



**National Historic Ships UK**  
**Registers Review: Tug Group**  
**Updated May 2026**

## Summary

In 2013 an [assessment methodology](#) was developed for use when analysing craft on the National Register of Historic Vessels (NRHV) in terms of their significance and potential eligibility for inclusion on the National Historic Fleet (NHF). Public consultation brought further refinement to this process and a summary of responses can be viewed here: [Review of the National Historic Fleet and Assessment Methodology 2014 \(nationalhistoricships.org.uk\)](#).

The [National Historic Fleet](#) is a sub-section of the NRHV comprising vessels which are considered to: be of pre-eminent national or regional significance; span the spectrum of UK maritime history; illustrate changes in construction and technology; and merit a higher priority for long term conservation.

Funding was sought to implement this methodology via a full review of the National Registers but when it proved difficult to secure the necessary grant aid, a decision was taken to continue the process internally, albeit over a longer time frame. Due to available resources, the current review only covers those vessels presently listed on the National Historic Ships Registers and does not extend to those on the [National Small Boat Register](#) or others as yet unrecorded.

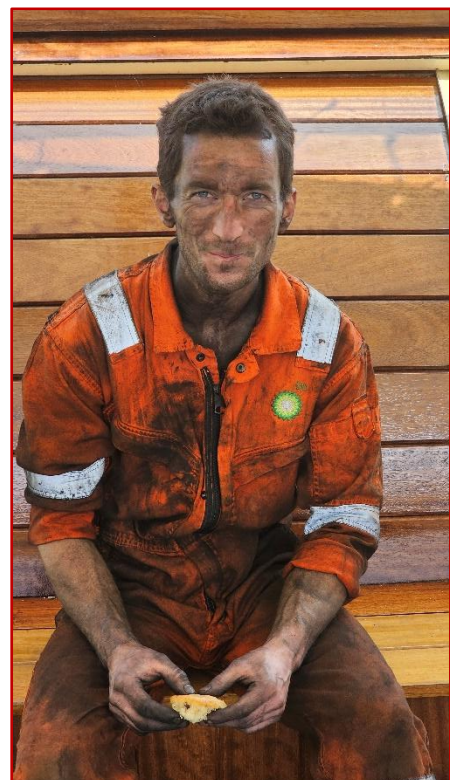
The first phase of the review is being undertaken with a focus on service vessels. A report was published in May 2024 which detailed the results of research undertaken into the lifeboats within this category, with 157 craft assessed and scored as part of this process across 2021-2024.

The second group of vessels analysed within the functional category of service is tugs and 104 vessels have been scored with consequent changes to the NHF as set out in this report.

## Methodology

A working group comprised of the NHS-UK Director, Resources Manager and Policy, Projects & Course Manager, with Stuart Anderson as the dedicated project volunteer met throughout 2024 to undertake research and assessment of the tugs. Simon Stephens, Curator of the Ship Model and Small Boat Collections at Royal Museums Greenwich and member of the NHS-UK Council of Experts was asked to give support on vessel visits and with technical queries.

The scoring system, with its component parts including specialist scores, was re-examined initially to ensure it was fit for purpose (see Appendix A). A new specialist score was created to reflect the originality of the engines and associated machinery, and updated charts were put in place to provide a breakdown of rarity across the group calculated by vessel type and propulsion. Vessels were distinguished by having been built as inland/canal, river/lighterage, harbour/coastal or ocean going/salvage/rescue tugs, and this formed the core of the rarity analysis, based on the number of surviving vessels on the Register. These categories reflected propulsion type, whether single or twin screw,



manoeuvrability, hull design (freeboard / sheer / profile), power, bollard pull, availability of accommodation, overall length, bunker capacity & range.

As outlined above, a decision was taken not to include tugs listed on the National Small Boat Register (NSBR) in this group due to the team's limited capacity, as well as the fact that the NSBR database has been undergoing maintenance. This can be revisited in future if resources permit.

Individual tugs on the National Register were scored by working group members, with results reviewed by the Director to ensure consistency of approach. A call was put out via the NHS-UK website, e-newsletter, and social media, asking owners of historic tugs to check their online entries for accuracy and get in touch with any additional data they might hold. Custodians were also contacted with specific queries, or to obtain missing and more up to date information.

Once all vessels in the group had been scored, those with the highest rating were revisited as possible NHF candidates. At this stage, it was possible to assess potential implications for the existing Fleet and highlight which vessels might be subject to a change in status. The custodians of tugs affected by a potential change were contacted and visited as necessary to verify the findings of the paper exercise. [Statements of significance](#) were written for all Fleet vessels and published online.

## Findings

104 tugs were identified and scored as part of this process, with tugs therefore comprising around 5% of all vessels currently on the National Registers.

At the start of this exercise, 14 tugs were listed on NHF. Three of these were found to score significantly lower than the top range suggesting that their status needed to change. This was due to various factors including alterations in their material circumstances and the registration of other craft of the same type which impacted their rarity score. The status of these craft has now been amended so that they will continue to sit on the NRHV but no longer on the Fleet, and their custodians have been informed.

A total of 11 tugs are included on the Fleet following this Review, 10 of which have retained their original status and one which was newly assessed as being sufficiently significant to merit this recognition. This outcome means that 10% of all registered tugs are represented on the National Historic Fleet which has been agreed by the working group as being proportionate to the overall number reviewed and in line with the approach taken during the earlier assessment of historic lifeboats, the first group considered under the Review.



A full breakdown of vessels examined during the Review and their final allocated status can be found in Appendix B.

Three tugs have been marked for further review in January 2026. Two of these are currently on the Fleet and one is a high scoring registered vessel. The need for this extended assessment is due to

problems with vessel access which have made it difficult to verify existing scores, or to pending conservation work likely to impact originality and condition.

### **What will happen next?**

Whenever a tug is added to the NRHV in future, it will be assessed internally using the same methodology and scoring system. If it scores at the same level or higher than an existing tug in the Fleet, it will be flagged for potential review and comparison against these craft. Likewise, if we are informed of any material changes to tugs on the Fleet, their existing score will be updated and checked to see if this could affect their status.

An annual survey will be sent to custodians of Fleet vessels, asking them to advise of any significant alterations to the craft in their care, the conditions in which it is kept, or its method of use. These returns will be assessed each January alongside any vessels identified during the year as being potential Fleet candidates. Vessel scores will be updated as necessary and any revisions to status made at this time, so that the Fleet remains current and responsive to changes in vessel circumstances. If custodians do not complete the necessary paperwork or update us accordingly, it may impact on the vessel's status and could lead to removal from the Fleet.

### **The Ongoing Review**

Work has already begun to assess the next set of vessels within the Service category of the National Register which is 'Pilotage.' This encompasses light vessels, pilot vessels and tenders. 59 pilotage vessels have been identified as currently listed on the National Register of Historic Vessels and a full report will be published on these once all assessments have been completed. In the meantime, we encourage any custodians of pilotage vessels to ensure their entries on the Register are accurate and fully updated.

You can keep informed about the latest progress via our Registers Review project page at: [Registers review | National Historic Ships](#)

**National Historic Ships UK  
May 2025**

**Images © Daniel Adamson Preservation Society, National Historic Ships UK, Steam Tug Kerne Preservation Society.**



**Update May 2026:**

Following the annual survey of National Historic Fleet vessels undertaken in January, a further review was carried out of new tugs added to the Register over the last 12 months to see whether any changes were required to the composition of tug craft on the Fleet and to update the group rarity chart. No changes were made to the National Historic Fleet as a result of this.

**National Historic Ships UK****May 2026**

**APPENDIX A - TUGS GROUP SCORING SYSTEM**

Core score		Description	0	1	2	3	4	5
1	All vessels	Age (Date of Build)	Less than 50 years old (DNMC)	50-99 years old	100-149 years old	150-199 years old	200-249 years old	250+ years
2	All vessels	Innovations (New ideas and techniques)	Contains no design innovation of importance / built by unknown designer	Contains one important design innovation (plus 1 point for known builder or designer)	Contains two or more important design innovations (plus 1 point for known builder or designer)	Add one point for each named innovation (maximum 4 points) plus an additional point for known builder or designer		
3	All vessels	Historical Associations (People and events)	No historical associations	Solely local significance	Solely regional significance	Regional significance with elements of national significance	National significance with elements of international significance	Clear international significance (e.g. took part in Dunkirk evacuation 1940)
4a	Vessels whose primary purpose is fabric preservation (afloat/static)	Level of originality (hull fabric / design feature / vessel form / rig / internal and deck fittings)	No conservation principles applied / very little original fabric or features surviving	Vessel preserved / restored with introduction of considerable new materials	Vessel preserved / restored with substantial original fabric or features missing	Vessel preserved / restored with some loss of originality to all elements	Vessel preserved / restored with hull significantly intact but with some features missing or over-restored	Vessel preserved with exceptional originality of fabric and key features of form and function intact
5a	Vessels whose primary purpose is fabric preservation (afloat/static)	Condition	Significant problems, fabric in extremely poor condition or status unknown	Fabric in poor condition and declining	Unsatisfactory, fabric being inappropriately preserved or unstable	Visible improvement in condition or vessel stabilised, but with limited controls in place	Satisfactory, with any minor changes under control and monitored	Optimal - vessel stabilised and regularly monitored in appropriate environmental conditions
4b	Vessels whose primary purpose is operational	Level of originality (hull fabric / design feature / vessel form / rig / internal and deck fittings)	No conservation principles applied / little original material surviving	Significant reconstruction, adaptation or maintenance work which doesn't use like-for-like materials or changes vessel appearance	Extreme reconstruction applied using conservaton principles	Major reconstruction / adaptation resulting in loss of key features or new material out-weighting old	Reconstruction or adaptation where key features have been accurately and sympathetically replicated using like-for-like materials, without impact to form or function	All key features of form and function intact: no reconstructive work carried out other than maintenance / minor reconstruction or restoraton work resulting in minimal introduction of new materials
5b	Vessels whose primary purpose is operational	Condition	Very poor and deteriorating condition, or status unknown	Significant localised problems	Vessel in need of repairs / significant re-fit / no maintenance policy	Vessel in good or stabilised condition / regular maintenance	Condition very good / any localised problems do not prevent operation / annual maintenance plan in place.	Condition excellent and 5 year+ maintenance plan in place.
6	All vessels	Rarity (based on number of known vessels in this batch)	100 plus	51-100 surviving examples	11-50 surviving examples	6-10 surviving examples	2-5 surviving examples	Unique survivor

Specialist Score		Description	0	1	2	3	4	5
1	Tugs	Propulsion	Main Engine(s) and Machinery no longer fitted	Modern or replica main engine(s) and ancillary machinery	Historic engine(s) and machinery plant fitted but not the same as original	Original engine(s) fitted with modern adaptations (i.e. modern boiler, fuel source conversion, modern generators...)	Original engine(s) fitted with historically correct replacement machinery (i.e. Boiler or auxiliary items)	Entirely original engine(s) and auxiliary machinery plant fitted
2	Tugs	Age	1961 onwards	1951-1960	1941-1950	1931-1940	1901-1930	Before 1900
3	Tugs	Batch Rarity	13+ survivors	8-12 survivors	5-7 survivors	3-4 survivors	2 survivors	Unique survivor

**APPENDIX B - VESSELS IN TUGS GROUP**

As of January 2026

Registration Number	Vessel Name	NHS-UK Status Post Review	Vessel Type	Visited during Review
5	Cervia	National Historic Fleet	Tug - Harbour/Coastal	Y*
13	Challenge	National Historic Fleet	Tug - Ocean-going/Salvage/Rescue	Y
15	Daniel Adamson	National Historic Fleet	Tug - River/Lighterage	Y
33	John H Amos	National Historic Fleet	Tug - River/Lighterage	Y*
34	Kerne	National Historic Fleet	Tug - Harbour/Coastal	Y
45	Mayflower	National Historic Fleet	Tug - Inland/Canal	Y
54	Portwey	National Historic Fleet	Tug - Harbour/Coastal	Y
70	TID 164	National Historic Fleet	Tug - Harbour/Coastal	Y*
246	Sharpness	National Historic Fleet	Tug - Inland/Canal	N
724	Worcester	National Historic Fleet	Tug - Inland/Canal	Y
1937	Kent	National Historic Fleet	Tug - Harbour/Coastal	Y
3	Brent (TID 159)	Registered	Tug - Harbour/Coastal	Y
4	Canning	Registered	Tug - Harbour/Coastal	Y
71	TID 172	Registered	Tug - Harbour/Coastal	Y
457	Governor	Registered	Tug - Inland/Canal	N
629	Brocklebank	Registered	Tug - Harbour/Coastal	Y
635	Garnock	Registered	Tug - Harbour/Coastal	N
679	Thomas	Registered	Tug - Harbour/Coastal	Y
1003	John King	Registered	Tug - Harbour/Coastal	Y
1113	Kennet	Registered	Tug - River/Lighterage	N
1388	Tommy Lee	Registered	Tug - River/Lighterage	Y
1405	James Loader	Registered	Tug - Inland/Canal	N
1447	Severn Enterprise	Registered	Tug - River/Lighterage	N
1448	Severn Progress	Registered	Tug - River/Lighterage	Y
1640	Swallow	Registered	Tug - River/Lighterage	N
1657	White Heather	Registered	Tug - Inland/Canal	Y
1808	Manchester	Registered	Tug - Inland/Canal	Y
1892	Wendy Ann	Registered	Tug - River/Lighterage	N
1971	Wendy Ann II	Registered	Tug - Harbour/Coastal	N
1983	Hatfield	Registered	Tug - Inland/Canal	N
2023	Pacific	Registered	Tug - Inland/Canal	N
2051	Britannia	Registered	Tug - River/Lighterage	N
2065	Spitfire	Registered	Tug - Inland/Canal	N
2073	Nansen II	Registered	Tug - Inland/Canal	N
2079	Varlet	Registered	Tug - River/Lighterage	Y
2097	Volunteer	Registered	Tug - Harbour/Coastal	N

2235	Oxford	Registered	Tug - River/Lighterage	N
2260	Little Gem (TID 43)	Registered	Tug - Harbour/Coastal	N
2279	Helen	Registered	Tug - Inland/Canal	N
2292	Knocker White	Registered	Tug - River/Lighterage	Y
2352	Nore-Crest	Registered	Tug - Harbour/Coastal	N
2355	Fenland	Registered	Tug - River/Lighterage	Y
2394	Addie	Registered	Tug - Harbour/Coastal	Y
2411	Judith Ann	Registered	Tug - Inland/Canal	N
2413	Cob	Registered	Tug - Harbour/Coastal	N
2483	Severn Iris	Registered	Tug - River/Lighterage	N
2501	Steadfast	Registered	Tug - Harbour/Coastal	N
2570	Christopher James	Registered	Tug - Inland/Canal	N
2585	Friar Tuck	Registered	Tug - Inland/Canal	N
2608	Sir Hendrik	Registered	Tug - Inland/Canal	N
2661	Carole A	Registered	Tug - River/Lighterage	N
2744	Touchstone	Registered	Tug - River/Lighterage	N
2745	Sandbach	Registered	Tug - Inland/Canal	N
2757	Plodder	Registered	Tug - River/Lighterage	N
2795	Charlight	Registered	Tug - River/Lighterage	N
2811	Sammy	Registered	Tug - Harbour/Coastal	N
2868	Kiera G	Registered	Tug - Harbour/Coastal	N
3004	Cannis	Registered	Tug - Harbour/Coastal	N
3526	Typhoon	Registered	Tug - Inland/Canal	N
3537	Ruffian	Registered	Tug - River/Lighterage	N
3540	Brent	Registered	Tug - Inland/Canal	N
3542	TTMS Viking	Registered	Tug - Harbour/Coastal	N
3552	Ionia	Registered	Tug - River/Lighterage	N
3560	Dockman	Registered	Tug - River/Lighterage	N
3595	Atlantic	Registered	Tug - Inland/Canal	N
3610	Revenge	Registered	Tug - River/Lighterage	N
3636	Regarder	Registered	Tug - River/Lighterage	N
3686	Major	Registered	Tug - River/Lighterage	N
3708	Tilbury	Registered	Tug - River/Lighterage	N
3731	M.T Fearnought	Registered	Tug - River/Lighterage	Y
3803	Riverman	Registered	Tug - River/Lighterage	Y
3805	Kellingley	Registered	Tug - Inland/Canal	N
3826	Knighton	Registered	Tug - Harbour/Coastal	Y
3836	Suncrest	Registered	Tug - River/Lighterage	Y
3852	Efgee	Registered	Tug - River/Lighterage	N

3858	Plausible	Registered	Tug - Harbour/Coastal	N
3880	EMS Defender	Registered	Tug - Harbour/Coastal	N
3886	Plaudit	Registered	Tug - River/Lighterage	N
1	Calshot	Archived	Tug - Harbour/Coastal	N
634	Flying Buzzard	Archived	Tug - Harbour/Coastal	N
670	St Denys	Archived	Tug - Harbour/Coastal	N
1108	Primrose	Archived	Tug - Inland/Canal	N
1184	Nore Swale	Archived	Tug - Harbour/Coastal	N
1196	Lord Devonport	Archived	Tug - River/Lighterage	N
1197	Lord Waverley	Archived	Tug - River/Lighterage	N
1202	Green London	Archived	Tug - River/Lighterage	N
1543	Silverlit	Archived	Tug - River/Lighterage	N
1581	Dido	Archived	Tug - River/Lighterage	N
1582	Defiant	Archived	Tug - River/Lighterage	N
1796	Pelican	Archived	Tug - Harbour/Coastal	N
1901	General IV	Archived	Tug - River/Lighterage	N
1927	Molen Platt	Archived	Tug - Inland/Canal	N
1947	Resolute Lady	Archived	Tug - River/Lighterage	N
2273	Wheldale	Archived	Tug - Inland/Canal	N
2360	Scot II	Archived	Tug - Inland/Canal	N
2392	Progress	Archived	Tug - Inland/Canal	N
2620	Swiftstone	Archived	Tug - River/Lighterage	N
2668	Pietro Micca	Archived	Tug - Harbour/Coastal	N
2733	Redden	Archived	Tug - River/Lighterage	N
2878	Water Haigh	Archived	Tug - Inland/Canal	N
2879	Elektra ST1982	Archived	Tug - Harbour/Coastal	N
2914	TID 174 Bonchurch	Archived	Tug - Harbour/Coastal	N
3021	Eppleton Hall	Archived	Tug - Harbour/Coastal	N
3589	Sheen	Archived	Tug - River/Lighterage	N
3644	West Riding	Archived	Tug - Inland/Canal	N
3724	Barking	Archived	Tug - River/Lighterage	N
3821	Cairn	Archived	Tug - Harbour/Coastal	N
3864	Lyttelton	Archived	Tug - Ocean-going/Salvage/Rescue	N

\* Visited but not been onboard