

Heartbeat of Hythe

Newsletter for members and volunteers of The Hythe Pier Heritage Association



November 2020 Issue No 7

Dear Members and Volunteers,

Yet again our lives have been further affected by Government restrictions. Nevertheless, things have been happening behind the scenes in recent months and will continue to do so, albeit in a somewhat different way.

We are particularly pleased with the progress made to the repair and restoration of Carriage 4 . As a community group, we have much to celebrate when we look at the collaboration and hard work that has gone into this project between ourselves, ably led by Tina Brown , the Men's Shed (at the Pier) and the engineers at BFF. Fingers crossed we can see the fruits of their labours early on in 2021.

Meanwhile, our focus as a Board has been on the continuing deterioration of the buildings at the Pier end . This is particularly evident in the state of the structure on the South/ East side, which has in the past been a restaurant as well as sailing club . The roof is in a precarious state with large holes appearing. This has allowed rain to enter and is causing damage to the floor. Unfortunately this side of the pier is also exposed to the full force of any high winds and storms .

As you know, our aim as a group, has always been to protect the pier and it's structures . After discussions with Lee Rayment of BFF as well as Simon Goddard, the architect acting on our behalf, we hope to build a temporary structure to cover and protect the integrity of these buildings . We also intend to have an asbestos survey completed. As you can imagine, all these undertakings will come at considerable cost so will be dependent on available funds.

We have also been looking at how we can move forward with the preservation of the actual Pier structure. In order to do this, we have commissioned a more detailed survey than was completed in 2017.

We look forward to keeping you updated and informed about all the above in the coming months.

In the meantime, stay safe everyone.

Jill Gower

Secretary and Editor



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

Carriage 4 Repair update press release by Alan Titheridge

This is a press release which was issued to The Herald and other local papers this month .

' The Hythe Pier Heritage Association in conjunction with the Hythe Men's Shed (at the Pier) have in recent weeks been repairing and restoring the first of the four Hythe Pier Railway carriages. Despite having to work under Covid 19 restrictions, the project is ahead of schedule.

The first carriage being restored is Carriage No. 4, one of a pair ordered by the owner of both the Hythe Ferry and Hythe Pier, Mr T.B. Percy, in October 1921 from the Drewry Car Company of London. Both were built by Baguley Cars Ltd of Burton-on-Trent as part of a working arrangement between the two companies. Baguley works order number 1047 arrived in Hythe in May 1922 with the second carriage (Baguley works order number 1048) arriving a few weeks later. It is not known which of these two carriages is Carriage No. 4.

Hythe Ferry historian Alan Titheridge explains, "The carriages along with a further two that arrived in May 1923, were not numbered until the mid- 1990s when a number was applied after a refit, hence the highest number could be on the oldest carriage".

Project Leader Tina Brown details the work to date, "The structure has been strengthened by new frames being made along one side of the carriage and new timber and refurbishment on all other areas is underway. The new panels on both sides, front and rear are painted and many of these are in place and look fantastic, thanks to the efforts and hard work afforded by the volunteers from the Shed at the Pier.

"Work is currently underway on the repair and re-staining of the carriage doors in another workshop nearby and once all the external refurbishment is complete, replacement glass panes will be sought to comply with the British Standard specified for rolling stock.

"The internal paintwork will need cleaning and preparing for a fresh coat of paint. The original seats although nearly 100 years old are beautifully made and show the carpentry skills of that time, these have been given a good clean and only a touch up in keeping with restored furniture".



Seat base :photo Garry Brown

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Carriage 4 Repair update press release (cont)



Outer skins, side and positioned: Tina Brown

In May 1944, King George VI rode along the pier in Carriage No. 2 whilst on a visit to view the very many vessels assembled in preparation for the D Day invasion. A plaque to commemorate this was subsequently placed in the carriage but was later removed by an anonymous and unscrupulous souvenir hunter. More recently a period penny has been mounted on the backrest of the seat upon which the King sat.

The two tractors and the four carriages have operated almost continuously on Hythe Pier for almost a century, permanently exposed to the salt-water environment and in all weather conditions. The Hythe Pier Railway is recognised in the Guinness Book of Records as being the world's oldest continuously operating pier railway.'

Alan Titheridge says of the train, "It's archaic, it's eccentric, it's a wondrous relic that has against all the odds survived into the 21st Century. The Hythe Pier Railway trundles the length of Hythe Pier back and forth delivering and collecting ferry passengers some fifty times daily as it has almost without a break for a hundred years. One hundred years! There isn't a person in or from Hythe who can remember a time it wasn't here. It has been abused, derailed and more than once written off but this remarkable piece of early 20th Century engineering has embedded itself into the very heart and soul of the village.

In July 2022, the Hythe Pier Heritage Association is planning to celebrate the centenary, hoping to have the restoration complete in time. The Covid 19 pandemic has severely impacted upon the Association's fund-raising opportunities. The popular and highly-successful "Rock the Pier" music festival cancelled along with its other activities this year is planned for July 31st, 2021 but in the meantime, funds are still required to maintain the progress of the train's restoration. Donations can be made via the HPHA website www.hythepierha.org.uk which is updated regularly with news.'

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Tractor unit

One of the redundant tractor units has recently had mechanical parts renewed and the engine serviced by Dave , an engineer who works for BFF. In line with our collaboration with BFF, HPHA will be supplying the paint and wood to renew the the tractor box.

It would be great to see this tractor unit return to service at the same time as Carriage 4, hopefully early on in the New Year.



Tina Brown explains ‘ You can see engineers are chopping out old metal and will weld replacements (they have repaired the rolling ‘bits’ we will supply iroko wood for new slated frame on front and marine ply to make a new box on the back plus green paint’.



Photos :Tina Brown

An A – Z of Hythe Pier by Alan Titheridge

Part one E - H

E – Engravings

Walking along the pier it is impossible not to notice the engravings on the decking planks. With a bill to repair the pier that far exceeded its income, White Horse Ferries, at the time owners of both the ferry and the pier, in May 1998 rolled out a scheme to assist with the cost of replacing the timber decking. The public were invited to “buy” a plank which would carry an engraved dedication of their choice and be theirs for its lifetime. Kay and Les Barnes, having paid their £50 were in the autumn of 1998 the first to have their perpetuated in this way. Today almost every plank along the pier carries such a dedication, among them one to Gerald Yorke, the engineer who oversaw the installation of the Hythe Pier train in 1922.



Engraving: Photo Donna Wilson

F – Fishing

Fishing from Hythe Pier had been a popular pastime since its construction but during the early 1990s it was prohibited following a spate of mindless vandalism. Among some sections of the local angling fraternity fishing from the pier was regarded as something of a joke but it didn't stop the majority, which had varying success. In 1915 the Hampshire Independent reported “There has been good fishing (from Hythe Pier) during the week and several fine bass and whiting have been taken”, whilst in 1934 the Hampshire Advertiser “recorded about a dozen anglers on the end of the pier had nothing between them”

G – Green

With the restoration of the train now underway, questions have been raised about colour. Initially the tractors and carriages were painted a dark or bottle green with cream HPR signage. Post war the carriages were repainted green lower and cream upper whilst the tractors remained all-over green. During the 1960s the ferry boats and subsequently the train sported a blue and cream livery. In the late 1990s the colour was changed to predominantly white with a red lower section. The new millennium saw the colour scheme revert to green and once again cream HPR signage. Today the colour is still dark green although the signage has disappeared.



H – Hotspurs

The name “Hotspur” has been accorded to six different ferry boats since the construction of the pier in 1881. Derived from the nickname given to the medieval knight Sir Henry Percy, the proprietor of the Hythe Ferry James Percy named his first new boat such in 1889. His grandson Thomas Percy perpetuated the name with the replacement for this vessel in 1927. Hotspur II followed in 1936, Hotspur III in 1938 and the much-loved Hotspur IV in 1947. The final vessel to bear the name was the Hythe Hotspur in 1978. Six years after Hotspur IV was decommissioned in 2014, the Hythe public still speaks affectionately about the Hotspurs; a name synonymous with the pier.



Hotspur of 1889 and Hotspur IV circa early 1960s Photo: Peter Lamb

Events Co-ordinator needed

This voluntary role is to plan, organise and deliver community events, raising essential funds to help the Association fulfil its ambition.

HPHA stage three main community events over the course of the year, "Spring into Action", "Rock the Pier" and "Hythe Pier Heritage Day". The Association also have "pop-up" information stalls with fundraising activities at various local events, including the Hythe Village Fete, the Hythe Marina Seafood Festival and the Mistletoe Fayre. There are blueprints for these events providing a structure to work from. Of course, there is always the opportunity for innovation. HPHA is looking for someone to take these ideas forward and perhaps develop them in different ways or think of new ones! Above all, the aim is to keep the fun in fundraising.

The successful applicant would require good interpersonal, communication and organisational skills with the ability to use their own initiative and be computer literate. Experience in event management would be useful but is not essential. A "hands on" approach would be preferred with attendance at as many of the events as possible.

Covid 19 has severely disrupted fundraising this year but HPHA is ready to get back into action as soon as conditions allow. July 31 has been set as the date for "Rock the Pier" 2021 with the majority of the performers booked for this year's cancelled event rebooked. There is still much to do however, despite the restrictions the new Events Organiser will be needed to "hit the ground running".

For more information contact info@hythepierha.org.uk

Tropic Fundraiser event

Shopping has taken on a whole new meaning this year. With this in mind, last month, I decided to host a two day 'Tropic Pop-up Tent' in my back garden for customers to safely browse a whole range of festive gifts. It was really great to spend time with friends browsing the latest Tropic goodies whilst having a chat over a cuppa and a piece of cake. My last customers, even got the chance to toast the event with a glass of cava to celebrate. As a result, £71 was raised from sales and this has been donated to HPHA.

For those of you who have not heard of Tropic before, it is a British Skincare and cosmetics company who produce a range of cruelty free, Vegan and ethically sourced goods. Tropic also support charities such as United World Schools. In fact, every £50 of purchases funds a day of education in some of the poorest regions of the world.

If you would like to find out more, please contact me at

jaegower56@gmail.com or on my FB group

@Jill's Tropic Fundraiser Group

<https://tropicskincare.com/pages/jillgower>

Please feel free to share.



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Board Meeting dates and procedures

Normally the Board is attended by all Board members and other non-Board members, volunteers or external experts as required to support agenda items.

This a reminder that Board meetings may also be attended on an irregular basis by members of HPHA as observers. Such attendance must be requested at least 7 days in advance of the meeting by contacting any Board member.

Observing members will be accommodated on a "best efforts" basis as limitations may be imposed upon us by technology considerations or Coronavirus regulations.

Currently all HPHA Board meetings are held using Microsoft Teams online technology. Your computing equipment will need to be compatible with this technology in order to become an observer of the Board meeting.

Thursday, 17 December 2020

Thursday, 28 January 2021

Thursday, 25 February 2021

Thursday, 25 March 2021

Thursday, 29 April 2021

Thursday, 27 May 2021

Thursday, 24 June 2021

Thursday, 29 July 2021