



Falmouth Harbour
Commissioners

MEDIA RELEASE

Safety at sea message taken on board as Tall Ships race starts without incident

With more than 2,500 leisure craft on the water in the Falmouth Bay on Saturday to watch the start of the Funchal 500 Tall Ships Race, the Falmouth Harbour Commissioners have praised the responsible actions of boat users who contributed to the race day passing with very few incidents.

Saturday was certainly a busy day for the Falmouth Harbour Commissioners who coordinated the spectacular parade of sail involving 20 tall ships amongst the crowded waters of the Falmouth Bay, led by Captain Mark Sansom as Parade Controller, based on pilot boat ARROW and assisted by Falmouth Pilot Dave Pickston.

A carefully planned and executed departure operation was supervised by Deputy Harbour Master Mark Killingback. It involved Falmouth Docks wharf crews, the Falmouth towage company, Falmouth Pilots and several channel clearance boats including the Fire Brigade and Police together with the volunteer liaison officer craft, ensured a crowd-pleasing procession ahead of the start of the race.

Falmouth Harbour Master Captain Mark Sansom said: *“Ensuring the safety of all water users is of paramount importance to us all year round but high profile events like this certainly poses additional logistical challenges and safety considerations. The sheer number of boats on the water was quite possibly the most that I’ve seen during my 16 years in Falmouth and I am grateful to all those who went afloat to enjoy this magnificent spectacle for the responsible way that they navigated their craft and the way that they co-operated with the channel clearance teams. I have*

had very few incidents reported to me which, given the very high level of traffic, reflects very well on all those involved.”

Providing pilot services for the MIR, The Uruguayan vessel Capitan Miranda, the emerald sailed Alexander von Humboldt and the Mexican Navy training ship Cuauhtémoc was certainly a break from the usual routine of the Falmouth pilots, coordinated by the Falmouth Harbour Commissioners.

Captain Nicholas Martin, who was aboard the MIR when she passed Pendennis Point said: *“The atmosphere onboard was electric. The sheer number of people that turned out on the shore and afloat made the event something I will never forget, every inch of shoreline was packed with spectators and everything that could float was out to escort us to sea. The crew was amazed and delighted by the number of people that turned out to see them off. Everyone I spoke to was thrilled at their reception in the town. I know that Falmouth is a particular favourite of the Captain of the MIR; he said that his officers, crew and cadets had had a wonderful time.*

“The event was so well organised that it was a real boost for Falmouth. A magnificent end to what has been a not the best of summers. After being such a success I look forward to the next time the tall ships come to Falmouth, I feel very privileged to have the chance to pilot such a beautiful ship and I am very grateful to the organisers in giving me this opportunity.”

Commenting on the atmosphere aboard the ALEXANDER VON HUMBOLDT, pilot Captain Alex Head said: *“It was very different from our normal piloting operations. We normally take vessels straight out to sea but our route allowed us to take a wonderful tour around the bay. Good weather and tidal conditions allowed us to pass the headlands closer than we would normally to give the spectators a rare close up view of the tall ships under sail but with literally thousands of boats on the water and so much going on around us, it was vital to remain focused on the job in hand. The atmosphere onboard was fantastic, everyone just seemed really pleased to be there and the crew were very welcoming and excellent in picking out navigational marks to ensure the ships left port safely.”*



Whilst the attention of the spectators were naturally on the tall ships, the Falmouth Harbour Commissioners were also responsible for coordinating normal port operations throughout the race day, including the movements of a cruise-ship and a large tanker scheduled to come in to take bunkers as well as several other commercial moves around the docks, demonstrating the port's ability to facilitate both commercial and event-based operations.

Despite meticulous planning, last minute programme changes put the skills of the parade controller and channel clearance teams to the test as the MIR was brought from the back of the parade to the front in the place of the SEDOV who was scheduled to lead but at short notice did not take part in the procession.

On Friday afternoon 20 students from Falmouth School joined Deputy Harbour Master Mark Killingback on the harbour launch TRELAWNEY to get a close and personal view of the tall ships moored alongside Falmouth Docks as their reward for taking part in the litter clean up from the Custom House Quay basin earlier in the month.



Mark Killingback said: *“The ‘Waterfront Crew’ did a splendid job of helping us to clear the basin in preparation for the arrival of the tall ships so it was wonderful to see their reaction to the tall ships, realising the role that they had played in helping Falmouth to put on such a fantastic event.”*

Ends.

15 September 2008

Notes to Editors:

Falmouth Harbour, including the Carrick Roads, is reputed to be the third largest natural harbour in the world. Falmouth Harbour Commissioners are a statutory port authority with responsibility for the Inner Harbour at Falmouth (excluding Falmouth Docks), the Penryn River up as far as Boyers Cellars, the southern part of the Carrick Roads and a large part of Falmouth Bay. As well as providing regulation of its Harbour Area the Commissioners provide small craft facilities for residents and visitors.

Falmouth Harbour Commissioners is a statutory port undertaking created by an act of parliament in 1870. It operates as a trust port and has a board of eight commissioners who act as trustees. Falmouth Harbour Commissioners are committed to operating the harbour in an open and accountable manner and welcome feedback from harbour users.

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