



Scottish Fisheries Museum

Boats, fish and folk...

Volunteer Newsletter

Summer 2016

Isn't it good to see the sun at last! In this newsletter we're focussing on our volunteers – lots of people have been getting involved with the public and behind the scenes as the main summer season gets underway, so we'd like to share some of our stories, and hopefully inspire everyone with some of our plans for later in the year.

A Word from our Director

We are now in the middle of the summer and welcoming visitors from around the UK and beyond. Numbers have been rather patchy but it is always uplifting and encouraging reading the comments in our Visitors' Book and Trip Advisor reviews which are invariably positive. We know we must keep moving forward but future developments depend on us understanding our audience – who is coming in, who is not and how do we attract new audiences? With this in mind we are preparing a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for 'Resilient Heritage' funding with audience development at the core.

Other major projects which we are working on and seeking funding to realise are the major refit of *Reaper*, our Collections Centre (former Empire Cinema), a new National Memorial to Fishermen, an access pontoon for *Reaper* and creating a sustainable boat-building project to enable us to care for our own wooden boat collection and keep traditional skills alive.

When it comes to these projects and applying for funding, whether the Scottish Government, Fife Council or other external funding bodies, it is not just the direct contributions of volunteers that count but we can say with confidence that the local community is supporting and engaging with the Museum in so many ways. Thank you for your help and support which is so crucial for us to include in our applications to draw in this additional external funding.

Fishing Expo Aberdeen



It isn't just the *Reaper* that travels to other harbours to spread the SFM message! This year Hazel once again took the museum to the Fishing Expo in Aberdeen where our stand was visited by over 700 people and sales were good. We were generously supported by Dychem who collected donations for us and it was a great opportunity to make and sustain contacts with the industry.

Open Day 4th June

The biggest event of the Museum's calendar took place in glorious sunshine which certainly brought out the crowds. We had a very busy day, right from opening time at 10 when the first museum visitors entered the galleries, to the last to leave at 5.30.



We had our usual craft and fund-raising stalls manned by numerous volunteers – some who were swapping roles for the day, others who come back annually from work or study to take part and support us. We were also joined this year by the fabulously talented Jan Bee Brown and Mrs Mash who kept children and adults alike entertained with their songs and stories of the herring.



The entrance of the *Reaper* into the harbour to the sound of the pipes, bearing the Fisherlass and Lad and their escorts was, as ever, a highlight of the day. The young party played their parts well and enjoyed their moment on the stage, awarding the prizes for the art competition.

Many visitors rounded off the afternoon with a trip on board the *Reaper*, or cheering on the Community Challenge Rowers, or admiring the work of our Model Boat Club, in particular their tribute to Henry Anderson who sadly died earlier in the year.

As ever, the event is a mammoth task to organise and to deliver but it is also a fabulous day to be part of, showing the museum at its best to visitors and locals alike. Thanks to everyone who made it possible – and mark the date in your diary for next year – 27 May 2017.

Learning and Access Team Activities

It's been a busy past few months for the Learning and Access team at the museum!



First of all we have had our annual art competition which is open to all the schools and nurseries in Fife. This year's theme was 'The Fisherlasses' and schools were offered the chance to take part in a special workshop where they could learn about the history of women in fishing communities and make their own clay artwork. Over 200 schoolchildren from six different schools took part in these sessions and great fun was had by all!



We have also been running some big public events with the most eye-catching being 'A Medieval Muster', where we went back in history to a time of monks, warriors and pilgrims. In addition, we were invited to get involved in some really exciting events in the local area: for example we conducted various boat-related experiments at Fife Science Festival and dressed people up as fishermen and fisherlasses at Crail Food Festival.

Charlie says "A great big thank you to all of the Learning and Access volunteers for helping to run all of these events – I couldn't do it without you! Look out for the summer programme too which has lots to do for adults and children."

[Read more](#)

St Ayles Rowing Club



On Saturday 4th June, St Ayles Rowing Club held the second Community Challenge event that saw eight teams from local businesses racing against each other. Teams from The Bank, The Spindrift, Pagans, Stuart Barton's, Waid Rugby Club, Anstruther Fish Bar, the Allsorts and the Anstruther Tennis Club took part. After only having two hours training - some even less - the teams of complete beginners had to row twice in two different boats and the fastest combined time would see them through to the next round.

After a very tough battle, the Anstruther Fish Bar team were the winners and were presented with the Community Challenge trophy. The event was watched by an enthusiastic crowd who enjoyed the action in the sunshine. It is an event which really encapsulates the spirit of the St Ayles skiff-community: friendship and open to all.

Congratulations to the winners and all the teams that took part. Hopefully next year will see other teams keen to participate. A big pat on the back for all the Club members that helped with the event: without many people to give up their time it wouldn't be possible, so thank you to all.

The Club has been training hard for the up-coming Scottish Coastal Rowing World Championship which will be held at Strangford Lough, Northern Ireland from the 25th-30th July. There are 50 clubs taking part with international competitors travelling from New Zealand, USA and Canada: it will be quite a sight to see so many skiffs in one place. If you see the boats out training give us a shout out and if anyone is able to come along to support in Strangford that would be fantastic: we will endeavour to do Anstruther proud.

White Wing Restoration



June saw the end of an 18-month project by the Museum Boats Club volunteers, assisted by trainee boatbuilders Ryan Sibbald and Jordan Westwater.

In late 2014, *White Wing* was lifted out of the harbour by a crane for winter. There was some rotten wood around the coamings - the timber that forms the sides of the hatches - and *White Wing* was brought into the yard for repairs.

As is often the case with wooden boats, a little bit of visible rotten wood was hiding other bits of timber needing attention, and in some cases good timber had to be removed to access the bad areas. A minor repair quickly turned into a major restoration.



In the end the timber replaced was: the deck, the beams that hold up the deck, the stringer that holds up the beams, many of the timberheads which hold up the stringer, three outer planks and the bulwark, the heavy stroke, and the protective ironwork around the outside of the boat. She was refitted internally to match her original layout, and the engine was overhauled.

This has been a major effort – thanks to all the Club members, staff and trainees involved in preserving this living example of the boats that were so essential to the life of our coastal fishing communities.

Conservation of our Boat Collection

Wessex Archaeology (Scotland) has been commissioned by the Scottish Fisheries Museum to prepare a Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for the museum's boat collection. The work is funded by the Coastal Communities Fund and aims to:

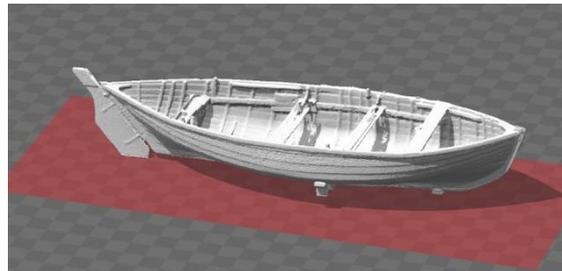
- Establish the significance of the collection as a whole to help guide the Museum in the future management of the collection, including the acquisition of new boats
- Focus on several key vessels in the collection, each representative of types of Scottish vessels used in the deep water, nearshore and estuarine fisheries over the last two centuries
- Guide the museum in initiatives to develop and maintain local, traditional boatbuilding skills

Archaeologist Ben Saunders explains:

“Over the next few months Wessex Archaeology (Scotland) will be finalising the CMP to guide the future conservation, preservation, and management of the boats collection. In this way the significance of this very special and unique collection of boats will be preserved for the benefit of present and future generations; in addition to the development and retention of key traditional skills central to the collections' survival.

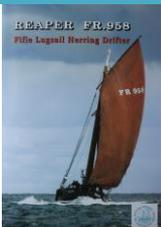
“Four of the vessels (*Reaper*, *Research*, *Jubilee*, *Newburgh salmon coble* and *Maggie*) are static museum pieces, now permanently indoors and dry. Their surroundings are relatively stable, which allows the CMP section on each to concentrate on the physical condition of each vessel and the changes that have occurred during their lifetimes.

“The CMP sections for the two operational vessels *Reaper* and *White Wing* are more complicated due to the need for constant management to ensure they remain seaworthy, which must be balanced against the need to retain as much of the historic material and authenticity as possible.



“More recently, the Wessex team have undertaken a suite of surveys, utilising among other things the use of 3D survey techniques. This has enabled the capture of the current condition of the vessels after the end of their hard working life, in which they have been repaired and adapted, to enable an understanding of the key threats to the boats; the ability to provide 3D renditions suitable for public display and dissemination; and provide useful illustrative material for the managers of the collection.”

Reaper book published



The new book on the *Reaper* was officially launched on 5th June. With text by Rodger McAslan and design by Alastair Ramsay, it is well illustrated with numerous images of the boat and crew over her long working life and her time at the museum. Copies are on sale in the museum and on board – why not drop in on one of the *Reaper* Open Days this summer and pick up a copy?

[Read more](#)

Moving Images 2 Digitisation Project



Suzanne, our Digitisation Project Officer, started at the beginning of March. Since then, she has been busy getting to grips with the photographic collection and identifying the ways in which we can build upon the valuable work that has been already been done by our long term volunteer, Alastair Ramsay and his team. So far, she's identified methods to refine the management of the collection, widen its use, and is also currently developing a new volunteer programme.

In addition to digitising negatives, Suzanne will also be using the collection as the inspiration for learning and outreach activities. She's been working with Charlie and Jen to develop a programme of events for children and adults, which will begin in October 2016 with an exhibition in the Merchant's Room.

Suzanne will soon be looking for volunteers to help with the project. There will be a variety of roles ranging from digitising negatives to researching photographs to participating in an intergenerational project. If you'd like to learn new skills, use your local knowledge, or work with a local community group, then get in touch!

Call for Volunteers (well, who better to ask than our existing crew?!)

Would you, (or would someone you know) be able to help the museum with its marketing?

All our staff have responsibilities for elements of marketing but, in the absence of a Marketing Officer, pressures on time mean that assistance with several aspects of marketing would be most welcome as sometimes we are missing publicity opportunities. Thanks are due to those who help with photography, such as Alastair Ramsay and Sandy Mackie, and to Gail Sorley for helping to promote events in the town. Areas where extra help would be useful are in writing press releases, content for social media, local distribution of leaflets and posters and e-mailing or posting out information.

There could be more in-depth projects, such as attracting coach tours, for someone who wanted to get their teeth into something specific e.g. which coach tours come to Anstruther? How long do they have here? What services do they require? Can we tailor our offering to their visitor needs?

If anyone wishes to get involved in any aspect then please speak to Simon (Director) or to John Finn (Vice-chair responsible for marketing and PR).

Keep in Touch

You can find more information on our events and activities past, present and future at: www.scotfishmuseum.org Check the News and *What's On* pages.

Or follow us on social media for glimpses behind the scenes and details of forthcoming events:

<https://www.facebook.com/scotfishmuseum/?ref=hl>
<https://www.instagram.com/scotfishmuseum/>

Or see our reviews on Tripadvisor – thanks to all our combined efforts, we have a Certificate of Excellence again this year! https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Attraction_Review-g551743-d680292-Reviews-The_Scottish_Fisheries_Museum-Anstruther_Fife_Scotland.html