



Friends of Newport Ship

News Sheet – April 2021

Update from the Chairman

This newsletter is coloured by the sad and sudden death of Lynne Crabbe, one of our trustees, a long standing and indefatigable member of the Friends and an affectionate colleague for many of us. Nothing was ever too much trouble for Lynne: for many years she has been the mainstay of our Cabin shop at the Ship Centre. We will miss her cheery presence very much.

Despite the lockdown, the Ship project has been very active. As Toby reports below, we have made important progress towards completing the drying and conservation of all our timbers. These are now with the Mary Rose project for freeze drying and we hope to complete the programme within 18 months. Transferring the timbers from a remote location in North Yorkshire along with 10,000 litres of PEG solution was a logistical miracle and there was added pressure in that the grant to fund the work had to be spent within the financial year. Toby deserves our heartfelt thanks for a tremendous achievement.

Elsewhere, the Friends are busy. **Liz Gulliver** is leading an overhaul of our social media activities and **Liz Aiken** has taken charge of updating our website. **Rob Kenny** has launched a project to develop a bespoke educational package for the Ship and **David Leigh** is rewriting the Ship Leaflet. I am very grateful to them and to everyone else who is involved. We can always do with additional resource so if you are interested in any of these activities, please get in touch via chair@newportship.org.

With the easing of lockdown, we can look forward to reopening the Ship Centre. We do not yet have a date for the opening of heritage sites, but we are working closely with Newport Council to plan ahead. At the moment we expect to have the Centre clear of the museum reserve collection and other stores by the **end of May**. I have proposed to the Council that we open for group visits from the **beginning of June** and aim to open to the general public by the **beginning of the School Holidays**. This is a realistic timetable but challenging. We will need to get the Centre in working order, train up our volunteers for the new displays and Centre layout and restart our publicity activities. There is plenty to do!

Bob Evans
chair@newportship.org



Lynne Crabbe



As many will have seen from the secretary's recent email, Lynne passed away recently. A particular shock to fellow committee members as she had participated in a virtual committee meeting only a few days prior. Our thoughts and sympathy are with her family.

Her involvement with the project stemmed from a visit to an open day at the ship centre, then in Maesglas, in 2013. In her own words she "was hooked". Not content with just joining the Friends, she became an active volunteer helping out on the retail side of things at the next open day. She became a committee member and was one of the mainstay duo, with Jean, who oversaw the retail offering.

The move to Spyttý meant occasional open days being replaced by a regular opening schedule. This meant that the need for "bodies" to staff the retail shop (cabin) increased markedly. Lynne stepped into the breach and could be seen, encouraging sales, donations, chatting to visitors, wafting membership forms under noses to ensure a steady flow of new members and dispensing coffee, in the cabin every Friday and on Bank holidays. She also manned a retail table at outside talks run by the then Chair Phil Cox and occasionally also for Secretary Rob. Her enthusiasm was truly unbounded.

The Friends will certainly be much the poorer for her passing, we will miss you Lynne. There is no better way to close this appreciation than to quote her own words that sum up her belief in the project and her desire to help:-

"This is our heritage and if we do not step forward and look after it, who will? "

RIP Lynne



Editor

The first few months of 2021 has been a strange mix of being busy and lockdown isolated for so much including visiting the centre. I am exploring the needs and how the website can be a resource for friends and members whilst meeting the needs of the casual visitor. Ensuring they want to Visit, Volunteer or Donate. Once there is a clear vision, we will share with you our ideas. The Website needs to be the heart of the FoNS communication hub. I am liaising closely with Liz Gulliver & David Leigh as Social Media and the leaflet are all essential if communication is welcoming and enthruses people to find out more about Newport's Medieval Ship.

This is a good example of a digital fundraising campaign by 'Build the Sutton Hoo Ship' - <https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/build-the-sutton-hoo-ship-1> - Yes this about re-creating the Sutton Hoo ship. This may be useful to file as an approach if we shift into raising funds as part of finding a hoe for the ship and costs of re-building the Newport Ship.

If you have ideas for newssheet or the Newsletter, please do not hesitate to email me with your thoughts – liz.aiken1@gmail.com

Liz Aiken

liz.aiken1@gmail.com



FONS Project Report 9 April 2020

Dr. Toby Jones, Curator, Newport Medieval Ship Project

Dear FONS Members,

The big news of the past few months has been the successful transfer of the remaining wet PEG treated timbers from their storage tank at the York Archaeological Trust to the conservation facilities at the Mary Rose Museum in Portsmouth. The move was a complex logistical challenge involving multiple articulated lorries, a telehandler and a small army of workers. The timbers and wax had to be moved over 300 miles as quickly and gently as possible. The timbers are now safely submerged again in PEG and will be dried in the two large freeze driers over the coming months. The move was generously funded by the Welsh Government as part of their Covid-19 Cultural Recovery Fund grant scheme for supporting heritage. As each load of timbers is dried, we will transport them back to Newport for safe storage in the ship centre. A big thank you to Matt Fairley and his Sculpture Conservation and Installation company for all their hard work in making the move a success!

We are planning on having the ship centre largely cleared of all the temporarily stored museum objects by the middle of May, which will allow us to prepare the ship centre for reopening to the public (date still to be determined).

Thank you all for your continued support of the project!

Cheers

Toby



A selection of timbers transported to The Mary Rose – April 2021

All images by Matt Fairley

Toby interviewed by Jenny Mathiasson discussing wet storage of collections for *The C Word: The Conservators' Podcast*. www.thecword.show – the interview with Toby at 27:50mins

<https://thecword.show/2021/04/07/s09e02-extreme-storage/>

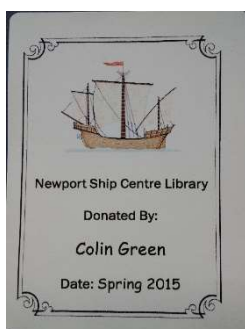


Rediscovered Animal Bone

Laura Carmona rediscovered an interesting animal bone during an inspection and audit of the faunal remains assemblage. This particular bone, identified as coming from a large mammal, was part of a concretion which also included a small oyster shell, some Micaceous redware (ceramic) fragments, and some fragments of mica. This conglomeration of material was found right down in the bilges in the central part of the vessel, just forward of amidships. This area is called Context 152 and it relates to the use-life of the vessel, as opposed to subsequent 'higher' contexts that formed as the ship filled with alluvial sediment. This single concretion contains information relating to ceramic production and utilisation, diet/food processing (both mammals and shellfish), and several clues about the site formation process which caused the disparate items to be bound together. This shows that every single artefact/item tells a story! It is astonishing that such a large piece of evidence is still coming to light 19 years after the Ship was found.



The Ship Centre Library News



The cataloguing project has continued to progress well during lockdown. The library now comprises 2,100 books, the majority of which are donations from Colin Green's collection following his death in 2015. Colin, who lived in Caerleon, was maritime historian and bibliophile with a particular interest in coastal sailing ships. He was Works Manager in South East Wales for the Environment Agency, and after over 40 years service, he retired to carry out further historical research. In 1999 he published a book *Severn traders: the West country trows and trowmen* a copy of which can be found in our library. Following the discovery of the Newport Ship in 2002, Colin was an enthusiastic and supportive member of FONS. Each of his books receives this bookplate in recognition of this generous gift to the project.

The library is currently located on mobile shelving in the timber store at the Ship Centre. Although not available for browsing, the books can be virtually browsed by subject, title or author via the website at <https://www.newportship.org/archaeology-conservation/our-library> . If you are a member of FONS, you can borrow books from our library – please contact Toby Jones or Bob Evans.

Our goal is to create a working research library where scholars and others can both borrow material and use resources in situ in a research room. For this, not only do we need a dedicated Ship Museum, but sufficient funds to buy recent material, including journals. For example, the very relevant title *The Mariner's Mirror*, for which we have donated back issues, costs around £415/year.

Sian King
Honorary Librarian
vice-chair@newportship.org



Social Media

The Newport Ship Centre may be shut due to COVID-19 but the ship is still in the news and being noticed.

The power of Social Media will ensure that the Newport Medieval Ship stays in the mind of the public and added to the list of places to visit once lockdown eases.

Social Media can be used to drive traffic to specific areas of the website including the link to the guidebook and, more importantly, The World of the Newport Medieval Ship.



Facebook

Newport Medieval Ship Project – facebook.com/newportship

Friends of Newport Ship – facebook.com/fonsnewportship



Twitter - @NewportShip

(Please note twitter is not as active as facebook) Does anybody love the twitter-sphere and fancy making this full of vibrant tweets?



Instagram - newport_ship

As well as our posts The Ship has a wide reach. With interest and sharing within Pinterest includes Medieval Archive, local papers; medieavalists.net, and people's collective wales. This is true across all social media platforms.

Liz Gulliver

liz.gulliver@btinternet.com



Secretary's Report

In the last Newsletter I reported how during last year we had to cancel numerous outside talks to interest groups, group visits to the Ship Centre and attendance at outside events such as Medieval Festivals. I also reported that we were trying to recover the situation in 2021. Unfortunately, with regard to attendance at outside events, the situation to date is not encouraging with many events already cancelled for this year. I must admit that, even if some events proceed later in the year, I am unsure as to whether we should attend them because it will be impossible to maintain 2m social distancing in our exhibition gazebo. We are accustomed to visitors being virtually next to us as we show them posters and photographs of the restoration project. Chairman Bob has already covered the matter of group visits to the Ship Centre and opening to the general public. With regard to talks to groups, we have made some progress with Chairman Bob and myself giving talks via Zoom, not as good an experience as face to face with those attending but better than nothing.

We have always made an appeal for volunteers to assist with a variety of tasks at the Ship Centre but I would like to take this opportunity to stress our **urgent** need for volunteers for **two very important roles**. Chairman Bob has already referred to the sudden and sad passing of Lynne Crabbe and her significant contribution and commitment to the "Cabin". We need a rota of volunteers to "man" the

Cabin on open days – essential for fund raising and to encourage membership of FoNS. We usually open each Friday and Saturday from March/April to October/November and if we could have a team of eight volunteers, that would require a commitment of just a half day twice a month for each person.

The Chairman has also referred to my responsibility for a project to develop a bespoke educational package for the Ship, specifically for schools. We have received numerous requests for a speaker on the Ship from local schools, principally primary schools to date but the scheme could also embrace secondary schools. We are seeking four volunteers who, with the necessary training regarding the Ship, could give talks to schoolchildren once or twice each month.

If you are interested in volunteering generally but specifically for the Cabin and/or schools project, please contact either Chairman Bob chair@newportship.org or myself secretary@newportship.org

Robert Kenny
Secretary



The Financial Statement March 2021

As we have been effectively hibernating there has not been much change since I last reported. The situation remains a reasonably healthy one and we will probably record a small surplus for the year. This is, however, the headline figure which is inflated by three donations of restricted funds. The term restricted means that the funds can only be used for a specific stated purpose. In this case the production of an animated film. As the cost of the production is yet to hit the accounts the sums should be ignored. Doing this results in a small deficit of £3k. This will still leave us with available funds of around £40k .

This £40k, known as net current assets (cash balances less creditors plus debtors, both zero at present) excludes stock for resale. The retail stock amounts to about £9k at present. It is by nature non-perishable and is securely stored. I am not expecting any condition related write off problems.

During the year we have provided finance to allow for the purchase of a new faro arm (part funded) and the production of a replica of the Goldciffe plank. These grants total some £3.5K.

As far as the effect of the pandemic is concerned the most pertinent comparison is with the financial year ended 23/8/2019 as this was unaffected obviously. This comparison shows a likely reduction in income of around 50%. As we have virtually no fixed costs and our activities are suspended this will not have such a severe effect as would appear at first glance. Hence the very small deficit projected above.

There is, however, a possible cloud on the horizon. The effect of covid on local and national government finances is well known. Exactly how this will impact the project, if at all, is unclear at present. It is, however, possible that we will be called upon to provide major support. So every penny we can raise is going to count.

Peter Horleston
Treasurer FoNS 26/3/21



Fundraising News

Raise free funds Every time you shop online! Amazon Smile – support Friends of Newport Ship every time you buy something through Amazon. Look out for the ‘Eligible for AmazonSmile donation’ on the product page. Millions of products are eligible for donations and every time you buy one Amazon will make a donation to us at no cost to you. In order to take advantage of this opportunity go to smile.amazon.co.uk and select Friends of Newport Ship as your chosen charity. You can use your existing Amazon account but to qualify for the donation you must shop through the AmazonSmile website rather than the Amazon.co.uk website. Don’t worry though, both the look of the screen and the shopping experience are the same! Bookmark the page on your computer or laptop to make sure you always shop on AmazonSmile. If you use Amazon on a smart phone you may want to delete your existing Amazon.co.uk app. There is currently no app for AmazonSmile but you can share the website to your phone by tapping the share button at the bottom of the website and then tapping the ‘Add to home screen’ icon. You will now have an AmazonSmile icon on your home screen which you can use in exactly the same way as the Amazon app with the added benefit that Amazon will donate a percentage of the purchase price to FoNS!

Easyfundraising - don’t forget that if you shop online you can sign up to [easyfundraising.org.uk](https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk) to support Friends of the Newport Ship. All you need to do is go to: www.easyfundraising.org.uk World of the Newport Medieval Ship. You may remember that in 2019 the Ship Centre hosted the launch of ‘The World of the Newport Medieval Ship’ which brings together all the current research and knowledge relating to both the Ship and the maritime history of that period. The book is a must read for anyone interested in medieval or maritime history or for those who want to better understand the ship and the world in which it sailed. Make sure you get your copy.

Purchase via website - <https://www.newportship.org/discover-the-ship/guidebook> or you can purchase a copy from AmazonSmile.

