

NATIONAL HISTORIC SHIPS UK



Forward Plan Review | 2019 - 2023

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In 2019, National Historic Ships UK (NHS-UK) published its Forward Plan setting out key goals on which to focus its energies across a five-year period.

In addition to core activities, the Forward Plan included: reviewing the National Historic Ship Registers; developing and increasing technical expertise; creating a structured approach to working with vessels at

risk; continuing the development of maritime skills and knowledge; and raising awareness of maritime heritage to new audiences. A huge amount was accomplished within this timeframe, with highlights listed below.

Below: *Gracie and Dorothy* on the Slipway, by Chrissie Westgate.

Front cover: *Trinity* reds at sunrise, by James Crisp.



Outcomes & Achievements

- 157 lifeboats assessed comprising 8% of all registered historic craft and 36 visited.
- 30 out of 79 tugs scored with visits undertaken to 12.
- Statements of significance produced for 46% of vessels within the National Historic Fleet (NHF).
- Nominations Panel formed for the Council of Experts and eight new members appointed.
- Second edition of *Recording & Deconstructing Historic Vessels* published in accessible format.
- New base level of data set for the National Archive of Historic Vessels.
- At risk assessment undertaken for NHF and accompanying guidance published.
- Traffic light system implemented to provide 'RAG' risk rating for individual NHF craft.
- Shipshape Network boundaries re-drawn, and eight Hubs established UK-wide.
- Hosted five in-person vessel owner events, two networking days and seven webinars.
- SHTP 2 project completed having delivered 16 trainee placements with 14 trainees going into paid employment or voluntary work within the maritime heritage sector.
- Two further short training placements provided, and series of learning films created.
- Six external markers appointed to Historic Vessel Conservation (HVC) course, 14 students enrolled, new learning film and additional case studies created.
- HVC course migrated to Moodle and e-portfolio assessment option offered.
- Traditional Seafarer Introductory Certificate launched with five delivery providers.
- New Award for Excellence in Maritime Conservation established in the name of the late director, Martyn Heighton.
- Photographic exhibitions held at the Historic Dockyard Chatham showcasing the previous year's winning and shortlisted images.
- 21 Flagships awarded and promoted.
- Awards ceremonies held online for three consecutive years with audiences of up to 2,500.
- Social media outreach extended to include Instagram with followers totalling 15,000 across three platforms.
- Three research internships hosted producing data on climate change, Heritage Harbours and economic impact of museum ships.
- Website upgraded to Drupal 9 with improved usability and design. Shipshape Network pages re-designed and re-launched.
- Engagements with national programmes including Mental Health Awareness Week, Volunteer Week, Heritage Open Days and City of Culture.



Measuring our Success

As a result of these activities, a robust process is now in place for ongoing assessment of the National Registers and the review is currently being delivered in-house analysing vessels by group.

A strong Council of Experts exists which is regularly asked to provide advice and support to the NHS-UK team. There is a mechanism for nominating new representatives to the Council as required.

Additional specialist expertise has been sought to support the Registers Review with individuals co-opted onto the working group as needed.

Guidance on recording and deconstructing historic vessels has been fully updated and is regularly used by the sector, demonstrating the value of instilling a structured process to capture data.

A risk assessment has been undertaken for the National Historic Fleet and a system is in place

to monitor craft whose rating raises concern moving forwards.

The SHTP 2 project funded by the Heritage Fund between 2018-2021 has been completed and its legacy upheld, with new initiatives such as the Traditional Seafarer Introductory Certificate in place.

The first student has completed the HVC course with distinction.

The Shipshape Network has been overhauled, with its regional boundaries re-defined to give full UK coverage, new web pages have been developed and the Skills Directory updated.

The Photographic Competition has formed the basis of a new outreach project, initially leading to an online exhibition and then to an annual display running for six months each year. A touring 'highlights' exhibition is also in development.

Pudge, by Shaun Mills.





Conclusions

2019-2023 was a successful, but challenging period, thanks to the added pressures brought by Covid-19. However, the pandemic enabled NHS-UK to capitalise on the use of digital and online engagement reaching as wide an audience as possible, whilst engaging with many more vessel custodians in a cost-effective and achievable way.



Sunrise in Kotka, by Mariusz Bartosik.

New mechanisms for assessment and guidance have been put in place, ensuring the Registers are on a strong footing moving into the next strategic framework, ready to build on all that has been achieved to date. NHS-UK has demonstrated its resilience as an organisation and, with increased

technical expertise in place, will continue to provide a strong voice for maritime heritage into the future.

[To view the Forward Plan 2024-2028 click here.](#)



The Vic 32 emerging from the mist on Loch Ness, by Mike Beard.

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