



MV
BALMORAL

Owned by charity
MV Balmoral Fund Ltd
(MVBFL)



GENERAL UPDATE AUTUMN 2020

Achievements on board since mid June 2020

Once again it's hard to pin down how things are going, long enough to write about! The lock-down did ease sufficiently for some volunteers, by invitation plus many precautions on board, to brave mask-wearing, long walks and devious routes to return to work, from 12th June. Many volunteers of course are still or occasionally sheltering because of their own or partners' health, or because of untoward events and, as usual, trustees insist that "families and health come first".

Just as things started to get better - most of us able to continue - we're getting more lock-downs; but our insurers are adamant that weekly inspection is still necessary.

Our Chief Engineer , Tony Byrne, had just returned from a 5 week stint in a commercial sea-going engine-room, and back on Balmoral, already been starting up the main engines. Then the next lock-down hit. Former chief Graham Bell had kindly provided cover, also checking winches and warps.

Considering the restrictions, especially frustrating in times of good weather, an amazing amount has been achieved by our stalwart volunteers, in improving the appearance and quality of the ship generally.

As for so many charities, especially those owning historic vessels, the effects of Covid 19 are still far-reaching, affecting our ship's potential future. And like them, MVBFL is finding that not being able to raise funds or consciousness through events has been extremely concerning for income and viability. We are proud of what volunteers have been achieving, and some people will have seen the blog of what we've been doing - and what the challenges are - as described above. But the social distancing rules - for volunteers as well as potential customers - have practically seized-up the Fund's ability to generate revenue on board the ship.

We are fortunate in still receiving support and donations from many of our members.

New website - www.thebalmoral.org.uk

What we've achieved on board since the last newsletter has been illustrated weekly in photo-blogs sent to those closest to the action, and more generally on the website. The old name "www.mvbalmoral.org.uk" magically relocates to this dynamic new website, an amalgamation of 5 former / other sites, which went live in July.

The photo archive is building up, and contact can be made through the website too. We are so fortunate that our ship could still be an operational one, rather than just a memory - and so **DONATION LINKS ARE ON LINE, and at the end of the newsletter.**

Some illustrations of our activities are shown on the following pages.

Recognition -

MVBFL has just been successful in the promise of help from the DCMS' rapidly arranged "LIFELINE" FUND. This aimed to assist owners and managers of the cultural heritage until April 2021, through mitigating the effects of Covid on income and maintenance.

Trustees are very grateful for the help, even though it was less than MVBFL sought. Trustees are prioritising how to allocate the funding.

This achievement is however a major acknowledgement, and makes our ship much more likely to gain further benefit. At last we have gained financial recognition for MV Balmoral's heritage and cultural value. The ship is a member of the elite National Historic Fleet. As *National Historic Ships* puts it:

Balmoral is the last vessel of her type on the Register and is an exemplar of the golden age of coastal day cruising.

3 Until this Spring, a small events team of dedicated volunteers enabled activities and functions to take place on board, considerably augmenting receipts and donations. Income achieved in these ways have funded insurances, essential expenses and some of the maintenance material used by volunteers. We have also been fortunate to receive donated materials (steel from AF Drew Steel Fabricators; paint from Nigel Mead, M&M painting contractors) as well as donations in kind (hardwood for renewed thresholds and benches, allowing repairs beneath; and sealants / fillers and paints / varnish.)

4 The vital relationship with the local community has also been achieved by our involvement with educational friends notably MyFutureMyChoice again through activity, functions and events on board. Graham Bell, former Chief Engineer, prepared and provided explanatory panels about how the ship works and is operated. We remain keen to develop these aspects through relationships with the maritime and science / technology side too. More than just income producing, they illustrate the value of this large, historic but still working ship in the harbour. **And, if we are able to achieve shore-power, there's a real chance for our educational events to become wider-reaching.**

5 Use of the ship, and Balmoral's permissibility in Bristol, has in turn been enabled by our knowledgeable chief engineer Tony Byrne, his engineering team and guidance from our maritime trustees. The charity has to convince various authorities of the ship's condition as well as worthiness: these can't be assumed or taken for granted! Hence the investment into last autumn's dry-docking. The engineering side has to allow space and tidiness for events to take place; whilst the general maintenance team has also to deal with the effects of rain and weather. Large banners and leaflets have been donated to inform the public about MV Balmoral whilst we can't allow folk on board.

6 Regulatory alteration / necessary repair work for re-gaining passenger certification has been costed, and resulting amounts are not outlandish overall, although this level of investment, with repair rather than re-build, will require more out-of-season work as part of the 5 year "continuous maintenance" certification cycle. **Not only is shore-power in winter crucial for sustaining the condition of the ship's machinery, future maintenance work will be more achievable too.**

Meanwhile, the full effects of Coronavirus including in the longer-term are of course not yet known. Again, becoming part of the new normal for heritage vessels. Nevertheless we know that sailing the ship is better for her preservation than not.

7 Raising all initial funds described above in present circumstances, has looked extremely unlikely, even though we know that sailing Balmoral is by far the best way to preserve both the ship and her tradition. We were encouraged that until March 2020, the "Balmoral in Bristol" policy, with the work and help described earlier, was achieving recognition and reasonable headway.

Using the ship in Bristol can be expected to make her at least self - sufficient out of season: potentially a net contributor, as well helpful in achieving the charity's necessary educational, community and younger-generation-inspiring objectives now and in future.

Again, shore-power is becoming essential for these objectives.

In the meantime, once Covid 19 appears defeated, we are planning to begin fund-raising for specific targets; starting with dry-docking to begin working on the hull requirements.

8 Trustees are still seeking active involvement at all levels.

Our volunteers are magnificent and do work they can be proud of, but particularly during these uncertain times extra help, in order to give cover-in-depth to engineering, welding, carpentry, decoration and deck teams, on-board, would be most welcome.

Trustees remain short of help from people with management skills / expertise in fund raising, and use of the ship until we can get her ready for passenger-carrying activities again. Responding to inquiries, looking out for contacts, leads and opportunities for short term fund-raising and engagement in local areas, all need enthusiasm and help. Also in exploring how we could usefully gain income - in the future winter months when hopefully Balmoral is operating in summer.

Eventually once the coronavirus is tamed we will need more people to assist at on-board functions, and give talks to other groups.

The ship - wonderful as she is - does not run herself, human help is required.

"We still have a chance of sailing Balmoral whilst she is intact and essentially an historically interesting ship in a very good working condition. If we lose this, NO ONE IS GOING TO BUILD ANOTHER ONE THAT CAN DO WHAT BALMORAL HAS DONE FOR SO MANY YEARS!"

- During Spring lockdown, the ship's primary condition was monitored weekly, thanks to Rob Skuse and Ross Floyd, then reported to the harbour authorities and MVBFL insurers.
- Renewal of annual insurance - with huge thanks to our donating supporters.

all photos Dave Bassett

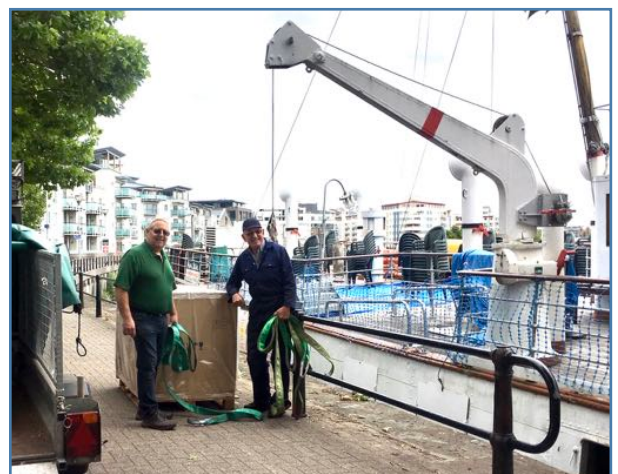


Achievements ON BOARD this summer:

- Completion of fire certification test and procedures.
- Return of the Tuesday / Friday volunteers in careful mode; sanitiser, water, supplies and notices donated.
- Chief Tony Byrne went back to sea and returned with his updated certificates. During his absence former Chief Graham Bell came in to oversee engine running etc.
- Participation in **Virtual Open Doors** (Harbour walks and ferry tours)
- Participation in virtual **Windrush Day** (on-board transmission to participating children at home, plus filming by BBC);
- follow-up **educational** day with "Empire Windrush" model building demonstrated / transmitted from on-board for school virtual participants.
- Large information banners donated and placed alongside the ship
- small printed editions produced and donated as new fliers, available alongside

Practical work achieved:

- New compressor - arrival, installation and wiring up
- Lister generator heads - 3 Port side items were refurbished (pro-bono) and returned
- Gaskets made ready to install them
- Re-build of the starboard Lister generator
- Acquisition of donated cable, hot-cutting to length and installation of wire warps
- Varnishing - continuous - to reduce weather damage and rot to rails and windows

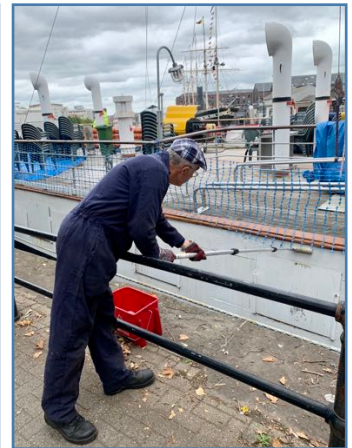
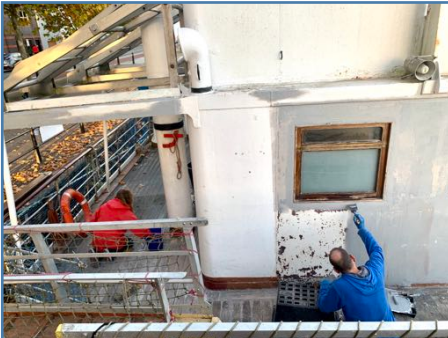


- Welding repairs (some with donated steel) for structural integrity /surfaces able to be protected;
- Work to poop deck - removal of the rusty "mangle" fairlead, cutting out & welding new steel coaming rim.
- Hacking back and re-painting - continuous - to prevent rust or rot
- Holes in decks - continuous - locating and filling many to reduce rainwater ingress
- Overhaul / renewal of aft stair starboard threshold and doors
- Cleaning mildew off walls and slime from decks for health and safety / condition
- Removal of bench areas to gain access beneath for steel and timber repair - opportunity to renew the benches with donated hardwood
- Starboard engine-room alley cleared to allow better working space, planning easier -to- lift shutters
Completed painting water tank interiors
- Lower saloon - cleared to allow events as and when, and safe access / PAT testing area, testing resumed

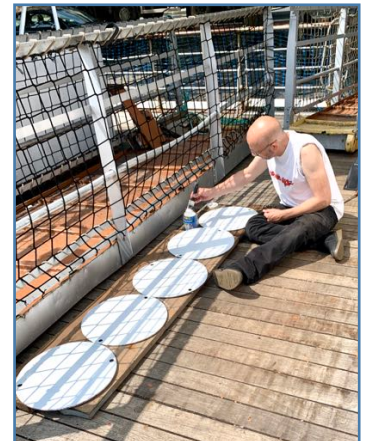


- Running main engines once a month
- Continuation of checking levels and bilges
- Making gaskets the old-fashioned way
- Removal of debris / cleaning sides of ship against rust (and to appear acceptable in the harbour scene).
- Extra warps and buffering to counteract effect of *Ellen* along-side
- Collecting donated marine paint





Please do not
yet use our
BRISTOL
address for post



Please let us know -

if you have a preferred /new email address or wish to become a Balmoral Member: contact through the website, or by email to sjjones532@gmail.com; or post to MVBFL Membership Secretary, 15 Edgarley Court, Wellington Terrace, Clevedon, North Somerset, BS21 7PR
Maggie Urquhart, Acting Hon Sec.

Please help keep this special ship's options alive, if you can.

Contact through the website www.thebalmoral.org.uk or donate....www.thebalmoral.org.uk/donations;

or donate by cheque (payable to MV Balmoral Fund Ltd) to MVBFL Treasurer, 23, Adder Hill, Great Boughton, Chester CH3 5RA; with an email address please for acknowledgment. **PLEASE GIFT AID IF YOU CAN!** Volunteering on board: contact the Chief Engineer through the website.

To discuss prospective events, email events@mVBalmoral.com tel 0117 325 6100