Educational Programming in Exeter and Dover on Board the Gundalow Captain Edward H. Adams

Molly Bolster
Gundalow Company

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July-August 2005

A Final Report To
The New Hampshire Estuaries Project

Submitted by Molly Bolster, Executive Director
Gundalow Company

P.O. Box 425
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30 September, 2005

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Gundalow Company (a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization) sponsors maritime history and environmental education programs for school groups and the public onboard the replica gundalow Captain Edward Adams from May through November in 12-15 riverfront locations in the Piscataqua Region.

Funding from the NHEP in 2005 supported the Gundalow Company’s efforts to successfully add Dover and Exeter to the towns visited by the gundalow between May and November. While the gundalow was in Dover and Exeter, collaborative educational programs were offered onboard to a total of nearly 3,000 people including youth and teen groups as well as the public during community events such as the Exeter Revolutionary War Festival. In addition, relationships were built among several key coastal organizations and Gundalow Company staff, board, and volunteers. These relationships will be nurtured in the months to come and will ensure that the programs offered in these towns will continue.
INTRODUCTION

The mission of the nonprofit Gundalow Company is “to preserve the gundalow Captain Edward Adams as a platform for maritime history and environmental education programs for school groups and the public throughout the Piscataqua Region”.

To achieve this mission, the Gundalow Company moves the replica gundalow to as many as 12 riverfront locations each summer and collaborates with coastal organizations and town officials to provide a variety of educational programs onboard the gundalow. The content of these programs is designed to enhance people’s understanding and appreciation of this region’s rich maritime heritage as well as contemporary coastal issues such as water quality, human impact on the estuary over time, habitat protection and restoration, land conservation, and general stewardship.

Prior to 2005, the gundalow Captain Edward Adams visited all the major riverfront towns in the Great Bay with the notable exceptions of Dover and Exeter. Given the historic importance of the gundalows to the economic development of both these towns, and the relevance of several contemporary coastal issues faced in both towns, the Gundalow Company felt it was especially important to make the effort to bring the gundalow to Exeter and Dover in 2005.
PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The main **objective** of this project was to add Dover and Exeter to the towns visited by the gundalow in 2005. In the process, the Gundalow Company board, staff and volunteers aimed to build relationships and offer collaborative programs with key individuals and organizations in each town that would help the Gundalow Company fulfill its mission while complimenting the missions of those collaborative organizations.

The primary **goals** of this project included:
- Development of collaborations with organizations and town officials in Exeter and Dover
- Design, printing, and distribution of 10,000 brochures and posters promoting the 2005 season
- Recruitment, training, and coordination of volunteers to assist in all aspects of this project
- Coordination of towing arrangements, docking arrangements, and the many unseen logistical details required to move the gundalow around the bay and up the rivers
- Implementation of programs onboard for day camps, recreation groups, teen groups, senior citizen groups, and the public
- Continue building on the success of this project in 2006
ACTIVITIES IN EXETER AND DOVER

Following is the summary of activities on the gundalow in Exeter and Dover. A complete schedule of the season is included on the enclosed brochure and poster.

July 7: Gundalow staff and 4 volunteers lowered the yard, sail and stump mast to the deck using the shears and chain fall in preparation for transit to Exeter. Staff and volunteer crew worked with Steve Root, Portsmouth Harbor Towing to move the gundalow from Prescott Park to the Railroad bridge on the Squamscott River. Anchored for the night.

July 8: Gundalow staff and volunteer crew moved the gundalow under the railroad bridge and up the Squamscott River using Gundalow Company workboat. Arrived at Swasey Parkway in Exeter to a crowd of well-wishers.

July 9: Gundalow staff and volunteer crew raised the yard, sail, and stump mast using shears and chain fall. Open to the public with 22 visitors onboard.

July 11: Gundalow staff and volunteers presented educational program onboard for youth from the American Independence Museum. 18 participants

July 12: Gundalow staff made arrangements with Exeter Harbor Master to move gundalow to town dock for event on July 14.

July 13: Gundalow staff and volunteers presented educational program onboard for youth from the American Independence Museum. 29 participants

July 14: Gundalow staff and volunteers moved vessel to Exeter Town dock in preparation for Exeter Historical Society reception onboard followed by Carol Aten’s lecture. 64 participants

July 15: Gundalow staff and volunteers moved vessel back to Swasey Parkway berth.

July 16: Gundalow staff and volunteers onboard greeting visitors all day during the Revolutionary War Festival. 1444 visitors onboard the gundalow

July 17-20: Gundalow staff and volunteer onboard – vessel open to the public. 50 visitors

July 21: Gundalow staff and volunteers presented educational program for a group from the Exeter Teen Center. 15 participants. Vessel open to the public – 316 visitors. Evening reception onboard with the Rockingham Land Trust followed by lecture by Karin Rubin at the Water Street Bookstore. 15 participants at reception; 4 at lecture.

July 22: Gundalow staff and volunteer presented educational program onboard for group from Exeter YMCA. Gundalow staff and volunteers moved the vessel to Newfields.
July 23: Gundalow staff and volunteers greeted 147 visitors onboard in Newfields. Evening reception onboard with the Newfields Historical Society and The Nature Conservancy followed by Jay O’Dell’s lecture about Oyster Habitat Restoration. 65 participants.

July 24: Gundalow staff and volunteers lowered yard, sail, and mast in preparation for going under railroad bridge.

July 25: Gundalow staff and volunteer crew moved vessel down river and anchored for the night below railroad bridge.

July 26: Gundalow staff and volunteer crew moved gundalow to Portsmouth with towing from Portsmouth Harbor Towing. Raised yard, sail, and stump mast.

July 27-August 6: Gundalow in Portsmouth

August 7: Gundalow staff and volunteers lowered yard, sail, and stump mast in preparation for transit to Dover

August 8: Gundalow staff and Volunteer crew moved the gundalow to Dover with towing from Portsmouth Harbor Towing. Tied up temporarily at George’s Marina to wait for the tide to come in enough so we could proceed under the sewer pipe and the pedestrian bridge, and avoid all the rocks before docking at Henry Law Park.

August 9: Programs onboard for Dover Recreation youth groups and Live and Learn Day Camp. 47 participants. Open to the public – 88 visitors.

August 10: Programs onboard for Dover Recreation youth groups. 46 participants

August 11: Open to the public - 45 visitors. Evening reception with Great Bay Coast Watch followed by Ann Reid’s water quality monitoring demonstration. 25 participants.

August 12: Programs for Dover Recreation youth groups – 76 participants

August 13: Open to the public – 38 visitors.

August 14: open to the public until it rained. 15 visitors.

August 15: Programs for Dover Recreation youth groups – 35 participants

August 16: Programs for Cool School and open to the public – 40 visitors

August 17: Program for Live and Learn Day Camp and open to the public – 48 visitors
August 18: Open to the public and evening reception with Cocheco River Watershed Coalition followed by Cheri Patterson’s presentation about the Cocheco River Fish Ladder. 40 participants.

August 20 – 26 Open to the public daily: 125 visitors

August 30: Reception onboard to thank all the Dover people who helped coordinate our efforts. Beth Thompson, City of Dover Economic Development Director thanked the Gundalow Company staff, board and volunteers for bringing the gundalow to Dover and encouraged a return visit in conjunction with the riverfront redevelopment project. Ned McIntosh, boatbuilder and brother of Bud McIntosh, presented the Gundalow Company with a painting of a gundalow by Cass Adams (son of Captain Edward Adams). 50 participants.

August 31: Gundalow staff and volunteers lowered yard, sail, and stump mast in preparation for transit under pedestrian bridge and sewer pipe.

September 6: Gundalow staff and volunteer crew moved gundalow to Adams Point with tow from Portsmouth Harbor Towing.
RESULTS

- The gundalow visited Exeter and Dover and spent two weeks in each location delivering collaborative education programs to youth groups, teen groups, and the public. Gundalow Company staff developed several new hands-on activities, water quality sampling, and added specific historic references to Exeter and Dover in order to enrich the program and to accommodate the variety of age groups served. Nearly 3,000 visitors came onboard the gundalow while in Dover and Exeter.

- Gundalow staff, board and volunteers worked successfully to develop partnerships with coastal organizations in Exeter and Dover including American Independence Museum, Exeter Historical Society, Exeter YMCA, Exeter Teen Outlook Center, Rockingham Land Trust, Water Street Bookstore, Exeter River Local Advisory Committee, Dover Recreation Department, Dover office of Economic Development, Great Bay Coast Watch, and Cocheco River Watershed Association. In addition, new relationships with several individuals in each town were developed which will make it easier for the gundalow to return in future years.

- Working with a graphic designer, Gundalow Company staff and board members designed, printed and distributed 10,000 new brochures and posters with the 2005 Gundalow schedule of events and sponsors.
CONCLUSION

Bringing the gundalow to Exeter and Dover provided a meaningful expansion to our 2005 season schedule. The new relationships established in both towns will make return visits much easier. The collaborative programs offered onboard provided the Gundalow Company with an opportunity to expand the content of our programs to include more hands-on activities, water quality sampling, and specific historic references to gundalows in Dover and Exeter.

By extending the geographical range of our 2005 season, the Gundalow Company’s educational programs reached new audiences and age groups ranging from kindergarteners to senior citizens. By collaborating with a variety of organizations and town officials, the historical and environmental message carried by the gundalow embraced the mission of several new educational partners in Dover and Exeter.

Having received such a warm welcome in both towns in 2005 the Gundalow Company expects to add Exeter and Dover to the list of ports visited annually.
APPENDIX 1.

THE GUNDALOW COMPANY
AND THE REPLICA GUNDALOW
CAPTAIN EDWARD ADAMS

The mission of the Gundalow Company is to preserve the Gundalow Captain Edward Adams in order to serve as a platform for maritime, historical, social and environmental education on and about the waters of the Piscataqua Maritime Region.

What is a gundalow?
The gundalow is a flat bottomed, shallow drafted cargo vessel once common on the rivers, estuaries and coasts of New Hampshire’s Great Bay and the Southern Gulf of Maine. Early forms of the gundalow were probably among the very first vessels built in New Hampshire by arriving colonists, and the last commercial gundalows disappeared from our waters in the first decades of the 20th century. The Gundalow Company owns the only surviving replica of an historic, functioning Piscataqua gundalow.

What is the historical significance of the gundalows and the replica gundalow Captain Edward Adams?

“Gundalows were the tidewater trucks of the Piscataqua region from the 1600s through World War I. The word first appears in writing in 1669 as “gondola,” a pronunciation that still survives among some native watermen. The earliest of these craft were simple lighters, undecked, without sailing rigs. They were rowed short distances between the Portsmouth shore, which lacked wharves, and ships anchored in the stream. Their job was to unload the ships newly-arrived from England, carrying their cargoes of manufactured goods to shore and then to reload the ships with the furs, timber, and dried fish being produced by the new colony. As upriver settlements in South Berwick, Dover, Exeter, and elsewhere developed freight service to Portsmouth was needed. The gundalows became larger and more numerous, with the addition of decks for ease of loading and sailing rigs to save rowing as trade grew. These vessels were well suited to the shallow rivers. They were flat bottomed, allowing them to float in a minimum depth of water and to “take the ground” at low tide, sitting comfortably until the flooding tide refloated them.

The real key to the success of gundalows, though, was the speed of the tidal currents in the Piscataqua region. The main channel of the river in Portsmouth is judged to be the second-fastest navigable tidal river in the continental United States, surpassed only by the Columbia River on the West Coast. This current essentially acts as an engine for a riverboat, a natural resource to be harnessed just as mills harnessed wind or falling
water. A skipper simply timed his moves to the tide, riding upriver with the incoming or flood tide and floating seaward on the ebb. There was always the sail to help when the breeze was favorable, and long oars to get into a tricky cove, but day in and day out the power of the tidal currents gave gundalows on the Piscataqua an ease of movement envied by barge and scow operators from the Penobscot to the Chesapeake.

The final unique aspect of a Piscataqua River gundalow was its triangular lateen sail, hung at an angle from a pivoting yard. Counterbalanced correctly, the peak of this yard could be quickly pivoted to the deck, reducing the overhead clearance needed from fifty or sixty feet down to twelve or sixteen, depending on the exact dimensions of a given vessel. This proved to be a tremendous advantage in passing under the low fixed bridges typically built on the smaller rivers.

Gundalows were usually owner-operated, and quite often the skipper was a part-time waterman, being also a farmer or mechanic of some sort. One high-seas captain said that, lacking the glamour of their blue-water brethren, “a man that would sail a gundalow would rob a churchyard.” Rivermen were known for their fondness for strong drink and strong language. In 1811 after a trip upriver from Portsmouth to Dover, itinerant Baptist minister Enoch Hayes Place wrote in his journal, “If the people in Sodom and Gomorrah was given to the practice of Swearing as much as they are here in this packet I do not wonder at Lot’s being willing to leave the place.”

The last gundalow to operate commercially was the *Fanny M.*, launched from Adam’s Point in Durham in 1886, abandoned on Dover Point circa 1920, and totally lost during the spring ice-out in 1926. In 1982 a reproduction of the *Fanny M.* was launched and named the *Captain Edward H. Adams* in honor of the last gundalow skipper. The *Adams* recently part of Strawbery Banke Museum, has now been transferred to the new non-profit Gundalow Company and can be visited in Prescott Park [and elsewhere around the area]. September and October finds the *Adams* on Great Bay conducting school programs in environmental and maritime history of the Piscataqua region.” – Michael Gowell, *Cross-Grained & Wily Waters: A Guide to the Piscataqua Maritime Region*, W. Jeffrey Bolster, Editor; Peter Randall, Publisher, Portsmouth, NH 2002

**Why the Gundalow Company?**

In 1982, a 70-foot replica of a gundalow was launched from Strawbery Banke, created by the then-new non-profit Piscataqua Gundalow Project. All who participated saw this not just as a vessel project, but as an educational platform from which to teach school children and entire communities about the natural and cultural history of the region. Operated first as an independent non-profit and later as a program at Strawbery Banke, the historic *Captain Edwards Adams* gundalow has now been released by Strawbery Banke to the newly formed Gundalow Company. The new Gundalow Company is committed to a vision of the gundalow as the connecting-force and collaborative leader of a shared maritime heritage of the Greater Piscataqua watershed, encompassing a 120 square mile area from York in the north, down each river way and water basin that leads to the Piscataqua Coast: The York River and Brave Boat Harbor, the Squamscott, Lamprey, and Oyster Rivers, the Bellamy, Cocheco and Salmon Falls Rivers, Great Bay, Little Bay and the Piscataqua River, to Rye and the Hamptons in the south. The mission of the Gundalow Company is to preserve the Gundalow *Captain Edward Adams* in order
to serve as a platform for maritime, historical, social and environmental education on and about the waters of the Piscataqua Maritime Region.

The Gundalow Company serves as a regional facilitator to collaborate and provide programs on maritime history, environmental history and stewardship, and environmental education as it pertains to the Great Bay, and the Piscataqua and York River watersheds. Active program partners in 2004 and for the upcoming year include Old York Historical Society, Historic New England, Old Berwick Historical Society, Great Bay Stewards, UNH Marine Docents, Sandy Point Discovery Center, Seacoast Science Center, Strawberry Banke Museum, Wentworth-Gardner and Tobias Lear Houses, Portsmouth Historical Society, and the Newmarket Heritage Festival Committee, as well as several other partnerships currently being developed in Dover and Exeter.
APPENDIX 2. Press releases and newspaper articles
Guldalow docks in Dover for monthlong stay

DOVER — The guldalow, once the tractor-trailer of the Seacoast that carried cargo back and forth for more than 200 years until the early 1900s, made a trip back to Dover on Monday.

The region's only remaining Piscataqua Guldalow traveled from the Piscataqua River in Portsmouth to Dover along the edges of Henry Law Park where it will remain for the rest of the month.

From the 1650s through the early 1900s, the flat-bottomed sailing cargo barges traveled this route regularly to carry a variety of bulk cargo.

That cargo helped define a region by the products it produced from textiles to finished bricks.

Molly Bolster, executive director of the Guldalow Company in Portsmouth, said the guldalows would ferry in wood for kilns to cook the bricks and products for the textile mills then ship the finished products back to Portsmouth.

The guldalows "were the tractor trailers and the river was the highway," Bolster said while docking along the banks near George's Marina waiting for the tide to go down just enough to get the guldalow through underneath.

Today, the guldalow will be used to carry educational cargo as it docks along Henry Law Park until Aug. 25. The guldalow will be open to the public for daily tours from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Youth groups from camps are invited to register for a 30-minute program onboard the guldalow Monday through Friday mornings.

The guldalow that made the trip Monday was built in 1982 and is a replica of the last commercially operating guldalow.

On Thursday, Aug. 11, the public is invited to a water quality sampling presentation onboard the guldalow with Ann Reid, manager of the Great Bay Coast Watch. The program will run from 6 to 8 p.m.

The following Thursday during the same time, a program will be held about the fish ladder on the Cochecho River. A fish ladder is a series of pools arranged like steps by which fish can pass over a dam in going upstream.

The guldalow will visit 12 riverfront locations this summer, providing educational programs
onboard for day camps, teenagers and the public.

The programs are designed to heighten awareness of the role gundalows played in the economic development of the region as well as protecting the water quality of the estuary and rivers in the Piscataqua Region.

The gundalow visit is made possible by a grant from the New Hampshire Estuaries Project, the New Hampshire Coastal Program and the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation in collaboration with the Gundalow Company.

For more information, the Gundalow Company can be reached by phone at 433-9595 through their website at www.gundalow.org.
The replica gundalow Capt. Edward H. Adams, built in 1982, will make stops this summer in Dover, Durham, Exeter, Newfields, Rye, Portsmouth and Stratham.

Gundalow on tour

Water quality is theme of events slated for summer

PORTSMOUTH — The Gundalow Co. is sponsoring a series of "Contemporary Coastal Issues" events aboard the gundalow Capt. Edward H. Adams this summer in collaboration with several coastal nonprofit organizations.

The first event in the series will be held aboard the gundalow from 6 to 8 p.m. on Thursday, July 7, at Prescott Park in Portsmouth. Jen Kennedy, executive director of the Blue Ocean Society, will present information about marine life conservation in connection with the organization's ongoing research on whales in the Gulf of Maine.

After traveling this summer to Exeter, Newfields, Rye, Dover, Durham and Stratham, the gundalow will spend next winter in York, Maine, at the York Historical Society's John Hancock Wharf.

Today, the replica gundalow aims to heighten awareness of the region's local maritime heritage as well as contemporary coastal issues facing working waterfronts.

"Contemporary Coastal Issues" events are scheduled featuring a guest speaker. The theme of the series is "Water Quality in the Piscataqua Region," and the public is welcome to attend.

In addition, the gundalow will be available for groups from day camps and for individual children to participate in a two-hour program aboard the vessel with learning activities about gundalows, navigation, tides and currents, knot tying, water sampling and model building.

The gundalow will be open to the public daily for tours.

The Gundalow Co. is a nonprofit organization founded in 2003, whose mission is to preserve the gundalow as a platform for maritime history and environmental education programs for school groups and the public throughout the Piscataqua region.

Today, the replica gundalow aims to heighten awareness of the region's local maritime heritage as well as contemporary coastal issues facing working waterfronts.

Funding for the educational programs conducted aboard the gundalow and in schools is provided by the N.H. Coastal Program, the N.H. Estuaries Project, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Greater Piscataqua Community Foundation, the French Foundation, the Thornton D. and Elizabeth S. Hooper Foundation, and the Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve.

Sponsors of the "Contemporary Coastal Issues" events have included such organizations as the Blue Ocean Society, Rockingham Land Trust, Seacoast Land Trust, The Nature Conservancy, Seacoast Science Center, Great Bay Coast Watch, the Jackson Estuarine Lab of the University of New Hampshire, Cocheco River Watershed Coalition, Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, Great Bay Resource Protection Partnership, Great Bay Stewards, and Sandy Point Discovery Center.
Gundalow to sail in for summer history lessons

PORTSMOUTH — The gundalow Captain Edward Adams will visit Seacoast towns this summer, including Portsmouth, Rye, Durham, Stratham and Newington, Exeter and Dover, as well as South Berwick and York in Maine.

The gundalow’s 2005 season begins in May. At each port, it will be open daily with scheduled programs for day camps, teens and adults in order to heighten awareness of the connections between the Piscataqua region’s rich maritime heritage and contemporary coastal issues.

The gundalow will visit York first, with two weeks of school group programs on board the vessel at the John Hancock Wharf in conjunction with the Old York Historical Society. That will be followed by two weeks of group programs for schools on board the gundalow at the Counting House Museum (Old Berwick Historical Society) and the Hamilton House (Historic New England).

In June, the gundalow will move to the Isles of Shoals Steamship Co. for collaborative programs for school groups with the Thomas Laighton and the Blue Ocean Society. For two weeks in June, the gundalow will be at Prescott Park for school group programs in collaboration with Strawbery Banke Museum. Other programs planned include collaborations with the Seacoast Science Center.

In late June and early July, the gundalow will be available before moving to Exeter for two weeks. While in Exeter, July 10-22, the gundalow will be part of the Revolutionary War Festival, with scheduled programs for youth groups in conjunction with the American Independence Museum.

The gundalow will be in Dover from Aug. 9 to Aug. 24.

The Gundalow Co. is currently seeking volunteers to be involved in the on-board education programs for youths and teens.

Training for volunteers will take place on April 11, 18 and 22, and all those interested should contact the Gundalow Co. at 433-9505 for details.
All aboard!

Festival-goers can step into history on the gundalow Captain Edward H. Adams

By Colleen Lent
Contributing Writer

Today's Exeter pedestrian is greeted with a sensory treat of fresh bread baking in coffeehouse ovens, fine jewelry sparkling from store window perches, and wisps of wind and birds fluttering over the Squamscott River.

As President George Washington strode through town in 1789, chances are the clamor of the local factories, farms, shipyards, and gundalows beckoned to him.

Gundalows, vessels built by local tradesmen and farmers, were the main mode of transportation on the Seacoast for about 250 years, according to Chuck Holloway, education director and captain at the Gundalow Company of Portsmouth.

In "The Exeter-Squamscott: River of Many Uses," Olive Tardiff estimates about 25 gundalows were operating in the Piscataqua basin in the 1890s.

At this year's Revolutionary Festival, Albert Hickey initiated the building of the Captain Edward H. Adams, launched in 1982. Built with the assistance of the University of New Hampshire, the gundalow proudly welcomed visitors of all ages to Strawbery Banke in Portsmouth, its birthplace and home for many years until the Gundalow Company adopted the vessel in 2002.

Molly Bolster, the Gundalow Company's executive director, says the Captain Edward H. Adams serves as a platform for reinforcing New Hampshire's maritime history and providing educational programs throughout the Piscataqua region. As Bolster talks of the nonprofit's mission, the words of Colonial statesman Joseph Anderson resound softly in the background: "There is nothing that solidifies and strengthens a nation like reading of the nation's own history, whether that history is recorded in books or embodied in customs, institutions and monuments."

The Gundalow Captain Edward H. Adams will travel from Portsmouth to Exeter for the Revolutionary War Festival. Shown here, volunteers on the gundalow prepare to set sail from York, Maine.

Sescoast Media
Group File Photo

The Captain Edward H. Adams serves as a platform for reinforcing New Hampshire's maritime history and providing educational programs throughout the Piscataqua region.

Some of this...
were the main mode of transportation on the Seacoast for about 250 years, according to Chuck Holloway, education director and captain at the Gundalow Company of Portsmouth.

In “The Exeter-Squamscott River of Many Uses,” Olive Tariff estimates about 25 gundalows were operating in the Piscataqua basin in the 1890s.

At this year’s Revolutionary War Festival, attendees will experience vignettes of the past, as the Gundalow Company’s gundalow, the Captain Edward H. Adams, will voyage from Portsmouth to Exeter. The New Hampshire Estuaries Project, New Hampshire Coastal Program, and George W. Merck Fund through the Greater Piscataqua Community Foundation are sponsoring the two-day trek.

Holloway says gundalows met their demise when other means of transporting cargo and people entered the historical landscape. Yet Capt. Edward Adams (1860-1959), of Durham, refused to let the vessels fade from the minds of Seacoast residents. In 1950, Adams and his son unveiled the Driftwood, modeled after the Fannie M, the last working vessel in 2002.

Molly Bolster, the Gundalow Company’s executive director, says the Captain Edward H. Adams serves as a platform for reinforcing New Hampshire’s maritime history and providing educational programs throughout the Piscataqua region.

The Captain Edward H. Adams serves as a platform for reinforcing New Hampshire’s maritime history and providing educational programs throughout the Piscataqua region.

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772-4543 • 85 Water Street
Volunteers help to reassemble the historic gundalow that docked at the Swasey Parkway on Friday. It will be on display through July 23 in honor of the upcoming Revolutionary War Festival.

Barge right in
Exeter River trip wet, wild ride

BY LARA BRICKER

In a culture where embedded reporters have become the norm, I signed up for a different sort of embedded adventure last week.

I got this semi-crazy idea that it might be fun to become a member of the crew aboard the historic gundalow barge the Captain Edward Adams as it made its first trip down the river to Exeter in at least 10 years.

If you have no idea what the gundalow is, don’t feel bad. I had no idea what it was until about a month ago.

If you go down Swasey Parkway this week take a look at the enormous red barge-like boat with the big white mast. That’s the gundalow, a type of barge once used extensively in this area to transport goods and supplies up the rivers where large vessels could not go such as Exeter, Dover, Berwick, Newington and others.

So back to last Friday. When I heard the barge would be making a historic journey to Exeter, I signed up with gundalow Capt. Chuck Holloway. Actually, I was most curious about how the gundalow was going to make it under the old railroad bridge in Newmarket and didn’t want to miss the big story if they got stuck.

As it turned out, Nate Hazen, a member of the board of directors for the nonprofit Gundalow Company that watches over the gundalow, took a trip via boat earlier this spring to measure the distance between the water and the bridge at both low and high tide. The gundalow needs 7 feet of clearance on top and 2 feet of water. 

Nate figured the barge was all set for water depth.
Exeter river trip on barge with... 

BARGE, from Page A1

because the channel from the Great Bay through Newmarket, then Newfields and eventually into Exeter, was 6 feet at its shallowest depth.

The bridge was another story. It had 5 feet of clearance at high tide and 11 feet at low tide, meaning the crew members of the gundalow would have to time their journey very carefully.

We were supposed to leave last Friday afternoon, but the crew members headed out Thursday afternoon when they saw the tropical rains headed toward the Seacoast. I met up with them Friday morning at the boat launch on Route 108 in Newfields. Along with Exeter resident Carol Walker Aten (who helped found the Gundalow Company), there was Capt. Chuck, Nate and Joe Donnelly Jr., the chairman of the board of directors of the Gundalow Company.

It was pouring rain and not exactly warm. I realized immediately that I was under-dressed for a trip of this magnitude. Joe and Nate had on full bright yellow rain gear including pants and tops. They looked like they should have been on that new reality show about the Alaskan king crab fishermen. Joe was especially proud of the heavy-weight insulated blue rubber gloves that he got at the fishermen supply store. Carol was also decked out in head-to-toe waterproof gear. I had on jeans, Tegnas and a raincoat. Big mistake.

The gundalow was big, solid and weighed 50 tons. I took the wheel. I think Capt. Chuck was bit nervous but he didn't say anything. He just got into the motorboat (perhaps so he could save himself when the gundalow went down.)

It's quite a feeling to be at the helm of something so big. Unlike a car or even a small boat, the response time of the gundalow is very slow. I turned the wheel and waited. Eventually, the boat would begin to turn. Joe was talking away with Nate, which either meant he had great confidence in my abilities or was not afraid to die. Either way, I didn't hit anything, or anyone, and even managed to make a big turn just before we went under the Route 101 bridge in Exeter.

When I saw the bridge, I hailed Joe right away. I really didn't want to be responsible for crashing the gundalow when it had almost reached its destination. And I was starting to get cold, really cold. Those blue fishing...
gloves were starting to look pretty good. I spent the last portion of the trip rubbing my hands together, trying to stay warm.

My hands were blue by the time we finally docked along Swasey Parkway. I jumped off the gundalow as quickly as I could and was met by my husband, Ken, who was kind enough to give me a ride back to my car. He looked at my pathetic blue hands and just shook his head as he helped me off the boat. "I see you're dressed appropriately for the weather as usual."

Lara Bricker is a former staff writer for the Exeter News-Letter. She can be reached at larabrinker@hotmail.com. The views expressed in this column do not represent the views of this newspaper.
WORKHORSE ON THE WATER

by Scott P. Yates

To look at a gundalow, one might reasonably ask, where’s the rest of it?

“Gundalows are funky boats,” agrees Captain Chuck Holloway of the Gundalow Company. “They built it very much as if it were an upside down barn.”

The boats hark back to an era when the river was the great highway. To marry their needs to the peculiarities of the waterway, farmers along Great Bay and its tributaries used the boats to transport their harvests of produce, meats, marsh hay, flour, linseed oil, snuff, lumber and bricks baked from clay dug along the banks. For three centuries, tons of raw materials traveled daily in the bellies of gundalows, propelled by the tides, the lateen sail, sweeps (ours), or poles in the shallows. Coal went up the river to build and operate the many factories. The factories produced oil, cotton and textiles, which gundalows ferried out to awaiting ships. Iron, plaster of Paris, and lime were among other cargoes.

Although the age of the gundalow is over, the spirit lives on in the full-scale, operating replica Capt. Edward H. Adams, a good example of one of the largest and most sophisticated vessels. At 70 feet long and 50 tons, and drawing just one foot, 11 inches of water, it’s fully decked, planked with pine, has a lateen sail (usually triangular in shape) and a cuddy cabin—the small quarters aft. The vessel honors Edward H. Adams, who piloted the last commercially operated gundalow, Fanny M., which was
abandoned at Hilton Point, at the entrance to Little Bay, in the 1920s. According to the Gundalow Company’s Web site, Capt. Adams dedicated much of his life to fighting for “the spirit of an age he felt people were ignoring.”

Holloway agrees with Adams’ perception of slackening Seacoast spirit.

“This was a maritime community with great history, and that may not be appreciated,” he said.

Wendy Pirsig agrees. She’s standing on the granite seawall at Quamphegan Landing on the Salmon Falls River, near the Counting House Museum in South Berwick, Maine. Pirsig is on the museum’s board of directors and is the chairwoman of collections. She says the landing was home to prolific tall shipbuilding and coal gas factories. Gundalows were vital to the transportation of coal, lumber and cotton to and from the factories that once stood there.

About 10 feet from the ale-colored waters of the Salmon Falls River, she pointed out a half-yard deep pit rimmed by a faded and worn brick wall. She said it was the remnants of the original coal gas container—yet another precious cargo for the gundalow.

She’s happy that it’s still there, and that the landing is partially preserved as a reminder of the factory days of long ago made possible by the gundalows.

“We’re all lucky that (the landing) didn’t get built up by something else. It looks pretty much like it used to. You can just picture it like in the early days,” said Pirsig.

In May, the Adams visited in South Berwick for the first time in its history. It was the first time any gundalow had ventured that far north in at least a century.

“The Route 101 bridge essentially prevented the gundalow from getting any further (north),” said Nathan Hazen, a University of New Hampshire Marine Docent and Gundalow Company board member. “101 has been a roadblock for more than a hundred years.”

In order to reach Quamphegan Landing, Hazen explains, “we had to do some charting that had never been done before. We charted it last year and took soundings.

There are three rapids between Hamilton House and the Counting House at low tide,” said Hazen. “It was kinda fun because it was our first time over those rapids on a 50-ton boat,” said Hazen.

With only inches of clearance over submerged rocks and under low bridges, sometimes the only way to pass through is by dismantling the sailing rig, which takes about three hours.

With the Adams reduced to a three-foot-high vessel, the sailors still have to wait for the incoming tide to push the vessel onward.

Journeys were even more perilous in days of yore, when boats sometimes sank in the Piscataqua River, where they may yet sit with loads of nails, bricks or wrought iron undelivered.

Still, the fleet’s efforts added up. In the 1850s, Moses Paul, and agent of the Cochecho Manufacturing Company in Dover, said, “The amount of goods and merchandise belonging to the Cochecho Mfg. Co. that is transported on the river to and from Dover and passing under the Portsmouth bridge in packets and gundalows is in value about $750,000 per year.” Keep in mind that 155 years of inflation makes $750,000 in 1850 worth over $16.6 million today. That’s pretty good for a bunch of farmers floating up and down the Piscataqua in upside down barns.

**Gundalow Summer Schedule**

The spirit of the gundalow has been reincarnated with a new mission. Though the Capt. Edward Adams no longer ferries tons of raw materials from port to port.

CONT'D NEXT PAGE ->
GUNDALOW SCHEDULE

- Aug. 1 - 8: Little Harbor, Route 1A, Rye, for day camp program with Seacoast Science Center. Open to the public in the afternoon. Onboard talk on "Coastal Health," Conservation Commission, featuring Dane Travers, executive director of the Seacoast Land Trust.
  Thursday, Aug. 4, 6-8 p.m., free.

- Aug. 8: Arrives at George's Marina, Dover. Morning programs in Dover for day camps and teens.
  Onboard talks include "Water Sampling on the Cocheco River," featuring Ann Reilly, director of the Great Bay Dolphin Watch, on Thursday, Aug. 11, 6-8 p.m., and "Migrating Fish at the Ledges on the Cocheco River," featuring Clark Halverson, marine biologist with N.H. Fish and Game, on Thursday, Aug. 18, 6-8 p.m., free. (Ferry $2).

  - Sept. 10 and Oct. 15: Wagons Hill, Durham, for Durham Day (Sept. 10) and Durham Day (Sept. 15, open to Durham residents only).

- Sept. 14 - Oct. 31: Sandy Point Discovery Center, Stratham, open for school groups daily by reservation.

- Nov. 8: Depart Sandy Point for winter storage.

Cover story

-> CONT'D FROM PAGE 9

port, several port destinations will get a visit this summer.

The Gundalow Company, a non-profit organization preserving the Adams for maritime, historical, social and environmental education, will host educational programs for children ages 6-12, as well as for the New Heights Teen Center in Portsmouth and Teen Outlook Center in Exeter. A grant from the N.H. Coastal Program supports lectures on contemporary coastal issues for adults.

Molly Bolster, executive director of the Gundalow Company, says bringing the gun- dalow to the people by increasing the number of visits to ports is the main message. It's reaching people, it's moving up and down the river, she notes. "It's doing what the gunalow is supposed to do."

Anyone can take a tour of the gunalow Capt. Edward Adams as it travels throughout the Piscataqua region this summer. Regular visiting hours for the gunalow generally are Wednesday through Sunday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Contact the Gundalow Company for more information at 603-433-9505 or www.gundalow.org.
2005 PORT VISITS IN THE
PISCATAQUA REGION

APRIL 25-6
John Hancock Wharf
York River, York, ME
Programs for school groups with Old York Historical Society

MAY 13-25
Quamphegan Landing/ Hamilton House Salmon Falls River, South Berwick, ME
Programs for school groups with Old Berwick Historical Society and Historic New England

MAY 27-JUNE 3
Isles of Shoals Steamship Company Dock Piscataqua River, Portsmouth, NH

JUNE 4-8
Prescott Park Dock Piscataqua River, Portsmouth, NH
Program for school groups with Strawbery Banke Museum and New Heights Teens

JULY 9-22
Swasey Parkway Squamscott River, Exeter, NH
Youth programs with the American Independence Museum and Teen Outlook Center. Made possible by a grant from the NH Estuaries Project and GPCF

JULY 23-24
Newfields Town Landing Squamscott River, Newfields, NH
Co-sponsored by the Newfields Historical Society

JULY 26-29
Wentworth-Gardner House 70 Mechanic St, Piscataqua River, Portsmouth, NH

JOIN US FOR CONTEMPORARY
COASTAL ISSUES SERIES ON
THE GUNDALOW

AUGUST 1-7
Route 1A Public Launching Ramp Little Harbor, Rye, NH
Programs for youth with the Seacoast Science Center, by reservation.

AUGUST 10-26
Cochecho River Dover, NH
Made possible by a grant from the NH Estuaries Project and GPCF

AUG 29-SEPT 9
UNH Jackson Estuarine Lab Adams Point, Durham, NH

SEPT 14- OCT 31
Sandy Point Discovery Center Great Bay, Stratham, NH
Programs for school groups daily with the Sandy Point Discovery Center. Reservations required.

NOVEMBER 1
Gundalow departs for the winter at John Hancock Wharf York River, York, ME
Co-sponsored by the Old York Historical Society

JULY 7
Introduction to Marine Life and Current Whale Research Projects, featuring Jen Kennedy, Executive Director of the Blue Ocean Society. Prescott Park, Portsmouth, NH

JULY 14
Exeter is a Seaport, featuring Carol Walker Aten, Trustee of the Exeter Historical Society. Swasey Parkway, Exeter, NH
Co-sponsored by Exeter Historical Society

JULY 21
Protecting our Waters by Conserving our Lands, featuring Karin Rubin, Land Protection and Stewardship Specialist for the Rockingham Land Trust. Swasey Parkway, Exeter, NH

JULY 23 (Saturday, 7-9 p.m.)
Oyster Habitat Restoration in the Great Bay, featuring Jay O’Deil, Marine Ecologist, The Nature Conservancy, Newfields, NH
Co-sponsored by the Newfields Historical Society

JULY 28
Land Protection Efforts Around the Great Bay, featuring Peter Wellenberger, Manager, Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. Wentworth-Gardner House 50 Mechanic Street Portsmouth, NH
Co-sponsored by Piscataqua Savings Bank

AUGUST 4
Coastal Headwaters Conservation, featuring Dana Truslow, Executive Director of the Seacoast Land Trust. Route 1A Public Launching Ramp, Rye, NH
Co-sponsored by Seacoast Science Center

AUGUST 11
Water Sampling on the Cochecho River, featuring Ann Reid, Director of the Great Bay Coastal Watch. Dover, NH
Co-sponsored by Great Bay Coastal Watch

AUGUST 18
Migrating Fish on the Cochecho River Ladder, featuring Cherie Paterson, NH Fish & Game. Dover, NH
Co-sponsored by the Cochecho River Watershed Coalition

SEPTEMBER 8
Current Research Projects at the UNH Jackson Estuarine Lab, featuring Dave Shay, Manager, JEL, UNH Jackson Estuarine Lab Adams Point, Durham, NH

SEPTEMBER 22
Great Bay Resource Protection Partnership Update, featuring Doug Bechtel, The Nature Conservancy, Sandy Point Discovery Center Great Bay, Stratham, NH
Co-sponsored by the Great Bay Stewards

OCTOBER 6
Gulf of Maine Expedition, featuring Natalie Springuel, Maine Sea Grant, College of the Atlantic. Sandy Point Discovery Center Stratham, NH
Co-sponsored by Great Bay Coastal Watch

See www.gundalow.org for more information, or call (603) 433-9505

The GUNDALOW is a type of flat-bottomed sailing cargo barge that was designed to take advantage of the swift tidal currents on the Piscataqua River. From 1850-1900 there were hundreds of gundalows that carried timber, granite, firewood, salt marsh hay, bricks, and fresh produce between Portsmouth and all the riverfront towns in the Piscataqua region.

Navigating with the tide, and into shallow rivers where large ships could not sail, these gundalows were the equivalent of today’s tractor-trailer trucks, using the rivers as their highways.

The only remaining gundalow was built in 1982 and named in honor of the region’s last gundalow builder, Capt. Edward H. Adams. Today, the replica gundalow is operated by the nonprofit Gundalow Company as a platform for maritime history and environmental education programs.
The only remaining Piscataqua Gundalow will visit several riverfront towns in New Hampshire and Maine between May and October. During each port visit, the gundalow will be available for youth group programs in the morning (by reservation) and open to the general public for tours each afternoon.

SPONSORS

Davis Family Foundation
French Foundation
George W. Merck Fund
Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve
Great Bay Stewards
Greater Piscataqua Community Foundation
Maine Community Foundation
Old Berwick Historical Society
Old York Historical Society
Otto Fund
Thornton D. & Elizabeth S. Hooper Foundation
Tidewater Seed Fund
UNH Marine Docents

The Gundalow is Coming!
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Programs for school groups with Old York Historical Society

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Salmon Falls River, South Berwick, ME
Programs for school groups with Old Berwick Historical Society and Historic New England

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Prescott Park Dock
Piscataqua River, Portsmouth, NH
Programs for school groups with Strawberry Banke Museum and New Heights Teens

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Squamscott River, Exeter, NH
Youth programs with the American Independence Museum and Teen Outreach Center. Made possible by a grant from the NH Estuaries Project and GPCF

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Co-sponsored by the Newfields Historical Society

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70 Mechanic St.
Piscataqua River, Portsmouth, NH

AUGUST 1 - AUGUST 7
Route 1A Public Launching Ramp
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Programs for youth with the Seacoast Science Center, by reservation.

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Programs for school groups daily with the Sandy Point Discovery Center.
Reservations required.

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York River, York, ME
Co-sponsored by the Old York Historical Society
JOIN US FOR CONTEMPORARY COASTAL ISSUES SERIES ON THE GUNDALOW

On Thursday evenings in July through October there will be a series of Contemporary Coastal Issues events for the public onboard the gundalow with a special presentation given by guest speakers from coastal nonprofit organizations. The theme of the 2005 series is “Water Quality in the Piscataqua Region.” All events are open to the public from 6-8 p.m. and are FREE. Except on Saturday, July 23, the event is from 7-9 p.m. Made possible by a grant from the NH Coastal Program.

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Introduction to Marine Life and Current Whale Research Projects, featuring Jen Kennedy, Executive Director of the Blue Ocean Society, Prescott Park, Portsmouth, NH

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