

Flamborough Today

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News In Brief

Celebrating 50 years of marital bliss

A COUPLE who were told their marriage would never last celebrated 50 years of wedded bliss on Sunday ...

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Pupils show off talents

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Royal visit for lifeboat crews

LIFEBOAT crews and supporters are preparing for a royal visit. ...

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Archbishop John wows the crowds

AS part of a year-long tour, the Archbishop of York returned to Bridlington on Monday to pray for th ...

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Harbour blow for wreck team

SCIENTISTS planning to search for one of the world's most famous shipwrecks off the coast of Bri ...

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Royal concern for Carla

A SCHOOLGIRL was treated to a regal chat when she braved a dislocated elbow to wave a flag for a roy ...

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Lifeboat crews' royal visit

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Crews ready for right royal visit

LIFEBOAT crews in Bridlington and Flamborough are making final preparations for a royal visit tomorr ...

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Site visit to resolve right of way dispute

A DISPUTE over a right of way behind a Flamborough

Brid's place in history

A MIX of local knowledge and state-of-the-art technology could help to finally locate 'the Holy Grail of shipwrecks' off the coast of Bridlington.

Experts leading the hunt for the Bonhomme Richard believe it will be the most significant finds for 100 years - tourism chiefs believe it will do for Bridlington what the legacy of Captain Cook has done for Whitby.



Liz Philpot (centre) receives the limited edition artwork from Melissa Ryan and Dr Bob Neyland. (PA0612-13b)



John Paul Jones (picture courtesy of the John Paul Jones Birthplace Museum in Scotland).

Project manager Melissa Ryan, from the Ocean Technology Foundation, said: "If we find Bonhomme Richard everyone will have heard of Bridlington." And her colleague Dr Bob Neyland, from the US Naval Historical Centre, said: "It is sort of the Holy Grail of maritime history. It would be one of the most significant finds, certainly of the last century. And it would become part of Bridlington's mythology."

They were in Bridlington last week to tell local people about how they will go about looking for the vessel, which sunk during the fierce Battle of Flamborough Head in 1779.

Councillors, coastguards, historians, librarians and TV crews were among those who were at the Orangery at Sewerby Hall last Friday to find out more about the project.

Mrs Ryan said: "Our ultimate mission is to find the final resting place of the ship, promote awareness and appreciation for the role of the ship and its place in history."

But it is easier said than done, as a number of previous unsuccessful expeditions have proved over the last 30 years.

It sounds like finding a needle in a haystack but Dr Neyland said: "You do find the needle in a haystack. You see almost every week there's a new shipwreck being discovered and the Bonhomme Richard will be found eventually."

But will it be found this summer, when the team of Americans set up base in Bridlington? Hi-tech equipment, which has been used to find the wrecks of World War Two ship sunk off the Normandy beaches, and years of research means the team possibly have the best chance yet of striking it lucky.

However, it could be that technology alone will not solve the mystery. Anecdotes from fishermen with information about where there nets snagged could unlock the puzzle, when it is teamed up with statistics, maps, navigation charts and ultra-modern computer programmes.

But the team are fully aware that finding the wreck is anything but guaranteed.

Dr Neyland said: "Someone has already told me there could be 50,000 wrecks out there. How do we deal with those two problems?"

"We have to start by sorting out which wreck might be the Bonhomme Richard through Geographical Information Systems (GIS), which allows us to take current maps and also historical maps from the 1790s right through to about the 1930s, place all these maps as various layers and create a new map.

"By putting all this information into a digital mapping system, you can see things that will help you find the wreck you are looking for."

"We are probably going to find other interesting wrecks from the 19th century, World War One and World War Two, all of which are part of your maritime history and heritage."

pub is due to be settled by a site visit by council ... [more »](#)

Looking forward to relaxing

AFTER 20 years of working at the Boots store in Bridlington, employee Sue Harvey is retiring. ... [more »](#)



A painting of the Battle of Flamborough Head by local artist John Cooper.

The team plans to arrive in July and spend three or four weeks carrying out surveys. In an ideal world, they would extend that to six weeks or more, but they will need to raise an extra \$100,000 to cover the cost.

No diving or excavation work will take place until 2007 at the earliest, so the first stage of the operation will be to use sonar and magnetic equipment to skim across the water and survey the sea bed.

Dr Neyland said: "The Bonhomme Richard could be buried below the sea and the magnetometer will pick up the

ballast that we know the ship carried. It also had iron for munitions and cannons on board. It's likely to be in fairly deep water. We hope there will be very good preservation. "

Among the other items the team is hoping to find preserved are remnants of chinaware, cooking utensils, edged weapons and glass and ceramic objects.

They are certainly determined, and optimistic, that their hard work will bring rewards.

"We have done years and years of homework, taken our time and put it all together. It could go on for decades and the cost will run into millions of pounds or dollars to recover the whole wreck," said Dr Neyland.

And that will just be the start. Arguments will rage about who owned the ship - it was a French vessel, loaned to America and sunk by the British - and if it is raised where the wreck will be taken to.

But whatever happens it should help to raise Bridlington's profile nationally and internationally.

Mrs Ryan said: "The battle was so exciting, so dangerous and so unbelievable. I'm hoping that's what we will show when we get into our educational activities.

"It is inspiring people to recognise the heritage that they have here, which tells us who we are. That is important and we should not lose that."

A STRONG bond has already formed between Bridlington and the team which is trying to uncover its biggest secret.

Melissa Ryan and Dr Bob Neyland, leaders of the expedition to find the Bonhomme Richard, said they were overwhelmed at the friendly welcome they were given during their two-day stay.

And, in return, they have presented the town with a limited edition painting of John Paul Jones at Battle of Flamborough Head by artist Dean Mosher.

Mrs Ryan said: "We have been so warmly welcomed here. We really appreciate it," and Dr Neyland added: "It's really been a pleasure to come here and meet everyone. I can't think of many places where we have had such a warm reception. One thing that comes across is the sense of community spirit."

It was not set in stone that Bridlington would be the home port for the project, others such as Scarborough and Whitby were considered.

But Mrs Ryan said as soon as she spoke to Liz Philpot, from Bridlington's regeneration team, she knew there was only one place to set up camp. "She was so enthusiastic and saw so much potential for the mutual benefits, we didn't need to look any further," she said.

Dr Neyland added: "Bridlington has very good resources and a very good harbour here."

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