



NATIONAL HISTORIC SHIPS UK
The official voice for historic vessels in the United Kingdom

PRESS RELEASE

28th May 2020

National Historic Ships UK announces FLAGSHIP OF THE YEAR AWARDS 2020

In response to the impact of Covid-19 on the maritime heritage sector, National Historic Ships UK has made a significant change to its Flagship of the Year scheme. Usually reflecting the cruising programme or visitor numbers of each craft, we have instead welcomed applications for 'virtual flagships' in recognition of the fact that many historic vessels have had to cease operations, cancel or postpone events through circumstances beyond their control.

The Flagship Awards provide an opportunity to demonstrate and celebrate the value of our sector during these exceptionally challenging times. Our 2020 Flagships have been selected for their tenacity in continuing to raise their profile throughout the Covid-19 outbreak by online activities, social media, developing learning resources, offering virtual tours and other creative means. They will have our full online support over the coming months to help promote their vessels.

Hannah Cunliffe, Director of National Historic Ships UK, commented: "I am delighted that we are able to offer these Awards again as a means of supporting the sector at a time when it needs our help most. The creativity and resilience these vessels have shown in developing new online engagement packages to meet the current situation has been impressive and I look forward to working with them all in the months ahead."

Flagships are expected to actively promote the role of National Historic Ships UK by sharing social media posts, publicising activities such as the annual Photo Competition, the Excellence in Maritime Heritage and Marsh Volunteer Awards. They will also be flying the flag as ambassadors for the UK's maritime heritage sector.

The Flagships receive grants of £500 and £250 respectively to be spent on the vessel or related digital activities and a special broad pennant to fly at the masthead once the ship is active again.

The 2020 National Flagship is:

HMS *Belfast*, Museum Ship

www.nationalhistoricships.org.uk/register/123/hms-belfast

The 2020 Regional Flagships are:

Medway Queen (South East), Paddle Steamer

[www.nationalhistoricships.org.uk/register/46/medway-queen.](http://www.nationalhistoricships.org.uk/register/46/medway-queen)

Zebu (North West), Tall Ship

www.nationalhistoricships.org.uk/register/3474/zebu

ss Explorer (Scotland East), Research Vessel

www.nationalhistoricships.org.uk/register/26/ss-explorer

Spartan (Scotland West), Museum Ship

www.nationalhistoricships.org.uk/register/622/spartan

For more information on our winning entries visit

<https://www.nationalhistoricships.org.uk/page/our-flagships-2020>

Please note that photographs are available of individual flagships on request.

For photographs or further information about National Historic Ships UK, contact:

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Notes for Editors:

National Historic Ships UK advises the Department of Culture, Media & Sport and a range of grant giving organisations on priorities for ship conservation and is the official voice for historic vessels in the UK. It maintains the National Register of Historic Vessels, which lists over a thousand significant historic vessels: www.nationalhistoricships.org.uk/registers