

# AFLOAT

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# The history maker

## Beale beats the odds to complete dream quest

**A DORSET expedition leader is celebrating a successful sailing year after recreating the first circumnavigation of Africa in a wooden boat.**

Philip Beale battled the odds to complete his dream quest of re-enacting the 20,000 nautical mile historic voyage, believed to have been undertaken by Phoenicians more than 2,500 years ago, according to Greek historian Herodotus.

It took two years and two months and involved in-depth research into Phoenician history, ship construction, design and building of a 20m wooden replica Phoenician ship in Syria and teamwork by international sailors to safely navigate through the pirate-infested waters off Somalia.

Now Beale, of East Chaldon, near Lulworth, has made history but rather than rest on his laurels, his sights are set on bringing the vessel back to the United Kingdom – and

to its home port of Weymouth – in 2012/13.

Beale said: “Thankfully we got home in one piece.

“The whole trip took two years and two months almost to the day.

“We weren’t sailing all that time, for about six months we were waiting for the wind but I guess we were probably sailing for about 300 days.

“We came close to pirates, we had one suspicious boat following us just off Somalia but then a container ship came by and we lost them.

“We would have bumped into a pirate mother ship but luckily we knew they made an attack a few days before and diverted course.

“The following week that mother ship hijacked three ships, luckily we had good intelligence from Poole-based business risk consultants Drum Cussac.”

Among the crew was Weymouth sailor Ed Sadler who joined the vessel in the Azores in June and stayed with it until it finished in Syria in late October.

Beale added: “Our voyage certainly shows that this boat’s very capable of sailing, particularly offshore.

“Even in fairly rough and stormy conditions around the Cape it handled very well and the ship was still in fairly good condition when we got in.”

More than 12 different nationalities and more than 50 different individuals took part in the adventure.

Beale, who is about to lead another expedition to an island off Yemen in the middle of February, said highlights of The Phoenician Ship Expedition included an “incredible reception” in Syria and the camaraderie between the



**HOMEWARD BOUND:** Phoenicia was accompanied by a convoy of over 50 local boats as she approached the harbour in Arwad, Syria. Below right: Traditional Syrian folk dance welcomes Phoenicia back to Syria. Below left: Expedition Leader Philip Beale at the homecoming ceremony

crewmates.

He added: “It was an enjoyable and great project to have done.

“We’re now working on creating a sailing foundation in the Middle East to enable young Middle Eastern people to visit the ship and some of the older ones will have the chance to sail on it.

“The ship is in Syria at the moment undergoing some maintenance but it’s our plan to bring it back to the United Kingdom in 2012 or 2013.

“The idea will be to sail up the Channel initially to London and then bring it to all the major ports – as Weymouth is the home port we’ll definitely bring it there.”

For more information, visit [phoenicia.org.uk](http://phoenicia.org.uk)



## Treasure found in Portland Port

A HEAVYLIFT vessel en route from China to Poland took shelter from bad weather in Portland Port.

The 53,868 metric tonne ship Treasure was on its way to the Bay of Gdansk where it will be submerged – like a floating dock – to stow four 110m long and 30m wide seagoing barges off its deck cargo.

The newly-built barges will be modified in a Polish shipyard for the transportation of offshore windfarm towers to locations of installation in late February 2011 or early March.

They will be delivered to Danish construction and engineering group Aarsleff.

Polish maritime journalist Peter Starenczak said: “The ship stopped by Weymouth and Portland probably seeking shelter from bad weather.

“Before stopping near English shores it was expected to arrive at



**TREASURE CHEST:** The heavylift vessel Treasure, pictured portside in Portland Port

Picture: TED TOOP

the approaches of the Polish port on the Baltic on December 30 or 31.

“Treasure was converted from a Suez max tanker by Chinese shipyard in 2008.

“It measures 216.785m in length and is 44.5m wide.

“The ship is operated by the Netherlands-based company Dockwise.”

Tug captain Ted Toop, of Wyke Regis, said the submersible heavy lift vessel arrived on Tuesday and left yesterday morning.

## A tale of two races

WEYMOUTH Sailing Club’s Boxing Day race was a tale of two events, the race in the bay and the race in the river.

Competitors had to de-ice their boats after a heavy overnight frost before setting out for the start line in the bay.

A light breeze from the south east made for good racing, but as competitors were entering the river mouth a sixty degree windshift around to the south west left the fleet tacking up the river against the spring tide with little or no wind.

Winner of the Frostbite trophy was local painter and decorator Ricky Bruton in his keelboat Sapphire.

Dave McCune on Inky Finger lead home the Squibs and even though he went aground just under the Nothe Fort, he managed to still take line honours and lift the Ice breaker Cup.

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THE first race of the New Year takes place appropriately on New Year’s Day.

For those boats still left in the water a quick blast around the bay before finishing outside the club will clear the cobwebs and set up the competitors nicely to enjoy brunch at the club and to partake in the annual bottle draw in aid of Weymouth Lifeboat.

All Weymouth Sailing Club committee members contribute a bottle of spirits as prizes for the draw, to raise funds for our local lifesavers.