

CONSERVING HISTORIC VESSELS
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SUMMARY

This paper summarises the conservation principles set down in the National Historic Ships UK (NHS-UK) guidance manual *Conserving Historic Vessels* [1], giving examples of each different approach and the differing impact on a vessel's significance. It underlines the importance of focussing on either a fabric preservation or operational use route and also of identifying the period in the vessel's life to which conservation will date. The use of terminology is addressed, with reference to the increasing way it is being adopted by UK funding bodies. Seven new units in historic vessel conservation have been drafted and, if accredited, will form a new BTEC short course. The NHS-UK publications, together with these units, continue to raise awareness of the need for a better understanding of the conservation options if long-term sustainability is to be achieved for the UK's Historic Fleet.

1. INTRODUCTION

National Historic Ships UK (NHS-UK) is a government funded, independent organisation set up to provide objective advice to UK governments and local authorities, funding bodies, and the historic ships sector on all matters relating to historic vessels in the UK. A principal function is to maintain: the National Register of Historic Vessels (NRHV), currently listing over 1,200 craft meeting certain basic criteria; the National Archive of Historic Vessels (NAHV) for those vessels which have now been broken up or lost; the Overseas Watch List (OWL) for significant UK vessels based abroad, and the UK Replica List. In addition to holding and servicing these databases, NHS-UK seeks to address questions relating to the support infrastructure for historic vessels and their potential for contributing in the wider economic, social and community context. A key element is the development of standards of best practice in terms of vessel conservation, promoting a greater awareness of conservation options and techniques, leading to a more sustainable future for those vessels of highest significance.

In furtherance of this aim, NHS-UK published the three volume guidance series *Understanding Historic Vessels* between the years 2007–2010. The first two volumes, freely downloadable from the NHS-UK website, focus on the recording and

deconstruction of historic vessels [2]. The third volume, *Conserving Historic Vessels*, is only available in published form and is a richly illustrated volume, designed to explain the key principles behind conservation, helping specialists and non-specialists alike develop an understanding of their project, its significance and the most appropriate conservation route to adopt in each circumstance. This volume forms the basis of this paper, setting out key definitions for the different conservation processes, explaining how to analyse a vessel's significance and how the conservation route adopted will impact on the long-term sustainability of the craft.

NHS-UK has built on the framework provided by this book and created a series of learning units, enabling students to better understand the application of conservation principles to specific vessel projects. Since publishing the series *Understanding Historic Vessels*, funding bodies such as the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) have also begun to look for the principles set down in the manuals in funding applications relating to historic ships and boats by means of providing a benchmark. This paper draws on these aspects and seeks to examine a range of approaches to conservation through the use of vessel case studies, as well as setting down the common terminology and misconceptions that can result from its misuse.

2. VESSEL SIGNIFICANCE

Before any decisions can be taken about the conservation of a historic vessel it is important to first assess her significance. Whether she is: the sole representative of her type; contains a particularly good example of an innovative design feature; has links to a specific historical event or circumstance; or retains much original material, will impact on the choices that are made for her future. *Conserving Historic Vessels* provides the methodology for writing a formal statement of significance, which should ideally be based on a combination of off-ship research, a vessel condition survey and in-depth fabric analysis. The statement is set out under three key headings, covering: the vessel's ability to demonstrate history in her physical fabric; her associational links for which there is no physical evidence, and the ways in which her shape or form contribute to her function.

NHS-UK has begun a process to write statements of significance for the 212 vessels currently on the National Historic Fleet (NHF), a sub-set of the NRHV, which comprises those craft deemed to be of pre-eminent national or regional significance. The statements summarise the reasons why a vessel is included on the Fleet and make the case for that vessel being given the highest priority in terms of

future conservation as the best representative of her type. Statements of significance are also being written for vessels featured in grant applications which NHS-UK is asked to comment on. Understanding the particular elements of that vessel which are most significant often has a bearing on the funding decision, especially in cases where the planned works to the vessel might impair her originality or lead to adaptations which are inappropriate to her heritage setting. For vessel owners or custodians, a statement of significance should be an integral part of the long-term conservation plan, enabling a better understanding of which conservation route is most appropriate, depending on the uniqueness of the craft.

3. THE CONSERVATION GATEWAY

With a statement of significance written, the next step is to consider the 'Conservation Gateway'. This symbolises the choice between conserving a vessel for operational use or to preserve her fabric in perpetuity. Either option is likely to result in a compromise of some kind, with the working capacity of a vessel removed if the decision is to adopt fabric preservation or the inevitable loss of original materials over time if the vessel remains afloat and in operation. In some cases, the decision is easy, whilst in others it can be a very difficult choice depending on the motives for keeping her. A further option might be to take the 'sunset approach', which recognises that a vessel may be fit to operate in the immediate future, but in the longer term will need to be taken out of use if her fabric is to be protected. This requires careful planning to ensure the vessel is safely retired before irreversible damage is done to her originality.

At a 2012 conference organised by the Maritime Heritage Trust in Cardiff, Stephen White, President of Mystic Seaport: the Museum of America and the Sea, spoke about the history of the site and the policies adopted over the last thirty years to ensure sustainability for the collection in terms of funding sources, visitor numbers, reputation and recognition. It is particularly interesting to note that Mystic Seaport, once adopting a policy of 'protecting' the historic vessels in its collection has, in recent years, taken an active decision to 'project' them instead. Four of the Museum vessels have the status of National Historic Landmarks and, with their significance clearly identified in this way, a decision to preserve the fabric of the vessels by displaying them as static exhibits is the most likely approach. However, the Museum has shifted its emphasis and taken the stance that, wherever possible, its ships should go back to sea as ambassadors for the Museum, connecting the public with the site to increase visitor numbers, raise the profile and attract funding, without which

the Museum cannot survive and the vessels themselves would have no sustainable future.

Charles W Morgan, built in 1841, is the oldest commercial sailing vessel in the United States and the world's last extant wooden whaling ship. She is currently undergoing a 5-year 'restoration voyage', costing \$8.5 million, with work being carried out at the Mystic Seaport shipyard with the intention of returning her to sea in 2013 for a commemorative trip along the New England Coast to her original homeport of New Bedford, Massachusetts and then to Princetown where her last three whaling voyages commenced. The ship has been at the Museum since 1941 and during this time, she has been displayed as a floating exhibit and has had two partial restorations carried out. The work is being done under the public eye and with great care, using like-for-like materials with all aspects of the project carefully documented and recorded. She has been laser scanned to assess her timbers and the work will focus on the lower bottom framing, interior ceiling, partial keelson replacement, stern replacement and will also manipulate her lines to correct hogging in the sheer [3].

The restoration is facilitating in-depth research of this key vessel and her story, plus creating an endowment fund for the ship and allowing thousands of people to experience her afloat. However, as the last of her kind and a National Historic Landmark, it might be queried whether taking *Charles W Morgan* back to sea presents too high a risk. Would it be appropriate for the UK to re-float and operate a reconstructed *Cutty Sark* or *HMS Victory*? In either case, this would require such a high replacement of original material, resulting in loss of significance that it would be hard to justify. When debates of this kind were held over the future of *Cutty Sark* in recent years, many people called for a replica to be built which would allow the public to experience sailing a vessel of this kind whilst the original remained in preservation. The historic yacht, *Gipsy Moth IV*, made famous by Sir Francis Chichester in his record-breaking single-handed circumnavigation in 1966-67, was displayed in a concrete dry dock at Greenwich for nearly forty years. In 2005, after a campaign to re-build and re-float her, *Gipsy Moth IV* was re-launched and embarked on a second circumnavigation. On the 11th leg of the trip, she ran aground on a reef in Tahiti, resulting in an 8-inch hole in her hull. Whilst the vessel was repaired and completed her journey, she could very easily have been lost and a significant representative of our maritime past would have been no more.

4. THE CONSERVATION PROCESSES

Having taken a decision about which conservation route to adopt, it is then important to identify the conservation processes likely to be employed in each case. *Conserving Historic Vessels* identifies four key conservation processes as set out below, the first of which are more closely allied to the fabric preservation route, whilst the latter most often relate to operational use. However, the majority of conservation projects will use a mixture of these processes in some form.

4.1 PRESERVATION

Preservation has been defined as ‘keeping the fabric or part of the fabric of a vessel as far as possible in its existing state, and retarding deterioration’ and is likely to be employed when a vessel is deemed of such high significance that her original materials should be retained at all cost. By its nature, preservation is incompatible with operational use, although it might be applied to specific parts of an operational or static vessel. A preserved vessel offers a source of information on the ‘real thing’, acting as a reference point from which a replica might be built or research carried out. Where a vessel is the sole surviving representative of its type, there is a case for preserving it for future generations as it may help them to answer questions about the past which we have not yet thought of.

In some circumstances, preservation is clearly a natural process to adopt, simply because of the level of original material that survives and the extreme reconstruction which would be necessary to see that vessel float again. *Mary Rose*, the 16th Century British warship, sank in 1545 and was raised 437 years later. Her hull has subsequently undergone a complex stabilisation and preservation process, in order to dry it out for display in a climate-controlled building to retard further deterioration and preserve the original timbers. A forward thinking preservation approach can be seen with *SS Robin*, the sole surviving British-built steam coaster, which has now been preserved as a static exhibit sited on a purpose-built floating pontoon. The condition of her riveted hull would have meant loss of much of her original fabric were she to continue in operational use – this way, all existing material has been retained and displayed innovatively so that the public can see the internal and external hull in its entirety.

The emigrant clipper ship *City of Adelaide*, built 1864, has lain on a derelict slipway at Irvine since 1992 in the ownership of the Scottish Maritime Museum. With funding sources dried up, the Museum applied to the District Council for Listing Building Consent to demolish the ship. NHS-UK

opposed this and the application was withdrawn. Subsequently, NHS-UK proposed a controlled deconstruction of the vessel at a cost of £600,000 which was accepted by the Scottish Government who agreed to allocate this sum. It was further agreed that deconstruction should only be carried out as a last resort and that the money should be used to support any bid which would ensure the preservation of such a significant vessel. A considered bid was received from Australia which proposed removing the ship to Port Adelaide, a harbour which she visited many times in her working life when carrying some 900 emigrants to the New World. The Australian bid undertakes to display the ship in her present form, in a well-ventilated building, thereby preserving original material and may also reconstruct certain areas of the ship, such as the captain’s cabin to aid interpretation.

Other bids received included a suggestion of encasing the ship in concrete to above the waterline, beneath which a membrane would be stapled to the hull. She would be towed to Sunderland in this form and the concrete would be removed once a suitable dry dock was identified to house her, followed by a complete reconstruction. This option was felt to present too great a risk of damage to the original timbers, followed by a loss of significance in the reconstruction. Another proposal would see the ship turned upside down and used to house a museum of shipbuilding & emigration. In the event of deconstruction, the Scottish Maritime Museum agreed to take the first nine feet of the bow and eleven feet of the stern, including the rudder and, after pressure, to include a centre frame for display alongside these sections. However, this would be insufficient to show her shape and scale, or the form which is an integral part of her significance. In conclusion, NHS-UK has put together a list of twelve conditions for the ship, including the need for a sustainable business plan and conservation management plan to be developed, a confirmed site to be found and sufficient funds for her future. The Australian bid still has to meet the latter condition, but taking into consideration the significance of the ship to both countries and the level of originality, it is clear that preservation is the right solution for this vessel if it can be achieved.

4.2 RESTORATION

Restoration means ‘returning the existing fabric or part of the fabric of a vessel to a known earlier state by removing additions or re-assembling existing components with the minimum introduction of new material and without conjecture’. This conservation process is often adopted when a decision is made to return a vessel to her original

specification or a particular date in her history which has been identified as having the greatest significance. Careful consideration needs to be made before any changes of this kind are made and the level of new material that would need to be introduced to effect this alteration should be fully assessed. If more original parts survive from a different time, it may be that this has greater relevance to the vessel than it may first appear.

Duet is a 50 foot long gaff yawl, designed by Linton Hope and built by White Brothers in 1912. She was made famous as one of the founding vessels of the Ocean Youth Club, launched in 1960. Shortly after this, she was re-fitted at Camper & Nicholsons and a significant addition was made in the form of a doghouse, previously taken off the Duke of Edinburgh's yacht *Bloodhound*. Whilst the doghouse was added almost 50 years after her build, it forms an important part of her history as it has now been on board for half her lifetime, as well as having the connection to such a famous vessel [4]. Therefore, the decision has been made to retain this feature, rather than seeking to restore her to her original specification by removing the addition.

4.3 RECONSTRUCTION

Reconstruction is defined as 'returning the fabric or part of the fabric of a vessel to a known earlier state, but is distinguished from restoration by the introduction of new material into the fabric'. This is the most common conservation process, as some level of reconstruction work is always inevitable over time in an operational vessel if she is to remain seaworthy. However, there are varying degrees of reconstruction, ranging from reconstruction of a section or specific element of a vessel, to what has been called extreme reconstruction 'where the majority of the original material is decayed or missing, resulting in a major rebuild using new materials'. Reconstruction should be carried out using like-for-like materials and by employing traditional methods and tools wherever possible. It should be based on sound research and recreation of original design and any compromises to authenticity must be able to be justified. Careful documentation of this type of work is essential and changes to original fabric should be clearly recorded and identifiable.

As with restoration, owners will need to make a decision about which period of a vessel's life reconstruction should be taken to. The surviving Bristol Channel pilot cutter fleet is a good example of different approaches adopted in this regard. At one end of the scale is the National Historic Fleet pilot cutter *Kindly Light*, built in 1911 and considered to be the fastest and most successful of

the pilot cutters working in the Bristol Channel immediately before the First World War. After falling into poor condition as a static exhibit in a dry dock at the Cardiff Industrial & Maritime Museum, she was bought by a private owner who dedicated 18 years on a meticulous reconstruction to her original pilot cutter specification. The owner had the ambition to experience exactly how these vessels were handled and sailed during their working life and so *Kindly Light* was fitted with no engine, no electrics, an original deck layout with sweeps, mast, spars and rigging and original accommodation below, thus achieving the highest possible level of authenticity. An alternative approach would have been to reconstruct the vessel to a specific point in her history when she operated as a yacht, but this was judged not to have the same significance as the original function for which she was built [5]. The majority of original surviving pilot cutter owners have chosen to reconstruct the vessels to cruising yachts, retaining original features where possible, but with substantial adaptations including engines, modern electronics, navigation equipment and modern-style accommodation.

For vessels which are one of a number of survivors of their type and have few remaining original features, reconstruction for operational use may well be the best option. The deep sea Essex smack *Pioneer* built in 1864 by Harris Brothers of Rowhedge is one such vessel which, having sunk at her moorings in 1942 was left to deteriorate in the mud until a group of enthusiasts began digging for her remains in 1998. The wreck was carefully raised and transported to a barn to establish the vessel's shape and construction details and, by re-building with the original timbers as a base, the vessel constitutes an extreme reconstruction rather than a new-build replica. Timber of the same type as the original was used wherever possible, ironwork was recreated, seams were caulked with traditional materials and the rig was drawn from a postcard image of *Pioneer* in her working days.

The West Country trading ketch *Irene*, built in 1907 by J F Carver & Sons of Bridgewater, was gutted and sank in a major fire at Marigot Bay, St Maartens in 2003, becoming an insurance write-off. For this vessel to return to operational use, extreme reconstruction, as in the case of *Pioneer*, was the only option. Having taken this decision, the owner towed her back across the Atlantic and spent the next six years re-building her. Burnt frames had to be replaced, wasted iron rivets removed, the sheer corrected to the time of launch, the vessel re-planked and re-decked, spars made, accommodation rebuilt and fittings fabricated. Since being re-launched, *Irene* has been able to earn her keep as a sail training and cargo vessel and

can often be seen attending sailing festivals or regattas in the West Country.

Most historic vessels were only built to last a finite number of years and if, through lucky circumstances or committed owners they exceed this period and continue to operate, reconstruction will eventually occur. The Harbour Defence Motor Launch HMS *Medusa* was reconstructed in 2006-2010, being some sixty years old, and only built with a life expectancy of five years. She was carefully taken apart to reveal the condition of her original hull. The deck beams and beam shelf were repaired using reclaimed teak decking, some of the frames were replaced, sections of the hull were replanked, the engines were rebuilt and good progress was being made when, like *Irene*, she suffered the catastrophe of fire. Luckily, the vessel was unscathed, but her engines and fittings, stored in the workshop were not so fortunate. With dedication, the team continued the reconstruction and, in March 2010, the vessel was re-launched and is now fully operational again, taking part in a range of prestigious events including the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Pageant earlier this year.

4.4 ADAPTATION

Adaptation means 'modifying a vessel to suit a proposed new use' and often relates to vessels in operational use where changes have to be made to satisfy Maritime & Coastguard Agency (MCA) legislation. Vessels displayed as static exhibits may also be subject to adaptations in order to meet health and safety requirements in terms of visitor access, and care should be taken to adopt an approach of least intervention, with minimal impact on original material. Adaptations should be introduced only as a last resort and should be capable of being reversed if the use to which the vessel is being put changes at a future date. Items that are removed from operational vessels to facilitate their use, such as original engines, spars or fittings, should be kept in controlled storage in case the vessel is later brought ashore for preservation and the opportunity to display or re-fit these elements arises.

The Brunel-designed passenger liner, ss *Great Britain*, was brought back from the Falkland Islands to her home port of Bristol in 1970. Today, she is displayed as a museum ship, winner of the Gulbenkian Prize as Museum of the Year in 2006, and subject to an innovative conservation plan. Below the waterline, the dry dock has been sealed around the ship so that she is sitting in a giant dehumidification chamber with the temperature carefully controlled to prevent further corrosion. This ensures preservation of her hull whilst, above decks, various adaptations have been necessary to

allow the public full access to her both externally and internally. These have been sensitively put in place and, in particular, the system for disabled access is worthy of note. A simple wheelchair lift has been inserted into one of the ship's funnels, thereby avoiding any damage to original fabric and concealing the modern equipment from the general eye.

On the composite clipper ship *Cutty Sark*, a number of compromises have been made in her conservation. Also sitting in a dry dock, the vessel has recently been raised three metres and is supported by a steel structure, surrounded by a glass canopy. Whilst traditional methods have been employed on the lower decks, a decision was taken to replace the weather deck with new, modern materials rather than traditional teak. Like the vessels referred to earlier in this paper, *Cutty Sark* was also subject to a fire and, whilst care was taken to conserve as much original timber as possible, in other areas adaptations have clearly been made to facilitate her use as a public exhibit. Looking at her deck from the ground, it is possible to see a glass structure on the foredeck which, on closer inspection proves to be an access point to the lower decks. Likewise, an opening has been made on the starboard quarter to enable visitors to enter via the exhibition space in her hold and follow the designated route around the ship which tells her story.

Adaptations which affect the aesthetics of both static and operational vessels should always be considered only as a final option. It may be that an alternative solution can be found, although this can require some imagination and persistence to achieve. In recent years, a situation has arisen whereby local MCA representatives have demanded that historic fishing vessels remove their original fishing numbers from their gunwales or face a fine, as they are no longer active fishing craft and the numbers might lead to confusion at sea. However, both the owners and NHS-UK argued that the history of a working vessel is integral to its significance and therefore that the numbers should continue to be painted on the side of these vessels in the way they always were. After much discussion, a compromise was achieved whereby the Brixham trawler *Vigilance* painted a thin, diagonal red line through her fishing number on both gunwales and this minor adaptation was accepted by the MCA.

In cases like this, it is always worth having a further discussion with the authoritative body and seeking support from NHS-UK to indicate the level of significance of the vessel and the particular aspect under threat. The historic junk yacht *Boleh*, currently in the last stages of a conservation project

in Portsmouth, has been informed that it may not be possible to re-fit the original Japanese windscreen deadlights which were a feature of her design because they do not have the appropriate UK markings. Since the deadlights are clearly of a higher specification than would be required, NHS-UK urged the Trust to speak to the MCA again about their suitability and, in the event that regulations prevent their re-fitting, consider creating a replica piece of glass of the same size and shape which could be appropriately UK stamped.

5. CONSERVATION TERMINOLOGY & FUNDING BODIES

By providing the definitions set out above and in *Conserving Historic Vessels*, NHS-UK is trying to set a standard for the sector. The word ‘restoration’ is currently the most widespread conservation term and is regularly used indiscriminately to refer to any type of works to a historic vessel, ranging from maintenance to repairs, or minor restoration to extreme reconstruction. By seeking to define more clearly the different conservation processes, what they entail and what outcomes will result, NHS-UK is encouraging vessel custodians to think more carefully about the approach they are taking, the impact it could have on significance and whether it is the right choice for the vessel in question. A better understanding of the type of conservation being carried out will ultimately lead to a more sustainable future for our historic fleet.

NHS-UK works closely with a number of funding bodies, including the Heritage Lottery Fund, the National Heritage Memorial Fund and the Fund for the Preservation of Industrial and Scientific Material (PRISM), offering advice and feedback on applications relating to vessels on the NRHV, or associated skills and training initiatives. These funding bodies now use the framework set down in *Conserving Historic Vessels* as a measure of the proposed vessel project, the implications of the work involved in each case and the likely impact on the vessel’s significance. In its advisory capacity, NHS-UK is looking for applicants to demonstrate a clear understanding of the different conservation processes and to explain why they have adopted their chosen methodology. Funding is encouraged for those applicants who particularly seek to protect and enhance the vessel’s significance and where care has been taken over any adaptations which can not be avoided. A clear conservation management plan built on these principles demonstrates the pathway to a sustainable longer-term for the vessel.

6. ACCREDITATION

NHS-UK has also been working to develop associated accreditation as part of a Heritage Lottery funded Skills for the Future project being undertaken in partnership with the Canal & River Trust. This scheme has developed seven units in historic vessel conservation based on the principles set down in the guidance manual *Conserving Historic Vessels*. The units cover the topics of: historic vessel evaluation; stabilising historic vessels; finding data and researching historic vessels; determining the appropriate conservation route; producing replica vessels, and recording and deconstructing historic vessels. The units have been brought together to form a proposal for a BTEC level 3 diploma in historic vessel conservation and a submission has been made to the awarding body Edexcel for accreditation. If successful, this would create a short course comprised of 280 learning hours which will initially be offered by NHS-UK in partnership with the International Boatbuilding Training College Ltd, Lowestoft.

This course seeks to address the decline in knowledge surrounding the ways to conserve historic vessels and to build on the skills taught in existing boatbuilding qualifications to enable students to apply what they have learnt to heritage assets, rather than modern new-builds. By raising awareness of traditional skills and the importance of conserving craft using like-for-like materials and techniques, it will heighten the need to retain and pass on this knowledge. By offering the BTEC as a short course, it will also be possible for existing boat builders or owners with a reasonable skill level to undertake the course and hone their appreciation of what is involved in a vessel conservation project, better informing them of the decisions that lie ahead and the different processes available when working on a historic ship project.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The three-volume guidance manual, *Understanding Historic Vessels*, has for the first time provided the UK vessel-owning sector with a set of standards to aspire to and parameters within which to work. Each vessel conservation project has its own particular difficulties or circumstances to overcome and no two projects are the same. Vessel owners come from all backgrounds and may take the form of private owners, trusts or associations, charities or commercial organisations, museums or local authorities. For many, sources of funding are an issue and may determine the level of conservation which can be achieved. NHS-UK seeks to offer support and advice in all these cases. This paper has summarised the basic principles that should be considered with any project of this kind and, regardless of the difficulties to be overcome, there

is nothing to stop all custodians making a careful analysis of the significance of their craft and, within the process they adopt, seeking to retain, interpret and enhance this wherever possible.

NHS-UK is not the only maritime organisation seeking to uphold principles and standards of conservation in this way. It is interesting to note that the Comité International de la Méditerranée (CIM) which regulates classic yacht racing in the Mediterranean bases elements of its handicap ratings on the level of authenticity which has survived in each case. Vintage yachts will be gauged on how accurately conservation work has related to the original drawings or plans, as well as how well executed and how well proportioned this work is. The materials used and the sail plan can also impact on the rating [6]. This type of approach is encouraging and, as with *Conserving Historic Vessels*, it marks another effort by an umbrella body seeking to address the different levels of accuracy and care in the conservation projects being carried out.

NHS-UK would like to see more bodies and individuals adopting this approach and will be promulgating the terminology of *Conserving Historic Vessels* wherever possible. If accreditation is achieved, the new units will help to widen the knowledge base and ensure that the necessary skills to keep vessels conserved according to their significance are not lost. Work with funding bodies will seek to support those applications that have developed a clear conservation management plan and have a good understanding of why they are undertaking the work, what impact this is likely to have and what the long-term sustainability will be of the conservation route adopted. The conservation route followed in each case and the statements of significance being written for all vessels on the National Historic Fleet will help NHS-UK to prioritise the level of support and focus its energies particularly on those vessels of pre-eminent significance which may be at highest risk. By encouraging the use of *Conserving Historic Vessels* as best practise, NHS-UK hopes to reduce vessel loss, particularly within the Fleet and ensure that the UK's maritime heritage survives for future generations to enjoy.

8. REFERENCES

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Hannah Cunliffe holds the current position of Policy and Project Manager for National Historic Ships UK. She works to raise the profile of the UK's maritime heritage by: undertaking case work relating to vessels on the National Registers; seeking protection for the National Historic Fleet; managing the Shipshape Network and associated skills projects; preparing funding bids and providing expert advice to the Heritage Lottery Fund and other grant-giving bodies as required. Before accepting the role in April 2009, Hannah completed a Masters in Maritime History at the University of Greenwich and worked as a freelance maritime researcher and consultant for ten years. She spent her childhood sailing on a Bristol Channel pilot cutter.