

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

SAVED FROM THE SCRAPMAN

A historic Dunkirk Little Ship has been saved from an almost certain future as baked bean cans thanks to a confirmed restoration grant of £90944.00 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) it was announced today. The money will enable the 1931 built Steam Tug to return to active service, as a fully operational, educational & public accessible reminder of the thousands of similar vessels that once thronged Britain's ports & harbours.

The Steam Tug *Challenge*, which is currently based in Shoreham Harbour, - and is owned by the not for profit charity, Dunkirk Little Ships Restoration Trust (DLSRT) - became little more than a floating hulk after its arrival in the Sussex port when its steam boiler was declared unfit for further use, after a period of use following an earlier hull restoration.

Despite the tremendous efforts of little more than a handful of local enthusiasts who spent many hours trying to keep the vessel in visually good condition by constant painting and general preservation, there was little that could be done to get *Challenge* steaming again until the HLF stepped in with the vital grant. This will now provide not only the new boiler, but also a whole raft of other essential tasks including the restoration of the steam plant and the updating of the electronic navigation equipment to modern safety standards.

This grant is particularly welcome as it will enable *Challenge* to participate in the 75th anniversary commemorations of the epic task known as Operation Dynamo, which saw some 330,000 Allied troops rescued from the beaches of the previously little known French town of Dunkirk during a few hectic and highly dangerous days in late May and early June 1940.

The work, which could take up to a year to complete, will be carried out by both local volunteers as well as specialist contractors at Shoreham.

Jerry Lewis, Chairman of the DLSRT said of the grant "Without the invaluable assistance of the HLF it was likely that, despite the heroic efforts of our volunteers, *Challenge* would have continued to deteriorate to a point where further restoration would have been impossible".

The Trust always welcomes new recruits, both skilled and unskilled, and anyone interested in helping to restore this vital part of Britain's heritage should contact Volunteering Manager Peter Evison on 01273 722449 or by Email to evison35@ntlworld.com

About the Heritage Lottery Fund

Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage for present and future generations to take part in, learn from and enjoy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported 30,000 projects, allocating £4.7billion across the UK. Website: www.hlf.org.uk

Steam Tug Challenge

For further information on Steam Tug Challenge & the work of the Dunkirk Little Ships Restoration Trust, please contact DLSRT Press Officer – Chris English in the first instance so that we may provide you with the latest details, arrange interview(s) & provide any further information that may be required.

Chris English – Phone - 07711 717470; Email - chris@cjenglish.demon.co.uk



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PHOTO CALL

The stars of Brighton Theatre Group's production of "Titanic the Musical", which is being staged on the actual night of the 100th anniversary of the sinking on 14th April 1912, will be on board *Challenge* in full costume at Shoreham harbour from 6.00pm to 7.00pm on Monday 2nd April.

Further details of the actual location etc from Chris English as above.