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CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE



As we approach the end of the year on the "Maid of the Loch" I would like to thank our volunteers, our friends and the many visitors who have shown their support during 2023.

We have made exciting progress towards restoring our beloved ship as you will read in this newsletter.

We confidently look forward into 2024.

With much optimism, and with reinvigorated enthusiasm we all look forward to seeing the "Maid" berthed alongside the pier resplendent in her original livery during the coming season.

Watch this space !

On behalf of everyone at the "Maid" best wishes for the festive season and good health in the coming year.

Iain Robertson,
Chairman

CLOSING THE GAP!

Two large pieces of equipment that are vital to the work of the shipyard, the telehandler and the 'Genie' platform lift, were both deemed to be life expired just a few weeks ago but we were delighted when Mark Anderson, CEO of GAP Plant Hire came to our rescue and provided us with the use of a telehandler whenever required. He also assisted us with the sale of these older items and is helping broker the purchase of a better quality second hand 'Genie' platform lift so essential for any work at height or to the hull where scaffolding would be difficult and costly to erect. This support is likely to continue and we've even been supplied with a portaloo!

John Sibbald Training has also been most helpful by instructing 5 of our volunteers in the operation of the telehandler. It's very comforting to know that we have the support of these companies who value the importance of our work to get the Maid moving again.



Telehandler trainees

STOP PRESS!

GAP has just selected PS Maid of the Loch as their Scottish Region charity so we can expect a cheque for £5000 very soon. A very big thank you for such fabulous support!

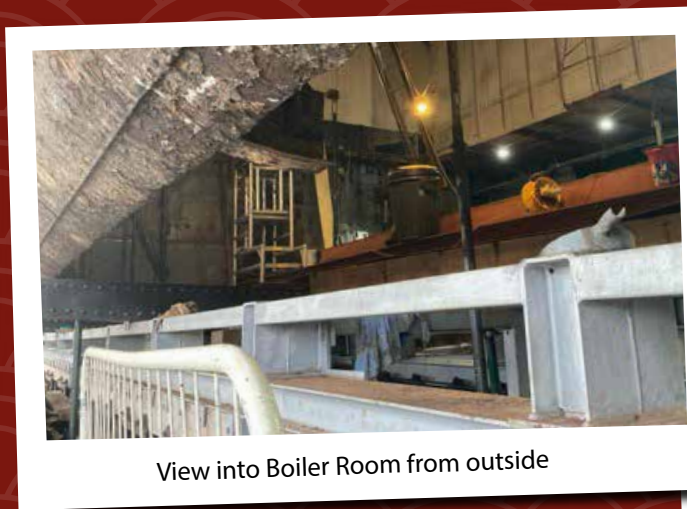


REPLACING OLD HULL

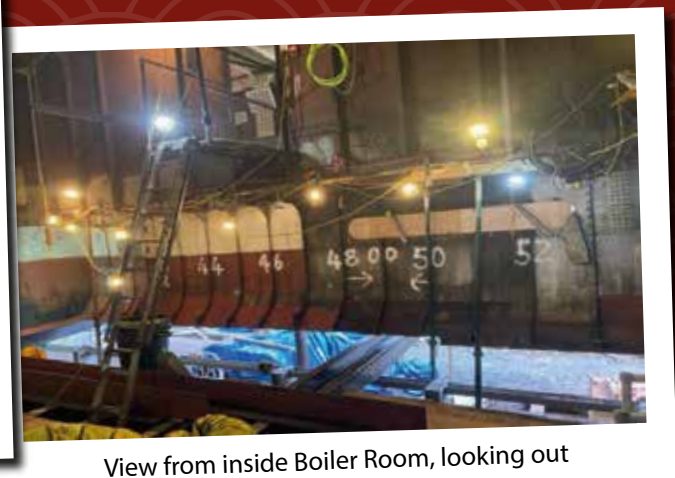
The second phase of the work to replace the boiler room shell is underway. A lot of effort was put in by Volunteers, Board members and suppliers on how the contract could be best arranged, balancing risk and cost. The successful bid from JPS Restoration of Alloa puts them in control of the work flow with volunteers preparing the way, assisting with significant tasks and providing the mechanical handling with our new machine. Certified steel has been purchased and delivered from Holland and is now at Barnshaws for cutting and forming before some finishing work at JPS and fitting on the ship.

It sounds a simple set of tasks but also included is assistance from Bute Boatbuilders, who cut the 12m sheets in half to meet Barnshaws handling capability, Volunteers and JPS partially cutting out the hull plates to take templates before the original hull shape is lost and design and erection of a goalpost support for the main deck while the hull below is removed. Frames will start going in around the 2nd week of December and will be fully fabricated in place prior to the plating being slotted under the hull as a newbuild hull would be constructed.

We appreciate support for this phase from Scottish Landfill Communities Fund.



View into Boiler Room from outside



View from inside Boiler Room, looking out

NEW FUNDING FOR OUR SHIPYARD

We're very pleased to have secured grant funding to develop our shipyard capacity through a Scottish Government programme known as the Community Led Local Development Fund. The specific Forth Valley and Loch Lomond part of the programme and their Local Action Group awarded the Maid Project around £100,000 to assist with items of equipment including a newer Genie platform lift which will allow us to progress our restoration programme.



The Maid of the Loch project is extremely fortunate to have facilities at Balloch Pier which mean that our volunteers can work on the ship while "slipped" out of the water. The Genie platform lift in particular will enable us to reach parts of the ship requiring repairs, safely, easily and cost effectively. Combined with the grant award from the Scottish Landfill Communities Fund for the current works to the hull, our fund raising this year has enabled around £200,000 of essential repairs to be carried out and vital equipment to be purchased.



CHEERIO TO CHARLI

Recently we had to make a sad but also joyous farewell to Charli, our much loved Programme Manager. Funding for Charli's post was at an end and we had to decide, for the meantime, to concentrate our efforts on practical progress to the ship. We aim to continue working towards creating a museum, running events and engaging with the public but we will be short of Charli's undoubted flair. She is shown here with Charles in naval uniform, another of our much loved crew. Volunteers past and present turned out to wish her all the very best. Good luck - we'll miss you Charli.

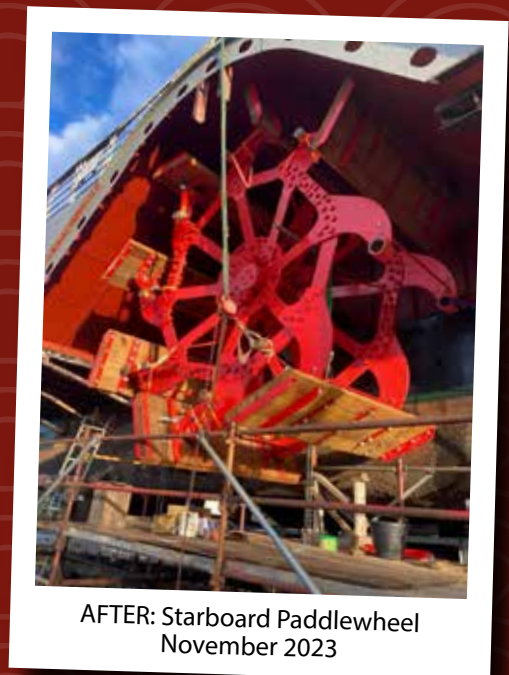


PADDLE PROGRESS

Work continues steadily on restoring the paddles with the starboard paddle floats now in place. There have been some alignment challenges in the reassembly work but the 'Paddlers' are now mostly content that the difficulties have been resolved. Some reassuring advice from engineers at Waverley was helpful. Work will now commence on the Port paddle arrangement as there is repair work still required to the starboard springbeam before the starboard paddle can be completely restored. Skilful work from a skilful crew.



BEFORE: Starboard Paddlewheel August 2021



AFTER: Starboard Paddlewheel November 2023



VOLUNTEER FOCUS

NICK ALLAN



Nick joined the project as a volunteer Director a year ago, and is a familiar sight at the shipyard leading groups of potential funders, or influencers around the Ship.

As Nick says, “You never know what a visit to the ship might generate by way of potential funding, valuable connections or a future partnership arrangement. By bringing specially selected guests to the Ship, the profile of this project and the fantastic work being done by all the volunteers, can be showcased and promoted.”

A Chartered Surveyor and Humanist Celebrant by trade, when he isn't dealing with “all things property” Nick can be found conducting Wedding Ceremonies just about anywhere.....in castles, on beaches, at loch sides and even back gardens!

Apart from his great enthusiasm and passion for the Maid, he has an enduring love-affair with classic cars. For better or worse, richer or poorer, he owns a number of cars in various states of (dis)repair.

If he wasn't already a busy chap, a few weeks ago Nick was commissioned as a Deputy Lieutenant of Dunbartonshire.

ONLINE PRESENTATION ON MAID PROGRESS

Our Chairman delivered an online update on 30th November. If you missed it you can view it on Paddle Steamer Preservation Society YouTube channel.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N_b6ae4Ehpw



MOUSY MERCHANDISE

We've told you before about the beautiful, unique items made from the Maid's old paddle timber so we thought we should introduce Maggie Irving, our very talented woodturner. We can also introduce too our adorable ship's mice, a new item in our online shop. These very tactile wee creatures are barely having time to settle in before they are snapped up!

Bag yours now at

<https://www.maidoftheloch.org/maid-shop/special>



SHIPPING LINE PARTNERS AT KNIGHTSWOOD MODEL BOAT CLUB

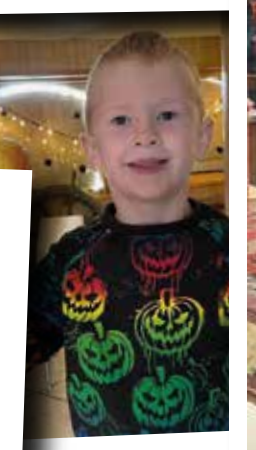
Over many summers we've been delighted to welcome our friends from the KMBC. They always bring a wide variety of boats, ships, sometimes even submarines and enjoy adding to our events by displaying their interesting models to our visitors.



THE SPOOKY SHIP AND PIRATES DAY OUT!

We just love dressing up here at the Maid and lots of our young supporters do too. All sorts of shady characters arrived (willing!) to walk the plank or hook the shark or other 'dangerous' activities. You'll be pleased to know they all found the treasure!

Hallowe'en was another very successful event when ghostly creatures and scary monsters walked the decks of the Maid and enjoyed, hunting for ghosts, dookin' for apples, the pumpkin bowling alley, pinning the nose on the witch, being pilloried and then being terrified by the Terminator – Hollywood style – that was scary!





VISITSCOTLAND QUALITY ASSURANCE

This year, in spite of the difficulties of operating a visitor attraction inside a working shipyard, we have retained our 3 star grading but are very encouraged to know that we are very close to obtaining 4 stars – next year for sure!

GRANT WELCOMED

A grant from the Stafford Trust has been received and has been really valuable in keeping the work of the project moving forward.

Thank you!



PAINTING PRESENT

We were very happy to accept this wonderful original painting of the Maid leaving Tarbet Pier back in the 1950s. Painted by Malcolm Root it was donated by Peter Lyons who was keen that, on his death, the painting would be returned to the Maid's owners.

NEW GUIDES REQUIRED FOR SEASON 2024

Can you help out on a couple of weekend days per month? Join our knowledgeable crew and sell/tell the Maid's story. Training given – get in touch soon by email or phone.



MAID OF THE LOCH



MAID OF THE LOCH www.maidoftheloch.org
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