



To the members of the British Military Powerboat Trust

August 2004

Dear Members,

Shortly after I took over the chair of the British Military Powerboat Trust, in April 2003, I visited our then landlord's (Bride Exel) London office and found a very different situation prevailing, to the 125 years lease at a peppercorn rent, which had been previously proposed to the executive of BMPT. Bride Exel told me that they had already accepted an offer from South Eastern Economic Development Agency (SEEDA), for most of the land at Cracknore Hard, and were negotiating with Oceanic Estates, for the sale of the Husbands Sheds and adjoining jetty.

We were at that time negotiating with the owner of Schnellboot S-130, to provide space at Marchwood for the restoration work, formerly to be carried out by Powerboat Restorations and estimated to take about 18 months. The result of these talks persuaded Bride Exel to give BMPT a lease until 29th September 2005. This lease was not to be renewable and therefore we would have to find a new home very quickly.

As I am sure you are all aware, our search for a local new venue has been very thorough and you will have read a very long list of leads that have been followed up, in the search for our new home - sadly with no success. Despite the lack of success, the trust would like to thank all those people who have given their time to help with this fruitless search.

In April 2004, the trust received a call from one Stephen Walters, who explained that he was working with Andrew Thornhill QC who had set up a collection of boats at Eyemouth, to the north of Berwick upon Tweed. Mr Thornhill was currently negotiating with Gallaghers, who had produced a scheme to redevelop the old power station site in Hamworthy. This site consists of approximately 65 acres of flat concrete, with waterside berthing in the Backwater Channel, roughly opposite the new RNLI headquarters building in Poole. This area is just above the lifting bridge between Poole and Hamworthy. These negotiations, to establish an exhibition of marine excellence, have been carried out in conjunction with the University of Bournemouth and with the support of The Borough of Poole, Poole Maritime Trust and other marine industries/organisations, including the RNLI.

BMPT has been invited, by Mr Thornhill, to join with the "World of Boats" in this project and, subject to permission being granted by Gallaghers, the Executive Committee has agreed to explore this avenue of safeguarding the future of the boats. I hope you will find that their website www.worldofboats.org shows their team to have the same enthusiasm for the restoration and preservation of boats as we have at Marchwood.

Mr Thornhill clearly has a knowledge of and interest in marine matters, as he is in the process of negotiating the purchase of Mashford's, at Cremyll in Cornwall, and Newsons at Oulton Broad near Lowestoft. He already owns Coastal Marine, at Eyemouth, where it is hoped CMB331 will go for restoration. Coincidentally, by the time of the AGM on the 2nd October, we hope the E-boat will be safely ashore at Mashfords.

I am pleased to tell you that we are extremely fortunate, in that Stephen Walters has very kindly agreed to give a short talk to the membership to highlight the possibilities of a new home, after the AGM on 2nd October at Marchwood, complete with drawings and plans etc. He is also happy to try and answer any questions you may have. I hope that you will find the plans and ideas as fascinating as I do and I know Stephen will be certainly providing you with considerably more detail than I could include in this letter.

So, after a long period of uncertainty, it looks as if there might be an opportunity for the BMPT to have a new home on the South Coast. I would urge all members to come to the AGM, hear what could be possible and give your Executive Committee support for the best way ahead.

I very much look forward to seeing you at Marchwood on Saturday 2nd October at 1100hrs.

Yours sincerely

Charles Du Cane
Chairman