New dig to start at shipbuilding village as Buckler’s Hard Shipyard Trust launches

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Author:

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Chair of the Trustees – Mary Montagu-Scott.

Buckler’s Hard Shipyard Trust tells us:

(Photograph and all words from Buckler’s Hard).

New charitable trust Buckler's Hard Shipyard Trust has been established to deliver education and heritage projects about the history of shipbuilding at Buckler's Hard on the banks of the Beaulieu River.

The charity trustees, led by Mary Montagu-Scott (pictured above), are excited to have started the charity and are about to begin their first project – to work in partnership on an archaeological survey of the No 2 slipway, where large wooden warships for Nelson's navy were built.

The trust's mission is to bring the story of Buckler's Hard shipyard alive, with its rich history from medieval times, to shipbuilding in the 18th and 19th centuries, its role in WW2, the global footprint of ships originating from it and its rural village community, in a way that is truly inspiring, sustainable, inclusive to all and preserves it for future generations.

Projects include a survey of the wreck of HMS *Agamemnon*, Nelsons's favourite ship which sank in 1809 in Uruguay, and an archaeological dig of the historic slipways. The long-term ambition is to lay a replica keel in the slipway to show the huge scale of the wooden warships and for woodworking skills and knowledge to be studied and taught to a new generation of people.

The new trust, which is based in the village in a cottage office in 75 Buckler's Hard and in the old shipyard slipways, is an educational and heritage charity and plans to deliver courses, talks, demonstrations and projects to build skills, knowledge and collections relating to its shipbuilding heritage.

Alongside Mary Montagu-Scott as trustees are naval architect Colin Cain from Lymington and lawyer Iain Rawlinson, who have volunteered to join the charity to lead the projects forward. The Beaulieu Estate has donated the facilities, and a local donor has generously helped to fund the set up and project development.

Chair of the trustees Mary Montagu-Scott said: "I have been wanting to do this for ages and at long last it has become a reality. There is so much we can do at Buckler's Hard to keep

the legacy and skills of wooden shipbuilding alive and I am so passionate to preserve and celebrate this part of our local and maritime history.

We have many exciting projects ahead and are looking for people to join our voluntary team. We need all sorts of skills, of course, shipwrights and carpenters, but also IT, web, media, accounting, project management, fundraising and are looking for more trustees for the board to steer the charity in the future."

Hannah Cunliffe, Director of National Historic Ships UK, is excited about the opportunities the charity will present: "Buckler's Hard is one of my favourite places to visit, whether by boat or car and I can't wait to see these projects progress to better tell the amazing story of wooden ship building in this little New Forest village. Buckler's Hard is already part of the Shipshape Network, a UK-wide initiative which connects individuals and projects from across the maritime heritage sector, raising awareness of critically endangered skills. It's great to see the site evolving in this way as we work together to inspire audiences, keeping alive the knowledge to help historic vessels survive."

Archaeological dig at Buckler's Hard

From Monday 21st July – Friday 8th August, a team led by University of Southampton will be working to survey and excavate the Slipway 2 area at Buckler's Hard, one of the largest of the five surviving historic slipways. It is a significant structure within the historic shipyard renowned for the building of 55 ships for the Royal Navy during the 18th and early 19th centuries including many famous 64 and 74 gun warships.

The project is being led by University of Southampton, Centre for Maritime Archaeology Department under Professor Jon Adams and Dr Rodrigo Ortiz-Vazquez, with supporting students and volunteers from the New Forest National Park Authority, Maritime Archaeology Trust and Bournemouth University and funded through the Buckler's Hard Shipyard Trust.

The survey will record the remains of the slipway structures using state of the art

technology and produce georeferenced plans and digital models of the archaeological remains. They will update the work of the archaeological dig done in the 1990s which revealed the huge slipway timbers still under the mud and artefacts that were found were recorded, preserved and are on display in the Buckler's Hard Maritime Museum.

Buckler's Hard is open seven days a week and you can visit for free and watch the dig unfold. There will be a free daily briefing for visitors at 2pm. To learn more please enquire at the Maritime Museum open daily 10am – 5pm.

A free exhibition and film in the Shipwrights workshop *HMS Agamemnon – Navigating the Legend* tells the story of Nelson's favourite ship and Mary Montagu-Scott's dive on the wreck.

Buckler's Hard, in the heart of the New Forest, is accessible by foot, car, motorbike, bicycle – or boat! For those arriving by car, a small parking charge contributes to the upkeep of the historic village. For more details see www.bucklershard.co.uk or call 01590 616203.

With a paid admission ticket to Buckler's Hard Museum, discover more about Buckler's Hard's maritime past and follow residents' stories in the exhibition of village life.

For further enquiries about Buckler's Hard Shipyard Trust, please e-mail info@bhshipyardtrust.org.uk

…or call: 07850 667238