

ONBOARD

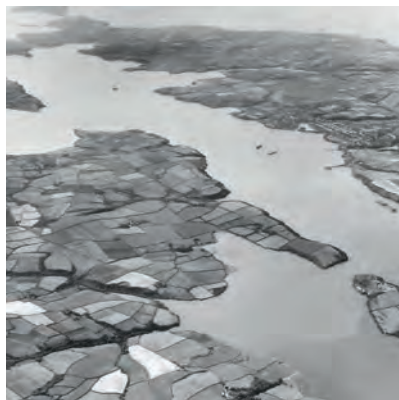
 **Port of
Milford Haven**

Spring 2023 | Issue 16
News from the Port of Milford Haven



Green light for Celtic Freeport bid

Milford Haven and Port Talbot welcome announcement of freeport status



PORT'S 65TH ANNIVERSARY

A look back at how far we've come



BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Tŷ Milford Waterfront celebrates one year of trading



BLUE SPACE OPPORTUNITY

Milford Beach Activity Centre embraces the power of the sea



PADDLEBOARDING SOARS IN POPULARITY

PLOT your day on the water

MILFORD WATERFRONT SUMMER FEST 2023

Join us this summer for a celebration of the sea with food, festivals and family fun, right in the heart of Pembrokeshire.



**MILFORD HAVEN
BEER FESTIVAL**
By Milford Haven Round Table

**27TH
MAY**



**MILFORD HAVEN
CARNIVAL**
By Milford Haven Round Table

**1ST
JULY**



SUNSET CINEMA
By the Torch Theatre

**28TH
JULY**

**MILFORD HAVEN
STREET FOOD FESTIVAL**
By Street Food Warehouse

**4TH - 6TH
AUGUST**



SUNSET CINEMA
By the Torch Theatre

**18TH
AUGUST**

Find out more at www.milfordwaterfront.co.uk/summerfest



#visitmilfordhaven

All information correct at time of going to print, April 2023. Please check our website for the latest details.



Hello,

Following a hugely successful 2022, this is a very big year for the Port, for Pembrokeshire, and for South West Wales!

2023 is our 65th anniversary year, but it's also the year in which we will make big strides towards becoming a Freeport.....The Celtic Freeport. Our collaboration with Pembrokeshire CC, Neath Port Talbot CC and Associated British Ports at Port Talbot will accelerate our Waterway's path to Net-Zero, position us to maximise 'Pembrokeshire content' in a green energy and renewables revolution, and create thousands of jobs for current and future generations. As a Trust Port of 65 years standing, what better gift can we give to our coastal communities.

Pembrokeshire County Council have been wonderful partners in this enterprise and deserve special mention for their

leadership in helping to persuade the governments in Cardiff and Westminster that we can deliver on our Celtic Freeport pledges. Together, we will secure investment, attract new businesses, support current businesses, deliver a skilled workforce and ensure that our county maximises the potential that floating offshore wind, hydrogen and renewables technology offer.

There's more information in this issue about the Freeport announcement, as well as an update on the complimentary and very exciting developments at Pembroke Port where work to convert the former Royal Dockyard to serve the marine renewables industry is well underway.

2023 is going to be a great year for the Port, our customers, and for our coastal communities.

Tom Sawyer
Chief Executive

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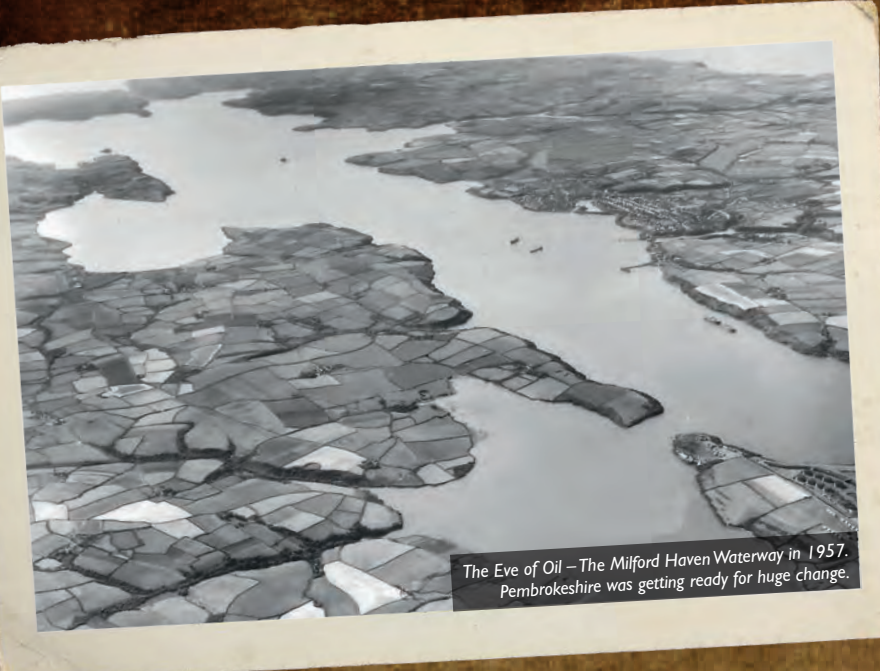
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THE PORT



The Eve of Oil – The Milford Haven Waterway in 1957. Pembrokeshire was getting ready for huge change.



The Milford Haven Waterway today. Credit: Shaun Bowie

The story of the Port of Milford Haven becoming the UK's most important energy gateway began 65 years ago, when The Milford Haven Conservancy Act received royal assent on 30th April 1958. The Act was no more than a piece of paper, a functional piece of legislation. But in an invisible subtext were the collapse of a once powerful trading empire, and the promise of new opportunity for men and women in our region's stuttering economy.

For Pembrokeshire, it was an economic Act, a social Act and, as Freeport status is announced in the 65th year of its existence, a future Act too.

AN ECONOMIC ACT - A HARBOUR FOR GIANTS

On November 22, 1957, the Minister for Transport, the Rt Hon Harold Watkinson MP stood to address MPs in the House of Commons. The Government was tabling a Bill to create a new body to manage navigation and shipping in the remote waterway of Milford Haven as part of a plan to make it a major oil port.

Just eight months earlier, the Suez Crisis had caused petrol rationing in the UK, with prices reaching levels that, in real terms, were not far off what they are now.

"The events of the past twelve months have taught the maritime world that it is wiser to be less dependent on

the use of the Suez Canal," said the understated government minister. *"There is pressure for larger tankers and larger vessels of all kinds."*

The facts were clear: Britain was no longer a superpower. It had become dependent upon US and Middle Eastern energy policy. It needed a dependable supply and large tankers that would sail around the Cape of South Africa, and it needed a harbour big enough to handle these giants. There was only one such harbour: Milford Haven.

Fast forward to 1963. Esso had built its refinery on the north shore of the Waterway, BP had built an oil receiving facility in

Angle and another US oil giant, Regent (Texaco) was celebrating the sod cutting for its refinery at Rhoscrowther. MP for Pembrokeshire, Desmond Donnelly was asked to mark the occasion with a few words.

"This is the re-birth of Pembrokeshire," he said. *"I only wish the men who were discharged from Pembroke Dockyard during the dark, depressing days, were here today to see it taking place."*

Donnelly had a knack for seeing the real story.

Unemployment was high and he saw oil taking the place of the long silent shipyards of Pembroke Dock and the empty fishing berths in Milford Haven, as an industry to put food on the tables of families up and down the Waterway.

But locals weren't sure. After all, Pembrokeshire was home to the world's first coastal National Park. Local historian and journalist, John Evans, who was in junior school at that time,

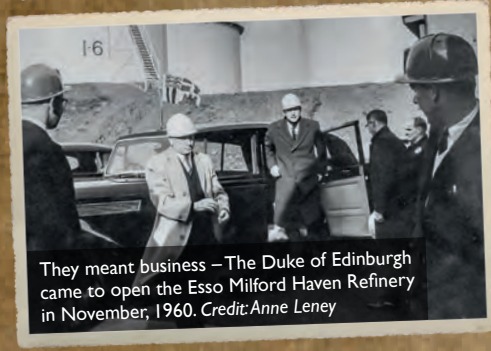
remembered the debate. *"There was a lot of antipathy,"* he recalled. *"But it caused some conflict too, with concerns about any smell it would cause, its effect on tourism. But there'd also been talk of building a nuclear reactor in Carew Cheriton, though! What would that have done for tourism?"*

By 1974 there would be 4 refineries. The Port's pilots handled close to 60m tons of shipping that year, making Milford Haven the UK's biggest port by tonnage. At its peak the construction industry had thousands of men on its payroll building the refineries, and the local authorities were reaping £2,000,000 a year in business rates from the oil industry.

The Conservancy Board (Port Authority) was built from scratch by the men recruited by order of the Act. General manager, Col. Jack Sullivan, who brought his family here to take up his post in 1958, was instrumental in ensuring the Board managed the rapid growth in shipping and starting reinvesting profits back into the business. Sullivan's son, Marcus, who still lives by the Waterway, remembered the fierce commitment his father and the

Board had to their duties. *"Dad was heavily invested in the Port and in the future of the Haven, which he saw as his project,"* said Marcus. *"I know he was proud of the tonnage the Port was receiving at the time."*

Modern refineries required few staff, and many who'd migrated for the construction work opted to stay here, even after the jobs were gone. By the 80s, the boom years were over. But throughout the changing fortunes of big oil,



They meant business – The Duke of Edinburgh came to open the Esso Milford Haven Refinery in November, 1960. Credit: Anne Leney



A harbour for giants – Esso Mercia, the largest tanker in Europe, visited in 1968. Credit: Western Telegraph/Port of Milford Haven

the evolution of the UK's energy port brought into being a diverse homegrown supply chain of expertise, from specialist engineers and fabricators to consultants and designers, whose services would be in demand around the globe long after three refineries had closed.

The Sea Empress grounding in 1996 was a wake-up call for the industry and an opportunity for the Port to put in place multiple safeguards to prevent anything like that from happening again. These include the UK's Port Marine Safety Code, extensive pilotage training and advanced navigational equipment, regular multi-agency counter-pollution exercises, and additional pilotage and escort towage requirements.

The overall capability and capacity of the Port and its supply chain, with over 5 decades of experience, led to the decision to site two LNG terminals and a new gas fired power station here in the late 2000s. That investment could be traced directly back to those unwritten promises bound in the Conservancy Act of 1958.

A SOCIAL ACT - MODERNISING PEMBROKESHIRE

What did the arrival of oil mean to people here in Pembrokeshire? Life in the county was hard in the late 50s. When Prime Minister Harold MacMillan had said in 1957 "most of our people have never had it so good", he certainly didn't have this corner of West Wales in mind.

Opportunities were few. Prospects afforded by a Waterway that had given communities living along it so much through centuries of fishing, boat building, mining and military activity were disappearing. Some saw the promise within the Act. Many didn't. When the oil companies arrived however, communities like Milford Haven felt the changes straight away.

"I went to work for Esso straight from college," remembered Jill Moir. The story of her family - the Yollands - was the story of Milford Haven. Trawler owners until after the war, her uncles left Milford for farming and her brother went to sea with the Merchant Navy. "Our parents thought there was nothing here for their children to go into," remembered Jill. "I might have earned £5 a week as a secretary but at Esso I got £25. My dad was over the moon when I got my job."



As an Esso employee, Jill Moir earned 5 times more than she'd get elsewhere and was able to get married in the Esso Club in 1965. "There was nowhere like it locally. It was really quite classy!" Jill recalled.

In his book, *A Vision of Greatness*, historian K.D McKay noted all these new jobs "created in the local service industries such as bus and taxi services, local shops, banks and recreational/leisure enterprises as a result of the extra salaries brought into the area."

Construction of refineries more than replaced the 1700 jobs that had once been tied to the fishing industry. Some jobs were taken by 'outsiders', or people relocated by their employers from elsewhere. This immigration meant towns like Milford and Neyland were soon filled with accents from Texan and Irish to Scottish and Liverpoolian.

As historian Simon Hancock explained, migration had always been a part of Pembrokeshire's story and the arrival of oil triggered yet another wave. "Economic change brought migration and migration meant social change," said Simon. "It was enriching, it opened peoples' horizons to people of other backgrounds and traditions."

Jill Moir's neighbour, Anne Leney, was one such immigrant. She came here

in 1959 with her father, John Follett, who had been sent by Esso from their Fawley refinery in Portsmouth to oversee completion of the Milford Haven complex. Anne went on to work for Esso Milford Haven. Her husband would become a Port pilot.

"It was a step back in time coming here... 20 years back," she said. "I loved it. There were little shops everywhere and I would spend a lot of time walking the coastal path. The locals were much nicer than I expected!"

With the oil boom, even 'backward' Pembrokeshire was catching up with the rest of the UK. Western Telegraph veteran and historian, John Evans recalled that by the 1960s, globally renowned bands were adding The Pill Social Centre to their UK tour dates.

"I remember top pop groups like the Who arriving in their battered Ford Transits," said John. "Fashion took time getting here but we started seeing images of mini-skirts in the paper." (However, as he pointed out, even this ultimate 60s symbol of women's emancipation belied the fact Pembrokeshire, powered by construction and oil, remained a very male dominated society.)

While oil brought in people like Anne's family, who would go on to become locals, it also re-skilled a generation of Pembrokeshire's tradesmen and their young who, when the refineries closed, would end up travelling worldwide for companies who valued their talents.



Esso ladies - Anne Leney (standing) and Jill Moir's lives would be transformed by the 1958 Act. Credit: Shaun Bowie

John Evans's brother, David was one example. "He started out a farm engineer... he had an innate ability to work anything!" said John. "He went to work at the Gulf refinery at first but ended up in Oman for seven years. When the refineries closed, people went to Saudi Arabia and the North Sea, earning a great deal more than a farm labourer!"



The Who FAN CLUB ADDRESS:-
c/o. Jane, 104 Ivor Court, London, W.1.

Rock bands including The Who were making The Pill Social Centre in Milford part of their national tours by 1965 (They were booked in October that year instead of another young band called 'The Beatles'). Credit: Margaret Jones

Connected Pembrokeshire - A boost to disposable income gave Pembrokeshire a taste of the Swinging Sixties

Announcement Of Freeport

22nd March 2023 was a day for celebration when the Welsh and UK Governments announced that the Celtic Freeport - including the ports of Milford Haven and Port Talbot - and Anglesey Freeport on Ynys Mon, were chosen as Wales' first freeports.

The Celtic Freeport will deliver an accelerated pathway for Wales' net zero economy generating over 16,000 new green jobs and up to £5.5 billion of new investment. The plans focus on low carbon technologies such as floating offshore wind, hydrogen, carbon capture and biofuels to support the accelerated reduction of carbon emissions.

The freeports will form special zones with the benefits of simplified customs procedures, relief on custom duties, tax benefits and development flexibility.

Ten big benefits of the Celtic Freeport:



- 1** Create 16,000 new, high-quality, well-paid, green jobs underpinned by fair working practices and inclusive workplaces.
- 2** Boost green skills opportunities for future generations.
- 3** Build two new green energy ports to unlock the £54 billion floating offshore wind (FLOW) industry.
- 4** Give Wales 'global first-mover' advantage in this new form of clean, reliable energy with strengthened export and supply chain opportunities.
- 5** Help to re-position the Welsh steel industry by using steel made at Port Talbot to drive the development of FLOW.
- 6** Attract £5.5 billion inward investment in modern, green technologies.
- 7** Decarbonise Wales' primary industrial cluster and make a major contribution to national net-zero carbon emissions targets.
- 8** Boost innovation in other clean energy technologies, such as wave and tidal, hydrogen and other sustainable fuels.
- 9** Enhance domestic energy supply and security.
- 10** And, importantly, invest in future skills, innovation and local projects, through a dedicated £500m fund.

www.celticfreeport.wales
#BackCelticFreeport



A FUTURE ACT - READY FOR NET ZERO



CGI image of what Pembroke Port will look like once construction works are completed.

Few would have imagined the 1958 Act would set the Waterway on a course to be a champion of the post-oil renewable energy revolution. The announcement in March that the Port of Milford Haven, along with Port Talbot, would form part of a great Celtic Freeport in south west Wales, gives our future generations more opportunities.

“Our Port business and all the other businesses that have emerged and endured here over 65 years, are match fit from serving the UK’s energy needs over the last six decades” said the Port of Milford Haven’s chief executive Tom Sawyer. “That’s the legacy of the Act, of creating a modern, safe and well-regulated Port in this Waterway.”

“Renewable energy developers from across the world will now see the Celtic Freeport as a place that not only has the capability and facilities, but

the appetite and ambition to help them establish and grow,” he added.

And just as happened in the 60s and 70s when salaries and social dividends flowed into communities around the Waterway,

“
That’s the legacy of the Act, of creating a modern, safe and well-regulated Port in this Waterway
”

the Port’s next energy revolution is expected to deliver again for families and for school leavers hoping for high-quality, well-paid work in their home county.

“He was all for attracting new business to the Port,” said Marcus Sullivan when asked what his Dad, Jack, would have thought knowing the Port of Milford Haven, descendant of the Conservancy Board, was set for another great chapter in its history. “He knew it

was a great deep-water harbour, whether as a base for fishing fleets, flying boats, sailing, oil and gas or the ferry he fought to get here. The idea of it facilitating renewables? He would have loved it.”



Dulse restaurant

FIRST ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS FOR Tŷ MILFORD WATERFRONT

A whole year has passed since the grand opening of the Tŷ Hotel at Milford Waterfront. We spoke to Hotel Manager Adrian Andrews about how business has been since they started trading last April.

Q. How would you sum up the past twelve months?

A. In a word... amazing! We have just been blown away by the positive response to the hotel, both from our guests and the local community. It's been an absolute pleasure to deliver so many happy experiences and to work with so many local partners to enhance Milford Waterfront as a destination.

Q. What have been some of the highlights?

A. Our launch last Easter was a very proud moment and we were delighted to be able to hit the ground running at such a busy time. We were also very pleased to be awarded 4 stars from Visit

Wales just a few weeks after opening our doors and then to be nominated for two Croeso Awards with Visit Pembrokeshire.

Q. What have your occupancy levels been like in the hotel?

A. Really good – exceeding our targets across the year. We expected the school holidays to be busy with Pembrokeshire being such a popular destination for tourists, but we have been surprised by the numbers of visitors outside of the peak seasons. The amount of business generated year-round by the Port of Milford Haven has provided us with a steady flow of corporate travellers during the week.

Q. How about the restaurant?

A. Dulse has quite rightly attracted some rave reviews and Executive Head Chef Simon Crockford has really put his stamp on the menu. As a former Wales National Chef of the Year, Sy has brought amazing experience from the Celtic Manor Resort back home to his native Pembrokeshire and has been excited to create dishes using the amazing seafood and other fantastic produce that is so readily available in the area. We have been delighted at how Dulse has established itself as a destination restaurant for foodies here in Pembrokeshire.

Q. Have you got involved in the community since you opened?

A. We have really enjoyed getting involved in the local community – sponsoring the rugby team shirts at Milford Comprehensive School and we have also supported the Round Table Beer Festival, the Fire Festival, the Pembrokeshire County Show, Haverfordwest County FC and the Long Course Weekend. Just recently we were proud to sponsor the match ball for Hakin United FC. But most of all it has been about meeting and working with neighbouring businesses to make the most of the fantastic community spirit here.



FLOVENTIS
ENERGY

UPDATE ON LLŶR 1&2

The Llŷr wind farms will be amongst the first floating offshore wind test and demonstration projects to be developed and constructed in the Celtic Sea, showcasing the next generation in clean renewable offshore renewable energy technology with 200MW of home grown, zero-carbon energy.

The Llŷr Projects are being progressed by Floventis Energy Limited – a joint venture between SBM Offshore and Cierco Limited. Having completed the benthic and geophysical surveys for Llŷr 1 and 2, Floventis is now preparing to submit a full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and begin consultation with local stakeholders.

Tessa Blazey is Director of Policy and External Affairs for Floventis. She said: "We're keen to involve local residents, stakeholders and potential supply chain partners in the development of the Llŷr projects and welcome any questions that people may have. We will be hosting a series of exhibitions and events in the region so please do come along and find out more about the opportunities that Llŷr will bring for the local area."

Please visit: www.llyrwind.com to sign up for project updates and find out about future consultation events.



Pembroke Dock Marine

FULL SPEED AHEAD AT PEMBROKE PORT

Work to redevelop Pembroke Port as part of the £60m Pembroke Dock Marine project is progressing well with significant activity underway.

Contractor BAM Nuttall began construction on the new workboat pontoon package in August 2022 which, once complete, will provide additional berthing for vessels at all states of the tide enabling the port to accommodate a wider range of marine devices.

Construction of a larger slipway capable of launching and recovering devices is ongoing, with the removal of the central section between the two current slipways making way for a new enlarged slipway. The majority of the material being removed is being repurposed to create expanded laydown spaces.

Elsewhere on site, Oleander House is due to open this summer. It's the first of four Grade II listed annexes attached to the historic Sunderland Hangars that are being renovated. A key part of the Pembroke Dock Marine

project, the annexes will create office and workshop space for the growing marine energy sector. The three remaining annexes, Catalina House, Falcon House and Erebus House, will also be available soon.

70% of the workers on site are local to the area, living less than 50 miles away from Pembroke Port, and around £7.7m has been spent in the local area on materials, equipment and labour to date.

The Pembroke Dock Marine development is part of the Swansea Bay City Deal which is funded by the UK Government, Welsh Government and through the public and private sectors. It is also part funded by the European Regional Development Fund through the Welsh Government.

Man of Opportunity

Matt Jones is an optimist. This is one reason why it's good to spend a half hour sitting down for a chat with him. When you throw the word "optimist" at him, however, he comes back with another O word: opportunity.

Throughout his professional life, Matt has taken opportunities and crafted them into a career that he freely admits comes close to perfect for its balance of work and life.

"I don't think another opportunity like this exists in my line of work," he says of his role as Project Director for the Port of Milford Haven at what is arguably the most dynamic and fast changing period of its 65-year history. Projects he's overseeing, or has seen delivered, include a 4* 100-bedroom hotel (on time, on budget), new pilot boats to allow the Port to continue to move more than 38m* tonnes of cargo per year, the £60m remodelling of a historic shipyard in preparation for a marine renewable energy revolution, and the roll out of hybrid working systems for the 200 strong team at the Port. All this amidst a pandemic and the inflationary crisis that followed, fuelled by the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

"There is huge change going on at the Port," says Matt. "That has an impact on any organisation both physically and mentally. Add the shifting sands of the impact of Covid and inflation, where sometimes steel prices were changing two times a day, and it can be challenging!" he adds.

It's clear that Matt, who breaks down these large, complex challenges into bite-size pieces for breakfast, has reached the level of experience where he can simultaneously see the tiny, moving parts while still appreciating the wonder of the whole machine. He can see the wood for the trees, and he feels very positive about where the Port and, by extension, Pembrokeshire is headed. Bedfordshire born (almost as far from the coast as you can get in the UK) he is working here because Pembrokeshire has once again become a land of opportunity.

"I think there are - and will be many more - opportunities for very well paid, skilled jobs with sectors such as FLOW (floating offshore wind energy) taking off here. What's more, the world is changing, and I think people are increasingly looking to a better work-life balance, moving away from cities.

*Provisional number for 2022 as supplied by the Department for Transport

There aren't many better places to live and work than here," he says.

As is so often the case, however, it wasn't just the dream job that brought him to his dream location. Matt was also headhunted into the county as a result of the kind of recruitment operation Pembrokeshire excels in: romance.

"I was down in Pembrokeshire for a weekend with a friend when I met my wife, Katie," explains Matt. "She had recently moved back to Pembrokeshire after leaving her job as a bed manager in a Cardiff hospital."

"We started dating and I was doing consultancy work with my former employers John Lewis at the time, so was able to spend more and more time down here. Eventually, we made the decision to move here and get married."

If you've heard a story like this before, it may be from the last issue of OnBoard where our new Chief Executive, Tom Sawyer revealed the terms and conditions of his recruitment to Pembrokeshire.

Matt and Katie now have two children ("What a great place to bring kids up!" he says) and he believes they, too, will have opportunities here in Pembrokeshire.

"We are now anchored here. Homegrown talent is important. Sure, they might go away and get skills and experience, but we can now lure them back with jobs in construction, engineering, renewable energy, and give them a future here."

“
I don't think
another
opportunity like
this exists.
”

On another level – With construction and marine renewables on the up, a positive Matt Jones (seen here inside the new Sunderland Hangar annex in Pembroke Port) thinks school leavers will get opportunities not seen here for a generation. Credit: Owen Howells Photography.

Matt Jones with project manager, Claire Lawrence at Pembroke Port. "I am very lucky to have an excellent team delivering some complex projects," says Matt.



HST MARINE MERGER BROADENS HORIZONS

Pembroke Port-based HST Marine was acquired by Purus Marine towards the end of last year in order to broaden the services they could offer under Purus Wind with a shared commitment to providing low-carbon solutions to the offshore wind industry.

While HST brings the crew transfer vessels and industry knowledge to the table, Purus has the means and infrastructure to expand the fleet and explore clean emission technologies such as biofuels, hydrogen and methanol.

Purus has won a number of significant contracts recently including

HST Workboats being part of the enabling package for the Celtic Sea FLOW project, survey works in Freshwater East, environmental studies with Jacobs within the Milford Haven Waterway and supporting Osprey Group working on behalf of EDF Energy at the new Hinkley Point C Power Station. HST Workboats is also employed as the safety boat contractor for Dragon LNG, South Hook LNG and VPOT.

Due to the developing nature of the industry, HST Marine are undergoing a new building programme meaning they will have additional vessels joining the fleet over the next three years including three hybrid Damen FCS2710s – the first of their kind, four hybrid StratCat 27 CTVs and three brevity-class hybrid CTVs.

THE CHEEKY SHEEP

A passion for painting and crafting has turned into a successful business stocking products including fused glass, jewellery, artwork and hand painted glassware which can be personalised in just 15 minutes.

Owner of the Cheeky Sheep Shan Rimmer started an online shop during lockdown and shortly afterwards opened a physical premises at Milford Waterfront to showcase her work. Everything in the shop is handcrafted by Shan which means customers are getting a unique product created in Milford Haven.

Shan loves her location, commenting *“Milford Waterfront is one of the nicest places to be situated. There’s a great selection of diverse businesses for people to have a unique shopping experience. We also have some of the best places to sit and eat and enjoy the view.”* She added *“I love that my days are never the same, it’s true what they say about finding a job that you love means you’ll never work a day in your life!”*

(The rather unusual name for the shop originated from a photo of a rare breed sheep taken at the Royal Welsh Show that was sticking its tongue out, so Shan drew him and the portrait is now on display in store).



As well as the shop at Milford Waterfront, you can find The Cheeky Sheep on Facebook and Instagram and at www.thecheekysheep.co.uk



THE EH GROUP - CARING FOR THE COMMUNITY

A company that started out as a care home 35 years ago has grown into an organisation with five successful businesses to its name and has just relocated to new offices in Milford Haven.

The EH Group began with the establishment of Elliotshill Care Home in 1988 with just a few residential care beds, but over the years has acquired Pembrokeshire Care, Ashdale Care and set up Catalyst Training and Coastal Cleaning. The Group provides services to businesses, the Local Authority and the NHS and now employs around 290 staff.

The team had previously been spread across a number of sites in Haverfordwest, however they have recently moved into a large modern office at Cedar Court in Milford Haven which now caters for everyone’s needs and provides a pleasant place to work and spend time with colleagues.

Commercial Director at The EH Group, Simon Clarke, said *“On top of this chance to bring everyone together in a new environment, there are the fantastic opportunities that Milford Waterfront provides, a wonderful place to stretch your legs throughout the day, plenty of options for food and drink, as well as some great bars and restaurants for get-togethers during the evening.”*

(L-R) Carla Roberts, Senior HR Co-ordinator; Sally Clarke, Director and Simon Clarke, Commercial Director of The EH Group.

Blue Space Opportunity



Milford Beach Activity Centre co-founder Chris Powles believes access to the sea unlocks potential for success in young people. Credit: Owen Howells Photography.

“I was practically brought up on the water, messing about,” says Chris Powles as he walks towards Milford Beach, gripping his kayak. “Life was about being on the coast, campfires on the beach, fishing... mostly messing about! It was a great place to grow up.”

It's February, the thermometer barely above freezing, but a wetsuited Chris isn't bothered. He's very much at home.

Summer or winter, a life growing up outdoors in a pre-digital Pembrokeshire (that every parent bores their children about) gave much of the inspiration for business partners Chris Powles and Sam Lingwood (both ex Forces) and Mike Naylor (industry radiographer), to set up their business, The Milford Beach Activity Centre, in the heart of their hometown, Milford Haven.

“
The Activity Centre opens up access to the Waterway, offering kayaking and paddleboarding, which is great for tourism but also great for today's kids to get the opportunities we had growing up... but in a safe environment!
”

Off the record, he explains how much of what he and his mates got up to as kids was less than sensible (*“I'm full of metal from misadventure,”* he laughs).

But an outdoor upbringing, and the impact it had on him, is also what drives him and his business partners to open up the sea to young people.

“It was the sheer joy of it, the smell of it and the thrills that got us on the water. That experience gave us an incredible start and we want others to have that chance, but properly equipped and learning some great skills along the way.”

Chris's business partner, Sam Lingwood also applied his Pembrokeshire upbringing to a career in the Forces.

“I grew up on the Mount Estate in a single parent household,” explains Sam. “I joined the Army at the age of 16. I think being comfortable with the sea and elements as a child set me up for the arduous training I completed in the Army.”

With a career that took in the Parachute Regiment before he was selected to train the best of the best at the Royal Army Physical Training Corp, it's not hard to see how growing up with the coast as a playground helped unlock enormous potential in Sam. He believes the business can help do the same for others today.

The sheltered bay off Milford Beach is a great place to start exploring the Waterway in kayaks. Credit: Cub3d Ltd.



"I think coming from a less privileged background has made me more determined for that not to be a barrier in my life. I have succeeded at being a high-ranking soldier, with a degree to my name, a husband, father and now business owner. Not bad for someone who left school without any GCSEs" he adds.

The Activity Centre is based in a beachside space above the Hot Water Slip. The docks shelter the beach from prevailing weather, making it an ideal bay for accompanying inexperienced kayakers and paddleboarders. Milford Beach is both a hidden gem for visiting tourists drawn to Milford Waterfront, and a central access to the same sea that brought the surrounding community its original purpose. The beach, once very much part of a working dock, now sits on a busy public footpath and cycling route close to cafés, shops and restaurants.

The elevator pitch, then, is that the Activity Centre provides a great day out for tourists drawn to the area, but also safely reconnects thousands of locals with the Waterway of their heritage, this time for pleasure rather than work.

"When I returned to Pembrokeshire, I started to work for the Council's youth service, helping provide young people with access to outdoor opportunities and activities," explains Chris. "My daily walk with the dogs would take me past the beach. One day the idea hit me – why not combine tourism and youth activity in one?"

Former army colleague Sam Lingwood returned from a career away to see Milford Haven transforming itself as a visitor destination. He feels positive about his hometown's prospects. So much so, he's also bought a pub on the Waterfront, the Nos Da Bar.

"There has been significant investment by the Port of Milford Haven and I know there is more in the pipeline. Housing is selling fast in the area, schools are improving – all signs that things are on the up, that people want to live and spend their money in Milford Haven."

The company has ambitions to expand its offering, with inflatable slides and jumps and even a climbing wall. Making Milford Beach a marine leisure centre is a transformation that might baffle the founders of this town. But it proves that, for locals, the river is not just a way to make a living, but an important way of life.



Paddleboarding with Milford Beach Activity Centre off the Hot Water Slip at Milford Waterfront. Credit: Cub3d Ltd.



BLUE SPACE THINKING

It's a good time to be in the business of getting people on the water.

We've long known access to green spaces is important for our wellbeing. It was for that very reason our national parks were created following the traumatic years of World War II. Now we know that the same is true for blue spaces. Researchers at the University of Glasgow gathered evidence from studies across the world and found ample proof that water features can be valuable public health assets.

In a BBC interview¹, co-author of the study, Niamh Smith, said that the team found an impact on both mental and general health from spending time in blue spaces. The research also linked time spent in blue space to a reduction in body mass index (BMI) and a lower risk of mortality.

Chris is very aware of the positive power of the sea. He left the army and returned to start his own family in his coastal hometown, hopeful that the next generation would connect with the water, as he once had.

"I honestly didn't realise the benefits of growing up by the coast until I left Pembrokeshire and saw what the rest of the UK had to offer," he explains. "While I was posted in Berkshire, I realised how living away from the sea meant that I missed out on things I took for granted and almost felt sorry for those who didn't have those same opportunities!"

For the team at the Port of Milford Haven, the approach from the business trio looking for a home for their Activity Centre could not come at a better time. *"Milford Waterfront is a very special place by the water,"* says Lucy Wonnacott, marketing manager at the Port.

"But it's important to make sure anyone can get enjoyment from being on the water too, no matter what their background is. Boating is expensive and unmanaged access can be dangerous. For someone to come along and offer safe, educational and fun ways to get out on the water is great for people in Milford Haven and for the visitors who are so important to the local economy."

"We welcome businesses like this," continues Lucy. *"They really open up a river that's so important for connecting people to nature and their own heritage. I hope having better access can inspire everyone, locals and visitors, to appreciate the natural wonders and rich history of the Waterway... it's a wonderful asset for peoples' health and wellbeing."*

¹ <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20221108-the-doctors-prescribing-blue-therapy>



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PORT CHARITABLE UPDATE



Keeping Pace

Mikey Lawlor from Greenacres Animal Rescue with Ben (L) and Archie, retired racing greyhounds. Credit: Owen Howells Photography.

The end of the pandemic led to a temporary surge of unwanted lockdown pets being abandoned or relinquished to Greenacres Animal Rescue. However, the sport of greyhound racing continues to keep the team busy, as they struggle to take on unwanted dogs that fail to perform.

Greyhound racing has endured as part of our sporting landscape for the best part of a century. It's the sixth most popular sport in the UK, according to its governing body the Greyhound Board of Great Britain which licenses most of the tracks in England. There is one independent track in Wales.

Nothing focuses animal breeding practices more than competition and money, and greyhounds are a supreme example of expert genetic development. The sport may not attract the same money as horseracing, but last year alone, it attracted £740m turnover in race bets. A winning owner can earn as much as £175,000. But a racing greyhound's worth is tied to its success, either on the track or as a breeding animal.

This is a problem for charities such as Greenacres Animal Rescue Centre in Talbenny, near Haverfordwest.

"A racehorse produces one foal," explains Mikey Lawlor, manager of Greenacres. "A greyhound litter

could have 10 puppies, with maybe only one or two making the grade," he continues. "Add to that the fact that getting them habituated to home life takes a lot of time and dedication, many dogs coming from a racing background are unwanted. That's why we get so many of them."

"Who cares for greyhounds is a cradle to grave challenge," agrees Vanessa Waddon from Hope Rescue, a Welsh animal charity that campaigns for the welfare of greyhounds and is lobbying our government to introduce a ban here. "With around 6000 surplus greyhounds rescued from regulated tracks annually in the UK alone, it's clear the third sector is expected to pick up the pieces," she explains.

The sport's regulator says financial provision is made for retiring dogs.

"As regulator of licensed greyhound racing, the Greyhound Board of Great Britain ensures that greyhound racing is run with welfare at its heart," they say. "We take very seriously our responsibility to ensure greyhounds enjoy long, happy and healthy lives in retirement. Through our Greyhound Retirement Scheme, which attaches a financial bond [£400] to every racing greyhound, we ensure that their retirement is safe and secure before they even step foot on the track."

However, some charities claim the £400 will not go far with vet fees at the level they are now. Greenacres is now working with other charities in



Senior service – Greenacres has protected unwanted pets like Fluffy for 15 years.

FIFTEEN YEARS OF GREENACRES

Greenacres Animal Rescue Centre started in 2008. That's just over a century in dog years! Experience serves the charity well when it comes to their reputation around the county.

"We are now seeing the welcome effects of our being here as long as we have," reflects Mikey on the 15th anniversary of Greenacres.

"I think we've earned the respect of our communities and as a result are seeing more and more legacies come our way, which is very welcome. We are also seeing the same people who've adopted pets come back 2 or even 3 times. We've even had children who grew up with adopted pets come and adopt as they've moved into their own home."

For Mikey and his team, these moments are hugely rewarding after all their efforts over the last 15 years.

"I would really like to thank the people and businesses of Pembrokeshire that have helped Greenacres become what it is today, my childhood dream... a rescue centre in Pembrokeshire to house all domestic animals in need of help! Never in my wildest dreams did I envisage what we have achieved. I am very grateful to everyone that has ever played a part."

the hope collaborating will help meet the challenge.

"I recently went on a two-week road trip around Ireland," says Mikey. "I visited ten rescue centres, asking how we can help them, as they are under huge pressure. But we also learn a lot from them too as they have become very resourceful because of that pressure."

Mikey's experience picking up behind the industry means he's against the sport. However, the figures show greyhound racing has strong public backing too. Whatever happens here in Wales, and with the last racetrack in Scotland given a last minute reprieve by the Scottish Animal Welfare Commission, there is currently no prospect of it being banned in England.

It's unlikely the issue of rehoming greyhounds will go away soon.



Young people have been helping to cook for their peers at the Winter Warmer Nights

WINTER WARMER NIGHTS

A joint project aimed at offering young people a safe and warm place to go, along with a hot meal, has been deemed a huge success in Milford Haven.

The Port partnered with Milford Youth Matters in October to launch Winter Warmer Nights at Milford United Football Club which ran every Wednesday evening through to the Spring. The sessions were open to all 11-17 year olds and were an opportunity to socialise with their friends, stay warm, help to prepare and enjoy a hot meal, play games and watch films.

Throughout the project over 800 meals were served, 500 youth volunteering hours and 250 adult volunteering hours accumulated, and 4 young people completed Customer Service qualifications.

Dayle Gibby, Milford Youth Matters Co-ordinator, said "Over the 6 months, the project grew significantly and surpassed its original aims and objectives. Whilst serving meals on a weekly basis, young people took upon leadership roles through volunteering and some gained valuable qualifications. I would also like to thank Milford United Football Club for their support with the facility, it's fantastic to see groups and organisations working together to benefit young people."

The next joint project will be Under the Bridge, which this year is also part-funded by South Hook LNG. Free activities will run throughout the summer holidays on Tuesday and Friday evenings underneath Hakin Bridge at Milford Waterfront.

For more information, please visit:
www.mhpa.co.uk/under-the-bridge



(L-R) Sara Richards, PR and Communications Executive and Tom Sawyer, Chief Executive at the Port of Milford Haven; Councillor David Simpson, Leader at Pembrokeshire County Council; Dave Somerville, DofE Manager at Pembrokeshire County Council; Robert Newsome OBE, Chair of Ambassadors for DofE in Wales and Steve Davis, Service Manager, Pembrokeshire County Council.

GOING FOR GOLD

The Port has enhanced its support for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award in Pembrokeshire by becoming a Gold Associate Supporter.

Having been a Silver Associate Supporter since 2021, the sponsorship means around 1,600 young people from secondary schools in Milford Haven, Pembroke Dock, Haverfordwest and Fishguard will have access to volunteering, physical and skills activities, as well as participating in expeditions.

The DofE programme is designed for 14-24 year olds and develops their skills, experience and confidence to successfully navigate adult life as well as providing opportunities for participants to realise new interests and talents.

Chief Executive at the Port, Tom Sawyer, said "I hold the DofE programme in high regard and I'm delighted that we've become Gold Associates enabling pupils from Pembrokeshire to get involved in this life-affirming and enriching activity."

For more information
on the programme, please visit: www.dofe.org



Port staff Hollie Phillips and Chris Oliver joined Pembroke Dock Community School for their Bumbles of Honeywood session.

BUMBLES OF HONEYWOOD

The Port has become partners of 2B Enterprising's educational programme The Bumbles of Honeywood which connects businesses with local schools to inspire young people and help them communicate effectively.

Sessions have been held in Monkton Priory Community School, Pembroke Dock Community School, Pennar Community School and Saundersfoot CP School where pupils listened to tailored stories and took part in practical activities, including how to stand confidently, speak clearly, smile and maintain eye contact when meeting someone new. More sessions will be held throughout 2023, with staff from the Port getting involved in the activities to help inspire the next generation.

SAFETY BRIEFING

PERSONAL WATERCRAFT (PWC) AND THE LAW

For many years the definition of a 'ship' seemed relatively clear. According to the Merchant Shipping Act 1995, it was 'every description of a vessel used in navigation'.

This seemed fine for many aspects of life on the ocean wave but recent developments in waterborne transport have called this into question. Not least when a jet ski (PWC) rider was initially found 'guilty of doing an act which caused or was likely to cause serious injury' under the Merchant Shipping Act 1995, only to win on appeal as a jet ski was deemed not to be 'a vessel used in navigation'.

This led to years of discussion and consultation which culminated in the Merchant Shipping (Watercraft) Order 2023 which came into force on 31st March 2023, closing the loophole which allowed the PWC rider above to win their appeal.

This new piece of legislation will change the wording in the Merchant Shipping Act 1995 from 'Small Ship' to a 'Watercraft' with the additional definition of a 'Watercraft' meaning any type of craft which:

- (a) is capable of moving under its own mechanical power,
- (b) is used, navigated or situated wholly or partly in or on water, and
- (c) is capable of being used to carry one or more persons.

So, what does this mean for you?

Just like the roads, there are rules to be followed when driving on water, whether you are on a PWC, a ski boat, a Rhib or any other 'Watercraft' that comes under the definition above. These are outlined in the International Regulations for the Prevention of Collisions at Sea (COLREGS)



The important part of these regulations to note are;

- Always give way to vessels approaching from your right (starboard)
- Always abide by local speed limits
- You must give way to every other kind of vessel including canoes and paddleboards as well as larger vessels or ships
- When inside a channel, keep the green buoys on your right going in, and on your left going out.

This is particularly important around the commercial areas of the Milford Haven Waterway which is a defined Narrow Channel according to the COLREGS.

Other things to consider when heading out on your Watercraft are what the local rules and regulations are, so ensure you do your research in order to avoid falling foul and finding yourself in court or endangering someone's life.

More details can be found online: <https://www.mhpa.co.uk/jet-skis/>

DON'T RISK A PROSECUTION FOR ENDANGERING SOMEONE'S LIFE

SUP LEASHES



Your Environment...

Where are you paddling? What are the conditions? Depending on where you're paddling and the conditions you face, you might need to wear your leash in a different place for safety and security. Take a look at the diagram to see which leash system suits the environment you paddle.

Coiled or Straight?

Leashes can be coiled / curly or straight. The type of leash is important depending on the environment you paddle.

QUICK RELEASE BELT SYSTEM
For use on any moving or flowing water where there is a risk of snag/entrapment
COILED

CALF LEASH
For use on lakes / canals / sea / coastal bays / surf where there is NO risk of snag or entrapment
COILED = General SUP
STRAIGHT = Surf

ANKLE LEASH
For use on lakes / canals / sea / coastal bays / surf where there is NO risk of snag or entrapment
COILED = General SUP
STRAIGHT = Surf



PLAN YOUR PADDLEBOARDING ADVENTURES

Stand up paddleboarding (SUP) has fast become the must-do activity in recent years, but with all new activities there usually follows incidents and accidents that are in the main minor, but occasionally end in tragedy.

Paddleboarding has not escaped this phenomenon unfortunately, with fatalities in other areas of the UK as well as locally, with the tragic loss of four paddleboarders at Haverfordwest Town Weir in 2021.

Stand up paddleboarding is where people stand on what is usually an inflatable board, but they can be made from other materials such as fibreglass, and paddle themselves along a lake, river or canal. Although it's been around since the forties, it's only in recent years that it has become the fastest growing water sport in the world.

Every time and every place you choose to use your SUP, safety should be number one in your mind and nowhere is this more important than rivers and estuaries due to the fast flowing nature of the water. The easiest way to help ensure your safety is to P.L.O.T. your day on the water.

P Personal flotation device (PFD)

Unfortunately many still consider this vital piece of equipment unnecessary as they believe themselves to be good swimmers, but wearing a PFD with a minimum of 50N buoyancy will give you the essential support you need should you end up in the water. A PFD will also help with keeping you warm by reducing the impact of the wind while standing up. A PFD is extremely important, even for the most experienced of paddlers.

L Leash

Another crucial piece of safety equipment for your day out, this ensures that you don't get separated from your board if you fall off. It's important to know about the different types of leash and where they should be used. When paddling in rivers and estuaries you will need a coiled SUP leash and a quick release waist belt. If you fall off your board and go to opposite sides of an obstruction, such as a mooring buoy, then the flow will prevent you reaching your ankle to release the leash. With a quick release waist belt you will be much safer. An ankle leash will be fine for lakes and the sea where there is no river or tidal flow, but always use a quick release system on flowing water. The diagram above put together by British Canoeing and the SUP technical group might help.

O Obstruction

A vital piece of planning your day is the consideration of any potential hazards you may encounter. When near moored vessels you should stay at least two board lengths away from them, the same for bridge pillars, navigation buoys and any other obstructions. Flowing water can affect your intended course so always monitor your position relative to your surroundings to ensure your course.

T Telephone

The last part of PLOT is always carry a means of communication. A mobile phone is great but make sure you keep it in a waterproof bag. If you are out in areas such as the Milford Haven Waterway then a waterproof hand held VHF radio could help you raise assistance should you need it. Make sure your device is fully charged and remember, before you set off tell someone on shore where you are going and when you will be back. If you get delayed, make sure to let them know or they could call the emergency services believing you are in trouble.

The Need For A Just Transition

An anniversary is a good time to take stock. It's a great vantage point from which to look back over the past 65 years and see what's changed since of the arrival of oil and gas. But we can also do an audit of all the experience we have accumulated over the decades as the UK's energy port and use it to plan for what is to come.

One overriding benefit of the signing of the Conservancy Act by HM Queen Elizabeth II in 1958 is that our economy here in Pembrokeshire, weakened by the loss of shipbuilding, the decline of fishing and the departure of the Armed Forces after WWII, was given a new purpose.

There was a surge of inward migration and new job opportunities for our workers. There also followed a rapid growth of connectivity driven by energy, not just in its shipping, pipes and pylons, but in the arrival and embedding of global companies. All this gave our remote peninsula a life-giving boost into the late 20th Century, just when it looked as though we were about to be left far behind.

Now, deep into the 21st Century, we are a strategic western gateway to the UK economy and we are not about to undo all those symbiotic connections. Instead, our experience, muscle memory and ambition can give us an edge in more ways than one as the world shifts to renewable energy.

We need to be honest with ourselves about what this transition involves. South West Wales's industrial activity emits more CO2 than all other regions of Wales put together. Nowhere in the country will see more change to the way it does business than the area we call the Swansea Bay City Region. What that means is the men and women who go to work to earn money for themselves and for their families may see significant turbulence. Governments and local authorities seeking to protect vital services, may see their revenues disrupted.

There are two key things to hold on to in this coming period of change.

Firstly, we owe it to ourselves and to our children to be the main agents of our future. Pembrokeshire needs to fight for a transition that benefits us. That we even have this option is an extraordinary legacy of the last 65 years as an energy port. Pembrokeshire's fate has previously been decided by factors beyond our control. Now, our natural and human capital, skills and experience give us the tools to be leaders in the shift to Net Zero, with offshore renewable energy just one of the opportunities there for the taking.

Transition for Pembrokeshire means passing to our future generations the opportunities given to us.

Secondly, we need to take care to ensure no one is left behind in the transition. What this means is simultaneously appreciating the leading role our 'big business' must play, just as we watch out for those in our communities who are most vulnerable to economic shock. Anyone who characterises energy or steel companies as the bad guys is not paying attention to how their presence puts food on our families' tables and money into local services, all while they provide products essential to our existence.

Were we to lose our status as a globally connected, economically active region, we would lose the rich experience, knowledge and diversity we've gained over 65 years. Economic migration would reverse and we would lose some of our brightest and best to other regions.

However, we don't have to accept this fate. We really are blessed to be so well placed to profit from energy, tourism, farming, and wellbeing, and if we plan and act now, we can all prosper from a sustainable, circular and just economy.

Transition for Pembrokeshire means passing to our future generations all the opportunities given to us 65 years ago.



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