

NELSONS BOATS AND MARINE SERVICES

Some four years ago Quinton Nelson who owns the Watson lifeboat ex ON-926 *Guy and Clare Hunter* and is based in Donaghadee, Co Down, saw an opportunity to find good homes for old lifeboats by starting an internet brokerage service www.nelsonsboats.co.uk. This has worked very well and many old boats have now found new homes with owners who love them.

This has slowly developed by the sharing of information around some owners and prospective owners and two years ago the "Historic Lifeboat Owners Association" was formed. There are now over 100 members in the association, most with their own boats and this has proved invaluable in the sharing of information on all aspects of lifeboat ownership. The association is open to all, with an interest in preserving old lifeboats, not necessarily all being owners. The association intends to look at the possibility for saving historic lifeboats by taking on restoration projects with application for grant aid from such organisations as the Heritage Lottery Fund and others.

There is also in progress an investigation into a block insurance policy which would cover all historic lifeboats in the association, allowing them to have both general cover and be open to the public at rallies and other events. This would involve the owners changing their current insurance to the new policy when it becomes due for renewal, hopefully at a cost reduction. Negotiations are continuing.

Quinton also puts his long time knowledge in wooden boat construction and maintenance to good use in a marine surveyor capacity and is available to carry out surveys or give advice on ex lifeboats, anywhere.

A further development in this side of the operation has been the requests to restore some owners boats to pristine condition. Work has been carried out all around the country, from Stornoway to Tichmarsh, Falmouth to Bristol and has resulted in the expansion of facilities at his workshop at home.

Two boats in residence there are 37' Oakleys ex ON-961 (37-03) *Calouste Gulbenkian* and ex ON-983 (37-16) *The Doctors*, both saved from museums in the nick of time. *Calouste Gulbenkian* came from the Milford Haven Docks museum where she was badly neglected and considered a health and safety issue as there was no controlled access. *The Doctors* was saved from the Buckie Drifter heritage Centre which closed in 2005.

Plans are to fully restore *Calouste Gulbenkian* to sea-going condition with the removal of the controversial self-righting system and addition of fixed ballast to compensate. *The Doctors* will act as a blueprint for this restoration and may be used to provide donor parts.

The first boat to have a facelift at the facility is member Andrew Hargreaves' Rother *Harold Salvesen* which was launched recently following a complete re-paint and general overhaul.

Also recently arrived is Tim Kirton's Liverpool class *Aguila Wren* for a complete restoration. This is likely to take at least a year or so. Through membership of the association Tim has been able to find original parts including the brass shaft steering gear and windscreens necessary to complete the work.

Another interesting project is the also recent arrival of the Rother class



Ex ON-1022 (37-30) *Harold Salvesen* all photos Quinton Nelson 007

Silver Jubilee which has been purchased from Dublin by new owner Michael Ankuda. When this full restoration is completed early next year, this boat is being shipped to the owners home in New York, USA., where she will undoubtedly cut a dash when she sails up the Hudson river.



Very technical calculations! 009

The boats arrive by road transport, *Harold Salvesen* being transported from Falmouth by Boat Haul, a Donaghadee based company with specialised boat transporter. *Aguila Wren* also came by road transport, by courtesy of P&O Ferries, Lame.

A notorious railway bridge outside Falmouth has 14'3" clearance. *Harold Salvesen* left the yard at 14' 2"! Much holding of breath and praying no council workmen had tarmaced the road in the meantime.

All enquiries to Quinton@nelsonsboats.co.uk ☎ 02891 883403



Aguila Wren, Harold Salvesen and The Doctors 006



Harold Salvesen and Silver Jubilee 008



Boat Haul 011