



# NORTH EAST MARITIME TRUST NEWSLETTER

Restoring traditional boats | Rebuilding heritage skills

## New look for slipway

The slipway shed now has brand new steel gates and roller shutter doors, thanks to a very generous donation from the John Lightfoot Foundation.

John read about the sorry state of the old doors in the last newsletter, and offered to support us with a donation of £6000 to cover the full costs.

After sourcing suitable contractors, the heavy galvanised steel gates are now installed, along with new motorised roller shutter doors above. Now opening them is a simple matter, and moving boats on and off the slipway is greatly facilitated.

Once again our grateful thanks to John Lightfoot and Solar Solve Marine who made this all possible.



## Royal Diadem stars at Bridlington festival

What a summer it has been, and for the volunteers at NEMT a highlight was surely our first appearance at the Bridlington Sailing Coble festival in August. A dozen traditional sailing cobsles took part, coming from as far away as Cornwall. We had two great days sailing in company and developed our sailing skills as well.



With Royal Diadem now sporting a jib for the first time her balance under sail is much better, and we think she looks wonderful. Indeed, many passers by were heard to comment that she was the star of the whole festival.

Our thanks must go to John Clarkson and the other festival organisers for sending a trailer to take the boat to Bridlington.

## New trustees

Following our AGM earlier in the summer, we are very happy to welcome back two familiar faces to the board.

Alec Renwick and Paul Nicholson were both voted on, with Phil Smith and Mark Batey stepping down.

The full committee is now:

Peter Weightman (chair), Jerry Dudman (secretary), Alex Finnegan (treasurer), Martin Wilson, Alex Renwick and Paul Nicholson.

## Workshop reorganisation

The main workshop looks empty without the lifeboat filling it, but volunteers have been hard at work taking advantage of the room to do some reorganising.

Newly renovated work benches are in place, a proper wood storage rack has been built and we are even getting our huge collection of tools in order.

Thanks to the many volunteers for getting stuck into an unglamorous but very necessary task.

Now there is plenty of space for more projects, with a flexible area that will allow us to move work around to suit our requirements.

There's also plenty of firewood for the stove to keep us toasty warm during the cold winter ahead!

## Lifeboat takes flight

Launch day for the Henry Frederick Swan gets ever nearer, as she was moved from the main workshop to the slipway.

Nerves were jangling as she was hoisted high into the air and swung out and over the river frontage.

Earlier Dave Parker and the team had winched her inch by inch towards the door of the workshop on rollers. Then the professionals took over as she was lifted on heavy duty straps suspended from a crane. Notice the spreader beams between the straps to stop the hull being squeezed.



She is now happily ensconced on the slipway where final tests are taking place. The stainless steel exhaust system has been installed, and electrical wiring is complete. Static engine tests are being carried out, and final details like the lettering and RNLI designs on her hull can be completed.

## Book-keeper wanted

Not all the volunteers we need have to have craft skills. Right now we are looking for someone with experience of book-keeping to help with the financial running of the trust.

This is an opportunity for someone to contribute a morning or two a week to keep track of the accounts, handle petty cash, keep the bank accounts in order and make sure the bills get paid.

Working with treasurer Alex Finnegan, this is a responsible position and one that will play a vital role in the running of the trust.

Previous experience of book-keeping in a small business would be useful as would the handling of online banking and Sage accounting systems.

If you think you can help, or know someone who might be interested, please get in touch with Jerry Dudman at [jdudman@nemaritimetrust.co.uk](mailto:jdudman@nemaritimetrust.co.uk)

## Signage

You will have spotted from the picture of the new slipway doors that the new signs are up! Well, not new, they have been sitting for a year waiting to be put up, but now with the help of a hired cherry-picker they are in place, and passengers on the Amsterdam ferry and other river users can be in no doubt about who we are!

## Snowgoose restoration

She has been resting under a tarpaulin for just about as long as anyone can remember, but now it's time for the sailing dinghy Snowgoose to get a spot of attention.

She is built in a very unusual way, using a reverse clinker method of overlapping planks, but with the planks the other way up from the normal way. The planks are of roughly even width, so instead of ending at the stem, many of them finish at the gunwhale.



She doesn't have a historic connection to the north east, but she's ours and we want to get her back into her original condition before finding a good home for her.

Snowgoose is a Solent Seagull Mark 2, built before the war for the Lee-on-Solent sailing club, who have been very helpful in tracking down the history of the Seagulls.

Next job is to survey her to assess the work required, which will mean stripping off the later fibreglass decking.



## The Bedford

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No, we haven't forgotten our 1886 lifeboat. She is currently safely under cover in a warehouse at Port of Tyne, and will be our next big project.

There is an interesting discussion to be had about the level of restoration that is needed. We have taken advice from a marine conservation expert about the options.

## Cygnet boatbuilding

The planking on new-build motor launch Cygnet is almost finished, and the boatbuilding team are thinking about the interior fit-out.



The conservation route would be to regard her as a historical artifact and not to attempt to get her back into the water. This approach would focus on maintaining her current condition and ensuring that no further deterioration takes place.

The restoration route would be similar to the work done on the Henry Frederick Swan, where we take her back to her original as-new condition, replacing parts as required.

The favoured approach now is the second - which is a lot more work and will require some considerable fund-raising.



In days gone by internal frames would have been from grown oak which is no longer available. So the team is laminating the frames that will help support the foredeck out of strips of oak pre-bent and then glued together. Engine bearers will be made the same way, but the ribs will be of steamed and bent oak.



## “Snowgoose” - what we know so far

Snowgoose was donated to NEMT many years ago by Brian Mahoney. He believes her to be a Solent Seagull Mark 2, and we are 99% sure that he is right.

As we start the renovation, we have been in contact with Lee-on-Solent Sailing Club members who have been helping with finding out more about the history of the boats.



The Solent Seagulls were a one-design built and designed for the Lee-on-Solent Sailing Club by Percy See at his yard in Fareham. The Mark One version was built in the early 1930s, and appeared in an edition of *Yachting Monthly* in 1934: “The craft is unusual in that the planking was reverse clinker, the upper edge of each plank being outside the plank above it, instead of inside as usual. The bottom planks toward the turn of the bilge are finished on a stake. The result is that the lands were probably more nearly in the direction of the flow of water than with the ordinary plank arrangement, and that this should reduce head resistance”.

The fleet were kept during the sailing season on moorings at Lee-on-Solent. In 1937 a force 10 storm destroyed most or all of the fleet.

Percy See’s son Eric designed a modified version of the Seagull, a Mark 2, of which we think Snowgoose was one.

Alan Reed, who was an apprentice at Percy See’s yard and helped build the Mark 2s, remembers that by the 1950s two Mk 2 Solent Seagulls were still sailed in the Club; Shimbil now owned by John Grout and Naida by Dick Gough. The

photograph shows Alan Reed sailing on Shimbil with John Grout and Peter Gough.

We are lucky that Snowgoose appears to be in pretty good condition, complete with most of the rig. She contains a number of later additions, including a fiberglass deck covering, where the original would have been canvas.

Our plan is to bring her back to her original condition as far as possible.

