

EUROPEAN
MARITIME
HERITAGE
NEWSLETTER

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The changing face of Heritage Afloat

by Mr John Robinson

Since 1994 Heritage Afloat has provided a forum for the owners and operators of traditional and historic vessels on the rivers, lakes, canals and seas around the United Kingdom. It has provided advice and support for individual vessel owners when needed and has campaigned against the steady loss of harbour facilities and dry-docks required for the upkeep of such vessels, and has supported local initiatives such as the Hermitage Community Mooring on the River Thames which provides a haven for visiting vessels that meet the requirements of the Barcelona Charter (www.hcmoorings.org).

Since 1996 Heritage Afloat (HA) has represented UK owners and operators at EMH, and has hosted two meetings of the Working Group together with various other Council and Executive meetings aboard traditional vessels in London and Southampton.

Members of HA voted recently to combine their resources with those of an older charitable organisation established in 1969 in response to concerns at the progressive loss of historic British vessels, some by then lying in foreign waters. This was the Maritime Trust, which repatriated the London-built coastal steamship *Robin* from northern Spain in 1974. Five years later the MT intervened to prevent the loss of the mid-Victorian ironclad warship *Warrior*, then serving as a floating jetty in Wales, and went on to acquire more than 20 other vessels, many

of which were the last survivors of their type and of huge historical importance. But for one, national organisation to maintain and promote 20 vessels, some dispersed around the country, proved intolerably costly, and all of the vessels were eventually conveyed to other custodians. Since disposing of Sir Francis Chichester's yacht *Gypsy Moth IV* in 2004, the Trust has provided advisory services.

Heritage Afloat supports the EMH view that, in most cases, continued operation offers the best prospect of long-term survival for pre-served vessels. Like the Maritime Trust, it deplures the failure of policy-makers to include them in legislation for the heritage. From henceforth, the two organisations will combine as a charity under the new title *Maritime Heritage Trust*.

HA has successfully resisted the closure and redevelopment of historic docks and slipways needed for vessel maintenance, and the new Trust will campaign to retain and improve shore-based facilities

for traditional vessels in operation, and to foster maritime skills such as riveting and sail-making. Among the objectives listed in its mission statement are *to increase public interest and support for maritime heritage, which in turn will raise awareness of its cultural importance and have wider benefits for economic drivers such as employment, education and tourism*.

The Duke of Edinburgh, who was an active naval officer when he married Princess Elizabeth in 1947 and took an active role in establishing the Maritime Trust, has agreed to remain as Patron of the new organisation. Under David Morgan as national Chairman, it will encourage the formation of regional sections. The first of these covers Wales, where a major campaign called *Wales and the Sea* begins early in 2012, chaired by Richard James of Milford Haven Port Authority. Cardiff County Council plans an international conference in October 2012 on the role of maritime heritage as an economic driver.



SS Robin, repatriated by the Maritime trust in 1974

Go to
www.maritimeheritage.org.uk
for more details of the new organisation.

Viapori project: Art exhibition in Suomenlinna

by Ms Julie Boéneec and Mr Jacopo Brancati

Built on a cluster of rocky skerries, the sea fortress is situated on a group of islands off Helsinki. Suomenlinna is a fortress dating back to the 18th century, a shrine enclosing a shipyard whose main activity includes maintenance and restoration of traditional ships. UNESCO protects the fortress as a World Heritage Site and it's one of Finland's most popular tourist attractions.

The Viapori shipyard boasts almost three centuries of uninterrupted activity.

Where once galleys and war frigates were built, ships with historical significance are today repaired or restored.

Why the Viapori experience is unique? This is a place where the future is built on historical foundations - a cultural heritage is kept alive for the future.

Viapori is the meeting point of different human experiences that developed during the history of Finland.

Personal experiences and knowledge are shared to fulfil a common goal: keeping the ships alive and handing over to the forthcoming generations a heritage which is not only material, but cultural, technical and emotional.

It's a heritage belonging to the whole nation; work and study keep it alive through space and time.

An ever growing number of young people take interest in traditional sailing, learning its features, appreciating and rediscovering the identity that was about to fade.

Ships come to Suomenlinna

from various Finnish coastal regions. In the dockyard young crews are learning working methods from the elders and take this knowledge back home.

The added value of Viapori lies in its human capital, in knowledge, development and transmission of traditional work techniques used on traditional ships.

The Exhibition Project

The exhibition leads the public to discover Viapori through different sensory experiences.

Photos and videos tell about men, ships and the dockyard; sounds and music recreate the atmosphere of the place.

The touch and smell of raw materials remind the visitor that the ships are made with traditional components.

The exhibition develops through four sections presenting the work and skills of men, the ships and their stories.

Over a surface of approx. 120 m², the exhibition describes the Viapori experience through 60 large format pictures, 6 video documentaries, authentic working tools, equipment and historical items.

The exhibition is planned to be ready in 2013, circulating and adaptable to the cultural programmes of other museums.

A complementary section can be created in order to contextualize the exhibition in sites other than Suomenlinna and enrich it with local content.

All the photos and videos are by Jacopo Brancati.



The Viapori Dockyard



Most of the Finnish traditional ships are docked and maintained here every winter.

The sound installation is made, and the music composed and performed by Arja Kastinen. You can follow the project on the Infine Arts web site at: www.infine-arts.net

Arja KASTINEN is a kantele player and was the first folk musician to take the doctor of music examination in the artistic study programme at the Sibelius Academy. She released several albums and published two books on kantele history and playing techniques.

For more information about

her works visit: www.temps.fi

Questions to Arja Kastinen:

Q.: How did you hear about the Viapori project, why did you choose to take part of it?

A.: I had known Jacopo already for several years when he asked me if I was interested in taking part in this project. When he introduced the idea of combining the photos with music and the work sounds, I was immediately enthused and said "Yes - I'm in!"

Q.: Could you tell us more

about your music instrument?

A.: I'm making music, based on improvisation, with kantele. It is the Finnish national instrument, roots about 2000 years. The instruments I use are either exact or a little modified copies from the museum originals. The original model for the 15- and 14-stringed kanteles was found in Korpiselkä, Finland, in the early 20th century and is now kept at the National Board of Antiquities.

I am using the old playing technique and the very old way of making the music from the moment. In my performances, I mix old and new playing techniques presenting the versatile timbres and acoustic properties of the kantele. I want my concerts to be experimental journeys to the dim and distant past seeking to uphold tradition while creating new things.

Q.: How do you plan to integrate music in the museography?

A.: I find it quite natural to interpret the marvellous art of photography by playing; it is like travelling into the pictures and sensing the feeling inside them and turning it into tunes!

Q.: To which extent do you think sounds and music can enhance the project?

A.: Music has the universal capability of opening peo-

ple's minds, and I hope (and believe) it will work marvellously in this project too.

Jacopo BRANCATI is a photographer and journalist specialized in maritime history and ethnology. He develops cultural projects with European maritime museums and is correspondent for the French magazine "Chasse-marée" covering different European cultural areas.

For more information about his works visit:
www.infine-arts.net

Questions to Jacopo Brancati:

Q.: Why is the name of the exhibition Viapori?

A.: Viapori is the Finnish name of the island, Suomenlinna is also the name but it comes from the translation from the Swedish *Sveaborg*.

So Viapori is the old (and still in use) name of the island.

Viaporin Telakka ry is the name of the association running the dockyard.

Q.: Suomenlinna's main activities are not related with exhibitions, why does the association want to create one? What's the main purpose?

A.: The ships are vulnerable because of the material they are made from, and the heritage they represent is



"VIAPORI, a Bridge to the Future" is a cultural project supported by:
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Skutföreningen Kustkultur i Finland rf
Chasse-marée

vulnerable too. If memory is lost, the object – the ship – is like an empty shell. Thanks to the exhibition, we can display all the human, historical and ethnographical dimensions.

Q.: How did you come to that project?

A.: I am a specialist of maritime heritage. The artistic group I founded, Infine

Arts, aims at enhancing and keeping it alive. Further to an important exhibition I created for the Finnish National Maritime Museum I came in contact with Viapori association. They invited me to visit their fortress and dockyard. When I discovered the site, I stayed breathless. I knew what I could do for them!

Keeping traditional...

(...continued from page 5)

Director of Rotterdam Maritime Museum and President of ICMM, his brother Gerd Loomeijer from *Register Holland*, Bernard Heppener from STA Netherlands and the directors of the maritime museums at Mystic Seaport and San Diego in the USA. Hendrik Boland and Paul van Ommen attended on behalf of EMH's Safety Council, while Michael vom Baur (Past Presi-

dent) and John Robinson were also there. Thedo Fruithof attended on the second day, and EMH participants played a prominent part in the discussions. The retired Holland-America liner *ss Rotterdam*, now a hotel-ship and conference venue in Rotterdam, provided an appropriate venue for dinner on the first evening. The Panel has maintained contact by tele-

phone and email since the Rotterdam event, and a follow-up meeting is planned in Bristol early in 2012. The Panel currently lacks participants from Asia, Africa and South America and would like to be able to fill those gaps. For further information on the Panel, contact Alan Edenborough, the Sydney Heritage Fleet, at alan@edenboroughclark.com.