

Falmouth Harbour Commissioners



Welcome!



A warm welcome to our March newsletter, which hopefully will herald the arrival of spring.

It has been another busy period for Falmouth Harbour Commissioners with steady shipping movements, winter maintenance and the drafting of the Port Masterplan keeping us fully employed.

We are already looking forward to summer; the Commissioners are sponsoring another display by the Red Arrows during Falmouth Week which will be the highlight of a busy programme of events for the year.

We have again added to our numbers by taking on two trainee pilots and two apprentices.

There have also been changes on the Board with Peter Hamilton (left) and George "Tony" Tomlinson



taking over from Peter Morgan and Karen Sumser-Lupson.

The repairs of our pilot boat Arrow are proceeding well and we are looking forward to welcoming her back into service in the early spring.

Mark Sansom
Harbour Master



Port of Falmouth development "still alive and on course"

Proposals to dredge a deep water channel to Falmouth Harbour, opening it up to larger vessels and ensuring the future of the port for shipping, are still very much alive and on course.

The commissioners and the port operators were responding jointly to a decision by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO), which determined there would be a negative impact from the proposed dredging on the Fal and Helford Estuaries Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

The decision by the MMO does not consider the significant economic benefits the project could bring to Falmouth and is contrary to the view

arrived at by both FHC and A&P Falmouth, who were advised by the world-renowned environmental consultants Royal Haskoning.

Royal Haskoning were authors of

David Ellis, commented, "The port development project has the potential to make a major positive impact on the Cornish economy, including allowing visits by larger cruise ships and positioning Falmouth to benefit from the significant future development of the offshore renewable energy sector.

"We now need to continue working with our partners to effectively demonstrate the benefits of the project and to highlight the substantial level of environmental protection already proposed.

"The port masterplan exercise has indicated that there will be substantial gains in both jobs and economic output if the dredging goes ahead."

Local MP Sarah Newton is very supportive of the scheme and said, "This scheme is vitally important for the interests of the whole county and I continue to do everything I can to help it come to fruition."

PORT MASTERPLAN:

Have Your Say

An exhibition of the Port Masterplan proposals will take place on the Friday 18th and Saturday 19th March at the Falmouth Watersports Association building at Grove Place.

The exhibition will show plans of the proposed development of the port and give the public a chance to ask questions and to provide their feedback on the proposals.

the independent environment impact assessment (EIA), commissioned by FHC and A&P Falmouth (published 2008), which concluded that the project could be carried out within the environmental constraints protecting the area.

Chairman of the Commissioners,

Fryderyk Chopin and Athena (inset), are towed into Falmouth



Falmouth: a safe haven

LAST October Falmouth Harbour played host to two remarkable casualty vessels – the *Fryderyk Chopin* and the *Athena*.

FRYDERYK CHOPIN: This Polish sail training brig was partially dismasted in the Western Approaches on 30 Oct.

- It was taken in tow by a fishing vessel and towed to Falmouth on 1 Nov. It was secured to the Crossroads Buoy, and later moved to Falmouth Docks for ongoing assessment/repair.

ATHENA: Following a fire at sea 250 miles SW of Isles of Scilly, the *Athena* evacuated 98 crew to life rafts leaving 13 crew onboard. The crew in life rafts were picked

up by MV Vega and brought ashore on 28 Oct.

- The *Athena* arrived off port limits on 28 Oct where an inspection team boarded. She was subsequently evacuated due to dangerous levels of carbon monoxide on board and towed to sea by the Emergency Towing Vessel Anglian Princess.
- The vessel owners appointed salvors who spent several days undertaking firefighting operations offshore with the vessel under tow before it was finally able to enter Falmouth.
- The *Athena* was safely moored at the Crossroads Buoy on 10 Nov where she was handed back to her owners.

NEWSLETTER

March 2011

PORTONOVO PROJECT: UPDATE

HARBOUR Master Mark Sansom spoke recently at an international conference on issues of water quality for ports.

Captain Sansom said, "... FHC's part in the EU-funded project 'PORTONOVO' (meaning 'New Port') over the last year will mean FHC are able to scientifically risk-assess port activities and minimise any impacts to the water quality in the port."

The European Universities and Ports involved in the PORTONOVO project are working together to find solutions to managing water quality for ports and harbours and share their knowledge at events such as this.



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STUDENTS' MARINE PROJECTS

THE Commissioners are encouraging young people to take an interest in their local marine environment, and last year helped establish an initiative called the Falmouth Habitat Project with

Falmouth Marine School. Through this project, FHC can support students in their research of the estuary and last year enabled the students to exhibit their research projects to the public.



FHC praised Chris Ruberry, from Devon & Cornwall's Fire & Rescue Service, for his efforts in providing safety boats for events on the water, and awarded him their annual award for his outstanding contribution to recreational sailing.

Mr Ruberry (far left), a member of Mylor Yacht Club and instructor at Falmouth School of Sailing, was presented with his award by Chairman of the Commissioners, David Ellis.

Pendant shackle checks

IT'S that time of year again when all of the yachts and motor vessels start to occupy their moorings for the coming season.

We would like to remind all

mooring holders of how important it is to check their pendant shackles regularly.

The shackle in the photograph was removed from a mooring during our annual winter maintenance program and was just over 18 months old.

The pin eye has become enlarged and the threads have almost worn away; no need to say what might happen if a boat were attached to it . . .



Mike Tuffery retires after 50 years

PILOT boat coxswain Mike Tuffery retired in January, after a 50-year association with Falmouth's harbour.

At the age of 15, Mike was already employed on the steam tugs of Falmouth Towing Co, working his way up from deck boy to relief master.

In 1974, he was First Mate on the harbour tug St Agnes when they rushed to the scene to try to rescue Falmouth Pilot Laurie Mitchell who had fallen overboard in heavy weather, with winds of between 30 and 40 knots.

Mike dived in and managed to get hold of the pilot, but the tug could not recover him.

Mike's bravery was rewarded with the Royal Humane Society's Bronze Medal and a Gold Medal from the TGWU for his unflinching courage.

Mike then spent 10 years working for John H Whitaker in Falmouth as master of a bunkering

tanker, before joining FHC's pilot boat crew in 1990, becoming coxswain in 1991.

Mike demonstrated outstanding seamanship and dedication



throughout his career, and, at his retirement party, many of his friends and colleagues spoke publicly of the warmth, resourcefulness and cheerful good humour of the man they called "Tuffers".

Mike intends to devote a lot of his retirement to pottering about in his fishing boat and sailing his yacht Five Boys with his family.

THE National Maritime Museum Falmouth has said a big thank you to FHC for their support of the museum's "Hevva! Hevva!" schools outreach programme, which is part of the museum's wider Cornish Voices living history initiative, celebrating and exploring the Cornish people's enduring relationship with the sea.

FHC have donated £2,500 towards the programme, and staff at the museum recently presented a commemorative framed poster to Harbour Master Mark Sansom by way of thanks.



FHC have invested in two new marine apprentices, who are learning on-the-job skills as well as completing Level Two NVQs in Marine Engineering at Falmouth Marine School.

John Cruse (below left) and Matthew Ormond



Selected from hundreds of applicants, Nicholas Gilbert (above left) and Tristan Gurd are FHC's two new trainee pilots, who are currently undertaking a newly-adopted three-month Pilotage Training Programme.



Tom Redgrave (right) joined FHC in Dec 2010 as Marine Ops Assistant, combining deckhand duties with logging and processing shipping movements.



PLEASE NOTE: Future issues of the newsletter will be available either from our website, by email, or by picking up a copy from the Harbour Office.

FALMOUTH HARBOUR COMMISSIONERS

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