



Friends of Newport Ship

News Sheet – February 2022

Update from the Chair

Having taken over the Chair role (from vice-Chair) only a few weeks ago, I still have plenty to learn. I have been involved with the Newport Ship since moving to Newport in 2013, when I became Secretary after attending a talk. I handed that role over to Rob Kenny in 2016 but remained a trustee (with a short break), so have a fairly good knowledge of the progress of the project. As well as cataloguing our library (which you might have read about in previous Newsletters), I was managing our little shop last summer, and selling merchandise on Saturdays.

My short-term objectives are to keep us on course with our plans outlined in the AGM, including helping with the big 20th anniversary celebration on **Saturday 30th July** – save the date! We were thrilled to welcome another consignment of timbers last week (see more below) and are excited to see the project move to a new planning stage by the end of 2022. Meanwhile, I would like to express our thanks to Rob Kenny for his huge contribution to the success of the Friends in the last 5 years, and likewise to his wife Claire.

I shall be depending heavily on the wonderful team of trustees that we have on our Board. They are being very supportive in this transition period, and it's all down to them that we are continuing onward and upward!

Sian King



FONS Project Report

Dr. Toby Jones, Curator, Newport Medieval Ship Project

There is no update from Toby, the last few weeks have been extremely busy, and he will have lots of news for the next news sheet.

Over ninety per cent of the ship's timbers have been returned to date. Once the remaining timbers have passed through the conservation stage later this year

The latest batch contained a large part of the central mast step, as well as a number of long oak stringers that were used to strengthen the ship.

Below is a selection of shots taken showing the stages of moving a large section from lorry to cushioned pallet.



**Operation move and place the timbers
Friday 28th January 2022**

Secretary's Report

Since the last News Sheet there have been several changes. I will continue as Editor of the Newsletter/News Sheet in addition to taking on the role of Secretary, until the AGM later this year I look forward to the challenge and will endeavour to keep members informed of the exciting future for the Ship 2022 and beyond.

As part of the 20th year celebrations we are including in our News Sheets memories from members about the ship and involvement with FoNS, episode One appears below thanks to a contribution from Charles Ferris. Please send your memories including articles, pictures, poems of volunteering, of peering down the hole, of marching to save the ship. These are special are all our memories should be recorded.

Liz Gulliver and I are liaising with Emma Newrick (Newport City Council) to raise the profile of the Ship in our 20th anniversary year. A Press Release has been sent out celebrating the return of timbers. Look out for the article in the local press.

This is a quote from: Councillor Debbie Harvey, cabinet member for culture and skills, said: “The twentieth anniversary of the discovery of the Newport Ship is a milestone that deserves to be celebrated.

“Along with our partners the Friends of Newport Ship, the council is leading the hard work to ensure that this important piece of our history is preserved for future generations to enjoy.

“As we continue to carry out preservation work, I’m pleased to announce our programme of events to mark this anniversary. I hope as many people as possible come together and join us in celebrating our remarkable ship.”

A Date for your Diary: 4th March at Lysaghts, Newport a public talk, ‘ Pre-history of the Severn Estuary by Prof Martin Bell <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-prehistory-of-the-severn-estuary-levels-tickets-262583312757>

Liz Aiken - Secretary/Editor



Social Media Report – SOS we need your help!

Activity has been slow on our platforms over the winter, which is a normal reflection of how quiet we are during these months. The return of a batch of timbers at the end of January - leaving just two more such consignments before all are safely returned home - has provided us with more photos and video footage to begin the process of drumming up excitement and interest as we mark both 20 years of the Ship’s discovery and 20 years of the founding of the Friends of Newport Ship.

For the most recent month we have gained 15 more Likes on **Facebook** taking our total to 399 with 302 people reached i.e., Saw the post, which is not bad considering we have yet to start active promotion to expand our following. Our **Twitter** account already has 2269 Followers and 4478 Following and I am expecting greater engagement as we share news of our preparations for the twentieth anniversary and the return of the last timbers. **Instagram** being a platform for sharing personal activities is always quiet at this time of year. That being said, it still gains a trickle of followers each month...and now stands at 124.

How you help...

Part of building up Followers is very much down to sharing insights and activities and partly down to creating links with other interested groups and organisations and this is where you come in. If you know of any groups on these platforms that have a connection with Newport, Wales, history, medieval trade, conservation, archiving etc that we are not yet aware of then please do drop us a note and we can search them out. There are a number of ways to contact me – Direct Message on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter. If you are a volunteer via the WhatsApp group. We want to engage and hear your thoughts so do not be shy - message me with your ideas.

Thank you, our Ship needs us! Please, like, comment and share, share, share in our Anniversary year.

Liz Gulliver



Twenty Years of Ship Memories Captured

Episode 1: First Night Nerves

I remember looking out of the window of my family business- the bus station café at an orderly queue forming across the Kingsway to see the ship the first night the council opened it for public viewing. Previously I'd contacted people who'd written to the Argus to support saving the ship. Four of us had agreed to meet up at the site gate to collect signatures for a petition to present to the council. There was my old friend Jan Preece and two ladies I was yet to meet, Jill Barratt and Glenys Silverson. I'd had petition sheets printed and put them on clip boards for my fellow enthusiasts to use and also had a roll of circular sticky labels printed, these showed an outline of a ship- a tall ship or clipper, not really appropriate for a 15th century vessel but it was all we could get in a short time along with S.O.S. in heavy black type on a yellow background. I picked yellow labels as they were a left-over remnant and the printer said we could have them cheap. I thought S.O.S (Save Our Ship) was a bit of a corny name, but we had to act fast, and it was all I could think of. Black print on yellow became our campaign T-shirt colours, all due to the colour of those left-over stickers which the visitors to the ship were happy to wear and the Archaeologists stuck on their site helmets. Seeing that large queue forming early I thought I'd better get a move on, or they'd be open, and I'd miss the crowd, so I gathered up the clip boards and stickers with a feeling of some trepidation. I wondered what I was getting myself into, but to "gee myself up" I said aloud Sherlock Holmes' comment at the start of some of his adventures- "The Game's Afoot". An elderly gentleman was just sitting down with a cup of tea on the table next to me and said, "that's right, the game IS afoot" and with that I left the café and crossed over the Kingsway to meet my old friend Jan and my new friends, Glenys and Jill. That was twenty years ago, the café has gone, the theatre has been built, the ship has been excavated and its conservation is all but completed. I'm the elderly gentleman now but until the ship has been reconstructed and on show "The Game's Still Afoot!"

Charles Ferris - Patron & Board Member



A Day To Remember at the Levels: 21st August 1991

I've been going back through my slide collection to do some digitising and came across some images from a visit to the Severn Levels in August 1991. The slides brought back many memories of what was quite a day!

The Severn Estuary Levels Research Committee (SELRC) was formed in the mid-1980s in response to some remarkable archaeological discoveries which were being made on both the English and Welsh shores of the Estuary. By the summer of 1991 SELRC was coordinating simultaneous excavations at both Caldicot and Goldcliff, which I was fortunate enough to have the opportunity to visit. At the time I was working as the Environmental Archaeologist for the Hereford and Worcester Archaeology Unit, so I jumped at the chance to go when the invitation came through. The weather was lovely when I left Worcester on the morning of 21 August to travel to south Wales, but I had been warned by SELRC to pack waterproofs and wellies just in case.

A group of excited archaeologists from across the region, including me, met initially at Caldicot Castle. The excavations at the Castle Lake were led by Nigel Nayling of the Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust and were being conducted in response to waterlogged deposits being at risk of dessication. The preservation of Bronze Age wooden artefacts and structural features was

outstanding, and additionally, the skeleton of a dog was one of the highlights of the areas that were being excavated on when we were there.



We then went on to Goldcliff, where two Iron Age houses, trackways and fishtraps had been exposed during autumn storms in 1990. The excavations were being undertaken by archaeology students from St David's University College at Lampeter, directed by Dr Martin Bell. As an intertidal site in an area of treacherous currents, great care was needed even for a visit. The weather was just beginning to turn as our group prepared to head out across the exposed mudflats under the

watchful eye of Derek Upton, one of the leading figures in SELRC.

Again, the quality and quantity of archaeological remains was fantastic. The two dwellings were large wooden structures, with wooden trackways reminiscent of those in the Somerset Levels connecting to other buildings nearby. The peat shelf meant parts of the site had survived far better over the winter than others, with in situ stakes and the remains of walls. Meanwhile, as we continued to look round, the clouds were really gathering, the wind was getting up, and all of a sudden, a storm meant that we all had to leave the site very rapidly!

It is an understatement to say that I was extremely pleased to have packed my wellies and waterproofs. I was one of those sent back in the leading group with Derek, with students and visitors alike slathering back to the shoreline in driving rain and a howling gale, carrying whatever equipment they could manage. In scenes reminiscent of Napoleon's retreat from Moscow, people were being helped, dragged, and cajoled across the slippery mire. I turned round and took one photograph which is half obscured by rain, but the other half shows the dreadful weather. Then just as quickly as it had arrived, the storm passed.



Back at the carpark we stripped off our sodden, filthy clothes, and breathed a sigh of relief that everyone was safe, if rather more muddy than usual. I feel very lucky to have been able to visit the SELRC sites at Caldicot and Goldcliff and am very pleased to share the slides and stories of my visit more widely after all these years.

Clare Wichbold MBE



Various Articles of interest:

Thank you, David Leigh, for hunting down these interesting articles.

Diving Back Bronze Bell Wreck

Our (Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales – <https://rcahmw.gov.uk>)

Find out more about this mysterious wreck ahead of our next free online talk, '[Diving Back on the Bronze Bell Wreck](#)' by Alison James, MSDS Marine, on behalf of the [CHERISH project](#) on 17 February at 5pm.

In 2021 MSDS Marine were commissioned by the CHERISH Project to undertake a programme of diving on the Bronze Bell protected wreck site. The wreck was last visited by an archaeological contractor in 2004. In addition, this visit was the first to assess the impact of climate change on the wreck. In this talk Alison James will give an update on the diving fieldwork and discuss the findings.

Tickets will be limited and must be booked in advance - [Tickets available here.](#)

To find out more about this mysterious ship, one of the first wrecks in Welsh waters protected under the Protection of Wrecks Act 1973, see this week's '[Monument of the Week](#)' [Facebook post](#) and look out for next week's blog.

Funding from the Cambrian Archaeological Association

Professor Martin Bell, who helped to discover the timbers of a sewn-plank Bronze Age boat of which we have replicas on show in the Ship Centre, has received an award from the Cambrian Archaeological Association. They have allocated £2000 towards the cost of conserving 29 pieces of Mesolithic worked wood from structures interpreted as fish traps in the bed of a palaeochannel in the intertidal zone at Goldcliff, close to where those boat timbers were found. The structure is dated 5210 – 4912 cal BC.

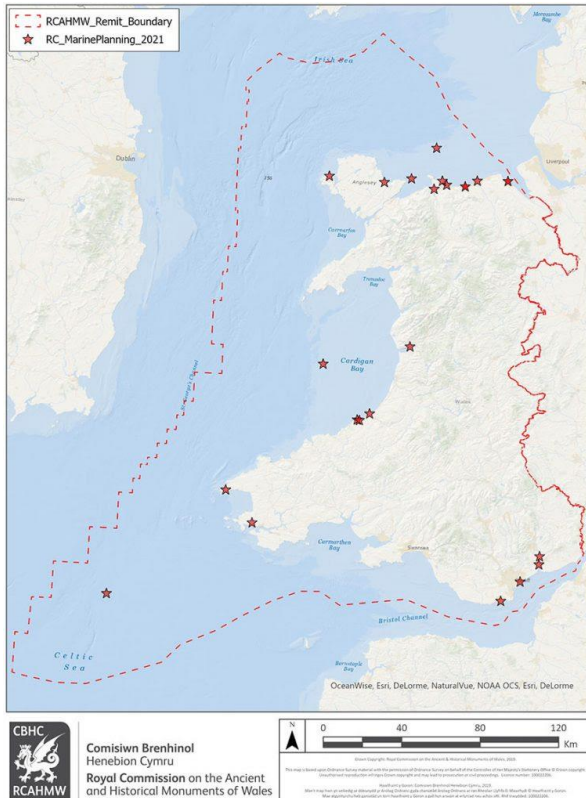
Planning The Seas



Most people are familiar, at least in passing, with the need to gain planning permission before building things on land: a house, office building, roads, etc. Less well known is that the planning system in the UK also extends into the sea. This is important because a lot of construction and development takes place in the *marine zone* which needs to be assessed to ensure it is appropriate and does not unnecessarily damage the marine environment or restrict/prevent access to it for

other users. Work such as the construction of offshore windfarms, laying communication cables, dredging harbours, or building/repairing coastal defences all require the granting of a *marine license* before a project can start.

The picture shows The North Hoyle offshore windfarm, off the coast of North Wales, typical of the large-scale offshore development for which the Royal Commission is a consultee (Royal Commission photograph taken by Toby Driver in July 2009).



Marine Planning

This process, broadly termed ‘marine planning’, is overseen by [Natural Resources Wales](#), and the Royal Commission has an important role as a statutory consultee concerned with the consideration of cultural heritage within Wales’s marine zone (see map). In summary, this means that we assess each marine licence application for any potential impact that the project might have on maritime archaeology. This includes all types of archaeological sites, from shipwrecks and aircraft to fish traps and submerged forests. We must also consider the potential impact during the construction of the scheme, its use, and (if applicable) when it is decommissioned at the end of its life.

Illustrating the remit extent of the Royal Commission into the marine zone, and the location of marine planning consultations, June to December 2021.



Keep In Touch With the Friends of Newport Ship

Newport Medieval Ship Centre (currently not open) Unit 20, Estuary Road, Queensway Meadows, Newport, NP19 4SP

Friends of Newport Ship: Charity Number 1105449

Telephone: 01633 274167

Website: www.newportship.org

Chair: Sian King chair@newportship.org

Editor: News Sheet/ Annual Newsletter – Liz Aiken secretary@newportship.org / 07769713918

Social Media: Liz Gulliver either Direct Message or email liz.gulliver@btinternet.com



Facebook

Friends of Newport Ship – facebook.com/fonsnewportship

Newport Medieval Ship Project – facebook.com/newportship



Twitter - [@NewportShip](https://twitter.com/NewportShip)



Instagram - [newport_ship](https://www.instagram.com/newport_ship)

