



European
Maritime
Heritage



2024 SEMINAR 2024 • SEMINÁRIO EMH 2024

TOWARDS A EUROPEAN NETWORK OF HERITAGE HARBOURS

CONSTRUIR UMA REDE EUROPEIA
DE PORTOS HISTÓRICOS

LISBOA • 13.01.2024

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Heritage Harbours in the UK

Henry Cleary, Chair, The Maritime Heritage Trust and on behalf of The UK Heritage Harbours National Group

What I will cover:

- How 12 UK Heritage Harbours have come forward
- Threats to harbours and responding to the challenge
- Potential for the Future

How the UK Heritage Harbours and Heritage Inland Ports have developed

Now 12 Heritage Harbours bringing together active projects

- Based on “Museum Harbours”
 - Widened to reflect vessel needs (eg slipways), challenges and community
 - Involvement of Historic England (concern on losses) and National Historic Ships UK
 - Brian Corbett (1941- 2022) inspired many local groups
 - Network open to new applicants subject to criteria
- Bideford
 - Bristol
 - Bucklers Hard
 - Chester
 - Exeter
 - Faversham
 - Ipswich
 - Maldon
 - Sandwich
 - Shardlow
 - Stourport
 - Wells-next-the-sea

Example of pressures: Sheerness Dockyard, soon after Royal Navy left, c 1960s (Credit: The Criterion Bluetown/Bluetown Heritage Centre, Sheerness)



Sheerness Dockyard 2015 – What is left?

(Credit Creative Commons 2.0 geograph.org.uk 4524959)



Example of pressures: At the other end of the scale.... Faversham

When commercial use ends...



Maintenance ends and silt takes over



But also some recent positives....

Greater interest and support

- More public focus on the local environment eg post Covid
- Health and wellbeing benefits of greenspace and water
- Growth in amenity societies and local history groups
- Environmental concerns put water on the political agenda
- Creates a wider spectrum of potential support

Fewer dedicated vessel enthusiasts but more who support what they see



HHs Key criteria and plan/vision

- Criteria adopted by National HH Group. Three key requirements:
- Is there heritage I can visit or actively experience?
- Is there an organization I can join as a member which is publicly constituted? (Doesn't need to be the lead, can be a partnership)
- A vision to improve - an active, moving project – not just a title



Challenges and potential

Gaining local support to influence decisions and tackle challenges

- Tackling planning pressure (eg waterside housing) needs voice in numbers!
- Maintaining an attractive, lively environment = visitors and £
- Public money getting scarce - fundraising ability vital
- Safeguarding and supporting vessel businesses and spaces eg slipways, stores, quays

Community, not just vessels



Heritage Harbour – Maldon and Heybridge (M3HA)

Partnership and support

- Community based organization with social media profile
- Working towards charity status
- Influential supporters
- Regular events
- Strong planning team
- Popular location and sites

Looks great but needs constant care



Heritage Inland Port – Shardlow, Derbyshire

Shardlow is key junction on the canal system, an 18th century port – village of 700 houses

- Unique collection of 18th century buildings – warehouses and merchants houses but some at risk in poor condition
- Village organizes annual Canalside Festival with c10,000 visitors to raise awareness
- Working to charity status to raise funds for projects

Volunteer using own equipment to clear and re-open a slipway for use by visiting vessels



Faversham Creek Trust (Charity 2011) –£125,000 raised for an opening bridge, Neighbourhood Plan

FCT - boat-building, restored buildings and events. Critical issue is an opening bridge



Below bridge – a lively Creek with vessels but not in Town Centre – Above Bridge ...sheds??



Exeter and restoring the quayside

A major regeneration and investment project for an inner city location

- Ship canal dating to 1563, Custom House 1608 and other key historic buildings
- Exeter Canal and Quay Trust
- Events based programme including Heritage Harbour Festival
- Dedicated staff effort supported by local authority

Attracting historic vessels back including a rebuild project



Ways that national organisations can help

Working together

- Historic England – inventory of infrastructure, listing help package
- National Historic Ships UK - Shipshape Network of regional hubs for projects
- MHT (volunteer organization) provides website and secretariat for HH National Group
- National HH Group focus on common issues and welcomes more members

Its all about promotion and support

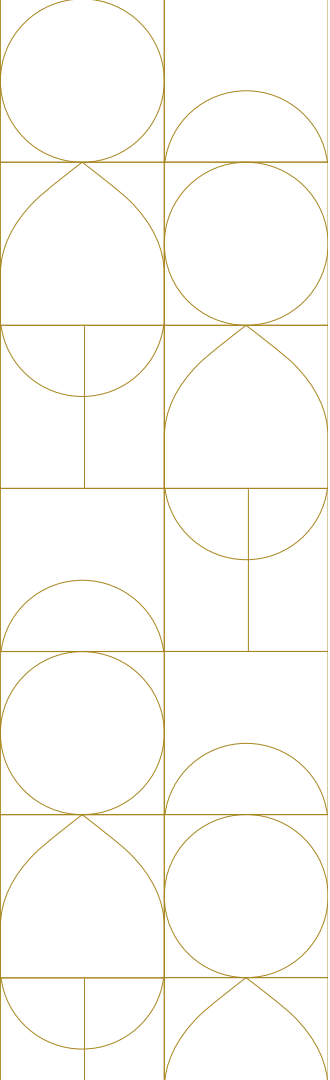


Learning from others at different levels

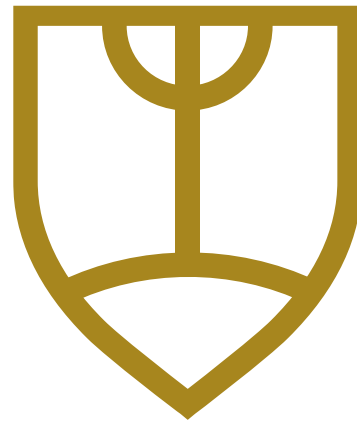
- Sharing experience and exchanging on possible solutions. [HH National Group](#) considers topics such as promotion, getting support from public bodies and from local people
- Desk based research is valuable to set out history and assets in a location eg National Historic Ships UK projects by intern students - see <https://www.nationalhistoricships.org.uk/page/heritage-harbours-research-project>
- New proposal by [Maldon M3HA](#) and [MHT Member Richard Titchener](#) to set up a research project to look internationally at what are the key success factors in heritage harbour operations, identify the barriers and how to achieve cultural change.
- This may require a funded piece of post-graduate research over 12 to 18 month delivery.. Research team to produce draft questionnaire for key players in at different states with follow- up interviews. Something for EMH to consider?.
- Comments, views to Richard at Richard@seachangesailingtrust.org.uk

Thank you (from Ipswich, our newest HH)!





THANK YOU
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