

BRITISH MILITARY POWERBOAT TRUST

JUNE 2004 NEWSBRIEF

“I visited the Trust on Saturday and received a wonderful reception. I was visiting with my 84 year old Grandfather, who served on HSL 126 and also on seaplane tenders in West Africa, during the Second World War. We were lucky enough to go for a trip on the seaplane tender during our visit and I am most grateful for the chance that you gave my Grandfather to go out on the boat again.”

This is the sort of response we are getting to our efforts to keep the Trust strong and healthy.

At this time, we do not yet have our own boats in the water to offer trips, and we charter in Powerboat Restorations, amongst other visiting guest boats, to give us a waterborne presence.

This year we have chartered ST 206, and ST 337, HDML Medusa and Hyperion have visited us.

Next year we will have our own ST 1502 as well as FMB Ark Royal, which will both be gainfully employed both showing the Trust flag as well as adding to our much needed financial pot.

To this end we have been offered the use of Hythe pier pontoon to run our trips from, and as you can imagine, this will put us in the centre of the public and tourist eye whilst allowing maximum speed to be used from start to finish of each trip.

Regarding the financial situation, you will recall from the last letter that at end April 2003 we were about £9000.00 overdrawn.

A decision had to be made whether to carry on or declare the Trust bankrupt.

We decided to carry on and try to rescue the situation.

At the time of writing this news letter we are happily able to tell you that we have most of the restoration funds back to where they should have been, as well as our general account standing at about £14,000.00. All debts as well as loans, where requested, have been repaid.

Our monthly income from “rent” on two pieces of land, gives us £1700.00 per month income against about £300.00 per month expenditure, a positive return of about £1500.00 per month, without taking into account door, shop and other boat rental income. This augurs well for our target “move” pot of £50,000.00.

The “move” date is not yet in sight. Neither for that matter is our next place of abode. However we are working every day of the week to achieve a happy solution to this need and thanks to the efforts of the Southern Daily Echo in its ever supportive and enthusiastic reporting of our situation, we remain totally optimistic that a solution will be found. Our Chairman Charles Du Cane is working tirelessly with any leads we achieve, and the green shoots of a new future for the Trust are beginning to show.

In the Boatshed we are culling all material that we cannot conceivably move, and asking all “visiting” boats and artefacts not belonging to the Trust, to be removed. Avon left us recently, and much of the endless piles of rubbish have been sorted and either labelled and stored, or scrapped.

The Boatshed itself is now looking much more business like, and this is a result of the constant hard work put in by our group of Volunteers.

This group are fantastic in their seemingly bottomless pit of enthusiasm and dedication to the numerous tasks involved in keeping the Trust clean and tidy as well as fund raising at our events, and just keeping the doors open every day of the week. Here I must name the two pillars of strength the Trust needs to recognise, Major the Hon Peter Baillie, and our Archivist Clive Frampton. Without the daily attendance at the Trust of these two gentlemen, the Trust doors would remain firmly closed on most days...a big thank you.

Whilst on the thank you road, the response to the last newsletter was incredible. We had four resignations and in excess of 150 supportive letters from members, amongst which were many extremely generous donations to the Trust.

This sort of response gives us the strength to carry on the task and be assured we will not give up in our aims, which are to get the Trust safely to a new home, with our boats safe and our pride intact!

Our web site www.bmpt.org.uk which has been up and running in its new format since April this year, also bring a huge supportive audience to our stage. Many fascinating requests as well as information on numerous boats, are received. These are passed on to our Historian Phil Simons, whose ever ready wealth of knowledge is regularly successfully tested...thank you Phil for your support. We welcome any ideas, suggestions or additions, which you would like to see on the site. On the site you will see new pictures of the Boatshed as well as the boats 1502 the FMB and 1664 in their latest new coats of paint, as well as the insides of the e-boat S130.

Our events this year, including Easter have seen an inflow of about £5000.00. Once again the efforts of our Volunteers has allowed us to undertake these events.

As I write this our D-Day exhibition, sponsored by the Daily Echo, is in its last week, and we are holding a "Closing Ceremony" on Saturday 26th June. This exhibition was a last minute decision and could only have been achieved with the support of the Daily Echo. On Saturday 26th we will have the top brass from Southampton City Council, Hampshire County Council as well as New Forest District Council. These dignitaries will have the opportunity to see our D-Day exhibition as well as our boats, and hear first hand of the battle, which we now face for survival. Medusa as well as Tahilla will be at the Trust and will convey the main guests on a symbolic D-Day sailing and a wreath laying en route to Town Quay. Everybody is very welcome to attend.

Next is the Netley Marsh steam rally at the end of July, and in August we plan to have a Members bar-b-que...then on to the AGM and close down for winter.

So, we look forward to continued prosperity as well as a new home. Before we achieve the latter, diarise the launch date for 1502, and Ark Royal, Easter 2005. We have set a date of April 30th, May 1st and May 2nd 2005 for the inaugural sailings from Hythe, so if you want a berth on those days, get your name in as soon as possible...first come first served. Initially we aim to have sailings every Saturday...otherwise, as demand requires.

Once again, we thank you all for your patience in waiting for news letters as well as your tremendous support for what we are doing as well as the way we are doing it.

Richard Hellyer.

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