Glimpses of enticing harbours or busy waterways have sometimes threatened to distract the attention of the EMH Executive when it has been invited to meet close to the water. President Per Jessing expected no such lapse of concentration when he arranged the latest meeting of the Executive in a delightful converted water-powered sawmill and forge in the forest at Hyssna, close to his home on Sweden’s west coast. Here in the spring sunshine the ExCom had only the sound of rushing water and the wind in the trees to divert their attention from the long agenda before them.

Plans were discussed for EMH representation at various symposia and conferences this year, including European Maritime Days in Gdansk 19-20 May, the General Assembly of Europa Nostra in Amsterdam in June and the World Canals Conference in Groningen 19-24 September. Through its President, EMH expects to take a prominent role in the European Maritime Days in Gothenburg 20-22 May 2012. The ExCom is interested in any proposals to host its triennial Congress and General Assembly in 2013; a summary of the requirements for host cities or organisations can be obtained from the EMH Secretariat.

Vice-President Hendrik Boland reported on recent correspondence with the Transport Directorate at the EC in Brussels about the problems of keeping traditional ships in operation within the changing boundaries of modern safety laws. EMH plans to contribute to forthcoming debates on these matters at the EC’s Committee on Safe Seas, due to meet in May 2011. There is a danger that, if they are denied the opportunity to earn their costs of upkeep, hundreds of Europe’s traditional vessels may have to be abandoned as beyond economic upkeep.

The Committee nurtured by EMH a decade ago to oversee the application of the Memorandum of Understanding on Traditional Ships (MoU) will also meet in May, in the shadow of an IMO Maritime Safety Committee meeting in London.

EMH will send four participants to that meeting, and will also co-host (with Heritage Afloat, the UK national (continued…)}
umbrella organisation) a reception for the MoU Committee close to the IMO Headquarters in London.

The ExCom went on to confirm the appointment of Nis-Edvin List-Petersen to chair its Cultural Council in succession to Per-Inge Lindqvist. Among the tasks confronting the Council, under its fresh Mission Statement, are establishing closer links with UNESCO and with Europa Nostra, and a substantial input to the European Atlas of the Seas. A full agenda awaits the Cultural Council when it next meets in Denmark on 11-12 May.

EMH’s Inland Waterways Council has also been busy considering proposed amendments to the ‘River Rhine Rules’ as they affect traditional vessels on Europe’s commercial inland waterways (not only the River Rhine), and these were discussed in Hyssna, as was the impact of the Maritime Labour Convention on crewing traditional vessels in Europe.

The Treasurer, Hendrik Boland, was happy to report that EMH has succeeded in building up a reserve of one year’s working turnover. Existing rules for the reclaim by EMH Council members of their expenses in attending Council members were confirmed; the Treasurer undertakes to settle such claims only where they are submitted to him within two months of the event to which they relate.

From the EMH Secretariat, Thedo Fruithof reported an extensive list of enquiries and requests for advice and assistance from all over the world. Plans were made for the EMH contribution to an important meeting to be hosted in July by the Rotterdam Maritime Museum, at which the International Congress of Maritime Museum (ICMM) and Sail Training International (STI) are expected to share some of the current problems faced by those who strive to keep our historic fleets alive.

This invitation to Rotterdam is heartening evidence that EMH is regarded, not only within Europe but beyond, as a significant player in this important area of shared cultural heritage.
Fifie becomes national Flagship

Shetland vessel Swan is awarded status as 2011 Flagship for the UK's Historic Ships

Flagship of the Year is the accolade awarded by National Historic Ships to the owners of the vessel with the most impressive seasonal programme of public events in the forthcoming year. The award is designed to promote wider engagement with, and appreciation of, the part that historic vessels play in the heritage of the UK. The winning vessel receives a traditional swallow-tailed broad pennant to fly from the masthead wherever she goes to mark her flagship status, and a grant of £1000 towards the cost of keeping the vessel in operational condition and opening her for public viewing.

The winning vessel for 2011 is the Fifie herring drifter Swan (LK243), launched in May 1900 at Hay and Company’s yard in Lerwick in the Shetland Isles. Having survived two world wars and then falling into disrepair, this vessel has now been restored to her former glory by a team of dedicated volunteers from The Swan Trust. The judges were particularly impressed with the breadth of Swan’s summer programme which, starting in her home port, will take her to the Orkneys; along the Caledonian Canal; to Waterford to compete in the Tall Ships Race to Glasgow, and then to Norway, engaging throughout with the large number of young people who will form her crews, and inviting visitors on board wherever she goes. Swan is one of some 200 vessels of pre-eminent national significance which together form the UK’s National Historic Fleet.

The chairman of the Swan Trust, Allister Rendell, said: “I am delighted that Swan has won such a prestigious award. It is particularly appropriate that Swan has been selected, since the Tall Ships will be visiting Shetland this year.”

Humber super sloop Spider T has been named runner-up 2011 and will receive a £250 grant which, like the grant to Swan will go towards supporting the vessel and promoting the Flagship of the Year scheme.

Martyn Heighton, Director of National Historic Ships, commented: “With the Flagship award now in its third year, the quality of entries has gone from strength to strength. Swan is a worthy winner in a year of fierce competition.”

National Historic Ships 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 craft.

The Swan Trust was formed in 1990, and today is responsible for the operation and upkeep of Swan. Their objectives include:

- To sail on the Swan.
- To teach and keep alive the techniques of sailing and working a traditional sail Fifie.
- To maintain the Swan as a viable commercial enterprise.

Spider T - An iron hull Humber sloop built in 1926 at Warrens Shipyard, New Holland, with a Gardner diesel engine, 200 HP. Bought by her current owner in 1994, she has now been fully restored to her original condition.

(Source: National Historic Ships)
The Croatian Brazzera

by Mr Velimir Salamon

The braceras or brazzeras were built in the Adriatic area for a long period, so that, together with the trabakuls and the peligs, they were the mainstay of coastal shipping. Some think that the braceras were firstly rowed i.e. moved by the force of the arm (called forza di braccia in the lingua franca of Adriatic sailors), and that the boat owes her name brazzer to this fact. However the oar and the sail represented the prime means of propulsion at this historic time and the multitude of other boats were rowed too. Perhaps the most sound reason was that it is possible that the brazza got her name from the modern professional consideration of the boat as the true member of the man-ship-environment system. It means that the ship is regarded as a subsystem of the larger system and that the ship’s hull forms a complete system together with the rig. And the rig used to change with time as soon as the more efficient sail was adopted. It must be stated the the Adriatic island of Brač, which is considered to be the place of origin of this boat, was called Brazza in the Venetian past. The term brazzer seems to be thus coined. Perhaps the less fortunate island inhabitants also preferred to build the smaller and cheaper braceras instead of the larger and more expensive trabakuls and peligs. But other professional reasoning suggests that the boat best suited the small water areas between the numerous Adriatic islands, primarily the local wave lengths, and used excellent protection from the nasty and sudden gusts of the wind and the sea in the numerous shady bays. It must be emphasized that the shipbuilding knowledge and skills of the Eastern Adriatic Coast inhabitants were highly esteemed in the past. The Roman Navy even adopted the design of the Liburnian boats for the basis of their powerful fleet. Likewise, the corsair sagitta from the town of Omis was so swift that they called her the arrow or, in Latin, the sagitta.

The one masted brazza with square sail

The brazeras were, most probably, square or sprit rigged at first, since these were among the oldest known rigs. The square sail also recalls the sagitta, on which the sail was so swift that they called her the arrow or, in Latin, the sagitta. The braceras were most probably square or sprit rigged at first, since these were among the oldest known rigs. The square sail also recalls the sagitta, on which the sail was so swift that they called her the arrow or, in Latin, the sagitta. The one masted brazza with square sail

Although no relevant evidnet documents are known to exist, the braceras most probably were sprit rigged at first, since the rig was one of the earliest. It was wide spread because it was the simplest to use. Even today it can be seen on the children’s boat known as Optimist. Beside the mast the brazza had a sprit, a pole extending from the lower part of the mast to the peak of the sail and a bow-sprit to set the jib. The one masted brazzer with the lateen sail

The triangular lateen sail was evidently known in the Mediterranean since Antiquity. It replaced the square sail since it facilitated sailing against the wind in the weak winds common in the Mediterranean. The rig usually consisted of the mast equipped with stays with blocks or pataraci, the lateen, on which the sail was attached by a series of small ropes called the matafuni, the halliard or munt for lifting the lateen with the sail, the parrel or the trozza for tying the lateen usually on the port side of the mast; a series of thin short ropes named mano di terzaruoli were used for shortening the sail in the strong winds, and the tacking rig or orci was employed for securing the fore end of the lateen in tacking, and the sheet or poža or škota for controlling the aft end of the sail. The lug rigged one masted brazza from the island of Brač

The lug sail obviously evolved by shortening the fore end of the lateen sail. Sometimes a lower boom equipped with the sheet passing through the system of double blocks was added to facilitate trimming of the sail. All the other good features of the lateen were kept.

The lug sail obviously evolved by shortening the fore end of the lateen sail. Sometimes a lower boom equipped with the sheet passing through the system of double blocks was added to facilitate trimming of the sail. All the other good features of the lateen were kept.
The gaff rigged one masted brazzera “Sv. Nikola” from Dubrovnik

As previously stated the braceras or brazzeras were built in the Adriatic for a long time so that, together with the trabakuls and peligs, they dominated coastal shipping.

The rig represented the part of the system consisting of the hull, the system of masting and the system of the sail.

It is important to stress that the boat designers used to eliminate any design which did not prove to be perfect. Therefore the rig of the boat used to change as soon as more efficient sail was adopted. Like in the folk proverbs only the best was here regarded to be truthful.

The two masted lateen rigged Istrian brazzera from Piran

Most of the Istrian braceras were built in Piranske ladjedelnice (nowadays in Slovenia). These used to be the two-masted vessels, at first lateen rigged, the rig known from antiquity. Although this rig sails allowed sailing against the wind, it was mercilessly displaced by any rig which proved to be more successful.

Large numbers of these boats served all along the Adriatic coast. But as the boat’s rig used to change with the demands of time and the fashion, the purpose of the ship changed too in accordance with the service which could be offered. So the original braceras were predominantly converted into salbunijeri, employed in dredging and transporting sand from the river Cetina estuary bottom.

However, some photographs testify that this rig endured as long as the 20th century, until the time of disappearance of the sails from the sea, and their substitution by more efficient motor propulsion.

The two masted gaff rigged Istrian brazzera “St. Ivan” from Piran moored in Krilo Jesenice

The Istrian braceras usually had two or even three masts, and not just one as was customary in the 19th century Dalmatia.

In the small fishing town named Rovinj-Rovigno in Istria the bracera was called the brazera and was depicted in various documents. The Rovinj-Rovigno brazera shows how the braceras could be equipped with even three masts, and not with a single one as was customary in 19th century Dalmatia. In the magazine “L’Istria” by Casamia Carer from 1846, the Rovinj-Rovigno brazera is depicted as the most eloquent witness of Rovigno history. All covered with sails, equipped with three masts, two in the bow section of the ship with the first one raked towards the bows and lug-rigged on the mizzen-mast, with the bowsprit parallel to the sea, this challenger of the bora tempest sends out the fragrance of masculine audity, the determined menace, the noble impatience.

However, the flat bottomed Northern Adriatic batana remained the principal boat of Rovinj-Rovigno. She was seranaded even in the famous Rovinj bitinadas where the accompanying choir used to sing imitating the musical instruments, while their hands were mending the nets. So the ecological reasons, these boats are being rebuilt again to match the demands of mass tourism.

The three masted brasiera from Rovinj-Rovigno

(continued…)

So the Dubrovnik bracera “Sv. Nikola” (St. Nicholas), which was probably built on the island of Korčula, shown in an oil painting in the Dubrovnik Maritime Museum, wore a gaff, a topsail and jibs.
But their three-masted bracera was so important that she was even put in the votive painting to be seen in the church of Sta. Maria delle Grazie in Rovigno-Rovigno.

So it happened that the Adriatic braceras used to differ from the boats of the same name e.g. in the Aegean Sea, since in the Adriatic the term denoted the whole boat, the system consisting of both the hull and the rig and not exclusively the sail.

The brazzera “Gospa od mora” (the Lady of the Seas) built for the NGO “Dupinov San” (the Dolphin’s Dream) in Betina.

The conceptual solution for the Dolphin’s Dream bracera was primarily based on the demands of the owner, and it was to build the traditional and educational ship with the utmost authenticity. It was done according to the world spread tradition which has already been investigated. She was designed and built according to the official rules and regulations for building such objects.

The owner requested that the ship should enable domestic and foreign guests to be taught the boat’s primary basic function i.e. the traditional Adriatic maritime experience of sailing and mooring. But every boat had to present the secondary traditional basic function as well, by appealing to all of the human senses. So, the experience would not include exclusively the eye and the vision, but also the mouth i.e. the food and the drinks, the nose and the scents of e.g. the island herbs, the ear via the oral and other traditional literature and the poetry as well as the famous Adriatic vocal and instrumental music, the touch of the hand, i.e. the movement displayed in various ceremonies and the folk danses etc.

The ship was also meant to provide cruising for at least 15 persons including the physically challenged ones, and to present the total Adriatic maritime heritage to the domestic and foreign public etc.

The bracera which was built was no replica of a particular bracera in history. She could not be such due to the inevitable and mandatory deflection from the original design. But it would prove impossible to determine that her design should be any different, since she was designed and built according to the world spread tradition which has already been investigated. She was designed in concordance with the modern scientific method of the learned guess. It must also be emphasized that every true shipbuilder would welcome the employed merge of the traditional and modern methods, since they would contribute solely to the efficiency which has been proved in the nature.

Therefore it was solemnly decided that the bracera Gospa od mora design would remain in the strict concordance with the owner and the tradition, but also with the official rules and regulations for building such objects.

The christening ceremony is to be performed in Supetar on the island of Brač on April 18th 2011.

It is hoped that the restoration of the memory of the Mediterranean maritime knowledge will support and enrich the current social life.

There is also hope that the respect of the nature will yield the more tranquil consideration of the slower and more meaningful life transferring the wonder of the traditional human wisdom to future generations, since they may find it difficult to search for it in books.

Subsequently the bracera will continue her function in Dubrovnik.
3rd Haikutter Regatta from Nysted, Denmark, to Rostock, Germany

by Mr. Eckhard Landgraf

Due to the success of the Haikutter Regatta’s in 2009 and 2010, followed by positive evaluations afterwards, the Bureau Hanse Sail in Rostock and the city of Nysted in Denmark have been working closely together in order to organize the 3rd Haikutter Regatta to take place in 2011. This event will become a prelude of the 21st Hanse Sail festival. Moreover, it will be a popular tourist attraction in Nysted. One day before the start of the regatta, on August 9th 2011, the “Haikutter Day” will take place in Nysted. In remembrance of the “golden years” of fishing and shipbuilding in Denmark, visitors can experience the maritime cultural heritage. Sailing trips with Haikutters to the wind farm and “open ship” are parts of a varied programme for the day. The organizers expect to welcome about 15 ships. The start of the regatta will be on August 10th at 10:30 am in Nysted. With fair winds the finale of the regatta is scheduled for app. 6:00 pm in Rostock/Warnemünde. The winning ship will take over the Challenge Trophy - a model of a Haikutter during the Award ceremony right after the official opening of the 21st Hanse Sail on August 11th, 2011.

What:
Setting a Guinness world record in towing by steam.

Where:
Schiedam, the Netherlands

Who:
Steamtug Hercules owned by Stichting Calorische Werkhuizen

Details:
15 historical ships with an overall length of 668 meters towed over a distance of 4.3 kilometers in 35 minutes.
The main issue dominating this conference was the unanswered questions about the history of Lithuania’s inland sailing ship vytinė (vüinnen in German, wicina in Polish, вуцина in Belarussian). This distinct type of cargo sailing vessel has been almost forgotten during the 20th century. The privately initiated reconstruction project of a vytinė was a good starting point for the conference about history, shipbuilding craftsmanship and traditional/historical ships’ professionals and specialists for rediscovering this Nemunas River sailing vessel. On April 15th 2011 participants from Poland, Belarus, Germany and Lithuania interested in the European maritime heritage, gathered in the Lithuanian Sea Museum in Klaipėda.

Dr. Jerzy Litwin, the director of the Polish Maritime Museum in Gdańsk, presented his research on inland shipping traditions on the Oder, the Vistula and the Nemunas rivers and its tributaries. Considering the Nemunas river, he stressed that the vytinė from the Middle Ages was a typical flat-bottomed cargo vessel and the largest one (up to 53 meters long), with squat hulls and a single square-rigged sail. The mast was erected in the fore end of the ship with a stay and shrouds. The ship had a paddle rudder. These ships carried timber, grain, hemp, flax, and other agricultural products and raw materials from Central Lithuania to the Baltic Sea ports: Königsberg (Kaliningrad) and Gdańsk (Danzig).

The head of the Navigation history department of the Lithuanian Sea Museum, Romas Adomavičius, made some points regarding historical ties between vytinė routes and the Klaipėda port. He suggested that this kind of ship could hardly be employed in carrying goods in the waters of the Curonian lagoon because of its size, limited mobility and aspects of rigging. So for safety reasons it must have been exclusively a river sailing craft. In lagoon waters other types of ships were more common, for example the Boydack or Reisekahn (passage boat).

Dr. Mark Springmann from the University of Greifswald presented historical facts about the vytinė which he had discovered in the Berlin Archive (the Nemunas River custom files). Those facts helped to broaden the view on river sailing equipment, restrictions and other conditions several hundred years ago. He also stated that while carrying out a traditional (historical) ship reconstruction project it is very important to have in mind the cultural, geographical, climatic and other natural and historical circumstances that surrounded the particular type of ship.

The representative from Belarus, researcher Andrei Kystymov, talked about the history of the vytinė in the waters of the upper Nemunas River. He made a wide report considering river sailing features in the former lands of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, nowadays Belarus and Ukraine, noting that similar types of cargo vessels were sailing on others countries major rivers.

Aidas Mozūraitis, the historian from the Regional Park of the Nemunas River in Lithuania, presented the only known archeological finding in Lithuania that could have been a vytinė. It was found and raised from the bottom of the Nemunas River, and consisted of parts of an about 15-16 meter boat. All known historical facts and descriptions suggest that it is small vytinė, probably from the 19th century.

The last lecturer, ship builder Simas Knapkis, introduced the vytine reconstruction project. He mentioned that the earliest illustration of a vytinė can be found in Olaus Magnus’ “Carta Marina” map published in 1539. After a historical introduction he talked about the problems which are being dealt with during the reconstruction. Simas Knapkis presented the idea to build a 30 meter long vytinė indoors, with which an exhibition about Lithuanian inland water shipping will be established.

During the concluding discussions at the end of the conference it was decided to nurture new international connections, support historical research of the vytinė, and to publish the material from the presentations. Also, the idea was expressed to put inquiries from all involved countries regarding vytinė matters into a bigger scale collective study. This rediscovery process will certainly help to revive the region’s cultural integration and to know more about the Lithuanian and the whole Eastern Central European maritime heritage.