

The *Dover* Steamship Company

Newsletter No. 4 – June 2013

Dear Member,

Well here we are again many months down the line and we have survived as an organisation, but it's taken some doing with false dawns, a few dead ends and ultimately one or two reality checks. To say we have learned even more about the task that we have been attempting to undertake is something of an understatement. Obviously in a world in which almost everything comes down to money (as we suspected!) you need to develop the skills to know where to get cash. Overwhelmingly this all takes precious time, but consistently whenever we look up, TSS Dover is still there waiting for us to come up with the right recovery formula.

I'm glad to say that after all our trials, tribulations and disappointments, we are at least moving in a consolidated direction. There are still details to fill in but first we owe you a précis of events to date:-

2012...



Dover/Tuxedo Royale – as she appeared during March'12 The Guardian(Nathan Hobday)

The new year kicked off with some intensive planning in all departments by your committee . Being confronted with a fresh 12months worth of spring tides - TSS Dover still sunk at her moorings on the River Tees was a daunting prospect, so complacency was definitely off the agenda! We focussed on following the advice of our established contacts at PD Ports by chasing the opportunity to present our plans and suggestions to their

board of directors. As you may know PD Ports are the harbour and river operators for Teesside and represent the ultimate authority for the area. They are also major stakeholders in the saga of our beleaguered vessel. We at last managed to pin them down to a meeting date for 15th March '12 and we are grateful that they generously found the time to see us. Owing to the draw on resources and the need to traverse the length of England, we capitalised on our visit to Middlesbrough by also organising a meeting with the long suffering Able UK Ltd. Able UK are the other main stakeholders in our situation and are affected most by the presence of a sunken ship adjacent to a quayside which is of great commercial value to them. Without their goodwill, we would not have a project. We are fortunate that both PD and Able are community orientated and each hold great store in being involved in supporting the Teesside locality as well as being committed to providing solid employment and training for their respective workforces. We ought to add here that we have liaised with the north-east's main training organisation NETA-essential for setting up the framework for our future apprenticeship scheme.

Theme of Presentation to PD Ports

The only way our vessel can navigate away from the River Tees as a ship (and not razor blades), is for us to develop a scheme which will see TSS Dover /Tuxedo Royale refloated and dry docked at a nearby location.

So, our presentation to PD Ports was themed on a proposal/request that they consider partnering with us with a view to refurbishing their currently derelict historic Smith's no 4 dock. This would be set up to support a major marine engineering apprenticeship scheme based around our vessel. MD Jerry Hopkinson and his board's reaction was enthusiastic. They were also impressed with the noble order of our intentions. However as is usual in this type of negotiation it was left very much to us the instigators to organise the practical details and the funding. It was also apparent that it was up to us to put together a proposal to initially raise the vessel from the river bed. This area of activity of course means closely liaising with Able UK. Later on in the day on 15/3/12 we arrived at the Billingham HQ of Able and met company Chairman Peter Stephenson and financial director Andrew Jaques. The Able team told us in no uncertain terms that they needed the vessel moved as soon as possible as they had urgent commercial reasons for freeing up Central Quay. The outcome of our conversation (which centred around our point of ownership of the vessel) was that Able agreed to help us get our liability insurance sorted out. Previously we had spoken to several brokers who told us that they had enough trouble sorting out cover for floating ships – never mind those which had sunk. Well we didn't come away with anything concrete in the way of pledges, but we gained recognition as serious players in all this. One

thing remained constant as before - all agreed that our solution was the best if attainable.

and now... The Funding !

A prickly subject indeed... Well we started looking at available government/lottery funding at the beginning of 2011 and believe it or not the money is out there *if* you can find a way to get your hands on it. Late in 2011 we took advice from a professional fund raiser who related to our plight and gave us an hour of his time. Spurred on by his input we enthusiastically applied to the Coastal Communities Fund. For your info :-

http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/prog_coastal_communities_fund?tab=1&

Actually we made an '*expression of interest*'. This was for government cash but distributed by the lottery fund administration. This took an inordinate amount of time and effort to complete for three of your committee members and we really believed that we had ticked all the boxes with our projected maritime apprenticeship scheme. Well it turned out that they had £18,200,000 to give away and 500 organisations applied for a requested total of £301,000,000! We had asked for 1.8million! A churned out letter told us to re-apply next year-*back to the drawing board*.

Now that we've dusted ourselves down we are going for the Heritage Lottery Fund and European(intereg) funding. Our secretary, Andy Maclean, had taken much time and trouble researching this with the North Eastern

office of HLF. Technically the ship is 3 years too young but there now may be a way forward by varying the exact funding scheme we access. Interestingly the HLF lady at Newcastle-Upon-Tyne said the ship's age shouldn't be a problem so we're working on it - another time consuming exercise. Retrospectively we feel that we may have tripped up on the Coastal Community application by including projected costs for refloating the vessel (or by even bothering to apply for it in the first place!). We learn, keep calm and carry on. Even if we had been successful the money would not have been available till early 2013 and as far as we knew at that time our stakeholders at Able wanted the ship refloated pronto. Well how was this going to happen you may ask? –read on.

Refloating TSS Dover/Tuxedo

We had discussed this amongst ourselves and with the other stakeholders over and over again, with considerable input from our Head of Engineering, Pat McGeehan. Also we've talked about it with our pragmatic Teeside friend John Coates who would like just to go down to Central Quay for a weekend and pump her out! We have also discussed this with the very helpful MOD salvage and marine team who have taken the trouble in their spare time to come and examine the vessel as best as they can. Gone are the days of them doing our kind of job as a FOC exercise – even at cost

price their services would add up to a considerable sum of money.

So, enter new players from the marine section of a well known transport conservation group who had experience in refloating heritage vessels sunk at their moorings. We asked around and they came highly recommended from that vessel's owners. Their chief technician assured us that the costs we would incur from them would be affordable and amount to expenses only. Our discussions with this group led to us organising their visit to our ship during early July'12 to make an assessment with a view to firming up proposals. They were to have investigated a pump out procedure with John Coates who has a first class knowledge of the vessel's layout. He is also in possession of a full set of plans, the ones which we rescued from her last year. We also importantly prepared to consult with the North Eastern branch of the environment agency – yet another stakeholder in the fate of TSS Dover/Tuxedo Royale. Alas our Irish colleagues went quiet - they even refused to take our calls and even went to the lengths of withdrawing from Facebook where we had a line of contact. Thankfully we hadn't got round to booking their hotel rooms or paid any travelling expenses in advance. We didn't pursue the issue - another lesson learnt!

The Glare of Publicity...

Well you could say that again... We may well have been struggling to get some cash together, but in 2012 getting

media attention was a bit like falling off a log! It all started in February after John Coates had a feature in the north eastern regional press all about Dover/Tuxedo in its sunken state at Central Quay. This was picked up on by broadcaster/journalist Jon Ronson who crafted an article for the Guardian - and suddenly we had a double page spread in the national press.



Steve 'Jock' Kitch's brilliant 'watercolour' photo of Dover/Tuxedo in the sunshine at Central Quay.

This was noticed by the BBC's '1 Show' . We were contacted by program planner Sam Goss who wanted to give us a 10 minute slot on the show on Monday 26th March - all at the height of Titanic fever. Well they really

went for it - they actually hired a motor boat from a local Teesside operator to film the vessel and interviewed John Coates (for us),



The Tuxedo ladies from Newcastle relate their memories and their dismay at the current condition of the night club ship that they once knew so well. They are standing on the north bank of the Tees just opposite the vessel and just down stream from the transporter bridge.

The 1 Show reporter Simon Boazman below, gestures across the river towards the ship.(P



Neil Etherington for Able UK, the Official Receiver and they even phoned the MCA. It also included nostalgic comments from a group of ladies from Newcastle-upon-Tyne, all of them former revellers in the active days of Tuxedo Royale as a night club moored under the Tyne bridge. As they spoke they gazed from the north bank of the Tees at the somewhat forlorn location of some hectic nights! Finally reporter Simon ended up having a quiet chat over a pint with John Coates at the Navigation pub, John rounding off the feature nicely by waxing lyrical over the future of the vessel.

The very next day BBC South East collared your editor for an interview on the Western Heights overlooking Dover Docks - a bit brief but all good publicity.

Furthermore on the media front we were contacted by a TV film maker who has been looking at putting together a 'fly on the wall' documentary about our efforts to preserve TSS Dover/Tuxedo. However we stopped hearing from them when they got lost in France - an unfortunate story.

Finally with regard to publicity 2012 we must mention John Coates' 'Tuxedo Royale – the boat' facebook page which currently has around 430 members mainly from Tyneside, many of whom danced or drank the night away on 'the boat'. No doubt the ladies pictured above number amongst them

<http://www.facebook.com/tuxedoroyale.theboat>

...and so to **2013**

Well we have to admit that 2012 was on the face of it a busy yet apparently unproductive year. However we amassed an impressive array of contacts and gained

much experience. By the end of 2012 face to face meetings had taken place with almost all the main stakeholders:-

PD Ports - owners and controllers of the Teesside Harbour facilities.

Able UK – owners of Central Quay Middlesbrough, where TSS Dover is ‘moored’.

Middlesbrough Council - the local authority covering Central Quay.

The Environment Agency- We haven’t actually met the responsible officers from the North Eastern office but we have an excellent relationship with them and a mutual understanding of the situation in hand.

We rounded off 2012 by presenting to the economic development team of Middlesbrough Council who stated that they would consider helping us financially if we came up with an appropriate business plan.

The Business Plan

Yes - those terrifying 3 words which strike fear into conservation and preservation schemes globally. They are an horrendous amalgam of words and figures which the likes of us struggle to produce and those in financial authority demand. We have since our inception made

several attempts at a proper business plan but it never seemed quite to come together. Several outside offers never materialised but one thing was for sure- we definitely needed a business plan and we definitely needed help.

At last it came in the form of an original suggestion by DSC committee member Neil Wiggins who suggested we contact an organisation he was acquainted with, namely C.R.E.S.T.. This stands for Charlton Riverside Engineering Sustainable Transport. He then introduced us to CREST director David Jones. David a surveyor, passionate environmentalist and expert on European funding took to us immediately as a focussed group, also seeing a mutual opportunity to both realise our objectives. David took on the task of preparing a long awaited definitive business plan. We are privileged that David has since accepted our invitation to join our committee. Without going into too much detail here I will simply allow the attached business plan explaining everything - it's all in there! All the stakeholders have already received a copy of our business plan - without exception they were impressed. We are now going for interreg 4 European funding and the search for a European project partner is on. We already have several leads. Please read and digest the attached plan thoroughly. If you have any questions, suggestions or queries please make contact via email or write to our secretary Any Mclean. The plan is designed to be improved upon or modified for our benefit.

Dover Town Council

We must record our thanks to Dover Town Council for supporting us from the beginning of 2012 by covering the cost of your committee's train fares between Dover and Middlesbrough which do not come cheap as you can imagine - and help preserve the personal solvency of your committee. It must be said that Dover Town Council are the only organisation who have shown faith enough to supply us with money. We salute them!

Membership Issues

A recent update from our Membership secretary Sarah-Jane Hart shows that our membership list has been slowly expanding. New members mainly seem to come from the ranks of former crew members on TSS Dover/ Earl Siward and /or relatives of former Sealink employees. It has been a busy period and your chairman would like to acknowledge the need for more frequent newsletters. All efforts will be made to rectify the situation. The way things are going there will certainly be no shortage of material to put in them! (..and on the subject)..thanks for the great photos- We will incorporate them into the website or the campaign.

Other News

We now have had several meetings with the Dover based Burgess Marine- now the UK's largest ship repairer. MD Nick Warren has given us invaluable advice on the practicalities of handling the ship and how

to initiate our intended training scheme. This is on-going and will be particularly relevant when the vessel reaches the South East.

Recently on 30th May '13 we were invited by Neil Wiggins to a meeting of the National Maritime Development Group at the University of Greenwich. One of the speakers was Martyn Heighton chairman of National Historic Ships. He was actually aware of DSC and we were able to discuss funding options with him. Neil is chairman of NMDG and also attending as a delegate was David Jones of CREST/DSC.

Member Rita Murphy from Ireland(one of the most committed Sealink Heritage enthusiasts in the world) is visiting the UK for our AGM – also with a view to relocating to Dover. Rita has commissioned several Sealink vessel models, including, yes you've guessed it 'Dover', which is nearing completion as you read this. Exciting plans are afoot-*watch this space*.

We are in the process of completing the establishment of our business negotiating company 'Dover Steamship Company Ltd' which will put us in the position of dealing with those organisations who require that type of status.

A.G.M. Tuesday July 9th 19.30hrs
Dover Town Council

Chambers, Biggin St., Dover. (next door to Town Hall)



TSS Dover negotiating Granville Dock, Port of Dover circa 1970 (A. Jones)

Your committee looks forward to meeting you all on the above date - you will have already received the AGM agenda if you are in contact via email.

If you are able to access DSC business on line- why not click on the following links for more information.

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Save-Preserve-the-former-Sealink-Ferry-TSS-Dover/188667974494250> ...also <http://www.tssdover.co.uk/>

On behalf of the Dover Steamship Company committee
-thankyou for your continued support...Kind Regards

Richard Moffatt
Company

Chairman Dover Steamship



TSS Dover in Service circa 1968 (photo AG Jones)