**INTRODUCTION –** A joint initiative by the Maritime Heritage Trust (MHT) and National Historic Ships (NHS) Shipshape Network; with strong support from the European Maritime Heritage (EMH), proposes that historic Ports and harbours in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland become officially recognised as ‘Heritage Harbours’. The developing Heritage Harbours recognise the great value in sensitively developing their, often superb, historic buildings; waste land; mooring; and maintenance facilities for both local and visiting historic vessels and are identified within the NHS Shipshape Network regions.

**SOUTH EAST REGION:-**

**MEDWAY HH1** – The proposal to designate Medway as the first British heritage harbour was presented to a meeting, of the local maritime heritage community and associated stakeholders, at the Sun Pier House tea rooms, on 10 December 2018. The meeting, at Sun Pier House, Chatham, was well attended by some forty enthusiastic representatives from; the local historic vessels; the Medway Council; MHT Trustees; the Thames Sailing Barge community and; representatives from Faversham.

Medway Council have appointed a senior officer to represent the council on the Medway HH forum group. We are in discussions with the directors of Sail Training International, with a view to Medway being a Tall Ships race port in 2025. This will be the main agenda item at the next Medway Heritage group meeting. The ‘Boat Shed’ and other historic buildings and wharfs, which form part of the historic Sheerness naval dockyard, have led to Sheerness becoming an integral part of Medway & Sheerness Heritage Harbour.

**FAVERSHAM & OARE HH2** - Faversham & Oare Creeks Heritage Harbour Group (FOHHG), have met regularly since early 2019 at Faversham Guildhall. Aims and objectives have been developed and considerable work in optimising balanced development and improvement of the creeks has already been carried out by group members. An exciting feature is that Kent County Council has continued the design work for the replacement Faversham upper creek bridge through the lockdown. A major member of the FOHHG, the **Faversham Creek Navigation Company, CIC., as well as carrying out important dredging work, are rebuilding the Town Council Brents Mooring Jetty.**

**MALDON & HEYBRIDGE HH3** – Maldon and Heybridge HH is moving at even greater pace. A full public meeting was held, at the Maldon Little Ship Club (MLSC), mid-September 2019, during the Maldon Heritage Weekend. The enthusiasm from the Maldon riverside community and Maldon Town Council was palpable. The Maldon and Heybridge Heritage Harbour Group (MHHHG) was formed and literally sprang into action, designing a notice / flyer for the public open meeting, within hours. The open meeting was successfully held during the Maldon Heritage weekend in September last year.

Regular monthly meetings have taken place at the MLSC and the group are working with the Town Council and District Council to optimise the local plans to best secure Maldon and Heybridge Maritime Heritage for future generations. The MHHHG has decided to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation and will henceforth be known as the Maldon and Heybridge Heritage Harbour Association (MHHHA).

The pandemic has done little to diminish the considerable efforts of Dr Andrea Raiker, chair of the Maldon and Heybridge Heritage Harbour Association and her stalwart committee. Active sub-committees are looking at communication and technical development. At a recent monthly meeting there were many exciting developments, including the proposed major contribution of MHHHA to the Maldon Maritime History Week in May 2021. WE LOOK FORWARD TO INVITING OUR EUROPEAN MARITIME HERITAGE FRIENDS.

**SANDWICH HH5 – The Sandwich Port and Haven Commissioners, other Sandwich maritime and heritage organisations and Dover District Council held the inaugural meeting to establish Sandwich as Heritage Harbour HH5. An excellent concept document has been prepared and the HH nomination confirmed. The first group meeting is scheduled.**

**SOUTH WEST REGION:-**

**PORT OF EXETER HH4 –** A really exciting development is the nomination of Exeter Ship Canal and City Basin within the Port of Exeter as Heritage Harbour HH4. The ship canal, the oldest in the country, was built so vessels can navigate the Exe Estuary to the heart of Exeter from which developed boat building and maritime traditions throughout the Port with its estuary and city quays that are still active today. The Friends of  Exeter Ship Canal have held discussions with the City Council and Harbour Master about a maritime revival at the basin in line with Heritage Harbour aspirations including ways to attract historic boat restorations and boat conversions. A joint announcement of the nomination has taken place and an inaugural meeting of all interested parties and stakeholders throughout the Port is being arranged. An excellent vision document has been produced. Please contact John Monks, Chair, Friends of Exeter Ship Canal, [jbmonks@btinternet.com](mailto:jbmonks@btinternet.com)

for further details.

**POTENTIAL HERITAGE HARBOURS ACROSS GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND**

**SOUTH EAST REGION:-**

**QUEENBOROUGH AND MILTON CREEK –** The historic Queenborough harbour is to be linked with Milton Creek. At Queenborough. the harbour trust is improving mooring facilities for Thames Sailing Barges. Lloyds Wharf, in Milton Creek, is home to the TSB Raybel Charters project; see more below in the HH Community paragraph. There is also the magnificent new building, which will house the reborn Dolphin Barge Museum. An inaugural meeting is to be held shortly.

**LONDON RIVER HERITAGE HARBOUR GROUP:-**

**\*\*Hot off the press\*\* A very successful ZOOM meeting was held on Thursday**

**4 February 2021. All the areas, detailed below, were represented, together with historic vessels and established Heritage Harbours. It was agreed that a composite London River Heritage Harbour Group would be formed, to create a powerful team to demonstrate to local government authorities and developers, that there is a powerful**

**maritime heritage lobby to recover and establish mooring and maintenance facilities for local and visiting heritage vessels. Locations cover Teddington to Gravesend.**

**(ROYAL DOCKS DEVELOPMENT)** – We are investigating the possibility of incorporating heritage harbour facilities within the Royal Docks development, as there is; surprisingly now few locations on the Thames for historic vessels. The London Borough of Newham is holding an Heritage month in May this year. This will be a good opportunity for the Heritage Harbour community to arrange a ‘Trade under sail, the past and the future’ event to remind the local organisations that heritage vessels, especially Thames Sailing Barges, are an essential part of both the history, the present and the future of the London river maritime life.

**(NORTFLEET HARBOUR, DARTFORD & CRAYFORD CREEK & BROADNESS CRUISING CLUB)** – Much effort has gone into these historic areas over the last few years. The hard work by their trusts should be rewarded by a major effort from the National and European Maritime Heritage organisations to bring our capital’s river somewhere close to the standards found in major port cities like Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Hamburg.

**BRENTFORD –** See **under the Inland Waterways Association below.**

**SOUTH REGION**

**COWES** – The harbour commissioners and the Cowes Classic Boat Museum have expressed interest and are looking at the potential of HH nomination.

**BUCKLER’S HARD** – Although over development is far less likely on the estate, the management team are interested in nominating Buckler’s Hard as an Heritage Harbour. Many beautiful classic yachts are making Bucklers Hard their home.

**SOUTH WEST REGION**

**FALMOUTH** - 2020 Marked the 150th anniversary of the Falmouth Harbour Commissioners and establishing the nomination of Falmouth as an Heritage Harbour is being considered as an objective in this anniversary year. An introductory meeting with the Harbour Master has taken place. The Tall Ships are at Falmouth 19 August 2021 and this provides an opportunity to examine the HH concept.

**CHARLESTOWN –** The beautiful historic harbour of Charlestown are considering HH status.

**WALES REGION**

**CARDIFF BAY** – Trevor Godbold, a fellow Trustee of the MHT is also a Trustee of The Heritage and Cultural Exchange, who, with the Cardiff Bay harbour authority, are investigating the mutual benefits of HH nomination for Cardiff Bay, one of the best stretches of secure safe lock / barrage controlled waters in Europe.

**EAST REGION**

**Brightlingsea – An inaugural meeting has been scheduled to take forward Brightlingsea as Heritage Harbour (HH 6 or 7).**

**CLEY-NEXT-THE-SEA –** We held a video conference and discussed the potential for grouping Cley-Next-The-Sea, Blakeney and Wells-Next-The-Sea, as an Heritage Harbour group.

**WOODBRIDGE** and the Deben river community are discussing nomination as an Heritage Harbour.

**SCOTLAND REGION**

**LEITH –** Edinburgh docks, although still a commercial port, has a considerable historic unused dock area and has the benefit of being the berth port for; the Royal Yacht, HMS Britannia; the Fingal (ex Windsor Castle) previously the Northern Lighthouse Board tender and now a luxury floating hotel, and; SS Explorer, a steam reciprocating powered trawler turned fisheries research ship.

**CLASGOW & THE CLYDE –** The Clyde Docks Preservation Initiative (CDPI); the Glenlee Tall Ship, and; the recent decision by the Glasgow City Council to refurbish the Govan graving docks, promote much interest in nomination as an Heritage Harbour.

**NORTHERN IRELAND REGION**

**BELFAST - ‘**PERICLES’ is an EU-funded research and innovation project, about international maritime cultural heritage, running until 2021. There are eight case regions across Europe, one being Scotland-Ireland. One of the project's main heritage focus is Belfast Port and the city's maritime heritage, in particular any 'hidden' or overlooked  maritime heritage. The academic team from Queen's University Belfast invited a representative from MHT to contribute to their research through a one to one interview on the subject of Belfast's maritime heritage. Although the actual interview has yet to take place, we have had ZOOM meetings and discussions about the possibility of Belfast being nominated as an Heritage Harbour, to provide a structure for the port’s maritime heritage. We are also looking at the possibility of EMH developing a stakeholder link with the PERICLES project to provide sustainability of the valuable maritime cultural heritage case studies that they are achieving.

**DONAGHADEE -** Donaghadee Harbour will celebrate its bicentenary this coming August and are considering Heritage Harbour status.

**ULSTER MARITIME HERITAGE –** UMH are considering becoming part of the Heritage Harbour community.

**HEART OF ENGLAND** **REGION**

At a ZOOM meeting between MHT trustees and officers of the Inland Waterways Association (IWA), we discussed the similarity of problems experienced by ports within the canal network to those of the coastal heritage harbours. The IWA have lost no time. We are already working on the development of **BRENTFORD, CHESTER, STOURPORT and WARWICK BAR** (Birmingham), as Inland Waterways Heritage (Ports) Harbours.

**CHESTER – The inaugural meeting of the Chester Heritage Port group will take place in the next few weeks and Chester will become HP 6 Or 7.**

**INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT –**Assistance was given to the Classic Yacht Association of New Zealand and the City of Auckland City Council with the resolution of some maritime heritage problems related to the preparations for next year’s Americas Cup. This was a joint effort by the Association of Yachting Historians (AYH), the MHT and the EMH and involved an extremely enjoyable ‘virtual’ weekend in Auckland.

We are, with a member of the PERICLES team, looking at the feasibility of Malta being recognised as a group European Heritage Harbour.

**THE HERITAGE HARBOUR COMMUNITY –** After the successful HH Q&A conference on 10 August 2020, a significant HH Community across the UK and Europe is rapidly developing. We are keen to include the significant return to ‘Trade Under Sail’. Sea-Change Sailing Trust’s new Thames Sailing Barge (TSB), Blue Mermaid, in addition to providing valuable character building training to all ages, will be providing trade under sail. After the current rebuild of the TSB Raybel, in Milton Creek, the ‘Raybel Charters’ Heritage and community will follow a similar model. Raybel Charters are closely associated with the French Schooner, De Gallant, which has traded

under sail from Columbia and Portugal to the UK, carrying high quality fair trade goods. On voyages during August and September this year, the De Gallant has transferred cargo to both TSB Dawn and TSB Will to carry the goods into the creeks and up to London.

**EUROPE** – **The European Maritime Heritage (EMH) Cultural Council will work with the UK Heritage Harbour community to develop the concept across Europe.**

**Please don’t hesitate to contact Brian Corbett, the OGA MHT Trustee and OGA EMH**

**Representative at Email;** [**brianacorbett@aol.com**](mailto:brianacorbett@aol.com) **if you would like to know more about the Heritage Harbour initiative.**