

STEAMSHIP

**FRESHSPRING**

**SOCIETY**

# FRESHSPRING NEWS



**No.11 Summer 2017**

*Preserving the past to inspire knowledge for the future*

The Steamship Freshspring Society is a registered charity, No.1151907.

**Objects of the Charity:**

To advance the education of the public through the preservation and operation of a historic steamship, and the promotion of maritime studies particularly amongst young people for the public benefit.

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Keep up to date with progress/news via the Society's website or Facebook page.

**Website:** www.ssfreshspring.co.uk

**Facebook:** www.facebook.com/SSFreshspringSociety?fref=ts

**Membership Enquiries:** Please send an s.a.e. for a form to: Steamship Freshspring Society, c/o Richard Ker, 4 New Street, Appledore, Devon, EX39 1QJ, or you can join online.

**Ship Visits & Volunteering on the ship:** The ship is open by appointment for groups. Members are welcome to visit on working days, which are Sunday and Wednesday. Please call Peter Gillett, our Local Ship Manager on 01237 472 456 or John Puddy 01237 479 730 so we know to expect you. Regular public opening will commence during school holidays and will be advertised locally.

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## Editor's Ramblings. . . .

**Doesn't** time fly? It's hard to believe that we're well into May and summer is nearly upon us. It is already several weeks since this year's AGM, when the ship was officially opened to members for the first time, followed by the first public openings over the Easter weekend. This is a great achievement for the volunteer team in Bideford and one which raises public awareness of the ship and what we are trying to achieve.



It was great to be able to spend a few days in Bideford and some time on the ship to see the great work being done by the local team. The transformation takes time but it is clearly happening and I would strongly recommend that if you can, you arrange to visit the ship to see the positive changes that are taking place.

It is slightly concerning to me that the number of new members is less this quarter than in previous ones. That may be due to the inevitable surge in membership that occurs when a new project comes to town. Now the ship has been at Bideford for a while, we will see a slow down in the rate of recruiting new members. We need to be vigilant to ensure we continue to recruit new blood and more willing helpers.

With a reduction in the available time that some trustees can now commit to the project, a greater onus is falling on the small team in Bideford, and especially the Chairman. While we are working on recruiting more trustees, volunteers with good organisational and business skills can help take a lot of the load off John and the team. Volunteers don't need to be all at the sharp end, doing the practical hands on work on the ship; there is a real need for more on the business side. Would that be you?

You will see that we now have our own beer! We have teamed up with the local Clearwater Brewery to produce 'Freshspring Steam Beer' which is available from the brewery. To celebrate this achievement, on 18th June, John and team will be delivering some of the amber nectar from Bideford Station to Appledore via Instow, using John's miniature traction engine and his steamboat. Please support this effort if you can.

I have had a number of interesting articles for the newsletter, some of which have been held over to next time. However, if you have a story to tell – not necessarily maritime – please let me have it, for the cupboard can get very bare quickly!

**Brian Gooding**

**FRONT COVER:** Freshspring on the morning of the AGM Saturday. The ship basks in the sunshine as John & Stephen secure the gangway in readiness for members to visit the ship.

**Brian Gooding**

**BACK COVER:** Another shot of Freshspring in the Bristol Channel en route to Bideford.

© **Graham Hobbs**

## From our Patron, Earl Attlee

At our April gala dinner last year in Bideford, I announced that we had secured emergency funding of £155,000 from the National Heritage Memorial Fund to stabilise the *Freshspring* and that she was saved and was coming to Bideford. I can now say that at the time I thought it was a proud boast although it was entirely truthful. I think it is worth looking back and examining how this extraordinary feat has been achieved.

Obviously key has been the sterling work of the trustees so ably led by our Chairman John Puddy. Initially the plan had been to base the *Freshspring* and the project in Bristol. However, as plans developed, it became clear that this was not going to be possible, so the trustees agreed that Bideford would be the most appropriate location. Sadly, some of the original trustees, who had the vision to start the project, found that the Bideford location really does not suit them which is entirely understandable. They should be proud of what they have started. The good news is that I now get a good excuse to come down to Bideford on a regular basis and we are recruiting excellent new local trustees.

Fortunately we are not the first project to rescue a steamship and there is an existing support infrastructure in place. The most important one is National Historic Ships UK which was ably led by its Director the late Martyn Heighton who passed away last year. His loss stunned the heritage maritime sector and he was a great friend and supporter to many of us. His influence undoubtedly contributed significantly to the saving of *SS Freshspring*. He was an advisor to Heritage Lottery and other funders and his support of our project was a crucial element in gaining funding. In addition, Martyn was a valuable advisor and someone who could be relied on to inspire our small but dedicated team. Some of you will recall he spoke at last year's gala dinner.

In the heritage maritime sector, collaboration is very important in gaining results and avoiding re-inventing the wheel. So we must particularly thank the Trustees of The Daniel Adamson Preservation Society (DAPS) for the remarkable support they give to the Trust. They provided valuable information and resources which greatly enhanced our funding application. In addition, now their own ship is in operation, DAPS has given us valuable equipment including a diesel generator. We also need to thank the *SS Shieldhall* for the continue support we receive from them.

In my opinion, the trustees made the right decision to engage professional help from Victoria Symes in fundraising in order to avoid making the same mistakes as others have made in the past. This has clearly borne fruit with the grant of £155,000 already referred to. This does not mean that we do not have to worry about fundraising. We do! We need to raise match funding both to give our major funders confidence that others think that the project is a sound one and also to cover our running costs that amount to £15,000 per annum.

Match funding can come in the form of cash, which is welcome, but it can also come in the form of materials, equipment and services. This is why the support of KeynvorMorlift run by Anthony Glover was so crucial. This company provided all the

towing services both to move the ship to the dry dock and to tow her to Bideford. Without the support, valued at £17,500 by KML, it is unlikely the grant would have been awarded.

When I first read about the *Freshspring* project, one of its facets that really struck me was the desire to inspire youngsters to take up a nautical or engineering career. It is all very well wanting to rescue a steamship in order to preserve our National Heritage, but what really gives the project legs is the social component. And there is just as much demand in Bideford as in Bristol or anywhere else. One of my private dreams is to see the *Freshspring* put into a relatively small harbour on the UK coastline and disembark its fare paying passengers for their day ashore. Then with a still hot boiler and steam up, take a group of sea cadets or other youngsters out to sea for a few hours. The marginal cost of doing so would be very low compared to the benefits to be achieved.

Clearly operating a steamship is a regulated activity and from the beginning of the project to save *SS Freshspring*, the trustees have engaged closely with the MCA. This has led to a very positive working relationship with surveyors. Indeed on 28th March, the ship was officially handed over from Cardiff to the Plymouth office, as we have moved from the Cardiff patch. Principal surveyors from both offices attended the ship to facilitate the handover. This unusual, almost unprecedented event, highlights the respect and high regard we have cultivated with the MCA. We are now set to work very closely with the Plymouth office to ensure *SS Freshspring* can in future sail with passengers.

In terms of the *SS Freshspring*, I look forward to the next twelve months with enthusiasm. I would encourage as many as possible to get involved with the project. Some will have no relevant experience but will nonetheless be very useful. Others will be experienced and qualified and may even have training qualifications and be able to have a disproportionately beneficial effect.

### New Members – welcome

John Richardson	<i>Uckfield, East Sussex</i>
Tracey Babb	<i>Bideford, Devon</i>
Peter Adams	<i>Bristol</i>
Andrew Mills	<i>Colchester, Essex</i>
Robert Mitchell	<i>Aylesbury, Bucks</i>
David Bassett	<i>Cardiff</i>
Stuart Barnes-Watson	<i>Ilfracombe, Devon</i>
Paul Tomlinson	<i>Dorchester, Dorset</i>
Robert Jennings	<i>Exmouth, Devon</i>
Lord Clinton	<i>Okehampton, Devon</i>

## Chairman's Report

Since the spring newsletter, activity has continued to escalate. Our volunteer team has done some amazing work to improve the presentation of *SS Freshspring*. She is looking very smart with much new paint. Every Wednesday and Sunday, the sound of chipping hammers can be heard, which is a draw for tourists as they seem to like watching activity. It is now impossible to be at the ship without a regular flow of curious people wanting to know all about her.

I had quite a response to my Lundy ships article in the last newsletter, which shows that it is important to include a range of articles to create a wide interest. We like to see articles from members so please consider adding something to the next issue.

We are still recruiting volunteers for a range of roles as, although we have ship volunteers, we do need people to help with the administration of the trust. There is more information in this issue so please consider supporting your trust.

There have been several visits to the ship recently, with the Bideford Rotary and the International Guild of Knot tiers who brought a worldwide group to visit. We hope to be selling really good key fobs soon with monkey's fists. This week, we have the Devonshire Association visiting.

The AGM was very well attended, which is very encouraging for the Trustees who all worked very hard to make the day a success. Our Patron Earl Attlee delivered a presentation about the year and how much has happened since the last AGM. We had the ship open for the first time in Bideford and members were able to spend time chatting and looking around. It was great to have the AGM within walking distance of the ship. We had an excellent talk by Peter Christie who is a well known local historian. His talk covered 'East the Water Wharves', which at one time was a very busy mining, shipbuilding and trading part of Bideford.

For those of us who work under the guidance of John Austin, Pete Gillett and Dave Stiff as volunteers, on a daily basis change is not so noticeable, but I do think that the team has achieved an amazing amount and our ship is looking very smart indeed. A team of brave men has started on the funnel now and at that dizzy height the wind can be very cold. How we long to see smoke coming out of it!

We continue to give talks, which really do mean something to locals now as they have the ship close by. Anne and Mac Head arrange for us to attend as many local events as possible, which is raising awareness, gaining members and increasing our volunteer numbers. I recently gave a talk to the Bristol Shiplovers, which was interesting in that some members had volunteered on *SS Freshspring* while she was in Bristol. One remarked that some people just came aboard and walked off with things from the ship. Hence we have some parts missing, particularly from the bridge.

As always, we are getting talk requests, so much so that I cannot cope with these myself so we are looking to find another speaker.

We continue with our Third Wednesday of the month meetings on the Café Barge

in Bideford. These are popular and next time we will all be learning about knots from a presentation by the International Guild of Knot tiers.

Our education work is going well and you will see an article by Bill Findlater in this issue. I can also report that we have formed a partnership with Integer Training and Wings Southwest to set up the North Devon Coastal Academy. This new venture will support young people aged 14 to 19 who would benefit from an alternative to mainstream education. Individuals can learn, develop and qualify through a vocational route with an emphasis on engineering and maritime careers.

I am delighted to report that we have cemented a deal with a local brewery to provide 'Freshspring Steam Beer'. This is available from local pubs and by mail order. Someone once said to me never run a shipping line or a brewery; well, now we are into both!

I hope you enjoy this newsletter. Our membership continues to rise, albeit more slowly. It is up to us all to recruit members, so we include a leaflet with this newsletter to encourage you to recruit one person. We have a great project, which is providing support for many people now and by degrees we move towards seeing our ship in steam again. Please visit when you can. Thank you again for all the support you give to your Trust. Our members are our inspiration.

**John Puddy**

## Ship Report

Work has progressed rapidly on board with volunteers working feverishly to open the ship for visitors. Chipping and painting work is extensive and has now progressed to the funnel.

We have held a meeting with our Engineering Volunteers, organised by John Cooper, with a view to organising and progressing work on machinery. We have to be careful to avoid conflict with potential funding constraints, and to be aware that we do not have any secure on shore storage or workshop facilities. John is drawing up a plan of recording and investigative works and we have identified a couple of projects which could go ahead under the guise of preservation and stabilisation work, and with our competent volunteers are readily achievable, e.g. forepeak windlass and steering engine.

We have drawn up drafts of a Job Sheet System to plan, record, and organise our efforts in future.

**John Austin**



## Treasurer's Report

At the Trustees' meeting in January, I agreed to take over the role of Treasurer, so I felt it would be appropriate to provide members with a report on the Society's current financial position and budget for 2017.

After the ship had emerged from the dry dock last summer, we expected to have about £10,000 in the bank. In fact we had more than that because we were able to 'save' some of the expected restoration cost, but on the downside Torridge District Council insisted – as part of the agreement for a long term berth – that we provide a Bond against the possibility that the ship would become unseaworthy and that Torridge would have to pay to remove it. The Bond is £9,000, payable £3,000 on berthing, £3,000 in October 2017 and £3,000 in October 2018. The money remains our property but will be held by the authority until such time as the ship becomes operational. We also agreed to have the ship surveyed annually at a cost of about £600 to verify its seaworthiness.

Cash in the bank at the start of 2017 was approximately £19,000, from which we need to pay £1,300. Excluding the cost of four magazines a year – which is covered by membership fees – to cover berthing fees, insurance, a bond payment, a survey and other essential costs, we need to find about £10,000 every year – and that's before we spend anything on maintaining or improving the ship!

How are we going to do this? We are applying for a variety of grants; some are specific to a purpose (like a new gangway) and some are for general expenses. Our major application is for a Lottery grant called 'Our Heritage' which, if we get it, will be match funded up to £30,000 by the Bridge Trust. As with all grants, the value of applications greatly exceeds the value of funds available, so there is no guarantee of success!

Excluding costs covered by grants, we have budgeted to spend £32,000 during 2017 and to end the year with at least £10,000 in the bank. To achieve this we need to raise over £20,000! We hope that fundraising activities and appeals will provide much of it but we need help from any source we can find – one-off donations, legacies or monthly contributions are all welcome and these help the Society with Gift Aid tax repayments. If you know of a wealthy marine enthusiast.....!

In the previous issue of our magazine I mentioned that we need to raise at least £10,000 a year just to meet essential costs – berthing fees, insurance, etc. – before spending anything on improving the ship. For a Society with no regular income stream (most of the membership fee is swallowed up by the cost of producing the magazine), this is a tall order – and a much taller order if we are to fund our budgeted spend this year of £32,000!

At our very well attended AGM, a number of people asked how they could financially help, so here are a couple of ideas!

## Standing Orders

We have about 200 members. If every member donated just £2.50 every week – the cost of a coffee – we would receive £26,000 a year. If we could claim Gift Aid on that amount, then we reach £32,500 – enough to cover our budget! Not everyone can afford to do this and we can't always claim Gift Aid, but it illustrates the point that small sums donated by lots of people produce large amounts of money!

If you bank on-line, setting up a standing order is simple. If not, you can fill in a form at your bank – or download one from the web. In either case, the information you need is that our bank account is called SS Freshspring Society, the account number is 00023232 and the sort code is 40-52-40. Please give your surname and initials as the payment reference.

## Legacies

Most Charities rely heavily on money given by people as a legacy in their Will, and if you wish to help *Freshspring* in this way, it would be enormously appreciated. On the assumption that you have a Will, you can give effect to this by completing a document called a Codicil, and a version of one is re-produced in this magazine.

Finally, a big thank you to everyone who so generously supports the aims of the Society – we can't succeed without you!

**Simon Tattersall**

## Trustees' Roles

**Stephen** Attenborough, a Trustee who took an eleven month sabbatical from paid work and relocated from South Wales to Bideford for the benefit of the Freshspring Society, has reduced his active work on the ship having moved back into full time employment. Experienced Bideford volunteer, Pete Gillett, has stepped up to take over some of Stephen's on board tasks, managing our wonderful volunteers. Stephen will continue looking after on board volunteers during most weekends and will take on a new role as Trust Conservation Manager, in addition to his Trustee position.

In this role, he will make day to day conservation related decisions with regard to repairs and maintenance, ensuring that we work in accordance with guidance from National Historic Ships, the Heritage Lottery Fund and other bodies, and he will ensure that all items and records not on the ship are properly recorded and maintained.

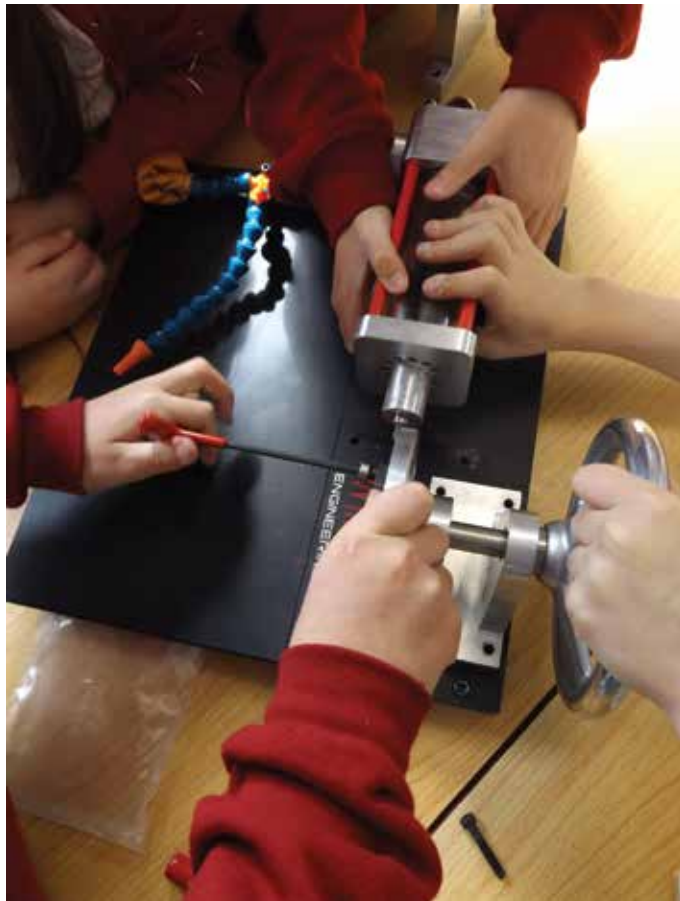
# Freshspring Education Project in Action

As a former teacher with a special interest in science and technology, I was curious to see the Freshspring STEAM ( Science, technology, engineering, art, maths) project in action as it has now been running at Sticklepath Primary School in Barnstaple, so I was very pleased when I received a call from John Puddy, our Chairman, inviting me to accompany him on a visit to the school to observe and participate in a lesson with the Year 6 children.

The class had done some previous lessons designing, making and testing models to investigate how forces work and interact. They had made interesting 2D card models to look at linear and rotary motion.

Another investigation involved designing, making and testing the efficiency of a simple wheeled vehicle using the potential energy stored in an inflated balloon. Over coffee in the staff room, the class teacher John Murray explained to us what had happened when the children had found that the models were not moving very far and when he challenged them to go back and experiment with the different variables, they were able with perseverance to solve the problem themselves (e.g. when the plastic tubing they were using was replaced with a lighter plastic straw the efficiency was improved).

He also told us how pleasantly surprised he was by the positive attitude many of the children were showing about the practical, problem solving work that was involved in the lessons. With school



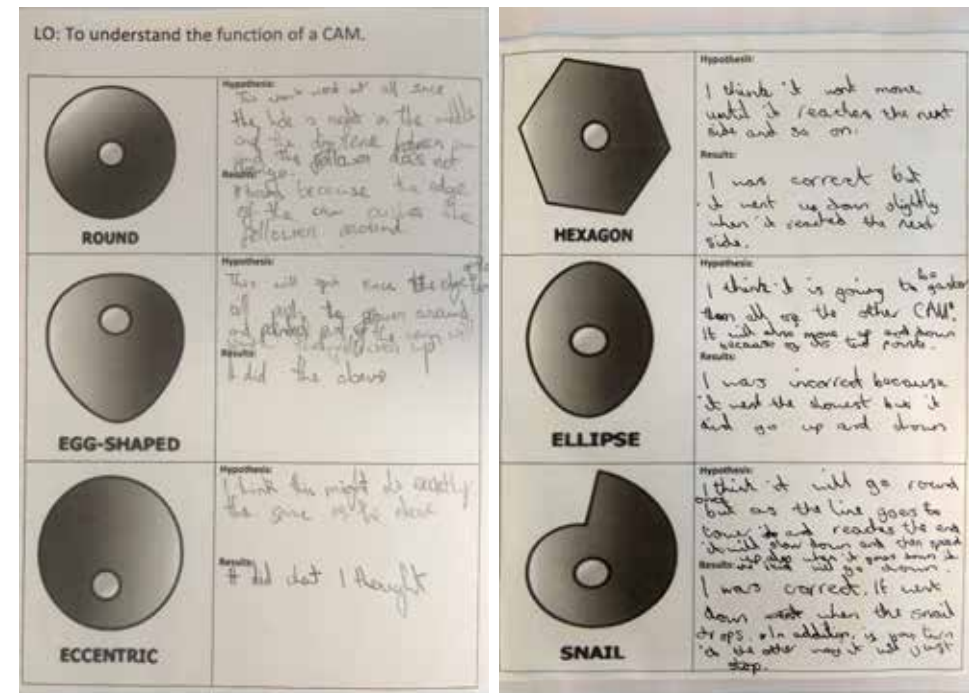
lessons focussed on revision and SATS tests, the different kind of brain work required, combined with the hands on practical tasks and group cooperation and problem solving skills, was providing a contrasting stimulating experience for the children and they were responding enthusiastically.

During the lesson we observed the class, 25 children working in groups, using allen keys and spanners to put together the components to make the air pump (see photo). Their next task was to use the handle on the piston to pump air from the chamber along the tube to inflate the balloon (lateral movement).

Then close the tap on the device to trap the air in the now inflated balloon as potential energy to use later. They then had the opportunity to change the handle for a circular one and experience the difference when using a rotary motion to operate the device. The next stage was to make some fan blades from card which could be used in combination with the potential energy stored in the inflated balloon to convert it into kinetic energy like a wind turbine.

But it was break time, the hour had flown by, but what an inspirational session we had enjoyed, and so good to see the resources provided by the Freshspring Society and its supportive partners actually working, and so well. It provides the platform for tremendous learning opportunities for these lucky children and the project certainly deserves to be more widely shared with other schools in the future.

Bill Findlater





# Restoring Steamships and Maritime Heritage in the UK

## Lock, Dock and Vessel

Maryann Soper

**Thousands** of people across the UK are actively saving our maritime heritage by supporting one of the many organisations set up to restore vessels or promote careers in maritime.

As we know, our little island has a rich seafaring past and is littered with historic ports. Thankfully, many of them are seeing a revival as top quality regeneration and investment has seen remarkable success. Coastal docks, such as The Royal Albert Docks in Liverpool, are absolutely thriving with fairground rides and an upbeat vibe, since the heritage-led regeneration; and as such plays a crucial part in the World Heritage Site designation.

Then we have glorious historic docks snuggled inland, like those at Gloucester, with a more subtle and sedate retail and leisure space. The Sharpness Canal ran ships inland from the River Severn, and Gloucester was a major trading centre. And so we are bestowed with iconic warehouses, still proudly adorned with their names.

Staying in the South West, we must mention Brunel's Bristol Docks. They too have been subject to a successful regeneration programme, with education and discovery in



*Gloucester's Historic Docks.* © Copyright Chris Allen and licensed for reuse under CC by SA 2.0



*Liverpool's Historic Docks.* © Copyright Maryann Soper



*The SS Great Britain at Bristol.* © Copyright GooseyGoo

maritime and industrial heritage at its core.

These are scenes, where current culture is enjoyed while maintaining and honouring the fabric of the culture that shaped us. It's a perfect blend for a sustainable future, which is why societies such as the Steamship Freshspring Society are adopting a heritage-led, education-focussed, commercially viable, community-based plan. Advice from the experts in the Heritage Lottery Fund remind us frequently that they invest in robust long-term plans, rather than plug holes in projects with cash, so we can see the wisdom in their logic in the regenerated historic docks around us.

The Freshspring Society is not the first to be operating in this way and we must look to our friends in Liverpool for inspiration and counsel, those from the *Daniel Adamson*. The *Daniel Adamson* is very comparable to the *ss Freshspring*; it embraces similar technology and is of a similar size (*Danny* 1908, *Freshspring* 1946) and was also saved from the brink of disaster.

Daniel Adamson was the engineer who had the original vision for the Manchester Ship Canal, which has been described as one of the greatest engineering projects of the 19th century.

The twin screw, coal-fired steam tug was built at the Cammell Laird shipyard in Birkenhead and is a remarkable survivor from the steam age and a most unusual vessel.



The Daniel Adamson. © Copyright Chris Allen and licensed for reuse under CC by SA 2.0

It was built in 1903 to tow long strings of barges laden with goods from the inland towns of Cheshire and the Potteries to the seaport at Liverpool. The *Danny* had been laid-up and neglected with no funding for even basic maintenance since 1984. Dan Cross was the impetus for the bid to save her. Dan, a skipper of a powerful modern tug currently at Milford Haven and with an interest in many aspects of heritage, canvassed fellow tug enthusiasts and bought the tug for £1.

The Daniel Adamson Preservation Society, or DAPS, was formed in 2004 and it took 12 years to get the tug ship-shape. The objective of the society is quite simply, "To conserve and restore to full working order, the steam powered tug tender and to operate her in and around the Mersey Estuary for public benefit".

They started off by getting a free tow out of Ellesmere Port to Liverpool for her restoration there, which sounds rather familiar to the *Freshspring's* restoration journey, thanks to Keynvor Morlift!

They also got the tug listed as a nationally important vessel by its addition to the coveted National Historic Ships Register. This vital proof shows the potential funders that the ship is special even though it is in a sorry state. Other great names on the register include the *SS Great Britain* and the *Cutty Sark*! Well, this too has been the course of the *Freshspring*.

The DAPS workshop at Sandon Dock, used by the engineers, includes a machine shop filled with donated equipment and was vital to the project, with training facilities donated by the Llangollen Railway group. The Freshspring Society has and is making partnerships with the local railway groups in North Devon to form a heritage engineering pool of resources and experts to raise the progress of industrial heritage preservation in the region.

The team at DAPS was very active in its fundraising activity and early in the project were supported by grants from charitable foundations such as Esmee Fairbairn, Garfield Weston and PRISM, which acted as "seed corn" to get the project underway. The much bigger grants came later; from the HLF amounting close to £4 million and a landfill tax funded grant of £75k via WREN for the art-deco areas.

Wrapped in plastic sheeting and with her paintwork clearly the worse for wear, being in the public eye during the events at Liverpool, she was able to attract 13,000 visitors, who donated £11,000 for her restoration! This helped to provide evidence for the HLF award that the public wanted the vessel to return to operational service. *Freshspring's* strategic positioning in Bideford allows the general public to see her and thus footfall will also contribute to fundraising applications and evidence that she is being adopted the people.

Meanwhile, the big bid to the HLF was being worked on and gaining momentum behind the scenes. The DAPS application gained the support (in writing) from major museums, MPs, councils and organisations. It had to prove it was a sustainable investment for the benefit of the community, so revenue streams had to be determined and justified. And then there's the matter of match funding! DAPS had to raise another £175,000 in matched contributions.



After restoration, revenue is generated by the pleasure trips, but up until that point, other strategies were implemented, such as the "Danny" ale, a 4.2% hopped bitter, sold throughout the North West, paying royalties to the DAPS. And *Freshspring* too will follow suit and develop multiple creative revenue streams to pay for the running costs and contribute to that crucial match funding.

When the HLF bid was successful, the restoration contract was put out to tender and Camel Lairds of Birkenhead were the successful bidders. Once again, it was a Svitzer tug that was to be involved in towing her into the Birkenhead dry dock, literally yards from where she was built in 1903! £3m was spent, thanks to the Heritage Lottery Fund, to recreate this superb and unique art-deco boat.

So the DAPS' 12 year journey, of endless effort, looks a little like this:

- Pioneering People – keeping the vision strong
- Paperwork – obtaining charity status
- Proof of Provenance – National Register of Historic Ships
- Freebies and Favours by Corporations – essential help, such as, towing and engineering works
- Prominent People – profile building and social clout!
- Practical People – All hands on deck! Do what you can, but properly!
- Paperwork People – The major fundraising campaign – behind the scenes
- Plain Sight – being in the public domain provided valuable evidence for grant applications
- The HLF and Restoration – Submitting the application and sending the ship away for restoration
- Delivering the Dream – operating the vessel and generating revenue

The Steamship *Freshspring* is in year four of turning its life around and major strides have already been made, thanks to a close involvement with the right people from the very start. We have the Pioneers, the paperwork, proof of provenance, freebies and favours, prominent, practical and creative friends and she is sitting in proudly in public view in Bideford, North Devon, so we're really in the final two stages of delivering the dream!

Meanwhile, a dream came true for our friends in Liverpool. On 22nd April this year, enthusiasts gathered at Latchford Locks to witness the *Daniel Adamson* make its first voyage to Salford along the whole length of the Manchester Ship Canal since 1984. Everything was going fine until they got to Latchford Swing bridge which stubbornly refused to open. They say that Daniel Adamson would have been turning in his grave, but I think he would have been proud of the marvellous maritime success stories in the UK; lock, dock and vessel.

## Freshspring Steam Beer!

The Steamship Freshspring Society has teamed up with Bideford's Clearwater Brewery in a new venture to produce 'Freshspring Steam Beer'.

The Freshspring Beer is 4.5% abv, hand crafted and is a light copper colour. Taste is defined as: citrus notes and nutty with a light bitterness... very drinkable!

500ml brown bottles will be available from June and they will be 'bottle conditioned' which means some of the active ingredients will be present in the bottle. Generally this gives a more intense flavour but does mean that the bottle needs to stand before drinking to allow it to settle.

The beer is available direct from the brewery:

6x500ml cases for £11.40 and 12x500ml cases for £21.85.

Delivery within 20 miles of Bideford will be free, but for everywhere else in the country there will be a £12 delivery charge and will be sent by courier.

Orders can be placed either by email to [sales@clearwaterbrewery.co.uk](mailto:sales@clearwaterbrewery.co.uk) or by phone on 01237 420 492. Payment will need to be made in advance either by BACS (call the brewery for bank details) or by sending a cheque made payable to [Clearwater Brewery Ltd](#) and sending to:

Clearwater Brewery Ltd  
Unit 1 Little Court  
Manteo Way  
Bideford  
Devon  
EX39 4FG





## A new mast for Freshspring!

I mentioned at one of our regular monthly meetings that it would be a good idea to plan to replace the ship's mast. I said, "It will add a lot to the appearance of the ship and will be valuable for flag drills with sea cadets." A local member, David Gannicliff, immediately said he would contribute £1,000 to help get the project going.

We have remarkable local contacts and one, Vernon Hocking, a boatbuilder, told me he would find a tree. Within a week, he acquired the tree and had it felled. It was the straightest Douglas Fir I have seen. "Straight as a gun," said Vernon. It is 45 feet long and perfect for our use. It was in a wood some 20 miles away.

It is no mean feat to move a 45ft tree and we asked an innovative member if he could move it. "Leave it to me," said Tim Hudson (who provided all but one of the photos). He duly moved the tree by getting a mate's lorry and loading on his tractor, along with a wheeled dolly. He used the tractor and the dolly, which was strapped to the tree, to bring it out of the forest and at the other end used the same contraption to bring it up the lanes to Wings' premises, where it will be worked on by volunteers.

The bark will be stripped and the tree needs to season for a few months and then it will be prepared for ceremonial fitting to the ship. This is a great project and entirely driven by our enthusiastic volunteer members.

**John Puddy**



*The tree for the mast is winched out of the woods. JP*



*The tree finally makes it to the lane for onward travel.*



*The tree is fixed to the dolly for dragging to the low-loader for its onward journey.*



*Initial transport was provided by this smart Nuffield tractor.*



*On the low-loader – tree, dolly and tractor.*



*Unloading the tree for the mast at Wings, unloading being done by a Fordson Major.*

## “Miracles we do everyday, the impossible takes a little longer!”

### Some thoughts on ship preservation from a believer

The excellent article by Martyn Ashworth in the Winter 2016 issue *Freshspring News* (No.6), “The ones that got away”, brought back many personal memories of a period in which I acquired *VIC 56* from the MoD (1978), greatly helped by the people and experience of the few projects ahead of me such as *Kerne* (Bob Adam) and *VIC 32* (Nick Walker) but only too aware of how difficult it was to succeed. Martyn’s record of the potential preservation losses is pretty complete but a few other headline losses that I recall, and most were clearly too big to take on, were the ‘Empire’ steam tug *Torque*, the Rosyth coastal tanker *C609*, the Isle class former trawlers and the larger steam vessels such as *HMS Reclaim* (the last RN reciprocating steamer) and the cable layer *John McKay*. Even for new readers, Martyn’s account of the ships we have lost will have been a call to arms to do whatever we can to keep the tiny number of surviving sea going steamers from going the same way.

Each project has its own special needs and *Freshspring* is one of the most ambitious steam projects to date – it is the largest of all naval supply steamers to survive, its imposing profile making a real impact. It is a great credit to the team, as they face



*VIC 56 and VIC 96 make a fine sight together.*

some big decisions, that they are collecting as much experience as they can from other maritime projects. Following are a few general thoughts based on my experience with *VIC 56*.

Saving ships is seriously difficult. Compare this with other forms of preservation and it’s amazing that it happens at all. The toll of the elements is unrelenting; you can’t put a ship in a shed, and the sheer scale of the task is daunting. No wonder officialdom put it in the “too difficult” box when battling off the early enthusiast would-be preservationists. Led then by retired naval officers (including Prince Philip) and seagoing professionals, the Maritime Trust broke through this barrier in the late 1960s and 70s by saving vessels such as *Gannet*, *Robin*, *Lydia Eva* and taking on *Portwey*, *Discovery* and many others. Long before HLF, they raised over £1m of business sponsorship for restoration but getting regular income was really tough. The fleet at St Katharine Dock in London did not generate serious “gate” money, but at least these ships had been saved for other homes – an important lesson for preservation. Another St Katharine lesson still applies – if your vessel is on public view, most people will be happy to admire from the quayside – don’t expect to raise large amounts in admission fees unless you’re offering a big extra.

The stage by stage approach is something that most ship projects have to recognise. The picture of the restored vessel in your mind’s eye will help keep you going but others will judge your vessel as she is not how you want her to be. As Groucho Marx put it, “I wouldn’t want to join any club that would have me as a member”. Gradually as you advance the project, more doors will open but you are very unlikely to get to where you ultimately want to be in one move.

Restoring an old ship is a matter of steady, not dramatic. The rust will need to be





tackled every year, and long after you've exhausted any generous benefactors, but don't get overwhelmed by the awesome scale. Total restoration is probably unachievable – having parts of the ship looking good, and keeping it afloat may be the best some of us can manage. Every year away from the scrapman is an achievement and keeps the possibilities open. It can be quite satisfying



*ss Robin when based in London's St Katherine Dock.*

once you get in the habit of concentrating on the small area you are tackling – chipping and painting a few square feet of deck in an afternoon is fully achievable (and it's cheaper than the gym) and over time you will make an impact. Get at least one part (and preferably a section visible externally) looking the way you want it (and can show off), in addition, of course, to having somewhere to get warm and make tea.

At the same time, ruthless prioritisation is critical. Every old vessel is at risk of springing a leak. The ship floats on its cargo spaces, not the gleam of polished brass; the condition of the hull in the main compartments has to be priorities one, two and three. What is the salinity of the berth – hulls in fresh water far outlast those on the coast. Do decks dry quickly after rain? Damp is corrosion's best friend. A drying berth with a reasonable bottom allows you to work on the hull – providing there's no bijou housing nearby whose owners like to see boats but not listen to people maintaining them.

Every preserved ship needs a role and it will rarely be that which it was designed for. Operating brings it alive and in steam, but also plenty of headaches and extra costs. Passenger carrying means a whole new class of requirements – it is very rarely viable. A great deal can be achieved through static "in steam" open days (many more people aboard and able to enjoy the machinery) with occasional movements between venues. The Liberty ship *Jeremiah O'Brien*, surely the world's most impressive steamship project, has one major operation each year. There's a good argument for restricting movements to what you need to motivate the group and demonstrate to the public.

This brings us on to probably the biggest challenge for all of us – keeping our projects alive and motivational for new generations, for people who have absolutely no memory or experience of small ships let alone steamers. When *V/C 56* had an open day for a school in Tower Hamlets many years ago, the highlight for visiting children was coal – it was a complete novelty for them and each wanted a lump to take home. We are not alone with this challenge – other preservationists, museums and heritage buildings all face these issues and the good thing about that is that there is plenty to share on how this is being tackled elsewhere.



*ss Robin, preserved on a pontoon in London's Royal Docks. She is now at Trinity Buoy Wharf.*

This was one of the reasons the Maritime Heritage Trust set up the "Reconnections" Conference in Liverpool in October 2015 with support from National Historic Ships, The Transport Trust and Association of British Transport & Engineering Museums among others. We believe that the biggest issues affect all forms of preservation so we had a real mix of railway, road and marine-based contributors looking at areas such as fundraising, communications and marketing, engaging young people and professionalism in operation. The full Conference report and presentations are on the MHT website and can be downloaded at [www.maritimeheritage.org.uk/conference2015](http://www.maritimeheritage.org.uk/conference2015).

The Maritime Heritage Trust came into being to give a voice to the ship and boat preservationist, lobbying Government, the EU and international agenda (we are the UK voice on European Maritime Heritage) and creating alliances for example with local authorities such as Cardiff. Increasingly, there is a need to help members share expertise and provide advice at critical points and when applications are made for support. We are pleased that *Freshspring* is a strong supporter of MHT. The energy and resourcefulness of her guiding team is an impressive example to us all and we will be happy to help where we can as hopefully she enters a new phase in the story of her preservation.

**Henry Cleary**

## 45 years and still going strong

David Gannicliff

1987 was a good year and, having finally retired and settled in North Devon, close to the Torridge Estuary, I decided that a small boat was a must. My family, wife and two boys, were very enthusiastic about the idea, but poor mum, she had other ideas. "What about the house and garden then?" she said.

So I found myself looking through the yachting magazines for a boat to suit the family and also to keep me occupied. I spotted a motor launch which was lying in Swansea Harbour, the other side of the Bristol Channel. She was afloat, could be viewed, and sea trials were easily arranged.

I gathered the family around me and off we went. The owner met us and ferried us to where *Almond* was lying. The first impression was that she was not run down and that there were no signs of stress in her double diagonal teak planking. The engines had been replaced three years previously and, on inspection of her vitals, she was found to be clean and sweet with dust in the bilges. YES, 45 YEARS OLD AND DRY AS A BONE!!!

The sea trials around Swansea Bay proved satisfactory, and I decided that this was the boat I could get my teeth into. With the comment, "I suppose it will keep you happy", I bought her!



*Almond with the Commander in Chief's pennant flying – HRH Prince Philip was aboard.*

Our home port, Instow, a delightful little harbour on the Torridge Estuary in North Devon, dries out to soft mud and sand banks. It required a good mooring to hold *Almond*, being 29 tons dead weight. So, with much mudlarking, three 15cwt concrete blocks were laid and a three-quarter inch chain bridle made up. I made final arrangements and we all hoped for the weather to hold for the next weekend. It did!

With a reassuring start at the first touch of the button on the engines, I was ready to leave for our home port. I had decided to make the run straight home, leaving two hours before high water and crossing the bar at Bideford one hour after high water.

Once clear of Swansea breakwater, I opened up the engines to 2,200rpm, and *Almond* responded with a growl from the exhaust – a plume at her wake and 15 knots on the log! I soon crossed the Bristol Channel and arrived dead on our ETA at Instow, thanks to my crew keeping me well supplied with tea!

*Almond* had arrived at her new port. Many people have asked: what is she? *Almond* was built in 1945 as a River Class fast motor launch, being 45ft overall with a 13ft beam, powered by Perkins P6M diesels. Built by British Power Boats to a 'Scott Payne' design, semi-displacement shallow V and, when viewed from aft, very full forward but lean aft. This followed the British Power Boat design of 1936 for their torpedo boats. *Almond's* present engines are a pair of Perkins H6.354 diesels. The designed service speed was 21 knots, but I do not think that this could have been achieved, as I now find that 15-18 knots is the most economical speed with a total of seven gallons per hour consumption.



*Almond after we put her back to her service configuration, running on the Taw Estuary at maybe 18 knots.*

*Almond* was commissioned on 3rd June 1945 and served with the RCT 56 Squadron Hong Kong, along with two other River Class launches, the *Humber* and *Alness*.

When seeking information from the Museum of Army Transport, it came to light that the present Administrator, a Major A Main Rtd, was in fact *Almond's* coxswain in Hong Kong. He supplied me with a lot of additional information. *Almond* was a VIP launch used by the Commander British Forces in Kowloon. She carried out 'range clearing duties' and 'internal security patrols'. That's right, she chased Chinese junks. *Almond* finished her service in 1977, was shipped back to Britain and sold to the previous owner in Swansea. *Almond* was designed to carry 30 men and a crew of four – cox, engineer and two deckhands. *Almond* is not an out-and-out gin palace! I am glad to say that the vessel had not been gutted and altered as so often happens with ex-MoD boats.

From the wheelhouse, one goes down to the forward accommodation in three steps. The accommodation was forward of a water tight bulkhead – a galley to starboard with gas cooker and double sink in their own compartment, being just big enough for one person to stand comfortably. To port – the heads, still with the original Simpson Lawrence Kentigern. I have often wondered what that loo would tell me if only it could speak. Going forward, the saloon with Pullman berth was designed for 14 personnel to sit. It is light and airy with a skylight over, two large cupboards and then a collision watertight bulkhead with a dogged escape hatch into the forepeaked locker.

The wheelhouse is the only structural alteration that has taken place. The same



*Almond* and an RAF Rescue Wessex helicopter on exercise with the local Sea Cadets.

shape has been maintained, but lengthened by some 10ft. This is great for the family to be able to be together when making a passage and share the watch at the wheel.

The added space has proved very useful for our local Sailing Committee, when *Almond* is used as committee boat during yacht club racing events.

Extension of the wheelhouse lost the use of the aft accommodation. It used to sit 12 men, and has now been reduced to a double cabin with two pilot-type berths. This accommodation is divided from the engine room by a further watertight bulkhead.

The engine room – all 14ft of it – is reached from the aft deck stepping down into a cuddy where the engineer sat next to the engine room telegraph. Through the half doors into the engine space, the two Perkins side by side will be found. A walkway runs between, with the batteries stowed below providing 24 volts at 2,000 amps – all the switchgear and engine room gauges, still being the originals, are mounted on the watertight bulkhead.

The engines being aft, the noise level in the wheelhouse is just a steady rumble but, of course, I lose the space for what would normally be the aft cabin.

Since acquiring *Almond*, I have become involved with local Sea Cadets and Sea

Scout Troops. A number of exercises were carried out in Barnstaple Bay, one of which was with the RAF Air Sea Rescue helicopter based at Chivenor. They airlifted seven Sea Cadets off *Almond's* foredeck and gave them a 'heli ride' around Bideford Estuary before landing them on Instow Beach. A wonderful experience for these young people.

• This article first appeared in 'The Little Ship' Winter 1990 edition.



*Almond* through 'the eye of a needle'; not quite, but under the old Bridge in Bideford on her way for winter lay up.



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A trio of images kindly loaned by Andy White shows ss Freshspring during her days in Bristol's Floating Harbour. The top one gives a good view of the wheelhouse. Replacing that is one of the major projects the Society has in hand.



## Leaving a legacy to the SS Freshspring Society

The SS Freshspring Society has benefitted greatly from the generosity of its members and friends who have left or given money to the Society.

Legacies provide very necessary financial support in helping the Society to meet its stated objectives of preserving the past and inspiring knowledge for the future

If you would like to think of giving the SS Freshspring Society a legacy, it could not be easier: The following codicil can be completed by you, witnessed, and kept with your Will.

### CODICIL

I (full name).....

of (full address).....

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I give, free of Inheritance Tax, the sum of

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In all other respects I confirm my said Will.

Testator's signature:.....Date.....

Signed in the presence of:

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Note: The witnesses must not be your executor, your executor's spouse or a beneficiary of your Will

April 2017

OCTOBER 16th 2016

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GRAHAM HOBBS

