

# Medway Queen (Heroine of Dunkirk)



## Development Programme for 2021



*Above: Medway Queen was awarded the South East Region Flagship Pennant by National Historic Ships-UK. Our President, Admiral Lord West, and the Mayor of Medway, Cllr. Habib Tejan, at the bow rudder steering position on the fore deck on the occasion of hoisting the pennant on 19/10/2020.*

*Inset: The Flagship 2020 pennant.*

The Dunkirk veteran paddle steamer Medway Queen is moored at Gillingham Pier, Medway. After a total rebuild, mostly funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, she is now being fitted out as a museum ship and event venue by our dedicated team of volunteers. In the longer term we wish to restore the ship's engine and propulsion system. We rely heavily on donations and grants for this work and over the last twelve months the income we would usually generate from visitors has completely disappeared.

New Medway Steam Packet Company  
(Medway Queen Preservation Society)  
Gillingham Pier, Pier Approach Road, Gillingham, Kent. ME7 1RX  
UK Registered Charity No. 296236, Registered Company No. 2100358

[www.medwayqueen.co.uk](http://www.medwayqueen.co.uk)

Richard Halton  
11<sup>th</sup> February 2021

## [About the Medway Queen Preservation Society](#)



*Photo: PS Medway Queen at Gillingham Pier. George Painter*

The New Medway Steam Packet Co. (Medway Queen Preservation Society) is a registered charity whose objects are “preservation and restoration of the historic Dunkirk veteran paddle steamer Medway Queen.”

The society is based on Gillingham Pier where we operate a volunteer workshop and the Medway Queen Visitor Centre. Guided tours of the ship are offered to the public on Saturdays in season. Ship visits are not possible at present due to the pandemic but as soon as we are able we will welcome visitors once more.

### [Volunteers](#)

The society is entirely voluntary although we employ specialist contractors where appropriate. Based at Gillingham, Kent, we have a Workshop Team doing physical restoration work, a Saturday Team who run the Medway Queen Visitor Centre and operate ship tours and an administrative operation run by the Trustees from the on-site office or remotely from home. In addition we have a team who tour with illustrated talks on the vessels history and two more who attend various events in the UK to get a wider geographic spread for our message. We have an active presence in the heritage and local press.

### [Education and preserving the history](#)

Much of what we do can be classed as educational and we are preserving and promulgating the history and the stories of the people who served on the ship in peace and war. We take that story to not only the enthusiast audience but also to a much wider family audience. To that end we participate in the Kent “Wheels of Time” initiative and the September “Heritage Open Days” events. We are becoming involved with “Medway’s City of Culture 2025” bid and cooperate closely with a number of other heritage projects.

There is more information on the society at [www.medwayqueen.co.uk/about-mqps.html](http://www.medwayqueen.co.uk/about-mqps.html) including our articles and financial statements for 2018/19 and 2019/20. For the history of the ship including Dunkirk and the hull rebuild look at [www.medwayqueen.co.uk/history.html](http://www.medwayqueen.co.uk/history.html) and to get an impression of how the vessel looks now go to [www.medwayqueen.co.uk/virtual-tour.html](http://www.medwayqueen.co.uk/virtual-tour.html)

## Development Plan 2021

The Medway Queen Preservation Society has an ambitious restoration/development program for 2021. Even though much of the work will be undertaken by the society's volunteer teams the total cost is expected to be in the region of £45000. We are, of course, at the mercy of a range of unpredictable factors including the Covid restrictions and, as always, the weather! No doubt other such factors will come out of hiding as we progress. As much of this programme as possible will be completed in 2021, any remainder being tackled the following year.



The plan includes a temporary move to Ramsgate in the summer where the ship will be put on the slipway for overdue hull maintenance and painting which was originally planned for last year. If circumstances permit we will organise an open event in some form while the ship is there.



To get the maximum benefit from the visual improvement that hull painting will make, work relating to the promenade deck is planned. The replacement purser's cabin is ready to be assembled on board when we can return to work. This and the forward deck house require a fully waterproof top covering which Bulldog Flat Roofs Ltd, of Gillingham, have already agreed to do for us.

We have a mast in store waiting to be refurbished and fitted. Even if the volunteers do the bulk of this work expensive machinery will be needed to be hired to install it.

*Photos: Top Ramsgate Dunkirk events in 2015, Brian Simmons*

*Bottom: The new mast being delivered to Gillingham Pier, Judith Maguire*

Design work has commenced on replacement deck seating around the rails and as free-standing units on the deck. These latter will be constructed in such a way as to allow for future fitting as life rafts if required. Detailed work on the materials required (mostly hardwood) has been undertaken and we estimate that this alone will cost in the region of £10000.



The Medway Queen Preservation Society is launching an appeal to raise £45000 to cover the 2021 restoration and development work programme. The total cost may well exceed that but we do not start with an “empty collecting tin”! We already have a useful amount towards the Ramsgate expedition from local sponsors, which we hope to carry forward from last year. Our own marketing initiatives and support groups will contribute and an appeal to members and others to sponsor a “bottom on a seat” has been launched on the web and will be in the next issue of Full Ahead, our members’ newsletter.

*Photo Above: Deck seating arrangements post-war.  
PSPS Collection*



*Photo Left: The newly fitted out upper aft saloon.  
Mick Appleyard*

## [Administration](#)

We do not presume to forecast the outcome of any request for funds but it is useful for you to have as complete a set of information as possible at an early stage. More information can be found on our website 2021 work program page where this document is available as a PDF down load. In the event of any queries please contact Richard Halton on [richardhalton1502@gmail.com](mailto:richardhalton1502@gmail.com)

Payment can be made by cheque to Medway Queen Preservation Society at our Gillingham address or by transfer to our CAF account: New Medway Steam Packet Co Ltd, account 00008835. Sort code 40-52-40.

Your assistance and support will be acknowledged on our website and in our members’ newsletter unless you request otherwise. Although contributions may be acknowledged in the context of a specific aspect of the 2021 project it is not our intention to “ring fence” them for that specific phase of the programme. We will provide updates to the specialist press from time to time and we will happily cooperate if you wish to issue a detailed announcement of your own participation.

Richard Halton