

Visitor may become resident

British yawl Klang II came to Greenport for repairs, may stay on

By Julie Lane

She may not gleam, but the Klang II's beauty is ageless. The 46-foot boat is at Preston's dock for repairs, and Greenport could become her permanent home.

That's because there's a love affair going on, with the owners of the 1924 English Channel yawl becoming increasingly enamored of the village.

The Klang II, although structurally and mechanically sound, has never undergone a facelift like Greenport, which has managed to retain its old fishing village charm despite the revitalization of its downtown.

"We're not looking to get her polished as a showpiece," says Klang II's captain, Rip Hayman of New York City. He and his partners are more concerned with the engine, electronics and rigging, he says.

Mr. Hayman and a group of seven friends purchased the Klang II from owners in Connecticut after finding it sunk in the Connecticut River back in 2000. They had the boat raised and determined that while it hadn't been sailed in years and needed work it was still sound.

They believe that with proper maintenance the Klang II still has at



Suffolk Times photo by Judy Ahrens

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The World War II boat Klang II docked at Preston's on Monday.



Suffolk Times photo by Judy Ahrens Rip Hayman (left) and Mark Sweeney playing 'Who's Going To Be Captain for the Day,' a card game of their own making, in their boat's 'salon.'

at least another 20 good years of sailing ahead of her. But in her present condition they're not ready "to take the old granny dancing," figuring she can't "disco all night," Mr. Hayman says. At the same time, she has passed all inspections necessary for insurance coverage.

Mark Sweeney, who describes himself as an artist and seaman, is among Klang II's owners. He estimates

it could cost at least \$10,000 to put the ship back in shape.

The Klang II is strictly a pleasure boat and none of her owners expects to profit from the boat. Mr. Hayman makes his money in various ways, delivering boats and giving lectures on cruise ships about maritime history.

"Look at her. Isn't she awesome?" asks Mr. Sweeney's girlfriend, Eileen Emeksiz, who was born in Turkey and has sailed all her life. For her, the chance to join the guys aboard the Klang II is a dream come true. "This is magical," she says.

But climb aboard and you'll encounter the Klang II's new sails, which the son of a former owner described as being like "a new dress for an old whore," jokes Mr. Hayman.

In her heyday, the Klang II was used as an offshore pilot boat in the English Channel, where it ferried passengers back and forth between the Isle of Jersey and Plymouth. It also was used in the clipper trade between India and China. When the partners initially purchased the Klang II, they moored it in lower Manhattan, but after Sept. 11, 2001, they had to move: had the boat not been out of port on the day the World Trade Center was attacked, it might have been lost, the captain says. They moved the Klang II to



Suffolk Times photo by Judy Ahrens The World War II boat Klang II docked at Preston's on Monday.

Nyack, but the marina there is due to close to make way for condominiums.

The attitude there is, "History be damned, it's money that counts," says Mr. Hayman, a twinge of sadness in his voice. When he began seeking alternative ports where he could find both the necessary dock space and the expertise to service Klang II, Greenport seemed a natural option. The only alternative was Martha's Vineyard, but he thought there were more "real people" in Greenport and that suited him and his partners.

Because of Greenport's ambiance and its proximity to New York City the village would be a natural base, Mr. Hayman says.

"This is a good place; this is definitely the place," he says. While he and his partners can do much of the work the boat needs, they want the expertise that's available from people like John Costello, Steve Clarke and other well known local marine contractors and boat builders.

At Brewer's Yacht Yard, they were able to check the bottom of the boat and determine that the hull needs caulking. Next they want to get the Klang II out of the water and remove her contents in order to make a thorough inspection of her bottom and ribs.

The cost of this undertaking might faze an individual boat owner, but the Klang II belongs to an association formed by the eight who originally purchased it. It has lost some of its original members but gained others and continues to seek supporters. The cost of membership ranges from \$100 to \$5,000 and supporters can participate in sails, receive training in boat handling and navigation, schedule personal sailing parties and, at the top level, train to command the Klang II.

While it's federally licensed by the Coast Guard, the ship isn't recognized as a licensed charter boat in New York State, which is just fine with its owners, who enjoy sharing the Klang II with others but don't see themselves as hired crew for the boat. "We don't want to run it as a charter," Mr. Hayman says. What the owners relish is having a lot of enthusiastic people onboard and the "three good mates" needed to operate it.

For information about becoming a Klang Association member, visit www.klang2.org.