

## **BMPT Newsletter January 2004**

Firstly my apologies for the lateness of this BMPT Newsletter, but we have been in such turmoil, and at full stretch, getting the Trust back on an even keel, at the same time as trying to sort out the future for the Boats in our care. Secondly I do hope you have had a wonderful Festive Season and are looking forward to a Happy 2004.

I think it will serve best if I give you an overview of the years happenings in 2003 and our hopes for the Trusts future.

### **The Lease at Marchwood**

Until May 2003 we had been assured that a 125 year lease on the site for a peppercorn rent was in the pipeline. This situation had been hanging over our heads for some considerable time, so our new Chairman was requested to investigate the situation with our Landlords. An opportune moment occurred in early May 2003 when the Owner of S130...the E-boat...was requesting a 2 year stay at the Trust for restoration of the boat by PBR.

At that meeting in London, Charles Du Cane established that the Landowners had now no intention of granting us a 125 year lease. as they were in the process of disposing of the Marchwood Site. They would, however, consider one or two 2 years to enable us to see the work on the E-boat through. Following further discussion within the Trust Executive a meeting was arranged with our Landlords to achieve the best result available for the Trust, with Charles Du Cane, John Towndrow and myself present. We are now in possession of a lease, which sees the Trust safely at Marchwood until 29 September 2005. This lease was agreed and signed thanks to the expertise of John Towndrow in these matters. We have been advised that no extension to this lease will be considered.

Apart from the lease, two other very important items have been negotiated. The first is the use of the monthly rent received from a transport company for the land they lease from the Trust. This income stream was, thankfully secured from the Landlord, by Charles du Cane. The second is the use of berthing rights on the Mulberry pontoon during the summer at a very realistic rental. Quite simply, without the income derived by the Trust from the transport company rental, we could not have survived. We also have a free mud berth on the inside of the jetty, which whilst not an ideal berth can be used by visiting boats at high tides. We have therefore sorted the tenure as best possible at Husbands and now have a framework within which we can work. Where we once had a 125 YEAR lease on offer, this has been reduced to a 125 WEEK lease, which by the time you receive this letter, will have reduced to about 88 WEEKS...!!

### **After the Lease at Marchwood**

Obviously the urgent need to find alternative accommodation for the Boats was put at the forefront of our "outside" work. To this end the Trust joined the Southampton Federation with a view to obtaining space at the Woolston Vospers site. Vospers are moving away from Southampton, and will be situated in Portsmouth. The Vospers site has been purchased by SEEDA...South East England Development Agency, which they take over when VT vacate sometime in 2004...with a view to development. The Federation produced a Portfolio covering the needs of its Members, with regard to the Vospers site at Woolston, and this was submitted to SEEDA for their consideration. The Federation consists of many like- minded Groups with Heritage as the common denominator, and from all walks of life. The Woolston site would be well suited to absorb all our varied needs, as well as having an active waterfront available. We are now awaiting the outcome of the Federation deliberations, which we expect to be known "sometime this year"..!

However, as it is extremely unlikely that the Woolston site will become available to the Trust before our lease at Marchwood expires in September 2005, we have to continue to look for alternative solutions. To this end, we arranged with the Leader of the Hampshire County Council, Councillor Ken Thornber, to meet with him as well as the Director of SEEDA and his team. The purpose of this meeting was to explain that BMPT had only until September 2005 at Marchwood, discuss the needs of the Southampton Federation at Woolston, and also to investigate other possibilities for the Trust within the SEEDA domain. Charles Du Cane and myself from the Trust and Alan Jones from the Federation attended this meeting. The SEEDA team gave us a very detailed and clear idea of their sites, which they have acquired in the South of England, particularly their purchases in the Hampshire area. However they have no firm ideas of what they plan to use the Marchwood Site for as yet. They suggested we arrange a further meeting with the SEEDA Hampshire Head of Management in order to get closer to our target area. This we did and Charles du Cane arranged a meeting as soon after the main meeting as possible. Charles and myself attended this meeting, once again in Winchester, and gave a detailed presentation of our purpose, present situation and predicament, as well as our hopes for the future. SEEDA Hampshire has now taken our request away to see if any answers can be found. We await their response. We have indicated that the bottom line as far as the Trust is concerned is that the secure tenure of the Boats must be our first priority, and this could mean housing them away from the Southampton area. Having hopefully shown you the broad picture, and updated you with regard to the future possibilities, I will now try and give you the details of the Trust itself, and what is happening within the "fridge" or "furnace", depending on the time of year you are at Husbands...!

## Operational situation

Due to financial restrictions, we have had to take drastic action on the operational front in order to survive. The most difficult decision had to be the release of Jo-Ann Saunders as the Trust Co-Ordinator. Jo-Ann's remuneration package was not sustainable within the Trusts income capability. After discussion with the Executive, Jo-Ann was released from the Trust employ. The loss of this function left a need for continuity with regard to the numerous functions keeping the Trust running, and Admiral Halliday asked me to fill the vacancy as best possible as the Operations Manager. Every effort has been made to keep all doors open. The telephone has been diverted to a duty mobile so that all incoming calls stand a good chance of getting an immediate answer, please however note that on occasion an answer machine will be available.

The internet email and web site have been redirected to a business address so that all incoming emails receive an immediate or as near as possible, reply. Whilst I know the above situation is not ideal, it is within the Trust capability and I do apologise to those who are not satisfied with it, and ask their patience whilst we try to improve things. Notices have been placed at each door giving contact phone numbers for those times when the doors are closed. A duty routine has been established to allow a summer 7 day open days to occur. During winter this is reduced to Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday. The other days may see those on restoration projects, working at the Trust. This Duty roster is a very difficult roster to maintain, as we have only Volunteers to attend to its needs.

It is here that I must mention the stalwarts without whose attendance and sacrifice of their freedom we could not have continued. Major the Honourable Peter Baillie and Clive Frampton have been available every day of the week, seven days a week for the last 12 months. Peter is an expert at virtually everything except bringing his pills to work..! He is banned from ladder climbing, but waits till we all out of the shed and then brings a ladder out of hiding to attend to lighting et al..! Clive is our Archivist and guide as well as attending to away evening talks. He is also a mean tea maker, which is a vital part of the days work..! They open the doors in the morning at 0830 and are there till 1500, or later, in the afternoon to lock the Trust up. Come rain or shine these two gentlemen have kept the doors open and things going within the shed on a daily routine, and without them the Trust would not be still active. My personal thanks go to them, and long may it last.

Dennis McCann is our treasurer and attends once a week to keep the books up to date. Tony Alston is our Membership secretary and attends once, sometimes twice a week to sort out a rather out of date membership list, which is now right up to date at about 300 members. The Trust owes all our Members a big thank you for maintaining your Membership, and I hope that the future will allow you to continue to support us, long into the future. New membership fees are now available, and are shown later in this letter.

Rhona Frampton attends on Saturdays and clears all the secretarial work that has mounted during the week, as well as being our main Cake Maker and Café Manager. These are but a few of our staunch Volunteer base, who we have available for events, and open days. All of you are thanked from the bottom of my heart for your kindness and consideration of the demands of Trust work, to which you give of your time so willingly to attend to...thank you all.

There are those who also give of their time on the restoration front, and attend to the restoration of the FMB and the 1502. All are thanked sincerely and I know our visitors benefit from all the hard work that is put in. More volunteers are always welcome at the Boatshed particularly to assist with the day to day running ...please let us know if you have a day a month which you would like to offer...or any time at all would be fantastic

The events this year, have brought the Trust welcome relief from our financial problems. Two long open weekends saw many visitors pass through our doors, and were only a success as a result of the generous support from our Volunteer team. The back yard has been rearranged and much of the rubbish removed or burned. A mistake by a Contractor working next door at Easter caused the water mains to be disrupted for the Easter weekend. As a result the Contractor offered his equipment and workers to us for 2 days to clear our outside site. This has been done to great effect and additional space has been thus provided.

The outside walls have been painted on 2 sides, and the main roof leaks dealt with as best we can. Once again the generosity of a roofing team working a neighbouring site, who worked for us after hours, saw these tasks which were impossible to us, attended to. Inside the walls have been painted as have most of the floors, and by Easter 2004 the Boatshed should look pretty good.

We have the attendance of Probation Service members, who are very well worked both inside and out, doing all the heavy work and cleaning and painting which would take us older ones far too long..! Phil Clabburn, our Technical advisor, has had to expand his work horizons.

The E-Boat arrived as you will know, and the contract for a 2 year restoration was in the process of being finalised with Phil, and Powerboat Restorations. However, the finance for this project dried up before the project began. This left PBR with no long term work on hand, and thus the need for Phil to find alternative means of income. At the same time, PBR had offered MGB81 to the Trust to purchase in accordance with a contract, once in existence between the Trust and PBR. Regrettably the Trust did not have available funding to acquire this boat, and Phil has advised the Trust that it has been put out to a Broker to be sold.

206 remains in the Boatshed, and will possibly be watered for the beginning of the 2004 season, and be available to the Trust to charter. 102 is out of the water for winter, and this boat will be available to us for the 2004 season to charter. We hope to be able to offer Phil and PBR the opportunity to moor 102 alongside the Mulberry pontoon at a reasonable rental. Phil continues to operate PBR from his office provided by the Trust, at the end of the Boatshed, and gives us any advice, which we need with restoration projects.

The main objective for the coming year is to raise as much funding as we can, from those who visit us on a regular basis, as well as from some big events. The first event is the Easter weekend. This will be held from and including the Friday 9<sup>th</sup> April to and including Monday the 12<sup>th</sup> April. Friday will be setup day, and the rest hard working days. It is the intention to launch both 1502 as well as Ark Royal FMB. Should this not be possible for any reason, then a naming ceremony will be performed. We are inviting the Hampshire Military Vehicle Trust, as well as antique stalls to give a wider appeal to the Public to encourage attendance.

The HDML Medusa will be with us, and the Dunkirk Little Ships will have their display activated. Possibly a few aircraft "cockpits" will attend. With 102 or 206 available for charter work on the water a very busy weekend is envisaged. Any help will be welcomed, and please do not hesitate to let us know, preferably in writing or email, if you can assist. We need to know when and for how long please.

The next event on our calendar is the DDay60 Anniversary, which we have been invited to attend in Portsmouth. This is the early part of June and will cover a week...any volunteers for this would be welcome. We see this as being an ideal opportunity to be seen by a wide range of the Public, as well as a fund raising exercise. Phil Claburn is considering how many of PBR boats will attend, whilst we hope to have 1502 on the water as well as the FMB..either waterborne or as a static on trailer, with our shop and the Queen gull.

These events are big manpower users by virtue of the length of time involved, so please, if you have any time to offer us, please let us know as soon as possible. There are more events later in the year, but I will stay with the 2 mentioned at this time, and see how we get along. Please remember that all the work involved in keeping the Trust alive and well, is performed by Volunteers. Many of these Volunteers have a normal 8-5 job to attend to, whilst still giving their time freely to the Trust's cause.

## Finance

The AGM was held on time in accordance with our Constitution, and I arranged the necessary with the kind assistance of John Towndrow on the paperwork side, and the Volunteers on the practical side...ie licking and sticking envelopes in order that all members were informed. On the day, in my capacity as Secretary, many questions were fielded and hopefully answered satisfactorily, from the floor. In the absence of our Treasurer, I presented the up to date financial situation, as well as the accounts covering the previous years finances.

The accounts were not accepted by the Members present, as they were incomplete, in that they had not been signed off by the Accountant/Auditor. We have also decided to send out the Minutes from the AGM now, so that all the Members may be well informed as to our situation. Here I would like to thank those Members who were unable to attend, who so generously sent in a donation to the Trust in lieu. This generosity is very much appreciated and went a long way to cover our costs on the day.

From the Minutes, you will see that an Extra Ordinary General meeting is requested by the Members, in order that the final accounts should be approved. After in depth discussion at the Executive Committee, I have been requested to ask you that we forego this meeting.

The reasons are simply that:

1. The accounts presented to you now, are the same accounts presented at the AGM, but are now signed off, as required by the Constitution.
2. To arrange another meeting will cost time and money, and if the requisite number of Members do not attend, will have been a waste of both.

As can be seen from the accounts, our financial situation was in a serious disarray. The choices open to the Trust were:

1. To close down immediately.
2. To make serious efforts to rescue the Trust.

The Executive Committee then led by Admiral Halliday decided to go for option 2, and make every effort to bring the Trust under financial control and try to rectify the situation.

The immediate steps taken included the release of the Coordinator, as well as cancelling various expensive projects still in the pipeline. Whilst this still left the Trust with bills to pay, at least the overdraft would be reduced. On examination of the bank statements it was discovered that the General account was overdrawn to about £4000.00 with bills still to be paid. The Restoration account in which should be all Restoration grants, held all the correct monies

for the HLF FMB grant. However, monies for other projects such as 331 and 1502, as well as funds owed by the Trust to the FMB project had been utilised elsewhere, and were no longer available. In addition, PBR requested that a loan made to the Trust by PBR should be repaid.

Suffice to say that, with the enthusiastic support and assistance from our Members as well as our Volunteer base, we have managed a total financial recovery. At the time of writing all our debts have been paid except the £2000 owing to PBR. Our Restoration account is restocked to the point where both the FMB and the 1502 accounts are replenished, and 331 has enough to carry on with. Our General account is in funds, to allow us to pay our monthly fixed costs.

We are in fact quite satisfied that, provided no unforeseen event occurs to upset the applecart, we will be able to continue until the end of our lease, with a strong financial profile. We have taken steps to put in place a regular monthly fixed income scenario, which income slightly exceeds our monthly fixed outgoings. All visitor income, income from events, Membership fee's as well as donations to the Trust are additional income and increase our bottom line strength. With the events planned for the year ahead, we hope to be able to report a very satisfactory situation to you all at the next AGM .

## **Website**

The website [www.bmpt.org.uk](http://www.bmpt.org.uk) has been revamped and we would appreciate any corrections which you may see need doing. It is always under review, with additions and changes being made as we can. Our email address is [boats@bmpt.org.uk](mailto:boats@bmpt.org.uk) and the telephone remains 023 8042 8443 - please remember it is switched to a mobile phone when the Boatshed is unattended.

## **Boats**

We need to arrive at a situation where we have all our Boats which will move with us, well prepared and ready to move. Likewise we need to go through our inventory of spares and exhibits in order that they be classified, marked and stowed in containers such that we can move these with ease. Obviously the items which we need for display purposes, will remain on show, but will have a planned place for the move.

102 , 206 and 81 each belong to Phil Clabburn and PBR, and are with the Trust as long as possible and as long as Phil Clabburn can reasonably allow them to stay. Obviously we would like them to be with us when we move, but this will depend on circumstances, and we discuss these with Phil on a regular basis.

1502 is well on the road to completion and will hopefully be launched at our Easter weekend. At the time of writing the new shafts and propellers have been ordered and the engines are in the frame to be fitted. The bridge window glass has been fitted and the mast stepped. The Boat is yet to be painted.

43597 the Ark Royal FMB is now upright again and the hull is painted. Work on the fore and aft canopies is progressing and the inside hull stripping and painting is well in hand. The electrical wiring loom has been completed, and window glass acquired. We hope to have this boat ready for launching at Easter.

Humber remains as a popular attraction as she is fully fitted and is a good example of a "ready to go" boat. Visitors are able to go on board her.

71 and 5004 still await restoration funding, and are retained in a good exhibition standard for our visitors to see.

331 is the next restoration project, and the Heritage Lottery Fund have approved our initial submission re funding. We have asked 4 Contractors to quote for the full restoration, and at the time of writing, anticipate all to hand by the middle of January 2004. PBR are one of those requested to quote.

The Boats outside are in need of major efforts to keep them protected, and this will be attended to as we have sufficient money and labour, to activate.

I think that I have covered all the important happenings of the last year, and hope that any questions you may have will be either emailed or posted to the Trust for action. Once again a big thank you to all our Members and especially all our Volunteers for all the support you have given the Trust, and we sincerely hope you will continue to do so in the future.

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