

STEAMSHIP

FRESHSPRING

SOCIETY

FRESHSPRING NEWS



No.14 Spring 2018

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 on Sundays and Wednesdays. Please call Peter Gillett, our Local Ship Manager on 01237 472 456 or John Puddy on 01237 479 730 so we know to expect you. Limited public openings will be held and advertised locally.

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Chairman's Report

As we enter a blustery 2018, our progress continues to be quite remarkable. With funds from various sources, including Bideford Bridge Trust, Torridge District Council and Heritage Lottery, in our bank, we have embarked on the project to restore the ship's bridge and boatdeck. This will dramatically improve the appearance of our ship as we move towards spring and full opening.

Within the Our Heritage grant is funding for a part time Project Education Officer. This is our first paid member of staff and is an exciting leap from an entirely volunteer team. As you know, education is a major element of the trust's objectives and we will now be in a position to dramatically increase the work we do in schools and in educating the public. Hayley Buscombe, our staff member, started work on 1st February with a very full diary. There is more in the newsletter from Hayley herself.

I am pleased to report that The University of The West of England continues to work with us and this year we will be working with students in product design and architecture. With a brief from ourselves, students will work on innovative designs for converting the ship for her range of future uses. The plans and ideas can then be fed through our Naval Architects to identify what might be possible. As we move forward, inevitably plans are reviewed and changes made. For example, research shows that a good revenue source will be carrying passengers in sheltered waters such as estuaries. The trips are likely to be up to four hours duration and those passengers will be accommodated on deck and in the two deck saloons we plan to build. For seagoing operation, accommodation will be provided for cadets, trainees and passengers who would like to experience sea travel on a small steamship. The museum element of the ship is very important as it shows how life was on a typical small steamer. We plan to retain the forward accommodation in a restored state with it being useable as accommodation. We are investigating opening up the forward two tanks to provide education and museum spaces. This work, should we gain the funds, will be carried out with approval for sea going use.

Once the restored bridge is in place, we will have a very valuable education space and it will be a great position from which to see Bideford and our two road bridges. Remarkably Butlers of Truro, who are carrying out the renovation, plan to deliver the completed bridge in one piece. It appears that it will just comply with national bridge heights as long as a very low-loader is used.

FRONT COVER:

Our first paid member of staff – Hayley Buscombe – poses for a photograph by the ship.
John Puddy

Trustees recently commissioned a funding audit and strategy report using Impact Fundraising who have been so successful in helping raise over a quarter of a million pounds in a very short time. The report will form our strategy for several years and includes work towards sustainable operation. Our most challenging fundraising will always be to fund the trust itself. Members have been remarkable in helping to maintain funds with donations ranging from a few pounds to a thousand. Our membership retention rate is very good and above the average. We do, however, need to make renewing much easier as we are losing some members because renewal is not automatic and some just forget (including me!).

We have arranged a very special event on 3rd March with some well known local artistes performing at The Freshspring Concert in Appledore. This is being professionally managed and all artistes are donating time. Do come if you can. Full information in this issue.

We will also be holding our next AGM on 21st April; this is your chance to help to drive the charity. It is you who vote Trustees to the board and we will be introducing a potential new Trustee who is a successful local businesswoman. We have some major challenges ahead; the Our Heritage Lottery project is for two years and there are activities within the funded programme which will have measurable outcomes. These include school and family workshops, a range of events and considerable work on the ship.

Our focus remains to inspire young people to enter maritime and or engineering careers and we work with various partners to gain the best results. "With just over a year to go until the UK leaves the European Union, there has never been a more important time for the UK and European maritime sector" said Mark Dickinson General Secretary, Nautilus International.

Nusrat Ghani MP, our new Shipping Minister, announced on 2nd February: "I am pleased to announce that we will be doubling government's financial support for maritime training, the so-called SMarT fund (Support for Maritime Training), from £15 million to £30 million to introduce a new SMarT Plus option. I am committed to continue building capacity and diversity within our maritime workforce so it can capitalise on every opportunity the market provides. I recognise the importance of transferable skills and the essential role seafarers play in supporting the wider maritime sector when they return from sea to shore based careers. Increasing our support for maritime training is essential in order for our great maritime nation to maintain its global position as a market leader. This is never more important than it is today as we prepare to leave the EU and take an even more global outlook.

Seafarers are highly skilled professionals entering STEM related careers. SMarT Plus funding will be available from April 2018 and will also support the Year of Engineering through stimulating the availability of training opportunities for deck, engine and electro-technical cadets. The 2018/19 cohort of SMarT Plus cadets will begin their on-ship training in the months before we leave the EU."

Our school project has moved into another school and you will see the report from the last school in this newsletter. The project has been very successful indeed, and we must again thank UWE and Whiteland Engineers for the sponsorship to enable this project to happen. UWE have acquired more funding to support school projects and we are working to see what would be the most beneficial project. It is possible that we could design an app so young people can learn by using a mobile phone. This is really a project for our education officer.

We have now engaged with The University of Plymouth which has a strong maritime culture. I hope this will be a mutually beneficial arrangement and both help to feed young people into the university and to expand our own education work. The university has its own simulators and we hope that the link will help us to bring simulation equipment both to the ship and for use in schools.

Our loyal ship team continue their very good work, much of which is now down below as the weather makes life on deck difficult. Engineers have been working on the main engine to reduce drag so it can be easily turned to demonstrate motion to visitors. Our friend 'Scuttlebutt' is contributing with his now regular report on life aboard. I must say it does sound fun working for such a tyrant. Also this time, our ship engineers have added their very interesting piece. It is clear that our machinery is in remarkable condition.

Our financial year has just ended and although we have considerable funds to carry forward, we need to work hard to raise general funds. Simon, our Treasurer, will be asking our loyal members to help again. You have been so generous up to now and this is directly reflected in our remarkable progress to date.

As always, I have to thank members for belonging to the Trust, staying with us on our journey to restore our beloved little ship and for your support. Please do come to the AGM. It is your opportunity to engage in decision making for the future and to see the progress made on *ss Freshspring*. We are fortunate this year to have Rear Admiral Nigel Guild CB Phd DEng CEng FREng as our lunchtime guest speaker. The AGM will be held at The Royal Hotel, Bideford on the 21st April and will be a daytime event to help those of you who will be travelling. The ship, of course, will be open for Members.

John

Hayley Buscombe

We are delighted to report that Hayley Buscombe is our newly-appointed All Aboard Educational & Project Officer. Her main role is to develop and deliver a range of educational workshops connected to *ss Freshspring*. She will also expand our work both in mainstream and public education. This is a very major step for the trust as Hayley is our first ever member of staff and we warmly welcome her on board.

Hayley introduces herself below:

I am very pleased to be appointed to this exciting and challenging position. I have twenty-five years' experience in education; originally as a primary school teacher, but I then started my career in heritage learning in 2004, working at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum and Art Gallery in Exeter, and have not looked back since!

I have worked as museum, learning and community officers across the South West in Somerset, Devon and Cornwall. Last year I worked at Cornwall Museums Partnership helping to co-ordinate community engagement projects across the county.

I am passionate about our heritage and sharing my enthusiasm to engage others in/learn from it. In 2011, I set up my own business as a Heritage Learning Specialist. Prior to that I worked as an Outreach Education Officer for Devon Learning Resources visiting schools right across Devon, delivering historical artefact and role play based workshops.

I enjoy working with a wide range of people and have a wealth of experience working with all ages from toddlers to retired learners; I actively promote lifelong learning and an inclusive approach. I have worked collaboratively with artists, arts organisations, museums and galleries as well as partners from other sectors.

I grew up in Cornwall and therefore have a strong connection with the sea and maritime and industrial heritage which has been reflected in my more recent professional pursuits. I was the Learning & Community Engagement Officer at Porthmeor Studios in St Ives, an industrial building with a combined heritage of fishing and art. Then in my self-employed guise, I have been working at the Fleet Air Arm Museum in Yeovilton so this job is the perfect complement – linking the Naval aircraft carriers to the Fresh Class water carriers that supplied the Naval ships with water.



Treasurer's Report

Our financial year end is 31st January – just a week away from the date this report is written. Although I will be going into more detail at the AGM, I can report that we expect to end the year with a balance in the bank of about £67,000. However, about £50,000 of this amount is restricted funds – in other words money ring fenced to meet our obligations under the 'Our Heritage' Lottery grant (OH).

The balance of £17,000 may seem a comfortable amount to meet our general overheads, but it is actually some way short of the funds we need to continue the excellent progress that we have made to date. To put some bones on this, our total spending commitment with OH is – in round figures – £120,000 and the grants we are due to receive total £105,000, leaving a shortfall of £15,000 to be funded by us. On top of this, we have an annual running cost of approximately £14,000, so actually, we need to raise more money!

What are we going to do about it?

We recently commissioned a fundraising strategy document from Victoria Symes – the lady who so successfully obtained the first grant from the National Heritage Memorial Fund that saved *Freshspring* from being scrapped. The document includes a number of suggestions on how we could raise our income and there will be more detail about this in the coming months.

All Charities rely very heavily on financial help from their members / supporters so, at the risk of repeating things I have touched on previously, I want to mention two aspects highlighted by Victoria – Legacies and regular giving.

The past few editions of this magazine have included a form on the inside back cover inviting members to leave *Freshspring* a Legacy. If you have already done this – thank you, your future help will be much appreciated. If you have not, would you please consider doing so?

Regular giving helps us meet our financial obligations NOW rather than in the future, and it's very easy to help in this way – as some members do. Just set up a standing order to:

Account name – SS Freshspring Society

Account number – 00023232

Sort code 40-52-40 – and use your initials and surname as the reference.

If every member regularly gave £5 a month – the cost of two coffees at a high street outlet – we would gain enough additional income to meet most of our annual running costs!

Would you be willing to set up a standing order please?

Simon Tattersall

Volunteer Opportunities

Fundraising Manager

The Steamship Freshspring Society require an enthusiastic person to take a lead on the fundraising strategy. This opportunity will enable the right candidate to generate valuable and measurable experience in the museums and charities sector. You will be assisted by a small team and supported by the Trustees and we will pay all reasonable expenses.

Membership Manager

The Steamship Freshspring Society require an enthusiastic person to take a lead on our membership strategy and development. This opportunity will enable the right candidate to generate valuable and measurable experience in the museums, clubs and charities sector. You will be assisted and supported as you deliver a significant difference to our membership and we will pay all reasonable expenses.

PR and Events Manager

The Steamship Freshspring Society require an enthusiastic person to take a lead on PR and Events. You will be assisted by a small team and supported by the Trustees and we will pay all reasonable expenses.

The Steamship Freshspring Society is based in Bideford in North Devon, but you will predominantly be home-based. We are seeking a candidate who will be willing to commit at least five hours per week for the foreseeable future.

Applications will be by written justification and interview by telephone conversation, prior to interview in person. For more information on the role, please contact John Puddy 01237 479730 or mail john.puddy@ssfreshspring.co.uk for an informal discussion. www.ssfreshspring.co.uk

New Members – welcome

Miss Anne Budd	<i>Appledore, Devon</i>
Mr & Mrs Andrew & Sarah Farmar	<i>Holsworthy, Devon</i>
Mr Mark Bannister	<i>Pontypridd, Glamorgan</i>
Mr Jack Schofield	<i>Bideford, Devon</i>
Mr Peter Stevenson	<i>Esher, Surrey</i>
Mr Brian Bragg	<i>Bideford, Devon</i>
Mr Paul Stott	<i>Redruth, Cornwall</i>
Mr Chris Frisby	<i>Falmouth, Cornwall</i>
Mr John Jasper	<i>Wellington, Somerset</i>
Mr Mike Hancock	<i>Ilfracombe, Devon</i>
Mr & Mrs Douglas & Susan Jones	<i>Holsworthy, Devon</i>
Mr Graham Fittock	<i>Truro, Cornwall</i>
Mr James McDonald	<i>Zurich, Switzerland</i>

Scuttlebutt from the Quay

With the scaffolding down and the old generator gone from the top of the Boiler Room, the ship's profile looks different, almost bare. We have so far resisted decorating the funnel with gaily coloured balloons although Santa was up there for the Festive Season, braving the gales and the rain, poor chap. We should maybe take some advice on which flags we could fly on top without inadvertently sending out confusing or misleading messages.

The Volunteer's Christmas Bash, brilliantly organised by our man Pete, was a great success. Held on the "Floating Café", there were sea shanties galore from the Folk Band with many joining in whether they knew the words or not. Much Freshspring beer and other liquids were consumed, accompanied by a buffet provided by our hosts, Bob and Annette. Amongst the excellently assorted raffle prizes was a 'Man-Bag'; some lucky chap must have gone home that night absolutely ecstatic.

We recently discovered that we've had a secret Mudlark in our midst all this time. When it was suggested that we inspect and clean the anodes around the bottom of the hull, Trevor jumped at the chance to show us just how much he likes mud. He squeezed into the harness, donned the oversize company wellies and, with a look of joy on his face, descended the ladder to the mud below. After retrieving his left welly, which amusingly for us got stuck, he got onto the pallets we had thoughtfully lowered down for him and surveyed his new world. There's good news and bad news about the mud; the bad news is that it's sticky and smelly, the good news is that there's lots and lots of it. After cleaning and checking the anodes, he took some photos of the mud. Trevor likes mud quite a lot, judging by the amount he brought back on board presumably for later, so we've ordered him some custom made mud-shoes and he's naturally very excited.

This time of year takes its toll on our volunteers, with the odd case of the Twinging Screws or periods of feeling a little Peaky and Flag, but by and large, we've been able to soldier on, largely thanks to tea and cake. The galley refurbishment has started and will eventually provide the crew with a comfortable and warm refuge from the elements, probably in time for the height of the summer.

In a little over a week's time (at the time of writing), our first contractor is due on board to start work on the boat deck. This is our man of steel, Faron, a welder of note. It will be an interesting experience for our volunteers to be working alongside consummate professionals who, no doubt, have their own way of working and code of conduct regarding the use of polite language at all times and a strict adherence to all aspects of Health & Safety. I expect much learning will take place.

Not no never mind, as they say round these here parts!

Pete Gillett

News from the Engine Room

John Cooper

The team of engineering volunteers who meet every Wednesday on *Freshspring* have reached an interesting stage in their main job on board which is to check the condition of the engine to ensure it is in good condition when we come to use it for the first time, and good for at least another 50 years!

It is known that the ship underwent a refit just before it was mothballed but what work was carried out during its refit? We don't know and I suspect it was a pretty hurried affair as it was probably known then that it was to be mothballed at a time when reciprocating steam engine ships were being withdrawn.

So we decided to examine the bores of the cylinders first which we have now done and have found that the bores of the three cylinders to be good with virtually no signs of wear, just a nice glaze on them although they were dirty.

In order to examine the HP cylinder bore, the engine crankshaft needed to be turned 180 degrees and, as the normal manual turning gear is at present broken, we have had to jack the crankshaft round by the use of hydraulic jacks.

During this jacking, it became evident that the crankshaft was excessively stiff to



General view of the top of engine looking forwards with some of the motley crew.
Photo D Jackson



HP cylinder bore showing the top of the piston. Photo D Jackson



The main bearing at the rear of crankshaft – the journal is in good condition.

turn. This has led us to easing off the main crankshaft bearings – all six of them – which immediately eased the stiffness, but the cap nuts were tighter than necessary. This has brought forward the examination of the top halves of the main crankshaft bearings which are white metal lined. We have only lifted the rearmost bearing so far but this one shows signs of tightness where the oil groove has been chiselled out but not properly scraped off to a true curve at the edges of the oil groove where the chiselling has raised the metal up.



Top half of rear bearing upside down – the grey colour shows the heavy pressure areas.

I'm lucky to be a part of a very enthusiastic team of volunteers who make light work of the difficult jobs. I will describe some of the challenges we have encountered so far in following issues of the magazine. If any member turns up on a Wednesday, the engineering team will be happy to show them around.

Scanning the Steamship

In September 2017, BMT teamed up with the Steamship Freshspring Society through its Maritime Heritage Community Involvement Project. BMT recognised the society's vision that this is more than just a ship; it is a tool to inspire the next generation of engineers. BMT's commitment to Maritime Heritage and its long standing STEM programme has reached thousands of young people throughout the country.

BMT deliver independent maritime engineering and design capabilities for UK and international customers. They are a leading independent centre for maritime engineering design, support and technical services. They provided knowledge, experience and resources that otherwise may have been inaccessible to the project.

Their first task saw a team of three young Naval Architects head down to Bideford to spend a day 3D laser scanning the ship. 3D laser scanning is a non-contact, non-destructive technology that allows the user to digitally capture the shape of physical objects using a line of laser light. They create 'point clouds' of data from the surface of an object to accurately capture the size and shape of a physical object and create a digital 3D representation. The point cloud data can be used to create 3D models, 2D drawings and animated fly-throughs.

The aim was to survey the hull and produce a lines drawing to supplement the ship's drawings already held by the Society. Due to tides, the team had to get out early to set up the equipment on the river bed to scan the ship whilst the tide was



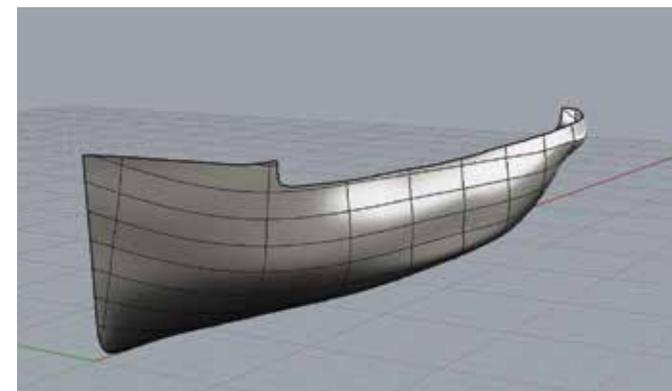
out and the hull was exposed. This proved to be messy work, with the area around ship being deep mud! Thankfully, before the tide was lapping at their heels, the team were finished scanning the hull lines and were back on board scanning the main deck of the ship.

The team were using a FARO laser scanning device that used reference 'orbs' placed at easily visible parts of the ship. These orbs provide reference points that allow the multiple scans to be stitched together and a 3D surface to be constructed from the cloud of millions of data points. The scanner also takes a panoramic picture at each scanning location, allowing a colour to be associated with each point, meaning that a full colour model can be produced which is useful for visualisation and walk through tours.

In between the showers and sunshine, the team managed to complete 37 scans throughout the day. A lines plan was produced and donated to the Society. BMT now



The FARO laser scanner.



SS Freshspring's hull lines.

plan to start modelling the main deck for the Society to help them with planning their renovations. The team also conducted internal scans; more are planned to capture every accessible part of the ship. The resulting data will be invaluable in planning and designing the renovations, modifications and alterations required to restore the ship to full operation for passengers in categorised waters and installing accommodation for up to ten STEM students.

Thomas Hill
BMT Defence Services Ltd, Bath



The new Wheelhouse

The restoration of the wheelhouse on *ss Freshspring* is the most visually impacting project so far in our journey and is funded via a range of Trusts including HLF and our local authority. This is the first real restoration element of returning the ship to sea. Visually, the ship will be hugely improved with the bridge restored to its original design. We chose Butler & Co. because they have a reputation for high quality craftsmanship and the whole team engage in practical boatbuilding with a passion.

Although we had various parts of the original bridge, a great deal has to be remade without detail drawings. Butlers had to study old photographs and carry out detective work on existing parts. The wheelhouse will be a very important visitor attraction and education space. It will also highlight the range of timber boatbuilding skills required in building a steel ship. Timber was a common material for bridges and wheelhouses as it did not affect magnetic compasses, an issue not so important today with high tech navigation equipment. There are very few ships in operation still sporting timber wheelhouses and when complete the structure fitted to *ss Freshspring* will be typical of those on ships over a period of a hundred years. I am sure the following from Butlers will be of interest to readers and demonstrate excellent progress by their team.

"Butler & Co. are traditional shipwrights, based on the Fal estuary in Cornwall, who specialise in building and restoring traditional wooden boats. We work on a wide variety of boats from sailing dinghies and day sailors to involvement with large projects including the 1915 Herreshoff schooner *Mariette*, 23 metre Fife *Cambria* and a structural rebuild of the hull of the Brixham trawler *Pilgrim*. Our involvement with the Steamship *Freshspring* started early in 2017, when John Puddy introduced us to the project and asked us to quote on the rebuild of *ss Freshspring's* wheelhouse.

"Later in the year, John was back in touch and Ashley and Holly from Butler & Co. travelled up to Bideford to see the ship for ourselves, to meet the crew and to take some measurements to finalise our quote. We were really impressed with the ship, the progress and work that the volunteers are doing, as well as the overall ethos and ambition for the ship. It was really inspiring and meant that we were really keen to be involved in the project. In early January we were given the go ahead to begin the rebuild and currently (at the start of February) we have just provided the first progress report, having finished the assembly of the front section of wheelhouse and machined up much of the remaining timber. In the next couple of weeks we hope to make quick progress assembling the remaining two sides. Even the front section alone is looking impressive and once the wheelhouse is completed, aboard *ss Freshspring* and with a fair few coats of lovingly applied varnish, it will make a huge visual difference to *ss Freshspring*."

A copy of the report from Butler & Co. follows:

SS Freshspring Wheelhouse Update



As soon as the go-ahead was given in early January, work began to machine up the timber for the wheelhouse. The rails, stiles and panelling were cut and thickened on site, followed by machining up all of the tongue and groove for the panels and setting up a jig to cut the tenons. The mortices were also cut on site. The first side (the front) has been assembled, glued and cleaned up and is looking impressive. The tongue and groove for the panelling on the two sides is complete and the next step is to finish machining and assemble the two side panels. There was a brief pause to await a further timber delivery for the rails and stiles for the remaining two sides, the timber arrived on Friday 2nd February and these will now be machined up.



Machining up the Iroko for the panelling from rough sawn boards.



Keith cutting the tenons on the ends of the stiles. The three rails for the front panel can be seen underneath.



Keith and Chris assembling the wheelhouse front.



The front wheelhouse side with the rails and stiles all assembled.



The front wheelhouse side with the panelling in place.



Jig for cutting the tenons to aid accuracy and efficiency.



Detail of the lower panels. These are bedded on brown Sikaflex and held in position by the panel beading. The grooves and end grain for the panels was oiled prior to assembly to minimise water ingress.



Close up detail of the pegged mortice and tenon joints between the stiles and rails.



Machined tongue and groove for the panelling ready for the remaining two sides of the wheelhouse.

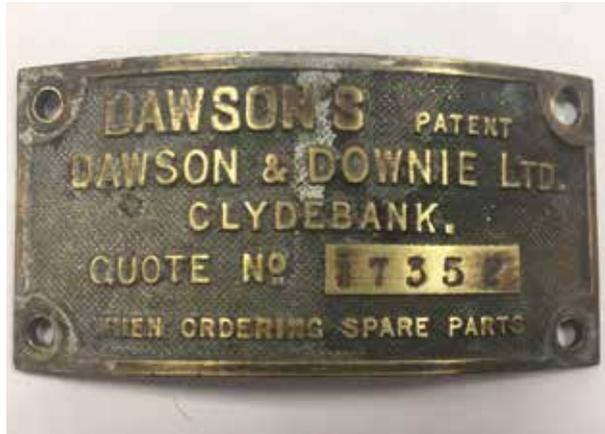


Stiles for the two wheelhouse sides ready for machining.

SS Freshspring Boiler Feed Pump

Dawson & Downie pump serial number 17352

The *ss Freshspring* boiler feed pump was originally built in Clydebank, Scotland by Dawson & Downie Ltd in 1941. Dawson & Downie Ltd starting building pumps in 1905 predominately for the marine industry at that time. The factory was located close to the John Brown shipyard in Clydebank, famous for building the *Queen Mary* and *QE2* amongst others.



The original boiler feed pump from the *ss Freshspring* was sent back to Dawson & Downie (who have since been renamed Dawson Downie Lamont and re-located to Glenrothes on the East Coast of Scotland) for inspection, overhaul and restoration back to full working order.

The pump in question is a 6ins x 4ins x 12ins vertical singlex direct acting steam driven reciprocating pump. The description of the pump helps us to identify the size of the pump, 6ins being the steam piston diameter, 4ins being the liquid piston diameter and 12ins. being the stroke length of the pump.

DDL still have many of the original parts list and drawings for our pumps dating back to the mid 1940s. Unfortunately, this pump pre-dates this and we no longer have copy of the original parts list but we do still have copies of the original drawings used to manufacture the pump in amongst the more than 100,000 plus drawings we still have of pump parts. This has set us a little bit of a challenge but not to be deterred, we have been able to identify the pump model from other records and have found a more recent parts list from a similar pump we are using to identify the parts.

When the pump arrived from Devon, our first job was to dismantle and clean each of the parts. This was to allow us to inspect and measure each component for wear and tear or damage. After completing this task, the next stage has been to measure and record each of the critical moving parts of the pump. We are now in the process of cross-referencing these parts with the drawings we hold on file. At the same time, we have identified the parts which either need re-working or replacement during the overhaul process.

The job of dismantling, cleaning and measuring the pump has been done by one of our workshop apprentices. Charlie will also be helping with the manufacture and re-working of the replacement parts needed over the next few months. This work will be invaluable in helping him by using the necessary skills and tasks in the repair and overhaul he will need in order to achieve his mechanical engineering apprenticeship qualification.

Once all the replacement parts are ready, we can begin the process of re-building the pump in preparation for testing.....

Iain Bickett

General Manager

Dawson Downie Lamont



Helping our Service personnel and the families

My name is Chris Bell and I have been a member of the Steamship Freshspring Society for some six months. I really enjoy spending days onboard carrying out routine tasks such as chipping and painting, and it is very rewarding to see the way the ship is improving over time.

Whilst in conversation with John Puddy recently, I mentioned that I worked for the Forces Charity SSAFA. He, like many other people, was not aware of SSAFA and what it stood for and he asked me to put a piece together for the magazine.

So here is a bit of background:

SSAFA stands for Soldiers, Sailors & Airman's Families Association and has been helping serving personnel, veterans and their families for over 130 years. Today nearly five million people living in the UK have served in the armed forces at some point in their lives.

That is why the work of the oldest Forces Charity SSAFA is so important. Our network of over 7,000 committed volunteers worldwide offer welfare support for people from throughout the military community and the Merchant Navy, from WW2 Veterans to the families of young service personnel wounded in Afghanistan.

Our network of branches provide help for veterans and their families in the community. SSAFA works in partnership with other military charities and specialist organisations to ensure that those who turn to us for help get the support they need.

I served in the Royal Navy during the 1960s. I thoroughly enjoyed my service time and felt that it benefitted me greatly. I decided, some ten years ago, to try to 'give something back' and I joined SSAFA as a Case Worker. The work, which is both interesting and rewarding, involves initial contact with clients, assessing their needs and then approaching relevant charities to help to meet those needs. The work is not difficult, full training is given and there is a quiet sense of a job well done when there is a successful outcome.

Many older people are often too proud to seek help, so if you are aware of anyone who, you feel, might need help please do not hesitate to contact myself or our Branch Secretary Mrs Claire Williams on 01752 254 611.

In closing, I would add that SSAFA always welcomes volunteers so if you feel able to give some time please get in touch.

The Railway Locomotives that went to sea

Alan Wilkinson

2017 marked the centenary of the closure of the short-lived standard gauge, 'Bideford, Westward Ho! & Appledore Railway', the closure forced upon it by the requisition of its three steam locomotives for service in World War One.

Despite its short life, it is remarkable how much material has been collated and made available to the public in Bideford, Northam and at least three publications, which are still accessible. Furthermore, local events were planned to commemorate what, for too many, was a sad occasion, so I shall mainly confine the notes to the railway's maritime connections.

The establishment of Bideford's terminus, in the roadway on the quay, was the subject of bitter wrangling and the railway was forced to adopt unique safety standards which included the locomotives having to be fitted with sheeting around the moving parts, and 'cow-catchers'.

Bideford's maritime features on the quay proved useful in delivering larger items for the railway, and it is recorded that, in 1898, the *ss Snipe* unloaded a cargo of steel rails, followed by the *ss Lannoy* with a cargo of timber sleepers.

Leaving the roadway on the quay, the railway swung sharp left at the 'Kingsley Statue' (about 100 yards from *Freshspring's* berth) and entered its own trackbed in an area known today as 'the Pill' which, as its name implies, was once an inlet from the river Torridge which was filled in to accommodate the new railway.

From 'the Pill', now a car park, the railway assumed a northerly inland direction on what is now a busy 'Kingsley' main road. On the left hand side, opposite Morrison's supermarket, is the long stone building which once housed the company's lengthy Pullman, American-type, coaches – a most elaborate feature for such a small railway! The loco shed, just beyond, was demolished as 'unsafe' about ten years ago and is now into car sales.

From this point, the railway followed an inland route to emerge on the windswept coast, which it followed into Westward Ho!, passing the still surviving 'stumps' of the ill-fated pier near the aptly renamed 'Pier House'. This pier was built with high hopes of hosting visiting ships, but soon became a victim of severe Atlantic gales.

From Westward Ho! station the railway followed a roughly eastern course, passing the 'Royal North Devon Golf Club', and ending up in Appledore terminus, just west of the parish church, and still retaining part of its platform and rear wall. Of maritime interest, and just before reaching the terminus, the line passed Hink's shipyard, which gained a reputation for building wooden replicas of famous ships, whilst its adjacent beach was a breaker's yard, often featuring redundant lightships, among its customers!

Due to its isolation from the national rail system, plus its spacious indirect route,

the railway never lived up to its founder's hopes and it may have been a 'blessing in disguise' when its three locomotives were requisitioned for World War One service, although it has not been disclosed how much (if anything) the company was paid for this!

The last days in the life of the three locomotives, seems to have attracted almost a separate story in itself!

To start with, trackwork was laid – 'Hornby' style – from the existing terminus on the quay, across Bideford bridge, to access the, then, LSWR goods yard on the site of the present 'Ethel Wynne-Browne' housing complex.

Because of the, then, sharp angle between the quay and Bideford bridge, the three 'victims' had to be first routed up bridge street, above the town hall, followed by the installation of 'points' to allow a straight run onto the bridge. At this point, it is reported that the locomotives spent the night in Barnstaple Street outside the 'Royal Hotel', whilst temporary rails were laid to access the goods yard.

Wartime reporting restrictions do not appear to be available, but it is logical that the locomotives would have been 'marshalled' into outward bound goods trains, to eventually reach a location in South Wales where they were checked.

It appears No.2 *Kingsley* was sent to a smelting works, where it worked until scrapped in 1937.

A different fate awaited No.1 *Grenville* and No.8 *Torridge* as they were, apparently, embarked on a captured German cargo vessel at Avonmouth for shipment to France, but the vessel was torpedoed off the coast of North Cornwall. With so much of this traffic using this route, it provided 'rich pickings' for U-boats.

About 15 years ago, an ambitious local diver located a vessel carrying railway locomotives, but deep water has thwarted any further plans to locate and, possibly raise, *Grenville* and *Torridge*. But, at least, they haven't been scrapped.



Torridge brings her short train into Bideford past the Perkins & Sons building. Marilyn Hughes, Westward Ho History Group

Engineering Kits – SS Freshspring

I am a student teacher currently working at Our Lady's Catholic school in Barnstaple.

As part of my qualification, I wanted to run an after school club that was both interesting and engaging for a group of children. I searched for the theme of the club and discovered the *ss Freshspring's* project headed up by Mr John Puddy through STEM. The theme caught my attention as an engineering club had never been conducted at Our Lady's before. Having contacted John Puddy, I found him extremely friendly and helpful with a good understanding of what I was wanting to achieve. I was surprised and pleased with what was provided within the project. The sets, which included not only quality made tools and equipment, also came with all the consumables to be used during the lessons, as well as lesson plans and resources to support that lessons.

The lessons were well planned and followed a constructive sequence. I found them easy to follow and could easily be taught by a teacher with limited or no previous engineering experience. Providing the consumables for the projects took a further burden off of an already over stretched teacher's workload. This fitted perfectly for an after school club as only having five minutes between the children leaving the class at the end of the day and when the club started with different children, I had no time to prepare the classroom or the resources. I soon developed confidence in the kits so that the children were able to open the relevant lesson folder and have all they needed to complete the learning.

The children were very enthusiastic throughout the sequence of learning, showing an eagerness to get 'hands on' with the equipment and get involved. It was good to see that what some children might term 'a boy thing' proved far from true. The girls in the group proved to complete the learning generally at a higher level than the boys.

I believe that the children would not have been able to experience learning like they have had it not been for the kits that John Puddy provided. The children showed their disappointment at the club coming to an end, one child even saying it's the best part of her week.

I am already looking at other projects and opportunities where I could utilise the kits again and am very grateful to have been given the opportunity to use them thus far.

James Barnard

Fundraising Concert

This exciting event will be held on **Saturday 3rd March** at the Appledore Community Hall, New Quay Street, Appledore, EX39 1LU to raise funds for the *ss Freshspring*.

The evening will be compered by radio personality Judi Spiers and will start with Judi interviewing our own John Puddy to set the scene for the evening where John will explain to the audience about the ship and the Society's aims and aspirations to return her to full working condition.

Performers will include:



Les Barker: Comic poet, genius & national treasure.



Tamsin Ball: A local girl with an amazing voice.



Steve & Tricia Ruffe: Acoustic Folk at its best.

There will also be a raffle which will include an auction for the top prizes.

Tickets cost £10 in advance or £12 on the door.

Ring 01237 451 933 for further information and to book in advance.

Doors open at 6.30pm for a 7.15pm start.

This promises to be a fun evening, so why not get together a group of friends and come along to support your ship?

Freshspring's new beginning

Barbara Ward takes on the mantle of ss Freshspring and imagines what the ship would have been thinking as she made her epic journey to Bideford.

For years, I had been constantly checked over to make sure I stayed watertight and sound until such time that things could progress and I would be steaming again. Sitting at the side of the Severn was quite a dangerous place to be berthed as the Severn Bore often tried to rip me apart, something I felt would be such a shame as my keepers were trying so hard to save me. It seemed a thankless task, but once my crew set their heart on doing something, they don't back down for anything, and so it was that my survival was to enter a new stage.

Soon life was to change forever as varying parts of me received a new lick of paint; nothing special some may say, but just enough to make me look a little smarter than I'd done in a long time.

All this came as quite a surprise as I've been sitting in Fred's berth for some twenty years or so and life had begun to feel like it was slipping away from me, even though my crew tried to reassure me that everything would be alright in the end. I had trouble believing their words, however well meant.

But before anything could change there was to be a lot of red tape to be worked through first and safety too; nothing is ever going to be easy these days. 2016 turned into a special year for me as I was taken from my long-time berth to have my hull repaired. And so it was, on 5th July, that I was made ready for a tug to arrive the following day



at high tide, with the help of Fred's barge to pull me off and take me downstream to Sharpness Docks where I would have my hull repaired and made whole again.

That Wednesday morning dawned bright and sunny with a slight breeze, and my crew were preparing me for the off. I thought this is going to be an interesting experience for all of us to cope with. Soon the tug arrived at high tide and after securing a tow from the tug, and with Fred's barge alongside, we were suddenly on the move. How strange it felt leaving this place I had called home for such a long time, but how good it was to be out in open water again. My crew seemed overjoyed and rightly so as they had kept me safe all those years and now the moment of truth had arrived and I was floating downstream under tow.

At first we were going quite slowly but as the tide turned, we soon picked up speed. It seemed so nice to see a different part of the river for a change, and it didn't take us that long to reach Sharpness Docks which would be my base for about a month,

I heard someone say. Stopping in mid-stream and getting manoeuvred so that I was in position down near the entrance to the dock felt like quite a task, but it was achieved with relative ease, since the crew of the tug and barge were old hands at this game, having done it many times before, so I had no worries.



I seemed to be being watched and photographed a lot, especially when I neared the dock. People watched with delight as I entered the dock; they captured my every move, including a man and his video camera, maybe I am that special after all.

We were all done by lunchtime. I'm now settled in my new berth awaiting my next move into dry dock when they are ready for me. Until then, I will have to get used to lots of different noises in the days to come, but my crew promises they will visit when they can. What will my new life have in store for me?

Before long, I was transferred to the dry dock. I had been in one before, way back in 1977

but that was a long time ago and now I was remembering what a strange experience it is, especially when all the water is drained out and I'm sitting on what I think are large blocks of wood, just balancing there or so it seems; it feels quite odd, but then the dock workers know what they are doing as it's something they do regularly. I still did not fully comprehend the extent of what they were going to do to put me right, but my crew were well aware of what was about to happen.

It was quite scary when the dock crew set to work to find out what parts of my hull were in need of being replaced, so that I would be fit enough to be towed away from Sharpness, en route to my new life. It took them a while to set the wheels in motion so to speak, but once the dock crew got started, I began to feel like this was a new beginning and I would never be in the same state again.

The work on my hull continued and soon I began to feel more confident about being safe in the water as the dock crew not only cleaned, but patched and painted



my hull, until even I was not sure it was really me. While on board, they found various bits that had been bent and distorted over time, which they straightened, while others were tidied, ready for painting.

Meanwhile the crew were in the process of giving me a new lick of paint all over to make me feel even better about myself, and what a difference there would be in my appearance afterwards.

Once all the work was completed, the dock was filled once again with water and I could float again, though even that felt strange for a while as I was more aware of being properly whole again, and what a superb feeling that was. Not only that, but these bits were

done, I think, to make me look and feel that bit extra special as I am after all a Heritage ship, and the crew of the shipyard wanted me to look my very best when I left their care.

Leaving Sharpness Docks – and what of beyond?

My trusty crew informed me that without the remarkable support of the towing company, I may not have survived at all, for it was their generosity that made it all possible as they did the whole tow from Newnham to Sharpness and then onto my new berth for free. I was back in the water and soon I was off to Appledore and then Bideford and a new life.

I left Sharpness shipyard on time and within budget, something my crew were thoroughly delighted with, and what a great tribute to Steve, the boss of the



dockyard, who had made this all possible.

From the docks I headed out from Sharpness under tow and was soon going beneath the first Severn road bridge. This felt so good, and I made good headway with a strong bow wave in the waters of the Bristol Channel. The weather was nice and dry, a really good day for travelling by sea. I wondered how many people realised I was back after such a long time away.

As I near Bideford, the tugs shower me with water spray; this is a great welcoming and makes others aware that I've arrived.

Now I've arrived but not before some of my crew help to get rid of a few old wrecks so that I have a good berth next to the quay at Bideford. I think it was probably a very emotional moment when I docked as this is a truly marvellous moment for all those who have worked so hard to get me here. It has taken a lot of time, patience and understanding of all the things that had to be put in place before I could be moved anywhere, but the trustees have done so well to allow me to come alive again.

From now on, the trustees and volunteers will be working hard to get me open to the public, and then getting me properly restored to sea-going condition with a massive Heritage Lottery Fund grant, so that future generations can know what my role was in my past, by giving everyone the chance to learn about my position in society.



Now I don't think I really knew how much all this meant to my long suffering crew when they saw me en route to my new home for I overheard them saying that they were amazed to see their beloved ship proceeding by sea to her new home in Bideford. Then I knew that all they had been doing for so long was well worth it, as they had managed to save me from

the scrapman, and that from now on everything was going to improve.

My saviours had found me somewhere I could call home and as a new attraction in the town, they were doing their bit to ensure the locals got involved. I've heard them say that the support for my becoming the town's newest exhibit has been overwhelming. Everyone wants to come forward with help to ensure I am the best that I can be.

To be brought up to date in a future issue...

• Pictures on these two pages are by Tim Hudson (sea tow) and John Puddy.



STEAMSHIP FRESHSPRING CLOTHING

1/4 Zip Fleece Sweatshirt



£32.00 Size ____

Hoody



£28.00 Size ____

Polo Shirt



£17.00 Size ____

Soft Shell



£48.00 Size ____

Sweatshirt



£20.00 Size ____

Tee Shirt



£12.00 Size ____

Sizes: XS, S, M, L, XL, 2XL, 3XL, 4XL

All are embroidered with the Steamship Freshspring Society logo.

STEAMSHIP FRESHSPRING CLOTHING

By arrangement with MJM Sports of Bideford, we have arranged a range of Society clothing to suit all tastes.

ORDERING

You can order online at: <http://mjm-sports.co.uk/steamship-freshspring-society> or by phone, using a card payment: 01237 477 757.

You may also order by post by using the form below and posting to the address below. Please enter the number of items you require in the box below the illustrations, and the size on the line adjacent. If you require additional items of a different size, please note that in the space below marked 'NOTES'.

Please make cheques payable to 'MJM Sports'.

ANY NOTES to MJM Sports:

Name

Address

 Post Code

Telephone

IF ORDERING BY POST, PLEASE SEND YOUR ORDER TO:

MJM Sports,
Unit 1 Daddon Rise,
Clovelly Road Ind Estate,
Bideford,
Devon.
EX39 3HN

CARD PAYMENT

Visa

Mastercard

Card Number

Expiry Date

 / 2 0 CSC

Signature

Date

Freshspring Steam Beer!

The Steamship Freshspring Society has teamed up with Bideford's Clearwater Brewery 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 are available and they are 'bottle conditioned' which means some of the active ingredients are 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 are free, but for everywhere else in the country, there will be a £12 delivery charge and your order will be sent by courier.

Orders can be placed either by email to 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



Leaving a legacy to the SS Freshspring Society

The Steamship 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).....

.....
declare this to be the (1st/2nd/other.....) codicil to my Will dated.....

I give, free of Inheritance Tax, the sum of

£..... (.....pounds)
to the SS Freshspring Society of Little Cleave, Lower Cleave, Northam, Devon EX39 2RH
(Registered Charity Number 1151907), absolutely for its general charitable purposes.
In all other respects I confirm my said Will.

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

Signed in the presence of:

First witness
Signature

Second Witness
Signature

.....
Full name

.....
Full name

.....
Address

.....
Address

.....
Occupation

.....
Occupation

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

CONCERT

IN AID OF SS FRESHSPRING

berthed in Bideford Harbour

SATURDAY 3rd MARCH

Appledore Community Hall,
New Quay Street, Appledore, EX39 1LU

Compere: **Judi Spiers**

Guests are:

Les Barker: Comic poet, genius & national treasure

Tamsin Ball: A local girl with an amazing voice

Steve & Tricia Ruffe: Acoustic Folk at its best

The evening will include:

Judi talking to the Chairman of the Steamship Freshspring Society

A raffle which includes an auction for the top prizes

This promises to be a fun evening

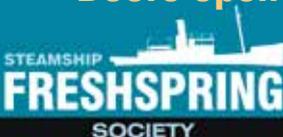
Tickets £10 in advance or £12 on the door

Ring 01237 451933 for further information

and to book in advance

Doors open at 6.30pm for 7.15pm start

Bar available



Preserving the past to inspire knowledge for the future