



Prawle Point

No: 48

'eyes along the coast'

Summer 2014

Sailing Trawler BM45 PILGRIM - Restoration

Some watchkeepers at Prawle Point may already have logged her on passage but this year BM45 *Pilgrim*, a restored Brixham built sailing trawler should be more in evidence than before.

She is owned by the Pilgrim Preservation Project Limited (PPP Ltd), a 'not for profit company' and managed by a Board of Directors. Pilgrim BM45 Ltd is a Registered Charity that exists to support the restoration and operation of the vessel. The Project is staffed predominantly by volunteers and was formed to return, restore, and operate the *Pilgrim*, as part of Brixham's unique maritime heritage, and provide heritage education and enjoyment for the widest possible audience.

Pilgrim is a 90 tonnes gaff rigged ketch, with overall length, (including bowsprit), of 94½ feet, mainmast height, (deck to mast top) 72 feet, beam 17½ feet, and draft (aft) of 10½ feet. She is powered by twin Doosan 5.8, 120 bhp diesel engines. She is built with English oak frames, with oak and larch planking, Canadian pine deck and English oak tiller. Her mast timber is Douglas fir. *Pilgrim* has a well equipped commercial galley, and can accommodate 10 guests with 5 crew.

Brixham sailing trawlers are famous around the world for their strength and speed. They were built right on the waterfront with timber from nearby woodlands, but because they were wooden they have all but disappeared. They only had an expected lifespan of about 20 years or so. (Timber and labour were cheap in those days). The work was hard and dangerous with just three men and a boy (often an orphan) manning these trawlers. Many were lost at sea whilst trying to make a living.

Pilgrim was originally built in 1895, by J W & A Uphams, one of Brixham's most famous yards. She was one of six similar vessels built at Uphams during that year. Brixham, an extremely busy Port at this time, with over 300



Pilgrim sailing in Torbay by Chris Slack
- Photographer.

similar red sailed, wood built vessels: played a huge part in the development of trawling which places both Port and these famous trawlers at the pinnacle of Britain's maritime heritage.

Costing just under £640 to build, she was owned by Silas John Pine, at 28 the youngest Trawler owner at the time, and trawled out of Brixham until 1912. Originally registered in Dartmouth (DH394), her official number was 102989 and later BM45. Then *Pilgrim* was sold to Lowestoft and again onto Sweden where demand for Brixham sailing trawlers was high. She was sold several times in Sweden being used as a fishing boat, cargo vessel, private yacht and sail training vessel. During World War II her sails were to prove invaluable as fuel became scarce and many stories abound about *Pilgrim*, mostly passed down by word of mouth, include that she may have participated in gun running and been shot at by the

enemy, she certainly had the Swedish flag painted on her side to show she was "neutral". Bought and sold several times in Scandinavia until, in 1999, she was re-discovered in Sweden, a shadow of her former self, in poor condition by Brixham fisherman Bill Wakeham.

In June 1999 *Pilgrim* returned home to Brixham in a very sad state, and the Pilgrim Preservation Project was established to manage her restoration. With a shortened stern and only a mizzen mast she was nonetheless unmistakably a "Brixham Trawler". A great deal of work was carried out to make her watertight and able to sail. Founders of this enterprise were her Finnish owner Johan Skibdahl and Bill Wakeham.

Although she could not operate commercially, controlled sail training commenced in 2000.

A huge amount of effort and hard work was put into generating interest in the project but by 2004 it became apparent that serious and significant funding would be required to fully restore her.

Changes were made to the constitution of PPPL to
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Pilgrim under restoration at Old Mill Creek. Supplied by J Treby (photographer unknown).

clarify it's "not for profit" status, and a charitable Trust, Pilgrim BM45 Trust Ltd, was also formed to work alongside PPPPL to help raise funds. She was moved to Plymouth and work started by Rod Coveney of Brixham and fellow directors on a successful bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund. £50,000 was granted early in 2005 which paid for a detailed planning project including a full marine survey and advice on a full restoration and conservation programme. A further HLF grant of up to £950,000 was awarded in 2008 and a specification for the restored vessel was prepared and costed at just over £1.3 million.

Although the UK was by now in deep recession, the HLF were very supportive, agreeing work on the project could be phased. This enabled the raising of the match funding to be phased also. (Match funding is a requirement that cash raised and voluntary work would reach 30% of the HLF input.) A further £60,000 was secured from South Devon Local Action Group prior to cuts announced by the new government of 2010. *Pilgrim* was towed from Plymouth to Old Mill Creek, Dartmouth, in late summer 2008 where she sat waiting for match funding to be secured. This was arranged by spring 2009 and work to restore the hull then continued until July 2011.

Pilgrim returned home to Brixham in October 2011 ready to be fitted out internally, and sailed again in 2012. Work continued on the fitting out through 2013, although only a limited revenue from passengers was possible, during this period. *Pilgrim* has been fitted out to generate income with provision for relatively inexpensive day and half day sails, to top of the range week long cruises.

For the 2014 season the former are planned to be operated primarily out of Brixham. The week long voyages will be mostly out of Dartmouth, and some from Falmouth. Destinations include the West Country and historic Coasts of France, Isle of Wight Old Gaffers Regatta, Solent and Jurassic Coasts, Devon and Cornwall, Isles of Scilly, Douarnenez Festival, Paimpol and Coasts of France, Brixham Heritage Regatta, West Country and Dartmouth Regatta, with local sails in Torbay, and the South Hams.

On deck special occasion celebrations in style alongside the pontoon can be provided, with *Pilgrim's* well equipped galley permitting catering for up to 50 people with buffet or canapé reception. Also for those with a sit down meal, or a sail with lunch or dinner in mind, up to 12 guests below decks can be accommodated in a comfortable saloon area. Weather permitting; an alfresco meal on deck is another attraction.

On board guests who are keen to gain 'hands on' experience are encouraged to help haul the sails or take the helm, otherwise a relaxing time taking the fresh air and enjoying the coastal scenery can be had, with the crew happy to look after the sailing.

Notable recent highlights include *Pilgrim* winning the Brixham Heritage Regatta in 2013, and being presented with the King George V Perpetual Challenge Cup by HRH Prince Charles and HRH the Duchess of Cornwall, and this year being voted the 'best restoration over 40 feet' at the 2014 Classic Boat awards ceremony in London.

On 24th May 2014, the Challenge Cup was again won by *Pilgrim*.

John Treby



Sailing off the South Hams by J. Treby.



The NCI President, Jon Gifford, presented 15 year service awards this year to Geoff Howell, Derek Venables, David Stone, Dave Wilson and Jenny Brown

L. to R. Derek Venables, Jenny Brown, Jon Gifford and Dave Wilson

PLAQUE UNVEILING AT GARA ROCK

In late April a plaque, donated by English Heritage, was unveiled on the terrace of Gara Rock Hotel informing visitors of wreck sites, a few yards offshore, where divers of South West Maritime Archaeological Group, SWMAG, have made discoveries of such importance as to rewrite the maritime history of Bronze Age Britain.

Local MP Sarah Wollaston performed the task and thanked the team of divers for "preserving the history of our coasts for future generations". The colourful plaque displays information on the protected Moor Sand and Salcombe Cannon sites and the professional work carried out by SWMAG researching and cataloguing finds before submitting them to the British Museum.

A buzz of excitement prevailed as invited guests were warmly welcomed by the team, given a chance to view a remarkable exhibition explaining the extent of underwater surveys and the priceless finds, all presented with superb



Mayor and MP gather with divers around the commemorative plaque.
Left to right: Ron Howell, Steve Clarkson, Sarah Wollaston MP, Mike Williams, Julie Williams, Jim Tyson, Mick Kightley, Irene Jeeninga, Mayor of Kingsbridge, Andy Elliott and Neville Oldham

photography, while the divers answered questions and shared their evident enthusiasm. The archaeological significance of the finds fires the imagination. The discovery of axes, rapiers, gold jewellery and copper and tin ingots prove a Bronze Age trade link with the Mediterranean, 3,500 years ago and in 1995 they found northern Europe's largest ever collection of Islamic gold coins and jewellery from a 17th century wreck. Before the area was officially designated as a protected wreck site, employees at the hotel kept an eye on security, now this commitment is undertaken by watchkeepers at NCI Prawle

Point who are notified when SWMAG, the sole licensees, are diving on site so any illegal activity there can be reported and investigated.

After the unveiling, an excellent lunch was enjoyed by representatives from local museums, archaeological, geological, subaqua and history groups, the SW Finds Liaison Officer, a BBC Devon archaeologist, the Exeter Curator of Antiquities, the Mayor of Kingsbridge Town Council, local farmers and two watchkeepers from Prawle Point.

A STALWART RETIRES

Derek Venables, who has given long and valued service at Prawle Point, will be missed by his fellow watchkeepers when he retires this summer.

"The Incomparable Venables" carried the full burden as Maintenance Officer for ten years from 2001, after qualifying as watchkeeper in 1999. He became Deputy Station Manager in 2002 including a period as Acting Station Manager and later, also took on the role of Roster Co-ordinator plus writing up the Prawle Point monthly Bulletin. He is held in deep and affectionate regard at Prawle where his contribution to the running of the station has been exceptional; no task seemed too arduous or too lowly for Derek, from roof climbing to work on radar and other 'altitude' equipment, to faithful tea-boy at so many events and always cheerful, entertaining company on the NCI stand at fetes and local shows. His theatrical exploits at Christmas parties with Roger Barrett in two man comedy shows could never be forgotten!

Now sporting an Honorary title, yet still frequently referred to as Corporal Jones, he will be keeping in touch at monthly meetings and no doubt visiting the Lookout on



Derek receiving his 15 year service medal from close friend and frequent lookout partner; NCI President Jon Gifford.
occasions. Congratulations and all good wishes for a happy retirement, Derek.



Friends Of Prawle Point



Cream Teas in the village hall at East Prawle will be served on Wednesday August 20th by our ever supportive team of ladies.

While indulging in some of their excellent home baking, you may wish to take a look at the exhibition stands showing the work of NCI Prawle Point and talk to

watchkeepers in attendance. You may also like to walk or take a short drive down to the National Trust car park to visit the Lookout and Visitor Centre for our Open Day.

A later date to note and keep clear is the evening of **October 11th** when the noted Carrivick Sisters will be giving a concert in West Charleton Village Hall of which more in the Autumn Newsletter.

NCI PRAWLE POINT: INCIDENTS TO DATE



19.10.13 At 15:00 yacht *True Blue* contacted the Coastguard by radio to advise that she had steering problems but was continuing on passage to Dartmouth. Watchkeepers tracked her through AIS until conditions improved and the yacht became visible. Watchkeepers passed her position, sail number and current weather/sea state to the Coastguard who thanked them for the information.

21.10.13 At 12:58 watchkeepers were contacted by Brixham Coastguard following a 999 call reporting a flashing light seen off Gara Rock. The watchkeepers advised that the only object in sight in that vicinity was a yellow yacht racing mark. A visual watch was maintained over the area concerned until Brixham stood the incident down. The 'flashing light' was thought to be the sun glinting on the racing mark.

07.12.13 At 09:15 fishing vessel *Fidelitas* issued a PAN PAN following total engine failure. At the time her position was about ten miles south east of Start Point. Brixham Coastguard contacted watchkeepers to ask whether they had the vessel in sight and subsequently for actual weather conditions. At 10:40 the vessel was under tow; shortly after the PAN PAN was cancelled.

18.02.14 At 11:05 Watchkeepers were asked by the Coastguard whether they could see and identify an open fishing boat reported in difficulty in Starehole Bay. They reported that they had been watching SE9 (*Anglo Dawn*) towing a dark hulled fishing boat (*Atlantis*) and that they were now in Starehole Bay. Salcombe lifeboat launched, took over the tow and both boats safely returned to Salcombe.

21.02.14 At 09:05 Watchkeepers were contacted by the Coastguard and advised that a number of containers were awash in the general vicinity. At 09:40 they advised the Coastguard that they had a container in sight and were tracking it by radar. At 10:08 they notified the Coastguard that a small container ship was transiting the area. The Coastguard contacted the vessel by radio. Following a further position update watchkeepers advised the Coastguard at 12:25 that the container was now out of sight with both visual and radar contact lost. Watchkeepers also informed the neighbouring station, NCI Froward Point, of the container.

04-08.03.14 Watchkeepers were notified by Brixham Coastguard of a solo rower in a white boat on passage west. During the period numerous sightings were made and reports given to the Coastguard when appropriate. He was finally reported as heading west and out of sight from the lookout. It is believed that he was en route to Portscatho.

15.03.14 The Coastguard contacted watchkeepers regarding persons reported in the water at Starehole Bay. They were advised that nine kayaks could be seen but no persons actually in the water.

05.04.14 At 11:50 watchkeepers were monitoring radio traffic in very poor visibility when they heard yacht *Ragamuffin* calling Brixham Coastguard she was unsure of her position. The Coastguard contacted the watchkeepers to check that they were monitoring the radio traffic. Watchkeepers advised that they were and had a possible radar contact. They suggested to the Coastguard that they ask *Ragamuffin* for the bearing of Prawle Point lookout. This allowed them to confirm to the Coastguard that they had *Ragamuffin* in sight and gave her bearing and distance. Salcombe lifeboat was launched and following an update of *Ragamuffin's* position by the watchkeepers she made contact with the casualty and escorted her into harbour.

5.4.14 Watchkeepers notified Brixham Coastguard of an elderly male on his own attempting to row east against the tide. He looked tired. They gave his description and position and advised that there were no other vessels in the vicinity. The information was logged by the Coastguard and shortly after this the rower's position was updated before the lookout closed for the day.

15.04.14 Watchkeepers heard a Mayday from yacht catamaran *Tannee* reporting a flooded hull but inability to pump. She gave her position. Brixham coastguard responded and launched the Salcombe lifeboats. The yacht was monitored visually and on radar and the position of a nearby yacht noted. At 09:59 both lifeboats were on the scene, one person was transferred to the ILB and the waterlogged yacht was taken in tow.

Dolphins were sighted in October, November and twice in December 2013. Brixham Seawatch was notified and, where appropriate, the NCI flanking stations of Rame Head and Froward Point.

24.04.14 Watchkeepers called Salcombe Harbour Office to report an unrecognised, stationary rib in the area of the Historic Wreck site. The Harbour Office later informed the lookout that the rib had caught its anchor which it was attempting to free. No further action was necessary.

03.05.14 Watchkeepers were informed by Brixham Coastguard that Yacht *Leader* had notified them of a large floating object. This was identified visually and bearing and distance passed to Brixham also notifying them that FV *Hustler* was close. Later RIB *Sea'n Shore* reported she had diverted to the object. Brixham advised them not to tow it into Salcombe. A maritime patrol aircraft diverted to 'acquire' the object and report. Watchkeepers advised Brixham of the proximity of SD *Navigator* for possible recovery 0.2 miles off Prawle Point heading west. Brixham advised no further action.

22.05.14 Telephone calls were received from Salcombe Boat Store and Brixham Coastguard concerned about motor cruiser *Anna* with single, inexperienced crew on board. The vessel was monitored visually until she changed course into Salcombe. All parties were notified.

SOME COMMON SAYINGS OF A NAUTICAL ORIGIN

<i>Plane sailing</i>	Navigational charts convert areas of earth's sphere to flat, or plane surfaces thus simplifying basic calculations. Erroneously the term is now usually printed as 'plain sailing'.
<i>Leading light</i>	Ships are guided into a difficult harbour entrance by a succession of lights, the first of which was called the leading light. This phrase now may relate to a prominent person within a group.
<i>Put the wind up someone</i>	Whistling on board is traditionally considered to invoke bad luck particularly in stormy weather. Sailors would be scared if anyone 'whistled up the wind'.

This completes the series of nautical words and phrases in common use which began in the Spring edition of 2010. After 73 definitions and now scraping the bottom of the barrel - the salted meat has all been used on voyage and any remnants of fat used in cooking - the supply has ceased.



Please help us to maintain this valuable service by making a donation and becoming a supporter of NCI Prawle Point or becoming a watchkeeper.

Please contact: The Secretary, PO Box 58, Kingsbridge TQ7 2QZ

Station tel. no. 01548 511259 www.nci-prawlepoint.org Cheques to NCI Prawle Point