

West Wales Maritime Heritage Society

Newsletter Spring 2016 and Chairman's Report 2015 – 16

The society has progressed remarkably in the last 12 months. We have increased our membership, embarked on a number of community projects and are negotiating with Pembrokeshire County Council to secure long term security of tenure of Hancock's Yard.

Museum. Last year we opened the museum for 30 days and received very positive feedback from visitors. This year we will be open for 80 days. The museum space has been expanded and the displays have been improved. All of the buildings in the yard have had their outsides painted, the gutters repaired and we have put vinyl banners on the gable end of two sheds to advertise the museum.



. A replica of "Agnes" will be made in the museum to demonstrate how traditional tools and techniques are used. She was built in 1906, on Front Street, and used to fish in the Cleddau. "Agnes" is raised for display behind the building area.



We are part of the local group that is developing The Pembroke Dock Town Trail to make the town more attractive to tourists by joint promotions of ourselves, The Sunderland Trust and the smaller heritage sites.

We may be loaned a WW1 naval armoured car to display in the museum. The RNAS took this Model-T based vehicle to Russia, when the British supported the White Russians in their civil war. We still need to investigate the insurance but it is exempt from MOT!

The Rosyth Dinghy remains very popular with children for playing at going on a fishing trip!



Restoration of the Tenby Lugger “Margaret”. Our bid to The Heritage Lottery Fund for grants to restore the last Tenby Lugger is stalled because we do not yet have long-term security on our site. This is the primary reason that we are seeking to lease Hancock’s Yard from the council.

Electric Supply. Another important reason to secure a lease is to enable us to install an electric supply to the yard.

Toilet. Plans to install a unisex and disabled toilet are well under way. The work will be started as soon as we receive building controls approval.

Community Projects.

- Work with Pembroke Dock Community School. We sold them a suitable boat and helped them to modify it for disabled access. It is now part of their Living Museum and we continue to support the project with talks and demonstrations.
- Working with Llanion Communities First and the local Jobcentre. We started with some talks to long term unemployed people to try to help them find historical interest in Pembroke Dock. This has developed into a thriving involvement with unemployed volunteers in all society activities. Currently there are three men engaged on a project to restore a 17feet long, Silhouette Class, sailing boat.



- Future Schools Education Project. As part of the Tenby Lugger “Margaret” project, we proposed to run a schools education project. If the lugger funding is not forthcoming, we want to continue with the education project and aim to have it running next year. It will be part of the primary school Key Stage 2 syllabus and we will prepare material for teachers to deliver in their classrooms. The pupils will visit our museum and, if we have a suitable vessel (which must meet the standards for passenger use), we will kit them out, brief them and take them for a local trip afloat.

Schools, like everyone, are under financial pressure but the program should provide an income for the society.

The Fleet. Quest is no longer fully seaworthy. She was built in 1927 and would need extensive restoration to replace the leaking garboard strakes, which would cost more than we can afford. The bilge pump cannot cope sometimes and needs more frequent monitoring than we can manage when she is on a mooring. She will be displayed in the tidal dock with her masts and equipment.

Four plywood boats were donated to the society last year, a Firefly, a Mirror, a Swordfish (National 15) and a Ballerina. The last is a 21-foot bilge keel yacht called "Dulcie-Anne". Although not of traditional construction they are all over 50 years old and relatively simple to renovate. They will be used to teach sailing techniques and taken to local events and regattas.

MITEC College, in Milford Haven, has closed down and one of their last projects was to build a replica Tenby Lugger. We believe that the European funding for it specified that it would be donated to WWMHS when completed, for use in community projects afloat. The building is finished and we have plans to use it in: -

- The schools education program to take pupils as passengers for short local trips.
- The "Tall Ships, Small Ships" program to take parties for crewing experience in a heritage sailing boat.
- Local events and regattas like Sea Fair Haven and The Pembroke River rally.

Winter Talks Program. Our programs of monthly winter talks in previous years were poorly attended. Last winter we decided to concentrate on two talks and to make them joint events with Pembroke and Monkton History Society. Both of the talks attracted big audiences (nearly 100) and succeeded in both reaching a wider audience and attracting new members.

Future Events.

- Sea Fair Haven 2016 will take place from 11th to 18th June. It is a biennial event that alternates with Semaine du Golfe festival in Brittany and celebrates The Cleddau Waterway. On Tuesday 14th we will lead the fleet of smaller boats up The Pembroke River to Pembroke Castle Pond.
- The Pembroke River Rally annually exercises the right of navigation on The Pembroke River. If the weather cooperates, we will lead a fleet of about 50 boats into The Castle Pond. This year's event will be on 30th July, when the high tide is at 4 P.M.

Thank You. Finally, thank you to all the members and volunteers for your hard work this year. I have been amazed at how much we have done and how the yard is now somewhere that the town can take pride in. We have risen to many challenges and the society's future is exciting.

Brian King
Chairman