

Heartbeat of Hythe



The newsletter of Hythe Pier Heritage Association

December 2023 Issue 28

Our Community Working Together to bring our Heritage and History to life

Welcome

As 2023 draws to an end it is worth reflecting on some of our key achievements this year. Rock the Pier was staged once again, despite extreme weather conditions. The artists performed with their usual enthusiasm, our volunteers did a brilliant job and our audience was as generous as ever. Later in the year and after a prolonged absence, Heritage Day was resurrected with great success. This time we were blessed with great weather and the community turned out in force to support the event. This year, we also started regular informal 'meet ups' down at Hythe Shed (at the pier). It's been a great opportunity to connect with many of our members and volunteers. We look forward to more in the New Year.

In terms of restoration, this year has seen another carriage and tractor reconstruction undertaken. Hopefully, 2024 will see their completion. Phase 1 of the pier restoration project was successfully completed, ensuring the continued safe operation of the train. We were also very proud to announce the completion of a sustainability project in co-operation with Solent University.

Thank you for your continued support.

We wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.

Jill Gower

Secretary and Editor



Tree contribution to Hythe's festival

This year we once again, supported Hythe 2000 by donating to the Christmas Tree Festival at St John's Church. The tree was made by members of the Shed (at the pier) using offcuts of wood to represent the wood of the Pier. Volunteers, Debbie and Jill, then decorated the tree using reclaimed shells from the beach below the pier. These were fashioned into its iconic visitors, the seagulls. We were delighted that our tree contributed to the £3000 raised by the event, as well as coming 2nd in the people's vote.

Track Restoration Phase 1 Completed abridged from article by Alan Titheridge

The first 45 metres of track, the points and sidings on the Hythe Pier Railway was completed during the first week of December 2023. At the beginning of this month, despite the inclement weather, the new rails, points and buffer were unloaded from an articulated vehicle and craned into position over the ticket office roof, overhead cables and pedestrian walkway, all without disruption to the ferry traffic. Long after darkness fell, final checks were carried out. The contract manager satisfied all was in order, the Hythe Pier Railway resumed service in time for the late afternoon commuter rush. The whole installation was effected in just four days.

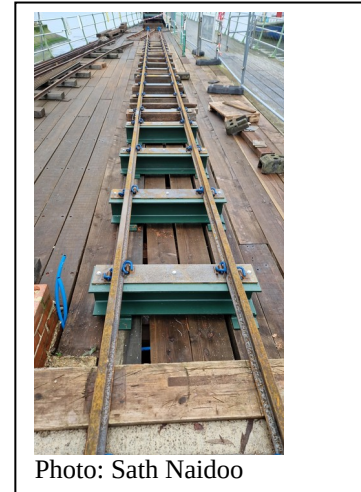


Photo: Sath Naidoo

Alice Keef explained her company's connection to Hythe, "Alan Keef Ltd has been involved with Hythe Pier Railway since the 1980's and has developed a long term 'soft spot' for this unique transport system. Over the decades, we have been peripherally involved in the supply of small quantities of track materials and some specialist work on wheelsets for the rolling stock. Therefore, we were very excited to be involved in the first of hopefully a series of major track works to replace the life expired track materials with heavier rail and modern fixings to secure the long-term future of the railway".

She added, "This first stage has been a long time coming because of the delays for additional structural work. It was been good to get on to site at last. Our work, if continued up the pier, will steadily remove the audible 'heartbeat' of Hythe, but as each section is replaced, hopefully this will improve the overall health and strengthen the pulse of the railway for the future".

The train continues to operate from the temporary platform whilst the construction of a new platform at the shore station is under construction, expected to be complete by early 2024.



Photo: Tina Brown

Our Tractor gets a lick of paint!

After extensive rebuilding and restoration, which began in the summer of 2022, the 2nd tractor unit is nearing completion. Doesn't she look great?

Mistletoe Fayre Success

Despite the freezing conditions on the day, our Teddy tombola and merchandise stalls were well attended. A total of £559.66 was raised on the day. Thank you to all the people who came to support us and our hardy volunteers who ran the stalls on the day.

Thankyou!

HMA (Hythe Marina Association) generously donated the sum of £475 to HPHA recently. This was as a result of various fundraising activities this year. We are very grateful for your continuing support.

Board Meeting dates

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 we have space limitations within our usual meeting room.

The dates for this year and next are as follows:

- Thursday, 25 January 2024
- Thursday, 29 February 2024
- Thursday, 28 March 2024
- Thursday, 25 April 2024
- Thursday, 30 May 2024 (also AGM)
- Thursday, 27 June 2024
- Thursday, 25 July 2024
- Thursday, 26 September 2024
- Thursday, 31 October 2024
- Thursday, 28 November 2024
- Thursday, 19 December 2024