

FRIENDS INDEED

Heartening support from the Friends of the Hunter Fleet

The Inaugural General Meeting of the Friends was held on Saturday 26th April at Hunter's Yard, Ludham. Despite the adverse weather some 150 Friends came, from as far afield as Wales, Evesham and London. Chairman, Richard Sargent warmly welcomed everyone and spoke of the encouraging number of Friends, then 332, without whose enthusiastic support the project to save the Fleet could not have succeeded. The Constitution was approved and officers and Committee members elected.

Bryan Read, Chairman of the Norfolk Heritage Fleet Trust, then gave the background to the formation of the Trust and reported on the satisfactory financial position to date. He also paid tribute to the many supporters, including the local media, who had made possible the purchase of the Yard and Fleet, and to the Yard staff whose skill and devotion would keep the boats sailing for decades to come.



BEFORE THE MAST

Friends brave the weather for a wet sail

Jennifer Mack, grand-daughter of Percy Hunter who built the boats from 1932 onwards, ended the formal meeting by saying how proud her father and grandfather would have been to see their work being carried on, giving pleasure to all who sailed in their splendid craft.

Chairman - Richard Sargant
 Membership Secretary - Jane Bartlett
 Treasurer - Peter Wall (co-opted 5.6.97)
 Newsletter Editor - Tim Munsey
 NHT nominee ex-officio committee member - Paul Stevens
 Elective Members - Jennifer Mack, Basil de Longh,
 Andy Cowburn, John Marr (co-opted 5.6.97)

The boat shed at Hunter's packed with Friends for the Inaugural Meeting
 Committee Members of the Friends of the Hunter Fleet elected at the IGM or
 subsequently co-opted are as follows:



A cheerful barbecue lunch followed with many Friends braving the rain to sail in the few boats not out on hire. Old friendships were renewed, new ones made, and the bar and sales counter kept busy, the new sweatshirts, burgees and badges being much admired.
 This first meeting augurs well for the Fleet, and we look forward to seeing many of you again at forthcoming events and meetings.

Friends' Chairman writes...

It is now well over a year since the Friends Steering Committee was formed and those of us fortunate enough to have access to the Fleet and other craft have all, to paraphrase Mr Goldwyn, crossed a lot of water since then. The Friends Association is in a sound financial position and is firmly established, with mailings going out to some 391 members' addresses and bearing in mind that most of our 'members' are actually families of various sizes, the number of Friends is likely to be above one thousand! This magnificent total could not have been achieved without two key ingredients: a love for the Fleet and a good deal of hard voluntary work; and despite the previous article about the Inaugural General Meeting I must mention it too, as both enthusiasm and hard work were much in evidence with so many of you turning out to see your Association was given a proper launching despite the weather; indeed my most vivid memories of the day are of the boats sweeping back down Womack through the drizzle, with broadly smiling crews. Thanks to everyone at the Yard for arranging the seating and sailing and all the other willing hands who helped with everything from planning to purchasing supplies, car parking, greeting members at the door, making tea, running the bar, providing the barbecue and tidying-up at the end.

The Friends sweatshirts, badges and burgees proved popular, with the latter selling-out; there are fresh stocks in and all are available at the Yard.

This Newsletter, *Hunter's Yard*, is developing well with an ever wider range of interesting articles; the picture quality in the second issue was excellent too. Thanks again to Tim Munsey and Paul Stevens for their hard work. In order to develop still further the news and information in the Newsletter, the Friends has purchased a camera, to live at the Yard. We can look forward to seeing the resulting photographs from this issue onwards.

I am pleased to announce that the Committee has been strengthened by the arrival of two new members since the IGM, for even an association our size has sufficient hats in its wardrobe to impress a princess. Peter Wall has been elected Treasurer; and should look very smart in one of them. John Marr has become an elective member and will also be a great asset to the Friends with his local knowledge and as he has more frequent contact with the Yard than most of us.

As to the future, various ideas have been discussed with members of the Trust and we will continue to work together to develop the most promising. In the meantime, while we establish our own traditions and administrative routines we have the forthcoming Friends' Evening at How Hill, which I am sure will be fascinating. I hope that we will have a full house, despite the recently advertised rival show. The East Anglian Film Archive does have a wonderful collection of early cine film - so do come, who knows, *'the star may be you'!* Of course some of their film is really not that old at all....

Richard Sargant