



House of Commons  
Culture, Media and Sport  
Committee

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# Maritime Heritage and Historic Ships:

## Replies to the Committee's Fourth Report of Session 2004–05

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First Special Report of Session  
2005–06

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## The Culture, Media and Sport Committee

The Culture, Media and Sport Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration, and policy of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and its associated public bodies.

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### Committee staff

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# First Special Report

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## Maritime Heritage and Historic Ships

1. The previous Culture, Media and Sport Committee published its Fourth Report of Session 2004-05, HC 296, on Maritime Heritage and Historic Ships, on 17 March 2005.
2. The Committee has now received responses to this Report from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, English Heritage, the Heritage Lottery Fund and VisitBritain. These replies are published below as Appendices 1 to 4. Further evidence was received from Rt Hon Lord McIntosh of Haringey; this is published as Appendix 5.

## Appendix 1 – Reply from the Government

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**We were dismayed by the time DCMS’s process for consultation has taken to reach what is a relatively timid conclusion : that the existing and commendable efforts of the National Historic Ships Committee were properly the responsibility of DCMS and that the NHSC’s achievements merited formal support, structure and resources. We would be extremely disappointed if the Government’s solution for what it has described, rightly, as the “plight” of historic ships preservation, was effectively, with a very small actual investment, to adopt and re-brand the NHSC as the advisory body for a tiny executive “Unit” which may or may not be able to add value to existing provision. (paragraph 20)**

The Government welcomes the Committee’s endorsement of its decision to establish a National Historic Ships Unit. The Government is grateful for the valuable work of the National Historic Ships Committee and wishes to make clear that the National Historic Ships Unit is an entirely new entity. The Unit itself will be an advisory body, whose members will be appointed through the transparent and formal procedures established by the Commissioner for Public Appointments, and which will, among other functions advise the funding partners on priorities. The performance of the new Unit will be assessed to ensure that it continues to add value.

**We welcome the Government’s commitment to establish the new Ships Unit, which is a step in the right direction, but we lament the time it has taken to set this up. We support the general aims of the Unit, as described by DCMS, and we hope it will indeed become the country’s historic ships champion; the national centre for excellence, advice and co-ordination; and disseminator of best practice for the sector. However, we are not persuaded that the funding, announced by Lord McIntosh, is adequate to meet these objectives. Its budget is paltry and staffing, however expert, minimal. (paragraph 24)**

The Government welcomes the Committee’s endorsement of its decision, in the year of Sea Britain 2005, to establish a National Historic Ships Unit and is grateful for the Committee’s support for the general aims of the Unit. The Government is pleased that following the

2004 Spending Review it has been able to make the necessary funds available to support this advisory body. However, the Government does not accept that the budget of the Unit is paltry. The Government took advice from the National Maritime Museum before determining the level of funding and believes that the funds are adequate for the purposes of the Unit. The Government will ensure that the funding of the Unit is kept under review to reflect the changing demands that may be placed upon it. However, the Unit must be lean and fit for its purpose. The Unit will not be a grant-giving body and the Government has no wish to create a bureaucracy that is larger than it needs to be to deliver the service required of it.

**Aside from its rather narrowly drawn objectives, we believe that the Ships Unit's pre-eminent goal must be to save more of the nation's key historic vessels in such a way as to preserve the story of Britain's maritime history and achievements. Unfortunately, we are not convinced that the Unit can prove effective in this respect. (paragraph 25)**

The Government agrees with the Committee that it is important that the story of Britain's maritime history and achievements is well told. To tell this story may require the preservation of some historic vessels in full but it will also be an essential part of the Unit's functions to determine where the use of other approaches is likely to be more cost-effective. These might, for example, include the use of models, drawings and plans, photographs, and computer-based animations. The Government expects the Unit to take a practical and cost-focused approach to its role. Good leadership will be essential and the Government will keep the role and performance of the Unit under review.

**We recommend that the Unit takes into account the views of the whole maritime sector. The established museums and those with responsibility for the more well-known ships must not exercise influence over the Unit at the expense of others. (paragraph 26)**

The Government wishes to assure the Committee that the National Historic Ships Unit will be an independent body accountable to DCMS. The advisory panel will comprise experts and advisors drawn from the historic ships, heritage management, commercial and industrial sectors. It will be for the Unit to take into account the views expressed to it by all relevant parties. The established museums and galleries have a number of historic ships in their collections. They also have an important role to play in telling Britain's maritime story. The Government sees historic vessels as complementary to that role.

**The criteria for placing a ship on the Register must also be kept under constant review. Appearance in the Register must never, alone, be reason enough for a ship to attract funding; non-appearance too, must never sound a ship's death knell. (paragraph 27)**

The Government's expectation is that the Unit and the funding bodies that it will advise, especially the Heritage Lottery Fund that has already done so much to support historic vessels, will wish to look at each case on its merits but the priorities for funding must be

clearly established. The Government's view is that if the National Register of Historic Vessels is to be a useful tool the inclusion of a vessel on the Register should imply some kind of priority.

**It should not be left to this Committee to identify ships which could be placed on the Register nor those that are in need of restoration of financial support. However, a case in point is HMS Stalker which, as an example of a "landing ship, tank" vessel of the type used in the D-Day landings and as the last survivor of her type and class in UK waters, has a prima facie case for inclusion. We recommend that the new Ships Unit, as soon as it is established, considers carefully the case for HMS Stalker being included in the Register. We also recommend that HLF pays due attention to HMS Stalker and her like in deciding to whom grants should be made. (paragraph 28)**

The Government will draw the Committee's recommendation to the attention of the Historic Ships Unit.

**The Government pays lip service to the value of historic vessels as part of the UK's cultural heritage and yet is unable to produce what the sector desperately needs above all else – adequate funding. (paragraph 33)**

The Government does not accept the Committee's view that it does no more than pay lip service to the value of historic vessels. The Government has made clear that, where Historic Ships are not already part of the collection of a Government-sponsored National Museum funding is through the Heritage Lottery Fund. The Government applauds the contributions and support of the Heritage Lottery Fund which has already committed many £millions to the successful preservation of historic vessels. But the Government also wishes to emphasise to the Committee that, as it has said in its memorandum, the scale of preservation undertaken will have to be related realistically to the resources likely to be available. Careful prioritisation of resources will be essential and the new Unit will have an important role in advising on that, although it will not itself be a grant-giving body.

**We recommend that a further allocation of grant-in-aid be provided to the Ships Unit to enable them, in turn, to give small grants to less well known, but by no means less deserving, ships. We recommend the Government reconsiders its position and looks seriously at direct public funding of some of the ships in the Core Collection; we see no reason why, simply because a vessel is not located within a funded museum it should not be considered worthy of government resources. This would take the pressure off bodies like the HLF who could then concentrate on a greater variety and number of ships rather than the few who, up to now, have swallowed the lion's share of the sector's HLF grants. (paragraph 34)**

Among the key purposes of the new Unit are to provide the primary source of advice to the Government on policy on national ship preservation and on funding priorities and to advise the HLF on preservation priorities and individual funding bids for historic ships

made to the HLF and to advise other public funding bodies. This does not preclude advice on any vessel, including those that are smaller or less well known. From April 2006 the Government is providing for a small grants scheme which will support publications, research, training and similar activities, including preliminary studies into methods and effectiveness of conservation techniques. This will be administered by DCMS, with advice from the Unit. But, as the Government has consistently made clear, it does not, itself, provide funds for major ship projects. The Government has no plans to get involved in the direct funding of historic vessels except where they are part of the collection of a Government-sponsored museum. However the Government will give careful and serious consideration to the advice of the Unit and to the views of the Heritage Lottery Fund and any other potential funding bodies.

**We recommend that the Ships Unit, working alongside DCMS, issues guidelines which set out effective fundraising strategies; suggest innovative funding methods; and advises on proven efficiency savings for the sector. (paragraph 36)**

The Government welcomes this recommendation and will ensure that it is reflected in the Unit's terms of reference. It is also essential that the Unit gives clear advice on the type of preservation that will be most appropriate and on the priorities for preservation. There may be many cases where the best solution does not entail the physical preservation of a vessel itself but, rather, the creation of a photographic, model or virtual record.

**We recommend that DCMS urgently discusses this problem of VAT payable by voluntary organisations with HM Treasury and reports back to this Committee with its findings. (paragraph 38)**

This issue of VAT was raised specifically by the Cutty Sark Trust. As VAT is the policy responsibility of HM Customs and Excise we have discussed this matter with them.

In the pre-Budget Report 2003 the Chancellor announced that many cultural attractions such as theatres, galleries, zoos and museums will no longer be required to charge VAT on visitor admissions (the cultural exemption), giving many attractions scope to reduce their admission charges.

It was recognised at the time that exempt attractions would no longer be able to reclaim VAT on construction costs and that this would give rise to difficulties for bodies with major building projects in progress. A transitional relief scheme was therefore devised. The criteria for admission to the scheme are that construction has been contracted prior to 10 December 2003, or grant funding was approved prior to 10 December 2003; or there is documentary evidence to show that negotiations for the project were at an advanced stage prior to 10 December 2003 and construction work has commenced as at 1 June 2004. The Cutty Sark Trust is unable to satisfy these criteria.

We have asked Customs and Excise whether an exception could be made. They have explained that, while they strongly support the work of the Cutty Sark Trust they are not able to make an exception. They have said that altering the "in progress at 1 June 2004"

criteria to accommodate a good cause cannot be an option from a VAT perspective and could bring UK into conflict with its EU partners.

We have explained the position to the Cutty Sark Trust which will now consider the options.

**We note the beneficial effect that maritime heritage projects can have on a local economy and we therefore recommend that regional development agencies and local authorities look to play a greater role in supporting historic ships for their wider regeneration potential. DCMS and the new Ships Unit should investigate the possibility of developing regeneration partnerships around maritime projects. (paragraph 40)**

The Government recognises that Museums and cultural projects can play a significant role in regeneration. The Historic Ships Unit, as an advisory body, will be able to reinforce this message but the essential planning and delivery of regeneration is for the relevant local authorities and regional agencies.

**We recommend that the Ships Unit considers the issue of disappearing skills with a view to providing practical recommendations to alleviate the problem. Consideration could, for example, be given to the establishment of a permanent department of further education at Greenwich or elsewhere, which focuses on maritime heritage as well as NVQs in the relevant areas. (paragraph 42)**

The Government expects that the Unit will wish to seek ways of improving the availability and standard of ship and boat conservation skills and training.

**We have highlighted a number of key issues which we recommend should be the responsibility of the new Ships Unit. The scope and breadth of the recommendations demonstrates the need for a properly resourced Ships Unit. (paragraph 43)**

The Government is grateful for the Committee's recommendations. The Government will ensure that the National Historic Ships Unit is lean and fit, that it is funded properly to carry out its functions and that its funding is kept under review.

*7 April 2005*

## Appendix 2 – Reply from English Heritage

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*Submitted by Dr Simon Thurley, Chief Executive*

I understand from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport that it has been agreed that English Heritage and other bodies should respond separately to you on the recommendations in the Committee's Fourth Report, and that these will then be published collectively.

Only one of these recommendations, No.11 is relevant to English Heritage:

We therefore recommend directly to English Heritage that it reconsiders its abandonment of historic ships. We believe its *raison d'être* – helping to protect the historic environment – encompasses, by definition, the protection of the historic fleet. (paragraph 35)

### English Heritage Response

“The conservation of historic ships is, as the Committee recognises, a very expensive business. At the time that English Heritage withdrew from the funding of historic ships conservation we did so because our grants budget was already under pressure and we felt that the sums we were able to make available were unrealistically small in the face of demand even from the small number of ships we were then helping. Our grants budget is now under even greater pressure and in the light of the very large new stream of money available from the Heritage Lottery Fund it would make no sense for us to move back into this area of funding. We must continue to choose our priorities very carefully to match the limited resources available to us.”

*29 April 2005*

## Appendix 3 – Reply from the Heritage Lottery Fund

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As the body which distributes funding from the Lottery to heritage, HLF has given considerable support to historic ships over the past ten years. We were therefore pleased to have the opportunity to give evidence to this inquiry into maritime heritage and historic ships.

In addition to presenting evidence to the Committee, we submitted supplementary information in the form of a letter to Derek Wyatt MP<sup>1</sup>, raising three particular issues which emerged from the Select Committee – the role of VAT, the number of Lottery

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<sup>1</sup> See Annex to the Appendix

officers, and our decision making procedures. We also wrote to Lord McIntosh in response to his announcement of the new Ships Unit. Copies of both letters are attached.<sup>2</sup>

We would make the following response to the Committee's recommendations:

#### Recommendation 1.

Like the Committee we welcome the National Register of Historic Vessels and were glad to assist in its creation.

#### Recommendations 2-5

We welcome the establishment of the new Ships Unit within DCMS and look forward to working closely with it. The Unit will also have an important role to play in the early stages of project development, in providing support for business planning, options appraisals and feasibility studies which HLF does not fund. We would also welcome further support for the Unit ; HLF alone cannot meet all of the needs of historic vessels - 90% of vessels are in private ownership and are not a priority for HLF funding.

#### Recommendation 6.

We agree that the inclusion of a vessel on the Register – whilst being a useful indicator of the heritage merit of a vessel – does not automatically make it eligible for HLF funding. HLF will only support projects that are sustainable in the long term and that combine heritage conservation and wider public benefits, including access and education. Just under half of the vessels we have funded are on the Register – other awards have gone to smaller vessels or to projects which demonstrate wide public benefits.

#### Recommendation 7.

As noted above, we have funded many vessels that are not on the Register. Every application is considered against our published criteria, in accordance with our policy directions and legislative framework.

#### Recommendation 8

We are delighted that the Committee has acknowledged our support to the sector, which of course extends beyond vessels to maritime heritage as a whole.

#### Recommendation 10

As noted above, HLF is currently the only identified source of funding but we cannot meet all of the needs of the sector. Applications for funding already exceed the sums available and difficult choices have to be made. DCMS has confirmed that heritage will continue to be a Lottery good cause after 2009. Our annual level of new commitments will, however, decline in future as we reach steady state in respect of income and expenditure.

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<sup>2</sup> Letter to Lord McIntosh not printed

We have also suggested that the new Unit set up a system for monitoring the long term maintenance of ships that have been conserved. In some cases, the need for major capital expenditure on ships – and indeed any other type of heritage – can be reduced through effective long term maintenance.

#### Recommendation 12

As well as guidance on funding strategies, the new Unit will also need to provide technical guidance, and will require expertise in conserving and maintaining historic ships. Published guidance on conservation is urgently required.

#### Recommendation 13

The Cutty Sark, in common with other listed structures, is required to pay 17.5% VAT on repairs, but not alterations, to historic fabric. Government has recognised the unfair burden that this places on those responsible for maintaining places of worship, and has introduced a scheme to refund VAT on repairs and maintenance. However, VAT remains payable on repairs to other kinds of historic structures. HLF accepts VAT as an eligible cost for projects that we fund.

#### Recommendation 15

A key role for the Unit will be promoting these benefits to the Regional Development Agencies and other organisations and seeking funding for maritime heritage from mainstream regeneration and tourism sources. In the light of the DCMS strategy on Culture and Regeneration, we hope the Department will be making a robust case to ODPM for the regeneration benefits of historic vessels.

*4 July 2005*

### **Annex : Letter to Derek Wyatt MP, Chairman of the Sub-Committee from Carole Souter, Heritage Lottery Fund.**

We are writing to provide clarification of a number of issues that arose at the inquiry

#### 1. VAT

The Cutty Sark, in common with other listed structures, is required to pay 17.5% VAT on repairs, but not alterations, to historic fabric.

HLF accepts VAT as an eligible cost for projects that we fund.

Government has recognised the unfair burden that this places on those responsible for maintaining places of worship, and has introduced a scheme to refund VAT on repairs and maintenance. However, VAT remains payable on repairs to other kinds of historic structures.

#### 2. Lottery Officers

We have obtained a figure of 457 lottery officers in local authorities across the UK; we are unable to state with any precision what percentage of local authorities has lottery officers.

### 3. HLF funding and processes

The heavy dependence of the sector on HLF for funding for capital works was made clear at the inquiry. Comments were also made about the difficulties and costs associated with obtaining HLF funding. It is important that the committee should be aware that whilst we fully expect to continue to support the maritime heritage for as long as we receive funding from the National Lottery, our funding comes with a number of provisos:

- 90% of historic vessels are in private ownership and are not therefore a priority for HLF funding;
- the annual level of HLF commitments is due to decline in value by around 30% by 2009; and
- HLF will only support projects that are demonstrably sustainable in the long term and that deliver heritage conservation and wider public benefits.

HLF has worked hard to make our funding easier and less costly to obtain. We introduced project planning grants to assist with the cost of surveys such as conservation plans and audience development plans. We operate a two stage process for grants over £1m with development funding available between stages 1 and 2 to give applicants confidence at an early stage that we will support their project, and to reduce the financial burden of developing a project. We also provide extensive pre-application advice. In the case of Cutty Sark, we provided grants for interim conservation work whilst a solution to the technical conservation process was developed over several years.

Nevertheless, there is always more to be done in this area and we welcome proposals for simplification. However, HLF is responsible for the proper use of Lottery players' money, and we do therefore require projects to demonstrate long-term viability before we are prepared to commit capital funding. This can be challenging for many applicants, particularly in this sector where leadership and guidance has been lacking.

For this reason we welcome the new Historic Ships Unit and believe it will have an important role to play in the difficult early stages of project development about which you have heard so much. The unit will need to be equipped with practical expertise on conserving and maintaining historic ships and should provide both advice and financial support for business planning, options appraisals and feasibility studies. Published guidance on the conservation of historic ships is also urgently required.

Finally, we would urge that the Committee recommends that the Unit should promote the economic benefits that historic ships can offer and seek funding for maritime heritage from mainstream regeneration and tourism sources, such as the Regional Development Agencies.

*7 February 2005*

## Appendix 4 – Reply from VisitBritain

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VisitBritain welcomes the publication of the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee report into Maritime Heritage and Historic Ships (HC 296) published in March 2005.

Through their report, Members of the Committee have played their part in raising the profile of the maritime sector both within and without Parliament. The report has helped to underline the importance of the maritime sector on a number of fronts – not least as a driver for regeneration, and the importance of engaging and broadening the visitor audience in the upkeep of historic ships.

VisitBritain particularly welcomes the recognition by Committee Members of the importance of SeaBritain 2005 (the spectacular year-long festival of events led by VisitBritain and the National Maritime Museum that celebrate all aspects of Britain's maritime heritage) and Waterside England, VisitBritain's main marketing campaign to encourage UK residents to explore our sea, coastline, estuaries and inland waterways.

In paragraph 39 the Committee recommends that **'VisitBritain and regional tourist boards use 2005 as a platform to build on their involvement with historic ships and ensure that the sector continues to receive the recognition it deserves'**. Through SeaBritain 2005 and Waterside England, VisitBritain has worked hard with our tourism partners throughout the nations and regions of Britain, and also with attractions and organisations across the maritime sector to promote Britain's maritime heritage. Since the publication of the report in March 2005, much activity has taken place that should be brought to the Committee's attention.

There has been considerable success in developing SeaBritain 2005. In early June, key decision-makers and representatives attended a major reception at the Britain and London Visitor Centre at 1 Regent Street to thank SeaBritain 2005 and underline the importance of our maritime heritage. A few weeks later the International Fleet Review in the Solent dominated global media coverage as a dramatic and historic reminder of the importance of the sea in our lives - vessels drawn from 36 different navies joined romantic tall ships, the latest powerful warships and aircraft and helicopters in thrilling flypasts to lead on news channels around the world.

Forthcoming highlights include:

- the astonishing Tall Ships Race in Newcastle Gateshead in late July that will involve over 120 tall ships;
- the Nelson and Napoleon exhibition at the National Maritime Museum which opens today (7th July);
- the New Trafalgar Dispatch being held throughout the South of England in August and September;
- the Royal Navy's Trafalgar 200 autumn events; and
- maritime festivals in Bristol, Falmouth and Chatham.

More and smaller events are being put together across the country, and not just in coastal communities – there are over 1,000 events and 350 maritime attractions to be found on the online searchable database at [www.seabritain2005.com](http://www.seabritain2005.com). There have been over 3 million page requests at the website. All these events, together with innovative projects such as the Trafalgar Woods project (which will create 27 new Trafalgar Woods - one for each ship involved in the famous battle) and significant profile in the press and media (so far, SeaBritain 2005 has generated over £1m of media coverage) all work towards broadening and deepening people's understanding and enjoyment of the nations' maritime heritage.

Domestic tourism marketing activity for SeaBritain takes the form of VisitBritain's Waterside England campaign. Marketing efforts are now building on this summer's events and focusing on online activity – a viral email campaign will be launched shortly, complementing e-newsletters being sent to nearly 100,000 people who have registered to receive information on events and attractions across England. This work is supported by Waterside England promotions at consumer shows and events such as the new Outdoor Show Urban Escapes in the Lea Valley, and the Hampton Court Flower Show.

The publication of the Select Committee's report is a strong statement welcomed by those people and organisations committed to developing Britain's great maritime heritage and ensuring its enjoyment by current and future generations. Crucially, this year provides us with a great opportunity - and we appreciate the Committee's timely work to emphasise the importance of the sector.

*7 July 2005*

## Appendix 5

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### **Supplementary Memorandum submitted by Rt Hon Lord McIntosh of Haringey: responses to supplementary questions posed by the Sub-Committee**

**1. Very little appears to have changed since the last Committee report on historic ships other than setting up the new National Historic Ships Unit. Are there no other steps the Government can take in this area?**

I disagree with the observation that little has changed. On the contrary, we have a clear policy for Historic Ships and, for the first time, a properly funded National Historic Ships Unit, which has wide support, and through which that policy can be delivered in conjunction with the Heritage Lottery Fund as the principal funder. This is a significant achievement. In addition we have provided extra funding to the National Maritime Museum to help support the team delivering the Sea Britain 2005 project, a major promotion of the Maritime Heritage in 2005 with excellent support from Visit Britain, which I welcome. Thanks to the work of the National Historic Ships Committee the National Register of Historic Vessels is now up to date providing a valuable source of information with the new Unit will take forward and maintain.

**2. It has been stated that the Government is committed to delivering a national policy on ship preservation and that historic ships have a role to play in delivering government objectives especially in the areas of tourism and regeneration. Yet there will be no government funding other than a small amount to establish the new Ships Unit. The sector has indicated to us that it cannot survive without further funding. Where should they turn to for funding?**

The Government's direct funding contribution to historic ships is in relation to the historic ship collections of the museums that it sponsors. This contribution is not small. The National Maritime Museum (NMM), for example, has over 150 vessels in its collection and over the last 10 years DCMS has provided NMM with grant-in-aid in excess of £130 million. Other historic vessels can be found in the collections of the Imperial War Museum, National Museums Liverpool and Tyne and Wear Museums, which also receive grant-in-aid from DCMS. The Government's policy is that funding for other historic vessels is a matter for the Heritage Lottery Fund. The Government will, however, fund both the establishment and running of the National Historic Ships Unit and the associated small grants scheme.

**3. Is there a case for direct government support for at least some ships in the Core Collection?**

Where ships in the core collection are part of a Government-sponsored museum collection they may receive grant-in-aid support. Where they are not they will look to other sources of public funding, where available, the Heritage Lottery Fund and private sponsorship.

**4. (a) What difference will the new Unit make in saving more ships when it will not be able to fund programmes? (b) What can it do more effectively than the existing NHSC?**

(a) The Unit will advise owners and trusts on sources of funding and advise the Heritage Lottery Fund on what ships should be funded and how preservation can be conducted most cost-effectively

(b) The Unit will be able to provide professional advice on ship preservation on a full time basis, provide professional advice to the Heritage Lottery Fund and it will be able to represent the sector to Ministers. In addition it will have the means, through the small grants scheme to fund research to underpin preservation efforts or to find alternative ways of recording historic vessels.

**5. Looking ahead five years, how do you see the establishment of the new Ships Unit changing the face of preserving our maritime heritage?**

The Historic Ships unit will achieve a more coherent, less fragmented and more cost effective approach to the preservation and recording of historic ships, a greater public awareness of the maritime heritage and of the alternative ways of recording and preserving it.

**6. In the submissions we have received, people have complained that to date the large museums have had too much control. Do you intend to ensure that there is adequate representation from all sectors including the smaller private owners of historic ships?**

I do not accept the premise that the large museums have had too much control. Indeed I am grateful for the positive help and advice that we have received from them. But, I do recognise the desirability of the Unit being overseen by an independent body and this is why I have proposed that from 2006/07 there should be an Independent Advisory Board whose Chair and Members would be appointed by the Secretary of State. During 2005 we shall be consulting on the composition of the Board and the appropriate representation.

**7. Do/should regional development agencies have a role to play in preserving maritime heritage?**

I am aware that the South East England Development Agency has contributed considerable funding support to the regeneration of the Chatham Historic Dockyard and I am also aware that the South West Regional Development Agency has contributed funding to the National Maritime Museum Cornwall at Falmouth. If there is further scope for regional development agencies to play such a role in the preservation of the maritime heritage I would hope that they were in a position to do so. That is, however, a matter of judgement for them but I am sure that the Historic Ships Unit will be well placed to facilitate liaison and constructive engagement with the RDAs.

**8. Can the DTI export licensing regime alert applicants to the need for a separate DCMS export licence? Are the DCMS and DTI export licensing regimes sufficiently "joined up"?**

DCMS and DTI are currently in discussion about what measures, additional to those currently in place, can be taken to ensure that applicants for export licences are aware of the licensing requirements of both departments.

**9. The Minister mentioned in evidence that he would talk to Treasury Ministers about the case of Cutty Sark and the fact that the Trust now had to pay VAT following recent changes in the law. Please could you let us know of the outcome of those discussions as soon as possible?**

Officials have written to HM Customs and Excise and I will let you know the outcome as soon as possible.

**10. How can tourist boards play a more active role in encouraging people to visit our historic vessels?**

I welcome the Sea Britain 2005 Project and the excellent support that this project is receiving from Visit Britain. Although the tourist boards no longer give grants the Regional Development Agencies are responsible for the regional development of tourism strategy and make substantial financial contributions in support of domestic tourism.

*21 February 2005*