode focusing on South Wales. It will be broadcast within the next year....we will let you know when it is about to air!

Thanks for your ongoing support!

Dr. Toby Jones  
Curator, Newport Medieval Ship Project

*As this is our 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary we have gathered some of the memories of that exciting time from those who were there - and can still remember it ! Here's Frank Cook's marvellous contribution.....*

## The Early Days !

In early 2002 the year was heralded as being one of great significance in the cultural life of Newport.

Work was scheduled to start in the May on clearing the site for, and the construction of, Newport's own Riverfront Theatre and Arts Centre. As with all major construction sites, protecting any archaeology likely to be disturbed was a matter of some importance and that responsibility was placed in the hands of the Glamorgan and Gwent Archaeological Trust.

Work seems to have continued without undue concern, until one day in June a man called Lee Davies, working in the area destined to become the orchestra pit, pointed out to his foreman that the timbers that he was starting to reveal were possibly worthy of note. And that, dear members, was the beginning of the journey on which we still find ourselves.

My source material for this item is FoNS' own excellent archive of newsletters. They are an enviable resource for this purpose as they convey the sense of excitement, the fast moving events and, above all, the commitment of what became the 'Friends' to the cause of preventing the then Council from 'burying' the whole 'inconvenience' under their flagship Riverfront. The Newsletters reveal that the buzz surrounding the discovery evolved quickly into speculation about the ship's name, its origin and the puzzling issue of what it was doing in Newport.

Newsletter 1 bore the SOS banner header proudly displaying the now familiar image of a ship surmounted by the date 1465. SOS has had three interpretations over the period of its use by the Friends: 'Save Our Ship' became 'Support Our Ship' with a short excursion into 'Save Our Stern'. No 1 is dated September of 2002 and already one gets a sense of the tension that existed over the question of future display. Early plans drawn up by the then Council, and the 'National Assembly' were to mount the Ship in an area below the auditorium of the Riverfront. The estimate for the necessary work to process and conserve the timbers and to construct the display area came to an optimistic £3.5m ! However, I believe I can best convey to those who weren't there and remind those who were of the heady atmosphere of the time by reprinting two specific articles from the Newsletters. To follow the timeline of the events, the first is an article written by Jean Gray which appeared in Newsletter 7 of Autumn 2005 and the second, a piece by Jeff Brooks, which actually appeared earlier in Newsletter 5 of Summer 2004.



Jean wrote: "As a Newportonian living in Cwmbran, I was so enthused by this discovery that I could not wait to see it. On the second viewing we waited in the queue for several hours. Whilst waiting we were (a) asked to sign a petition (b) asked by Charles Ferris to send a matchstick to Sir Harry Jones, Leader of Newport Council, this was to show what we would end up with if their original plan succeeded (c) given a Save Our Ship sticker to wear. On getting to the front of the queue we were told we could not go onto the site as we did not have suitable footwear (open toe sandals, it was the height of summer). Everyone in the same situation was being offered shoes by those with good footwear. The community spirit and camaraderie was fantastic. This was an early sign of what was to follow. We had a public meeting at the Dolman Theatre that same evening and there was standing room only, such was the interest in this fantastic find. The next day I sent an email to the students who had set up a web site with comments on how we should launch an active campaign. Little did I know that one was Charles Ferris' son. As a result, the next morning at 7am, Charles, Sherrie and I started the vigil. It went on 24 hours a day until on the 23rd August it was announced that money had been found to finance the recovery of our ship. The location of the site could not have been better for our protest, on the riverbank right in the centre of the City. During this time, the people of Newport and much of the UK came to show their support for our action, by tooting the horns of cars, taxis, ambulances, fire tenders, buses and lorries. This continued round the clock, night and day. The people of Newport were galvanised as never before, in showing the powers that be that they had had enough of the destruction of their City. Our history was important to all of us and they wanted Council decisions to reflect this.



The archaeologists working in the muddy hole, in cold wet conditions, said how invigorating it was to hear the horns being sounded all day while they worked. We had messages of support from around the world. Archaeologists were astounded at the media coverage that we generated as this had never happened before. People came to see the ship from America, Egypt, France, India, Sweden and many other countries; we had to turn them away as the ship, being on a building site, was not open to the public, but they signed our petition as proof that they had come. During this time we had many frequent visitors. Some wrote us poems; some wrote music and lyrics - in fact, one late evening as the clubs were turning out, we had a musician come by, who sat and wrote a song whilst playing a guitar, we then practiced, accompanied by myself playing on the bucket, Dave playing the railings and Tracy on the spoons. There were about a dozen of us there at the time singing and playing away and those in the bus station seemed to enjoy the performance. Children did paintings which we displayed on the railings and now keep in our archives. We also had plenty of refreshments from thoughtful supporters, and hundreds of offers of help. Being out all night for two weeks we all got to know of the nightlife in

Newport, a life that we have been profoundly touched by. Many hours were spent in the company of youngsters who lived in squats near to the town centre and they were happy to have someone to talk to and we all enjoyed their company.

Many new friendships were forged during this time and it shall be remembered as a very happy time, all the more so, as we succeeded in our quest to save the Newport Ship in its entirety. We took great delight in toasting our success in champagne on the roadside at 12 noon on the 23rd August 2002".

Jeff Brooks described his first contact with the Ship, a visit with his family which evolved into a role in the all-night vigil. He wrote: "A hot Saturday afternoon; our family go to the riverside to see what the fuss is about. The fuss is considerable. A makeshift shelter is surrounded by a small band of folk; waving placards at passing vehicles, tying protest notices and bunting to railings collecting signatures from



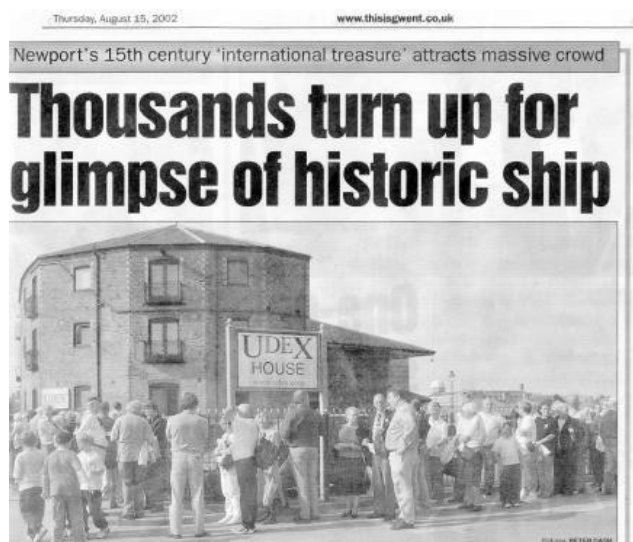
eagerly supportive passers-by. From this scene emerges an avuncular figure who turns out to be Simon Rutherford; eager to recruit yet more support to ensure that the structure emerging from the mud is properly recovered and studied. It seems chaotic, but cheerful and sincere. People wave, others sound their horns and I immediately volunteer to help and find myself placed on the 24-hour vigil rota for the small hours of the following morning. It will be the first of several mornings. Darkness; a cool and sometimes chilling breeze off the river; the road, the bus station, the car parks all deserted and quiet. The orange glow of sodium lights illuminates the view. Central Newport at 2.15 am; a sight I have not seen before. In the little shelter sits a volunteer who has been joined by a handful of youngsters. Some also support us, others come in for the company having nowhere else to go. I join them. A few vehicles pass, a big truck flashes its lights and those within give waves of support. People in occasional cars (including police cars) wave their support. The police reappear and return yet again at frequent intervals. Some days later we find out that they are "keeping an eye" on the security of our vigil. This is the first night of several vigils with numbers varying from a dozen to just two. It's not getting any warmer. The big doors of the building site open a fraction. A tubby figure appears.

"Want to have a look?" he asks

"At the ship?" we ask.

"Yeah, come on."

We inch across the uneven site and our guide shines the light of his large torch into the huge excavation. The floor is made up of the partly exposed and muddy keel, ribs and hull planking of a very large ship.



Pieces of timber lie around in the bottom. It looks sad and magnificent. My very first view of The Newport Ship at 3.37 a.m. and on a date I neglected to note down. Typical ! In these small ways the campaign to save the Ship began. However, in August 2002 Jenny Randersen, then the Assembly minister responsible for Culture, attempted to bring a note of caution to the euphoria of the time. She estimated that the work could cost up to £20 million !

The episode of the shoes, referred to by Jean, was the single matter most vivid in the minds of those to whom I posed the question. With one notable exception. Charlie remembered an early interview for ITV. Rebecca John, better known these days as a BBC Wales News presenter, was the reporter and Charlie recalls that before the interview started she resorted to the vernacular in extracting from him an undertaking that he would not use the word F\*\*\* on live television !

Frank R Cook

## Was the Newport Ship ever British?

One basic question to be answered is whether The Newport Ship was in fact a ship from Newport with a Newport owner and crew, or indeed a British ship, possibly from Bristol, with a British crew. The archaeological evidence suggests that the ship was in foreign ownership for most of its life. Evidence for its construction and its Basque origins are given elsewhere and more evidence for its use is given in the Newport Ship Project specialist reports. The environmental evidence, the coin evidence and in particular the pottery and tile evidence all indicate that the ship had strong Portuguese connections. For example, Dr Mark Redknap examined over 220 fragments of pottery from the ship, mostly from deposits in the lower part of the hold or bilges. These were from a small number of individual vessels. The lack of repetitive forms suggests they were not cargo, while sooting on some jars and lids points to them being used in the ship's galley.

The pottery was Iberian ware, referred to as Mérida-type ware, in different fabrics, from the area of southern Portugal inland from Lisbon. There was also a single sherd of refined earthenware majolica, possibly from a plate in the private possession of an officer or other wealthy person on board. Although some of this pottery could potentially have been acquired by a British crew during stays in Lisbon, if the ship been in British ownership for a significant period, one might expect there to be at least some British pottery. Yet the only Bristol wares and other British pottery found were in post-ship or non-ship contexts. This implies that, even if the ship was British owned at the end of its life, it had been foreign owned for the bulk of it.

The evidence from the ship's timbers is more equivocal. The hull shows signs of earlier repairs that had almost certainly taken place prior to it reaching Newport in c.1468. This includes tangles (patch timbers) that had been fastened to the hull near the turn of the bilges, where the ship would rest during loading or unloading at low tide. This area would have been subject to heavy wear, necessitating frequent repairs. Five tangles were cross matched against British chronologies suggesting a felling date between 1459 and 1483. While this implies work had been carried out in Britain prior to its final arrival in Newport, these could be merely running repairs, of the type that any ship, be it British or foreign, might need to carry out in port. So while the repairs imply that the ship had been in Britain before, they do not demonstrate British ownership.

Other timbers of British origin found with the ship are not fastened to the body of the vessel. These date from timbers felled in the winter of 1465/6 and the winter of 1466/7, but could be associated with the final phase of repair work, which commenced in or after 1468.

This begs the question of why Newport? The most likely explanation is that the ship had been acquired by William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, or Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, who took over the lordship following Herbert's death in July 1469. Both are known to have had an interest in shipping, employing vessels during the 1460s for both commercial and, naval repaired privateering purposes. Either could have bought or seized the Newport Medieval Ship, at an earlier stage, but feasibly as late as 1468-9. If the vessel was not in a seaworthy condition, either magnate might have felt that Newport would be logical place to get it repaired. I am grateful to Nigel Nayling and Toby Jones for information in this article and to Evan Jones for his advice.

Bob Trett



## Prize-Winning Model

At the beginning of June this year we received an email from Sara Restrepo, a Mechanical Engineering student at EAFIT University in Medellin (Colombia, South America). Along with her project partner Simon Carmona she wanted to share with us the joy of having won the first place in the presentation of projects in the subject of Descriptive Geometry, with the construction of a replica of the Newport Ship. The competition was fierce with more than 40 ship models presented.



Sara told us of how she and Simon were inspired to base their project on the Newport Medieval Ship.... "We presented a 30cm wooden replica of the Newport Ship, which was developed through several processes. These started with drawing the ship by hand to understand its structure, modelling the ship in the software Solidworks, slicing the model into ribs in the program 123D Make, laser cutting the ribs to assemble them and finally decorating the model.

We came across the Newport Ship when we were searching for medieval ships for our project. The Newport Ship page on Wikipedia was one of the first that appeared, and when we opened it, we fell in love with the ship because of its very interesting history and because of its shape.

Many of the ships we had seen before were very rectangular, whereas the Newport Ship represented a challenge for us, since we knew that its curved shape would be harder to model, yet it would also make our replica much prettier and more appreciated by our professors, since it would require a more thorough work when cutting and assembling the model. Upon further investigation, we came across the document titled "ShipShape: Creating a 3D Solid Model of the Newport Medieval Ship", written by Dr. Toby Jones and Professor Nigel Nayling, and the official webpage of the project, which gave us the information we were missing such as ship measurements, a complete history and a better understanding of how it was modelled in the project. We were also particularly moved by the idea of the entire city of Newport being so keen in seeing the project thrive. Newport has committed itself to the restoration of the ship, thus making a contribution to the whole world by preserving this medieval heritage.

Regarding to the development of the project, we developed the model over the course of 6 months, in which the first stage was all about researching information and then drawing by hand the ship. The second stage consisted of modelling the ship in Solidworks. This process began by drawing the outline of the ship, followed by the drawing of each rib, to obtain the desire thickness and shape of the model. Since we didn't possess the information for all of the ship's ribs, we deduced, from different images that we found representing the different profiles of the boat, the way in which the remaining ribs should look like. Next, we coated the structure to obtain the solid. We finished the modelling by adding some details like the balconies and the hollows of the masts. This stage lasted about 3 months. We were very insistent on giving the ship a very curved and organic shape, always avoiding straight lines and always trying to remain true to the real shape of the boat. With the help of the program we were able to section the ship into several ribs, making it ready for the laser cutter. After obtaining the ribs, we went to our university's wood workshop to use the cutting machine, and with the help of a tutor we cut the pieces of the boat, in a process that took about 45 minutes. The ship's assembly lasted about two hours. It was a slow and very delicate process, since several pieces were very fragile, due to their size and thickness, and therefore, any strong movement, could damage them. However, the assembly was carried out without any major problem. Since we didn't find any naval model stores in the country, all of the artefacts we used for decoration, such as the helm, cannons, chests, bell, barrels, etc. were created by using pieces for jewellery.

Because it is our desire to give your organisation our replica, we would like to know if it is possible for you to receive and keep it, as it is the first prize that the ship has won in America, and as a record of the admiration and interest that the ship awakens in other continents. Simon and I have already started thinking of ways of shipping the model so it can arrive safely at the Ship Centre.

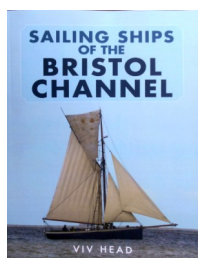




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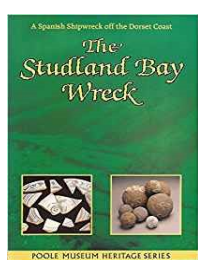
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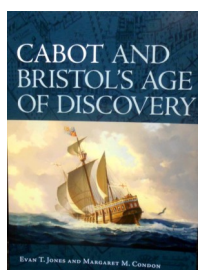
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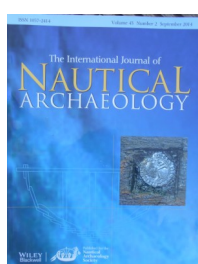


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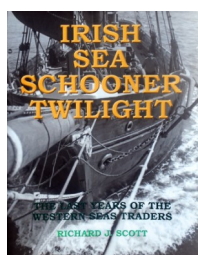
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