Full steam ahead for Merseyside ship following



Liverpool’s local celebrity steamship, the Kerne receives a life-saving £9,600 Heritage Emergency Fund grant to get her back on the waves.

Built in 1913, Steam Tug Kerne served as a Royal Navy ship in the First World War and is the only remaining operational steam tug of her type in the UK. But the sudden hit of coronavirus (COVID-19) meant the Kerne’s days on the water were numbered.

Since her retirement as a working vessel, this coal-fired ship has since served thousands of visitors as an educational glimpse into UK maritime heritage.

She was one of the first ships to be moored at Royal Albert Dock when it opened as a visitor attraction in 1984, and is also a frequent film and TV star, having appeared in many period productions including Sherlock Holmes (2009) and The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles.

The society at the helm

The Steam Tug Kerne Preservation Society is a charity committed to keeping the Kerne – and her story – afloat. They are one of the oldest, active ship preservation societies in the UK.

The society relies entirely on the work of its diverse crew of volunteers who service and maintain the ship. In 2018 they were awarded a Queen's Award for Voluntary Service due to the dedication shown by the society's volunteers for over four decades.



Thanks to this emergency funding, the Kerne is now in position on the slipway and ready for urgent repairs to the hull.

Urgent repairs needed

The society recently discovered that urgent repairs were needed to the hull of the Kerne in order to keep her afloat.

> *"It's absolutely vital that we get the ship afloat again so the efforts of our volunteers in preserving its valuable heritage are not lost."*
>
> Paul Kirkbride, Steam Tug Kerne Preservation Society

The income the society would normally generate through appearances and fundraising at events, and use in filming has completely dried up due to restrictions following the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. The society were relying on this income to secure the ship's future on the waters of the North West.



Keeping the Kerne afloat

Since being awarded funding of £9,600 through the Heritage Emergency Fund, the society can now look ahead to once again welcoming visitors to experience and learn about life onboard a vintage steamship. This emergency funding will secure the future and the good community work aboard this little tug of great historic importance.

Paul Kirkbride, Steam Tug Kerne Preservation Society said: “This funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund is an absolute life saver for the work of the society. It’s absolutely vital that we get the ship afloat again, so the efforts of our volunteers in preserving its valuable heritage are not lost. Now we’ll be back on track to steam into the 50 years of preservation of the vessel in 2021.”