

Heartbeat of Hythe

Newsletter for members and volunteers of The Hythe Pier Heritage Association



July 2020 Issue No 5

Dear Members and Volunteers,

Welcome to this latest newsletter with apologies for the delay in publication.

The current health crisis has brought with it many challenges and unwelcome consequences, not least the inability to gather and meet up with friends and family. Thankfully, this has relaxed somewhat in recent weeks and a 'new' normal is beginning to develop. We hope we can soon organise some safe and socially distanced activities at the Pier.

Although the ever popular Rock the Pier has had to be cancelled, we are confident we can bring you an even bigger and better one next year, with many of the bands keen to play for us again. We will let you know as soon as we have an agreed date.

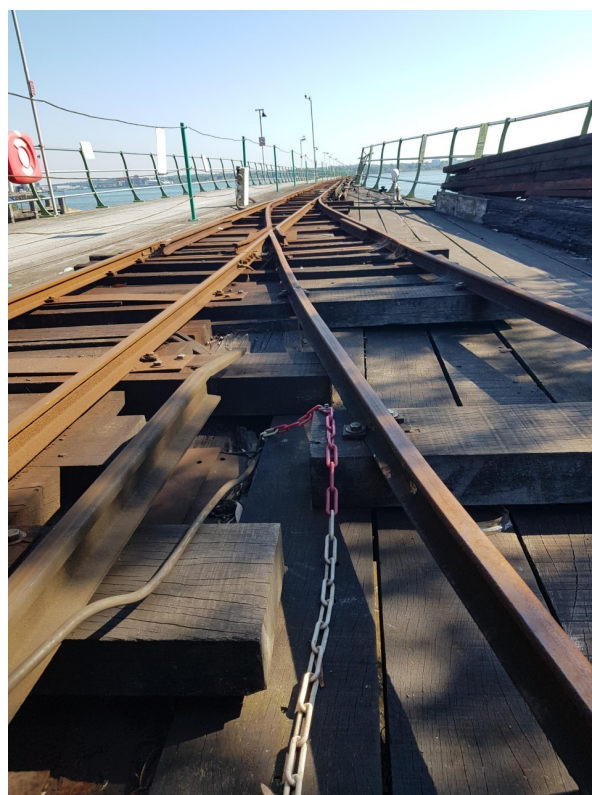
The current situation has also had repercussions for holding our Annual General Meeting. This was originally delayed from May and will now be held on 30th July 2020 attended by Board members only. This is due to current Government guidelines restricting large numbers of people gathering in one place. Documents and papers including a voting form have been emailed to all members. Details of this meeting, including the Annual Report, will be posted on our website after the event.

www.hythepierha.org.uk.

Sadly, Peter King who has served as Chair for HPHA since its inception resigned as a Board Director this month. His passion for the Pier and determination to save this valuable local landmark for future generations, have been unflinching over the past 3 years. His presence will be sorely missed. We wish him well for the future. Hopefully he will stay in touch and keep an eye on proceedings.

Jill Gower

Train track photograph courtesy of Alan Titheridge



Our Community Working Together to bring our Heritage and History to life info@hythepierha.org.uk
Hythe Pier Heritage Association is a Charitable Community Benefits Society (Reg No 7708)
The Grove, 25 St Johns Street, Hythe SO45 6BZ

Big ships passing

Alan Titheridge



Oriana docked, the crowds of onlookers depart the pier (Margaret Swain courtesy of Sath Naidoo)

Hythe Pier, since its construction, has been the best vantage point for watching the great liners and cruise ships entering and leaving the port of Southampton. My passion for ships began when from an early age I'd spend hours on the pier head watching them pass.

I can only imagine the excitement more than a century ago when the world's largest liner, the Titanic, set sail on her ill-fated maiden voyage. Forty years later, on July 9, 1952, the Echo reported "Thousands of people ashore or afloat in the biggest assembly of craft to use Southampton Water since D Day 1944, yesterday gave the new Blue Riband holder United States the biggest welcome ever accorded a liner in the history of the port. The long pier at Hythe and Weston Shore were absolutely packed" The photograph attached shows the pier almost buckling under the strain.

A decade and a half earlier the Hampshire Advertiser for April 4, 1936 reported that Hythe Pier was "absolutely weighed down" with sightseers trying for the best vantage point to witness the arrival of the (then) world's largest liner, the Queen Mary, the previous day.

On October 31, 1967 the Echo reported of the Queen Mary, "On this morning's tide the veteran liner made her last passage down Southampton's historic waterway en route to Long Beach, California". It continued, "There were vast crowds at Hythe. Hythe Pier was thronged with people today to watch the departure of the Queen Mary".

By 1990 the great liners had all but disappeared. However, a new phenomenon was about to revive the occasion of the maiden arrival. The first of the new breed of super-sized cruise ships to enter Southampton arrived at the beginning of April 1995. Large crowds had assembled on the pier to witness the maiden arrival of the Oriana, small-medium size by today's standards but with the exception of the Norway (formerly France) then the largest ship to have entered the port in almost twenty years. Hythe Pier was even more crowded on April 9, 1995 when she sailed on her maiden cruise. The Herald reported that Hythe "was a sea of people as the magnificent super-liner Oriana set off on her maiden voyage". The attached photo shows the crowds walking back up the pier after she had slipped out of view.

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Big ships passing Alan Titheridge (cont)

Throughout the first two decades of the 21st Century, ever bigger cruise ships have arrived, and in greater numbers. Almost daily throughout the spring, summer and autumn months sightseers use the pier as a vantage point to watch up to a half dozen pass by as they set sail, usually during the late afternoons.

Covid 19 has quarantined a similar number in port, just as it did our Hythe Ferry, but now that the ferry operations have resumed it is giving its passengers an unbeatable close up view whilst quayside and the pier the unparalleled view of them sailing by. When the HPHA renovation work of the pier head is complete, the view opened up, I will be able to rekindle my boyhood days and sit as an old man watching the great ships go by again.



Thousands assemble on Hythe Pier to view the maiden arrival of the United States in 1952

(Southern Newspapers Ltd)

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Some good news and some not so good news! Phil Bridges

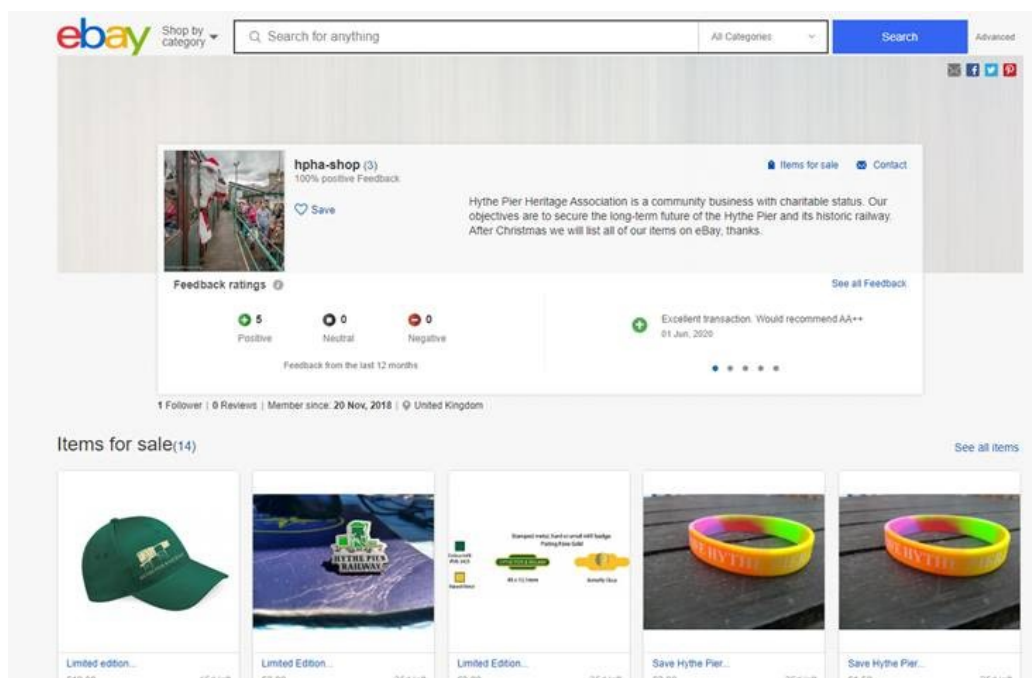
The not so good news is that we're sorry to report Maureen Mintram hopes to move to Salisbury in the next few months to be nearer to her family. Maureen's enthusiasm and dedication will be sorely missed. However Maureen promises, subject to available transport, she'll do her best to come back and help at events once some sense of normality returns.

In the interim we will be holding the stock and would love to get a team of people together to help try and fill Maureen's shoes, no easy task! Please email phil.bridges@hythepierha.org.uk if you feel you can help or even become Maureen MK 2!

The good news is that the HPHA online shop is now officially up and running

www.hythepierha.org.uk/shop

Items may be ordered online through eBay (*though we are charged a 10% fee*) and locally by emailing shop@hythepierha.org.uk or a voice message on 023 8098 6480 .



Hythe Pier Railway Carriage Repair Underway

Photographs by Alan Titheridge / Tina Brown

Hythe Pier Heritage Association in conjunction with the Hythe Men's Shed (at the Pier) has commenced repair work on the Hythe Pier Railway's Carriage Number 4. The carriage, which has been gifted to the charity by Blue Funnel Ferries, is lying in the Hythe Ferry workshop and will be repaired to full operational and safety standards. Once this work has been effected it will be placed back on the track, replacing Carriage Number 3 which will be withdrawn for a complete restoration.



This is the start of a proposed full restoration of the tractors and rolling stock that has been running up and down Hythe Pier since July 1922. The photographs show members of the Men's Shed with the first frame and the carriage in the workshop.



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News from the Men's Shed (at the Pier) Allan Fairhead

Following the Government advice we had to close the shed. It was very disappointing as it meant that the people we were trying to help were let down. However, I called in to the Shed most days as the walk down was my exercise and I was able to check all was ok. A few of our members would stop by if they saw the door open to see what I was up to.



Once the restrictions started to ease, we carried on with checking and clearing up. We are most grateful for all the donations we have received, but as there have been duplicates of some tools we have checked with our colleagues at Fawley to see if they need anything and others we have put out for sale to bring in funds for items we do need. We have continued with the external painting, getting plants into the new planter and built another ready for filling.

From softwood we have made up a section of a carriage to see if there are any problems to the build, and are now waiting for the hardwood to arrive to actually start the carriage restoration. Still following guidelines we have 10-12 members come down each day and see the pleasure it brings to everyone.

And finallythe answers to Phil Bridge's brain teaser from the April issue.

Across:

- 1 : Ferry
- 4 : Ticket
- 6 : Water
- 7 : Track
- 9 : Football
- 10: Travelcard
- 12: Electricity

Down:

- 2 : -Rattle
- 3: Season ticket
- 5 :Train
- 7 :- Town Quay
- 8 :Peter King