

# NORTHUMBRIAN FISHING HERITAGE TRUST

## Favourite

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Favourite

National Historic Ships:

Reg. No 1050

Length: Overall

35.97 feet (10.97 metres)

Tonnage: Gross

5.00

History

FAVOURITE was built as a seine net fishing boat in 1947 at the Fife yard of Walter Reekie. Built for the Isle of Man as MARGARET ANNA CT101, the boat moved to Amble, Seahouses and then

St. Abbs before passing into the care of the Northumbria Fishing Heritage Trust in 2006. She is now fully restored yet requires annual maintenance as do all wooden boats.

Significance

1. What is the vessel's ability to demonstrate history in her physical fabric?

The hull and superstructure have not been compromised by alteration since ending work as a fishing vessel. Overall dimensions are 36' long, 12' 2" beam and 5' draft. Repairs were undertaken to original standards and materials. Framing is 90% original, hull planking 95%, deck 50%, bulwarks 60%, masts and spars 20%. Crew accommodation 70%, fish hold 60%; and the steering gear is believed to be original. The 1947 Kelvin Engine and gearbox had been replaced circa 1960 with a Gardner and subsequent Gardner engine, (a 6LXB,) was fitted later and continues in good order. One fuel tank was replaced during restoration. Deck machinery is of a later date in the 1970s. The wheelhouse was originally placed centrally but replaced in the 1960s and moved to the stern. Part of the crew accommodation had been removed to suit a diesel heater, but has been re-instated to original pattern and a working coal stove fitted again. The paintwork now replicates the colouring typically seen on vessels of this type in the 1950sand 60s.

2. What are the vessel's associational links for which there is no physical evidence?

Favourite started her working life at Castletown, Isle of Man, in the hands of Jackie Maddrell and his sons; she was then known as "Margaret Anna" and carried the number CT101. The stay on the island did not last long for she was soon based at Amble, Northumberland, in the ownership of the Handyside family, and her registration number changed to BH35. In the 1950s, she was bought in a distressed condition by Bill and Michael Robson, taken to Seahouses and renamed Favourite with a Berwick registration number BK11. The Robsons undertook a considerable amount of remedial work, altering her configuration from that of a centre wheelhouse layout with large stern well, to the conventional arrangement she has today. They also replaced her original Kelvin engine with a Gardner 5LW. She once sank in Seahouses harbour but was recovered and put back into service. Twenty years later she was sold back to Amble as BH49 and worked there briefly before being purchased by Peter Nisbet of St Abbs who, with his family owned and cared for her for the next 33 years. During that time Favourite was re-registered as LH149. Peter Nisbet carried out improvement work that included fitting a Gardner 6LW

engine and rigged her for trawling. Prior to that point in her history Favourite had been rigged for seine netting, as well as being able to work pots etc. Like many old boats, she was lucky to survive. St Abbs is a difficult harbour to enter in all but the best conditions and on one occasion Favourite struck a submerged rock, tearing off a bilge keel. With water rapidly flooding the bilges she was driven flat out into the harbour and run up on the small area of beach - she thus avoided almost certain sinking. The central importance of a boat to a fishing family is illustrated by the ownership in the Nisbet family. When negotiating to sell Favourite for preservation Peter Nisbet was heard to say "With this boat I was able to marry my wife, buy a house, and rear three children; every penny we had was earned by her." In February 2006, her working life came to an end but her rarity was recognised by members of the Trust as being one of the finest and last survivors of her type. Favourite was restored in 2007 under the supervision of Tyneside's last wooden boat builder Fred Crowell, in his boatyard at South Shields.

### 3. How does the vessel's shape or form combine and contribute to her function?

FAVOURITE's form may be described as a "canoe sterned seine netter". The hull is of a type developed soon after the introduction of motor engines to fishing vessels, and designed with a shape suited to manoeuvrability; a most useful characteristic for working ring nets and for seine netting, where a tight turning circle enabled efficient fishing. The keel is shorter than earlier vessels and the propeller is well under the stern to avoid catching nets. The "canoe stern" enables the rear of the vessel to swing easily, yet gives lift when hit by a following sea. The gunnel or capping rail is low to the deck to ease hauling of gear by hand. The masts and spars are arranged for fishing methods of the mid 20th century. The main mast lowers onto the wheelhouse roof to reduce rolling when sitting at sea. There is a Gilson post for lifting the cod end of a net. A derrick is fitted for unloading the catch at port. There is a mizzen mast with a gaff sail to steady the boat in a swell when sitting at nets or when drawing pots. The wheelhouse is designed only to protect the helmsman and his controls, being too small to accommodate the whole crew. The general design suited seine netting as well as the working of pots for shell fish yet was later adapted for trawling. The accommodation caters for three persons to live on board whilst working from "foreign" rather than just the home port. The fish hold is of limited capacity but adequate for daily catches.

#### Previous names

1. 1949 - Margaret Anna

#### Subsequent developments

Favourite remains in the care of Northumbrian Fishing Heritage Trust, She visits maritime events on the coast of NE England and SE Scotland where the crew are pleased to show off the boat and tell the public about her history. Her home berth is at St Peter's Marina, Newcastle upon Tyne, where visitors may see her in the marina basin, or at NE1 Marina pontoon at Newcastle quayside.

#### Bibliography

1. 1998 Olsen's Fisherman's Nautical Almanac 1998