

# The British Military Powerboat Trust and the merger with the Portsmouth Naval Base Property Trust 2009

The British Military Powerboat Trust (BMPT) was formed in 1999, and secured premises at the Husbands Shipyard sheds, Marchwood, Southampton.

The object was to create a centre of excellence covering the restoration of military powerboats, and display these both on the water, as well as in a museum scenario.

The site had been offered to the Trust on a proposed 99 year lease, at peppercorn rental. Change of site ownership however, created a situation where the proposed lease was withdrawn, and the Trust had, in a very short space of time, to find other premises to house the burgeoning boat collection.

The Trust arranged a 2 year notice period with the new site owners, which generous time frame allowed the Trust to set about seeking a new home for the collection.

It soon became apparent that the Trusts financial situation would not allow a new home to be found, sufficient to house the entire collection.

It was therefore decided that we should return as many of the collection to the original owners as possible, and find new homes for the remaining boats.

MTB71, MTB331, RASC Humber, S130, CT78, 35ft FMB Target, FMB441341 and the German stainless steel 23ft boat, Gus, were all found homes.

MGB81, HSL102 and ST206, not part of the BMPT collection, were moved by their owners, Powerboat Restorations.

All the engines and related display items were returned to their owners.

The Trust retained ST1502, FMB43957 and FMB5004.

Regrettably no homes could be found for either HSL142 or RSL1664, and these boats had to be broken up on site.

The stern of HSL142 is now displayed restored by a Trust Member, and the engines and other equipment from RSL1664 were taken over by Trust Members who own RSL1643.

On the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2005 the last boat left the Husbands Shipyard sheds.

The search for a new home had led us to the OC Marchwood Military Port, who had kindly offered us temporary space in the Sausage Compound.

We moved our office container, along with the remaining stores container, and the Dunkirk Little Ships stores containers, to the Base.

FMB43957 and FMD5004 were moved to the site on their trailers, and ST1502 was brought to an allocated berth within the Military Port, on her own keel.

The Trust records, boat plans, photo collection and library were stored in the office container, and the search for a new home continued.

In 2008, we realised that our search for a home locally was not going to succeed, and that the continued drain on our finances, as well as advancing years for those at the work face, meant that we had to make a decision regarding the Trusts future.

Our Membership had resolutely supported our every move over the years, and it was as a result of this support that we had been able to survive for such a long time.

We decided that we needed to consider looking further afield to see what could be done, to either dissipate the boats, or better still find a home for the collection, and at the same time, retain our Memberships trust, and interest.

Many avenues were explored, and one of these was the Portsmouth Naval Base Property Trust (PNBPT), which owns Portsmouth Historic Dockyard on a long lease from the MOD. After lengthy discussion, we were able to present to the BMPT Membership, an offer to merge with PNBPT.

Our Membership had voted for this merger overwhelmingly, and at the final BMPT AGM held in the Historic Dockyard on 25th July 2009, the last model boat was handed over to the Chief Executive of PNBPT.

This saw the end of the British Military Powerboat Trust, but ensured the future of the boats which we had carried for so long.

It also gave the Membership immediate status within PNBPT, and access to the boats to continue the good work of restoration and maintenance.

Previous to this, as the Membership had agreed the merger at a Special General Meeting, we had moved ST1502 by sea to a berth within the Historic Dockyard, from where she operates on a weekly basis.

FMB43957, fully operational, had been moved on her trailer, and with FMB5004 were resident, on display, in Boathouse 4.

All our records were transferred to Room 7 in Boathouse 4 within the Historic Dockyard, and are available as and when needed.

In September 2009, the Powerboat Restoration team handed over ownership of MGB81, as well as HSL102, to the PNBPT. Both boats are now moored at the Gunwharf Quays Marina, Portsmouth.

The Membership of the BMPT has been kindly granted short term free membership of both the Friends of the Royal Naval Museum Portsmouth, as well as of the MTB102 Trust in Felixstowe..

The website [www.bmpt.org.uk](http://www.bmpt.org.uk) has been continued, with the "T" being changed from Trust to Team, and it is hoped to carry on reporting the boats and associated activities to all our Membership.

*Amended August 2015*