



Friends of Newport Ship

News Sheet – December 2021



Chairman's Introduction

This is my first contribution to a FoNS News Sheet as Chairman having been elected at the AGM on 13th November. I would like to thank my predecessor, Bob Evans, for his contribution not just as Chairman for the past three years but for all his work in support of the Newport Ship Project. I am pleased that he will continue to be involved and make an important contribution to the future development of the project.

The minutes of the AGM were recently circulated to all members of FoNS and, amongst other matters, they contained an update from our curator, Toby Jones, from which you will be aware that we anticipate all of our timbers having completed the preservation process and be in storage at the Ship Centre by late 2022. We are expecting another delivery of timbers from Mary Rose Trust in January and in a few days time, 21st December, a very small group of volunteers (I had hoped for some more) will be working with Toby and Martin constructing pallets ready to store the timbers.

In the latest annual Newsletter, SOS 29, in my contribution as Secretary, I detailed four specialist roles where I hoped, as Chair, to recruit volunteers to be responsible for four critical areas of activity – Press Officer/PR, Schools Education, Retail Management and Fund Raising. I will not repeat here the detailed descriptions of these roles contained in SOS 29. However, I would like to provide an update.

I am encouraged by the early discussions I have had with an experienced journalist who has contacted me with regard to dealing with the press. I am very confident that, with his invaluable contribution, we are going to achieve real progress in increasing awareness of and support for our Ship.

With respect to the Schools Education Project, I have already received requests for assistance from two schools and we have another three schools which requested assistance in early 2020 but which we could not progress due to Covid lockdown. I am hoping that retired or active teachers may be able to assist and advise in this area. Please consider this very important role.

With regard to Fund Raising, I am particularly interested in someone to monitor the various Trusts and other organisations offering grants and submitting appropriate applications on behalf of FoNS. The amounts of the grants vary in size but all funds that we can raise will be wisely used to improve further the visitor experience at the Ship Centre as well as assisting

with funding the future work of the Newport Ship Project. One of our committee members has offered to be part of a team but this role needs a leader. How about you?

Retail – our Vice Chair, Sian King, kindly volunteered to oversee the Cabin and our merchandise range until the end of our open season in 2021. We now URGENTLY need someone to take over this role in order to plan and prepare for when we reopen to the public next year.

Please, please, if you can help with any of the above roles, please contact me ASAP.

Our library continues to receive very positive support. At the AGM I announced that one of our FoNS members, Francis Wright, had offered to donate £250 to cover the cost of the purchase of *Cogs, small cogs and boats* reported by Sian King in SOS 29. In mid-December I was contacted by another of our members, David Morgan, who will be standing down soon as Chair of the Maritime Heritage Trust, who wishes to donate a reasonable number of books. If you are aware of anyone who wishes to dispose of books related to maritime history or archaeology, please ask them to contact me.

It only remains for me to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a prosperous and healthy New Year. Stay safe and look after each other.

Very best wishes and thank you for your continuing support.

Rob Kenny
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Editor

2021 has been a challenge. The opening of the Ship Centre through the Summer felt like a return to a more normal world. Now just ahead is 2022 and the word Covid-19 and restrictions will continue to be part of our everyday language. That said 2022 is going to be a big year for The Ship. We can look outwards and show the preserved Ship to the world! A 20th Anniversary is traditionally celebrated with China and the metal associated with this milestone is Platinum a strong and resilient metal, making it an apt element as the Ship is definitely resilient! The colours and gemstone linked to celebrating twenty-years are green reflecting the gemstone Emerald and White. I am sure we can incorporate these traditions into our celebrations. By the end of 2022 the Ship should truly be back on the tourist map of Newport with a clear plan forward.

The Living Levels Lottery funding is coming to an end in Spring 2022, and part of the legacy is the establishment of “Living Levels Ambassadors”, to help your businesses, communities, and organisations prosper post-lockdown and Covid. I attended a virtual event and the Ship was mentioned and they were delighted that I was part of the evening’s discussions. As part

of this they have published a “Sense of Place Toolkit” for Ambassadors which is sixty-eight pages, and another shorter public version, “Discover the Gwent Levels”. This is a project that will help signpost the Ship as a place to visit. As the Ambassador’s role develops, I will keep you updated.

I was delighted to be at the centre when the latest batch of Ship’s timbers were returned from the Mary Rose. It was definitely thought provoking being close to these medieval timbers, waiting to be stored in the dark, be unloaded by modern fork-lift, with care and attention. I could not help but imagine the workers who were repairing the ship before it sunk into the mud, and how they physically connected with the wood they were shaping with wooden and metal hand tools. It is awe-inspiring the accuracy of the craftsmanship. The boat builders were skilled artisans.

Here is a selection of photos that capture the day and show the myriad of shapes and sizes that will one-day be reassembled to show the ship in-situ.



Each piece carefully found a safe haven on a pallet, registered and tagged to be found again when the ship remains are re-assembled.

Gently lowering a large piece, careful does it!



Every shape and size

Home found, waiting for re-assembly day



This is the ‘Friends’ newsletter and if you would like a particular topic explored that is relevant to the ship please do not hesitate to contact me to ensure our communications are relevant as we move the project forward beyond the 20th Anniversary.

Liz Aiken

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please do not hesitate to email me with your thoughts
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FONS Project Report

Dr. Toby Jones, Curator, Newport Medieval Ship Project

Dear FONS members,

As you will have gathered from elsewhere in the newsletter, there has been some disruption to our conservation timetable. As it stands we are hoping to collect the next batch of dried timbers from Portsmouth in late January 2022 (at the earliest). In preparation for this, we have ordered extra foam padding and a large amount of timber and screws from which we will build the long pallets needed to safely handle and store the long timbers. Even with the latest delays we are still on track to finish the freeze-drying phase of the project in 2022!

Dr. Pat Tanner and I are currently focussing on designing a research project to examine (and hopefully remedy) the structural/support problems facing many archaeological ships on display around the world. This work will directly feed into our plans to design and create a suitable support structure for the Newport Ship.

As previously mentioned, we are very close to taking delivery of a new display touch screen provided by the Living Levels Landscape Project. It shows loads of videos and interactive programmes relating to various time periods in the history of the Gwent Levels. On a related note, work is progressing on the extended digital animation showing a detailed view of what life was like onboard the Newport Ship in the 15th Century! This film will include a series of scenes depicting typical activities such as cooking, eating, attempting to sleep and battling storms and leaks!

We are also continuing to develop plans of the 20th Anniversary of the ship's discovery. A whole series of events are planned for 2022 to commemorate the remarkable discovery, including a big medieval fayre open day on Saturday 30 July and a one-day conference in October to chart the next steps on the path to getting the ship reassembled and on display!

Thanks again for all your help and support over the last year!

Toby



The Mary Rose gets Conversation boost from new X-ray technique

In very simple terms - The advanced x-ray methodology applied to the Mary Rose timbers allow scientists to identify, locate, measure and monitor various chemical compounds in the timbers at a nano-scale – think larger than molecules but much smaller than bacteria and cells...a very fine scale method for peering deep inside the wood! If you want more details here is the link to the website. [The Mary Rose gets conservation boost from new x-ray technique | The Mary Rose](#)

Thanks to David Leigh for highlighting this interesting article.

A few screen captures from the Dextra Visual LLP film





Secretary's Report

Annual General Meetings (AGM) are an important milestone of our year. However, given that reporting this can be somewhat dry, I shall be brief. The first thing to note is that this was the first time we were able to offer a hybrid meeting, welcoming members in person to the ship centre and others online. It was lovely to be able to see the ship centre accommodating so many who were prepared to don the layers to keep warm.

David Jordan, the artist who has painted two of the most recent representations of the Newport Ship, gave an interesting and engaging talk on his experience as a marine artist. I am sure that I wasn't the only one who was unaware of the level of detailed research which lies behind each piece of work. After David had formally presented his painting, *Approaching Newport*, to Toby Jones, who received it on behalf of Newport City Council, the AGM proceeded with reports from the Chair, the project Curator, the Treasurer and Secretary.

The results of the postal ballot for Officers and Committee Members were presented. The four Officers were returned unopposed and are Robert Kenny (Chair), Sian King (Vice Chair), Claire Dowd (Secretary) and Peter Horleston (Treasurer). The remaining six Committee Members elected are Liz Aiken, Charles Ferris, Jeff Grosvenor, Liz Gulliver, Kate Humby and David Leigh. A warm welcome to Jeff Grosvenor who joins the Committee as 'the new boy' and welcome once more to Kate Humby after a short absence. We are all looking forward to supporting the project as it moves towards its next phase.

Our AGM was followed by a Special General Meeting (SGM) to consider revisions to the Constitution. There were some further minor but useful alterations to the document made as a result of members' comments. The ballot for the new constitution which closed a week after the AGM/SGM, asked members to either accept or reject the proposed revised constitution or abstain from the vote. The results are as follows: Accept 76, Reject 2, Abstain 3. The Charity Commission were expected to respond to our revised constitution in time for the SGM but a severe backlog meant this date was missed. We have now received confirmation that the Charity Commission has accepted our revised constitution.

Many thanks to all those who made a contribution to this revised document.

Claire Dowd

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Getting to Know The Board of Trustees

First board member to chat with Liz is Claire Dowd the new Secretary of the Board.

Claire before we talk about the Committee, terminology and other functions of your role. Let us start by finding a bit about yourself, how you got involved with the Newport Ship and then elected to the committee.

I retired in 2019 after a career in Human Resources (Personnel, as was) and later as a Counsellor/Psychotherapist and Senior Lecturer. I have two adult daughters (and two adult

stepdaughters). I also enjoy our large garden which kept me out of mischief during the pandemic.

In July 2015, Rob (husband) and I visited the Ship Centre. We were given the tour by Jeff Brooks who really fired us up and we both said that if we had the time, this is a project we would like to be involved in. Sometime after this, and after Rob had joined the committee, Phil Cox (then Chair of Friends) was looking for someone to take the minutes of Committee meetings. I volunteered! This was a co-opted role and suited my wish to be involved but not in the spotlight.

This year our Chair, Bob Evans, stepped back from the role. Rob, who has been Secretary of Friends for several years offered to stand for election as Chair and persuaded me to stand as Secretary. I was nominated as Secretary and as no one else was nominated for the role, I was returned unopposed (I didn't have to go through election) in November 2021.

What is a co-opted member of the committee?

Co-opted committee members are on the committee because of their area of expertise. In my case, because I could take minutes! Co-opted members are not elected, not trustees and don't have a vote.

What are the key functions of your role as Secretary?

At the time of writing, I am still discovering what my full role will be. It is mainly an administrative role so organising committee meetings, taking minutes, managing correspondence, recording membership. One of my first jobs in the role was to make the gift aid return to HMRC so we could claim 25% of the gift aided monies. Like a lot of small charities, I am sure there will be lots of other things to do too!

Why is the secretary also an Officer and what is the difference between an Officer & committee member?

Officers have specific roles. In the Friends case, we have four officers; Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer and Secretary, each with specific roles within the charity. Then we have another six committee members who don't have specific roles in the running of the charity but share the responsibilities of running the charity. These ten people form the committee.

What is the difference between a Trustee and a committee member?

Almost all charities have a committee (or board) of voluntary trustees at their heart. They make decisions on behalf of the charity and have responsibility for both the success or otherwise of the charity and for its financial probity. As far as the Friends are concerned, all our committee members (officers and elected members but not co-opted members) are trustees.

Do you have to be a member of FONS to be seek nomination to be on the committee?

Interesting question ... and our constitution doesn't expressly say this. However, I think it is there by implication. It would seem strange to me to have a committee member (who is also a trustee) with all the responsibilities they have for running the charity not to be a member also. Besides, the membership fees are so reasonable, it would be hard not to be a member. It is also our practice to seek nominations from the membership of the charity and the nomination form states this. In the light of this, we will insert a clause into the revised constitution which expresses this to avoid any misunderstanding.

How does a person become a committee member, is the opportunity to seek nomination by invitation of the committee or can anyone put themselves forward?

In the lead up to the Annual General Meeting, which is normally held in the autumn, nominations are sought from the membership for elected committee members and officers.

This would be done sometime in September so that AGM papers can be prepared for distribution at least 21 days (new constitution) before the AGM. Anyone can put themselves forward but they need to find two members to support them; one to propose and the other to second.

Why do we have a constitution?

The constitution is a set of rules that govern how the Friends will operate. As you can see above, it is not a perfect document – but it is good enough.

Now some insight into Claire the person as we launch you onto an imaginary ship heading towards a desert Island –

- a. Three pieces of music to be your soundtrack: something classical; Piano Concerto No 5, 2nd movement by Beethoven. Something by Madeleine Peyroux like 'Don't wait too long'. And something by Simply Red like 'Stars'. And loads more.
- b. A book? Jane Eyre ... or Wuthering Heights I love a good autobiography too
- c. What luxury would make the solitude bearable? Clarins Shower stuff or a cashmere jumper, depending on the weather on this desert island.
- d. What hobbies other than a fascination in Medieval ships do you have? Gardening all year round. Cross-stitch for my more reflective moments.
- e. Anything else you want to share? Cake or gin and tonic 😊

Thanks for your time. I am sure there are many other questions FoNS members wish to ask the committee, in the next Newssheet the Q&A will be with Rob Kenny the new Chairman. If you have any questions you would like to ask him, please email them to liz.aiken1@gmail.com



To Market, To Market

It's dark as I reach over to turn on the bedside lamp before turning off the five am alarm on my mobile. Silently we go about getting washed, dressed, flasks made, car loaded. Turning out lights and locking doors, we head out into the dark drizzle of a late autumn Friday morning....no gorgeous sunrises for us on this trip...we fasten seatbelts and start the engine. Six am, we're off, just two and a half hours according to Google Maps, then we can begin the task of

unloading and setting up. Mercifully it's not long before the car has warmed up and we encounter little traffic until we reach the motorway...who on earth is up this early on a Friday??? Oh yeh, us, ha-ha ha!

The bright lights of a burger van parked outside the event hall is a most welcome sight not just to our eyes but our empty stomachs... book in first... reky our pitch...nab our share of the available tables and a couple of chairs...the trader's equivalent of putting a flag in claimed territory...then go get breakfast...bacon and egg rolls with coffee since you ask and very nice too!

The car is unloaded quickly making use of the open fire doors, then moved to a spot out of the visitors' way. We spend the next ten minutes, now our fast is broken, determining the

best way to make use of the location of our pitch in terms of the dynamics of people flow to maximise impact - a bit of trial and error ensues until we are satisfied our display will give people time to see who we are and what we're about. This is our third time at The Original Re-enactors Market (TORM) near Coventry, each time we've been assigned a different location, each has had its' own character to adapt to... it is fun tweaking the display to suit. Finally, we don medieval kit, Huw chooses to be the merchant in his finery and I "bob" up (as any fans from Blackadder will recollect) choosing to dress as the Shipmaster rather than the merchant's wife...joined hose and doublet pack up smaller than kirtle and over kirtle!

Having established our new base for the next three days, we quickly get to know our neighbours...the furniture maker, the seller of 16th century iron ware, the cutler, the tailor, and the weaver... for some strange reason they've kept us away from the armourer and swordsmith! Shiny!

We know this market well; we've been re-enactors for over a decade now and visited as members of the public for nearly as long. Some visits were to collect bespoke equipment, others to purchase specific items and yet others for the social aspect, travelling with friends and family. As ambassadors for FoNS we can empathise with our audience...are they tired and shopped out? Are they wondering what excuse they haven't yet used for the much needed fifth sword in their collection? Are they seeking out the best choice of doublet or the bargain spear or eating knife, the finest broadcloth or smoothest linen?

If they're on a mission we leave them be, they'll often make a more leisurely second and third tour of the hall later and we can chat then. If they look tired and in need of sustenance we offer them a leaflet to takeaway perhaps to peruse as they rest up and refuel at the cafes and burger stands. Then there are those who pause to read the pull up posters but aren't at this point inclined to spend any more time with us...but the following market they greet us from the outset when they step closer in to learn more. And then there are those who are surprised to learn of such a discovery and want to understand why it is they are only now hearing about it, those who've seen it on PBS America and are delighted to have such a tangible contact with us at last, those who are intrigued with what has been learnt since the making of that documentary.

This market caters for re-enactors of all eras from Iron Age to WW11... providing clothing and equipment... but re-enactors are not the only visitors, there are archaeologists wishing to visit the crafts people painstakingly making reproductions of finds they've viewed in museums, historians wishing to talk about how the artefacts are used, their wear and tear, ease of production and those in film and theatre wishing to improve upon authenticity for their audiences.

And then there are our fellow volunteers from many, many other museums big and small... we immediately go to our social media platforms and seek out each other's museums and organisations, to like, to follow, to share...and in the process extend our audiences and their interests.

It is this wonderful exchange of knowledge, of interest, from far and wide...other wooden ancient artefacts...the Boat Under The Car Park, Flag Fen, medieval life...Sandwich

Medieval....as well as old time favourites The Mary Rose and Vasa that makes what we do...spending three days away from home, rising well before the crack of dawn, returning home in darkness and for my husband Huw who works full time losing an entire weekend....so very rewarding and compulsive. We've gained volunteers as well as wide interest, from historians, archaeologists, re-enactors, lay people, novelists, those in the film and theatre industry, costumers, armourers, carpenters, leather workers...the list goes on and on.

We both educate and are educated... what is there not to like! Checks diary...when's the next one...bring it on we say!

Liz Gulliver



Ludlow Medieval Christmas Fayre 2021

For several years we have loaded our trailer and car to take the Newport Medieval Ship exhibition up to the Ludlow Medieval Christmas Fayre. This is a fantastic event held over the last weekend in November in the grounds of Ludlow Castle and attracts tens of thousands of visitors to the town and the event itself. Not only are there a host of traders but also medieval entertainers providing a running programme of fun. I can't quite describe it all and do it justice in a few short sentences.

This year we set off with an extra 100kg of stone chippings to weigh down the gazebos in preparation for the expected stormy night. Arrival at the castle was delayed by a puncture on our trailer and it was getting dark. With failing light, we turned the car towards the pitch and used the headlights to see what we were doing. Rain fell and froze on contact with cold surfaces and the wind was picking up. Liz and Huw (Gulliver) joined us. But up went the gazebos, in went the pegs, weights secured round legs – we were battened down for Storm Arwen and retired to The Blue Boar for refreshment. After all, the wind didn't seem too bad.

The first notification we received Friday night was the delayed opening on Saturday morning so that the event organisers could complete safety checks on site. This, we agreed, sounded sensible and settled down for the night. The morning arrived and before we were all up, the event that day was cancelled to be followed by a further notification an hour or so later to say that the Medieval Fayre was cancelled altogether and we were asked to clear the pitch.

The site was devastated. It was heart-breaking. It's difficult to describe. Two of the three very large marquees were shredded, rubbish hung from the trees, an electricity tower was down. It looked as if the site had exploded. Somehow our gazebos were still standing; maybe the additional pegs and weights helped and maybe there was just that little bit more shelter from the full force of the storm. Who knows. The real tragedy here is that this wonderful event is run by a small family business who are currently not being supported by their

insurance company. On top of the effects of the pandemic, this could well drive them out of business. What a thoroughly miserable time this must be for them.

So we packed up our trailer, hitched up once more. Liz and Huw decided to stay another night but we just wanted to go home. The fact that our jockey wheel lost a split pin and didn't work and we had no power when we got home really seems insignificant.

For pictures of the event in good years and to see some of the chaos left by Arwen, click this link [ludlow medieval fayre 2021 - Google Search](#)

Claire Dowd & Rob Kenny



Treasurer's Report

Our editor asks that the reports for this edition should include some "Christmas sparkle". For a treasurer that presents some difficulty as we are by nature serious minded. On reflection though does not every "Christmas Carol" need a Scrooge? Who better to play the part than your current interlocutor?

So without even a single ho ho (well just a few) the treasurer's report for the period 23/8/2021 to 26/11/2021. Actually, it's "good news week" but the only explosion is the sound of our income rocketing skyward. (For those of you under 70 to whom this reference is oblique to say the least; google Hedgehoppers Anonymous for a song titled thus from the 1960's).

For the last 18 months I have been putting as much of a gloss on the figures as I could. You know "not lost anything just the opportunity etc etc". Whilst it is obviously true that we incurred hardly any covid related costs we did lose revenue earning opportunities. Thankfully I have no need to sugar the pill this time round. We have reopened and things go well.

The centre boasting an upgraded visitor experience (funded by FoNS) has proved a real "Christmas cracker"

A surge in off-site talks leading to uplifts in speaker fees, sales and donations have provided a real gem of a gift for our Christmas stocking.

The "light on top of the tree" has been a wave of donations, some to fund specific projects like the animated film (we are still £500 short of the total here so any good fairies would be most welcome) and to help purchase books for the library. A special mention here for Eric Channing who organised a donations bucket in a local Sainsbury store which raised over £150.

The upshot is that our income for the period 23/8 to 26/11 is £7418 as opposed to £9436 for the whole of last year. Ignoring the gift aid claim last year as this year's claim is yet to be made. The importance of membership subscriptions is also evident when examining the

detail in these figures; contributing 38% this year and 43% last of the total income, again ignoring gift aid.

I must now revert to Scrooge mode I fear. Whilst our available resources of £47,860 may seem healthy we must bear the following in mind.

- 1) That amount of £47860 is less than half of the total grants we have made to the project over the years.
- 2) The conservation phase draws to a close and display related costs may well mean increased calls on our resources.
- 3) The pandemic effect on local and national government finances is well documented but it will mean an increase in calls being made on our funds in my view.

So we must redouble our efforts and any support that you can give as a volunteer or a donor or both will be most welcome. Having said that your current support as a member is much appreciated and vital to our future success.

Happy Christmas and see you in the New Year

Peter Horleston – Treasurer FoNS



Social Media

Keep liking, sharing and commenting. Get the Ship noticed in 2022!!!



Facebook

Friends of Newport Ship – facebook.com/fonsnewportship

Newport Medieval Ship Project – facebook.com/newportship



Twitter - @NewportShip



Instagram - newport_ship

Liz Gulliver

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