



MEDIA RELEASE

MV Balmoral Fund Limited., owners of MV Balmoral
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www.mvbalmoral.org.uk/

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MV BALMORAL ON THE MOVE - BUT HER FUTURE IS STILL UNCERTAIN.

The 1949-built classic motor vessel Balmoral - the last seagoing ship registered in the port of Bristol - is on the move this week. She has been moored outside M Shed since last October - a berth she has occupied most winters over the last 30 years - from whence she has sailed around the British Coastline most summers since.

After a two year lay-up in 2012/13 she was brought back into service by her current charity owners MV Balmoral Fund Limited and operated mainly in the Bristol Channel and Irish Sea in the summers between 2015 and 2017. During her subsequent winter lay-ups much effort has gone into developing a programme of events around the ship in Bristol - both social and educational - but recent uncertainties over berth availability have held this process back.

Last autumn the owning charity was advised that expenditure beyond our immediate resources would be needed to upgrade the vessel for future passengers operations. Discussions with the Heritage Lottery Fund confirmed that if they were to assist us, any grant could only be considered on the basis of our developing our community benefit and educational activities ahead of any application for funds for the main work on the ship. In this context our community is undoubtedly Bristol, which has generously hosted the vessel for some 30 winters outside M Shed.

As has happened for short periods in previous summers when she has been unable to sail, we will be moving MV Balmoral to facilitate the Harbour Festival activities at the end of the month. This will be to a berth opposite SS Great Britain on Hotwells Road. MV Balmoral will move to that berth under her own power with a professional crew, some of whom are volunteers. The move is expected to take place around 13.00 on Thursday 12th July. This is only a temporary berth for this summer and is without immediate access to the facilities required for us to hold public events on board.

We are grateful that the Mayor's Office and Harbour Master are willing to negotiate a commercial arrangement for year round berthing in Bristol Harbour, and that through an educational engagement programme aligned to Bristol City Council objectives we may have the opportunity to contribute to the Harbour's charitable offer. We acknowledge the assistance of National Historic Ships (UK) and Thangam Debbonaire (MP for Bristol West) in these developments, which have yet to be finalised, but we hope will enable us to plan and operate activities throughout the year.

Year round access to berthing facilities in the centre of Bristol where the public can come on board for events is essential for MV Balmoral Fund to be able to develop the community and educational links required to access funding to upgrade the vessel and return her to revenue earning cruises on the Bristol Channel and further afield, for the benefit of many thousands of passengers who enjoy viewing the British coastline from the Sea.

To do all this we need much more help - particularly from people in reach of Bristol to help with events and ship maintenance - and (wherever you live) to help raise money (we need about £3 million) - to contribute management skills - assist with general administration as well as help fashion workable ideas. We are a small team facing a big challenge - do come and join us. To find out more contact us on volunteers@mvbalmoral.com or visit our website www.mvbalmoral.org.uk/