



Newsletter Issue No. 1

The exciting development project continues to gain momentum. Plans for the world-class museum are progressing with designs by architects Carmody Groarke; the fundraising campaign is off to a positive start; and our team is growing along with an ever increasing desire and commitment to succeed. Our newsletter updates you on the work we have been doing and tells you what is happening in the next few months.

Images far top and top: Windermere Steamboat Museum concept designs © Carmody Groarke

Windermere Steamboat Museum development

It has been an immensely busy year for everyone involved in the project. Since Carmody Groarke won the RIBA competition in 2011, the team has grown to include Arup engineers, Real Studios and Jonathan Cook Landscape Architects as well as other expert consultants and advisors.

The plans for the new Museum have been developing, responding to how the collection will be displayed and the stories it will tell. The main exhibition space will show the boats within the context of the lake whilst the wet dock will have boats on the water evoking the spirit of the past. The café will make the most of the incredible views across Windermere, overlooking the jetties where boats will come and go and visitors can board boats setting sail around the lake.

The design team has been working closely with the Trust - our curators, conservation and learning teams - to understand the processes that are involved in the conservation of the collection and find out more about the history



of the boats and the people who made and used them on Windermere. We have consulted with many local people and visitors and we are using their comments to inform the project development. Watch out for further opportunities to see the work in progress and comment on the proposals.

The team completed the outline designs towards the end of summer and are working towards detailed designs and a planning application in early 2013.

*Charlotte Upton
Project Coordinator*

Volunteers

Work on the care of the collection has to continue on a daily basis. While the conservation of Osprey progresses, we have also been turning our attention to re-organising the stores and the smaller items in our care. It's an exciting journey of discovery every time we open a box or lift layers of tissue paper. Ranging from early essentials such as lifebelts and fenders to more luxurious tablecloths, tea sets and silver spoons, many of these small objects are rare and precious survivors and raise interesting conservation issues. The library and archive pose another enjoyable challenge, as we organise and preserve existing information while remaining alert for new material and research opportunities.

We are fortunate in having such a dedicated team of volunteers to help us in this work behind the scenes. From archivists to engineers, they offer us the benefit of their existing expertise while remaining open to developing new skills. We will be presenting profiles of some of our volunteers in future newsletters. If you'd like to join them, do get in touch.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer or would like to find out more please contact us.

*Margaret Reid
Curator*



Collections and research

It is said that a picture tells a thousand words and this is certainly true in light of the ongoing research into the people and places associated with the boats in the collection at the Museum.

The Lakeland Arts Trust has many glass plate negatives from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in its photograph collection. Scanning the glass plates at high resolution reveals images of startling clarity which allow us to zoom in and read the names of boats, the trade signs on passing carts and even the price tags in a Bowness draper's shop window set out for 'Spring 1889'.

Included in the collection are original negatives for well-known photographs. One such image is of the 1845 steamer *Lady of the Lake*, which was the first passenger steamer on Windermere. Others show a rural Waterhead at the north of Windermere with the 1871 cargo steamer *Raven* at her mooring. Barrels are lying on their sides and baulks of timber lie along the deck, whilst carts are busy in the foreground. This dynamic and irreplaceable information on how



Raven was used and how cargo was arranged on her deck will directly influence her display in the future.

With the help of our volunteers we are continuing this extremely rewarding re-discovery of images in our own collections and others held locally to paint a vivid and accurate picture of the history of boating on Windermere.

*James Arnold
Assistant Curator Social History*

Image top: Volunteer at the Museum

Image bottom: Photograph of TSSV Esperance moored on Windermere

Image opposite top: Mr Bowler's Steam Launch

Image opposite bottom: Conservation work on SL Osprey



Appeal for information

The elegant Windermere steam launches at the heart of our collection are evocative emblems of a pre First World War era of leisure and privilege – boats that might express a wealthy industrialist's passion for steam and invention or serve as a beautifully-furnished extension of a luxurious lakeside home. It has been fascinating to hear recently from a number of people with family associations with the boats. Their willingness to share

images and information really helps bring the collection to life and we hope that these connections will grow as others get in touch.

But these boats would not exist without the people who built them and maintained them, and without the generations of accumulated Windermere boatbuilding experience that preceded their development. We do have some insights – letters from launch

owner to engineer, for example, or photographs of the construction and launch of early 17ft class yachts. Collection objects, too, are eloquent: *Branksome's* exquisitely shaped oil can was ingeniously designed for use in a tight space, but would mean even more if we knew who'd used it.

Finding out more about the people who built and operated the boats is the next focus for our research. We have already received valuable information from individuals, and generous support from an army of volunteers poised to help us explore census records, but we feel there is more information out there. If you were involved, or had family involved, in boatbuilding, maintenance or operation on the lake, do please get in touch; even if it's just an idea or a snippet of information, we'd love to hear from you.

Margaret Reid
Curator

Conservation & restoration

It's been a very productive year in the restoration of the Steam Launch Osprey. Shona Meiklejohn joined the team in December 2011, bringing with her valuable wooden boat building qualifications and skills which have helped Osprey's progress immensely.

All of the internal framework is completed, including seven new planks, some of them full length, and a new keel and stem that have been bolted into position. Curved templates were made of each part of the stem, then taken to felled oak trees in Devon, Hampshire, Oxford, Northumberland, Cumbria, and Hull, where curved oak branches were matched to the templates, then cut to the correct thickness and transported to the museum for the seasoning and fitting process.

Newly trained varnishing volunteers who have been dedicated to learning their new skill are applying varnish in volume. The cabin has been craned onto Osprey and the engine and boiler will soon follow. This will allow the engineering volunteers to do what they have craved for so long... to fit all the pipes and get steam up!

Plans are already in place for the next conservation projects; *Penelope* a 1932 motor launch similar to the varnished steam launches, has been surveyed and the engine is currently being overhauled by volunteers; we want also to start work on *Dolly*, the oldest steam boat in the collection.

Adrian Stone
Conservation Workshop Manager





Activities

Although the Museum is closed during the re-development, we have opened up for 'Behind the Scenes' group visits, Heritage Open Days, family fun days and special activity days. We have received wonderful feedback from visitors who have been really enthusiastic about their visit and the plans for the museum. For information about future events please have a look at the website.

individuals in the coming months will be crucial to us reaching our target in time to apply to the HLF.

Sue Marsden
Campaign Director

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Fundraising

Our fundraising began as soon as we received development funding towards the project from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) in 2011. We have raised over £2 million to date and have a shortfall of £685,000 which we need to raise in the next few months as our match funding to apply for a multi-million HLF grant in early 2013.

We have been pleased with the support we have received so far from charitable trusts, individual benefactors and statutory funds. The Sir John Fisher Foundation led the way with a major grant, followed by substantial grants from the Wolfson Foundation, the Garfield Weston Foundation and smaller grants from

several other trusts. The Rural Development Fund has supported the development stage and we have recently been awarded a conditional allocation of £1.25 million from the Regional Growth Fund. More applications are in progress and we anticipate further grants in the coming months.

Individual donors have been very generous and we have received many large donations and pledges and look forward to securing more personal donations in the near future. The fundraising campaign is now being launched to the public and we hope that anyone who is interested in the project will make a donation, however small or large. All our donors are personally thanked and the larger donors will be permanently acknowledged on donor boards in the new Museum. The support of trusts and private

A note from the team

It's such a rare opportunity to be involved in the development of a new museum. It's an exciting challenge for all of us involved in the project, with important – and often difficult – decisions being taken on the best conservation route for each

boat, how to display and interpret the collection and make it widely accessible, and how to ensure that the new Museum is sustainable in the long term. The project has been described as one of the most complex maritime projects in progress at the moment!

*Image top: Steamboat Association Rally
© Paul Pearson Photography*

