

# In fine voice

This year's Teign Shanty Festival promises to be even bigger and better than last year, says IAN MITCHELL

The 2018 Teign Shanty Festival was a huge success, filling the towns of Teignmouth and Shaldon with crowds of supporters, raising the profile of shanties and the River Teign community, as well as raising £2,000 for charity.

Sea shanties were essentially work songs, set to a rhythm for working, to reduce the monotony of undertaking repetitive tasks aboard ship. But they were also Foc'sle songs, which were storytelling verses to be listened to at leisure, to remind sailors of home and these helped to keep alive traditions and record local events and people.

In the Teign estuary area we are blessed to have talented songwriters such as Bob Freshwater, who painstakingly research historical records and craft their own recording of such events and so keep them alive for future generations.



This year there will be at least 27 sets of shanty singing groups attending - up from 21 last year, coming from all over the UK as well as overseas. One of the shanty groups attending, The "Longest Johns", were featured in Gareth Malone's television program The Choir and also performing are Teignmouth's very own sea shanty

**ABOVE:** The Teign Shanty Festival organising committee hard at work!

**BELOW:** Veteran sea shanty singer Alan Whitbread holds the audience enthralled

singing group, the Back Beach Boyz.

Last year there were 70 hours of free entertainment - this year there will be more than double that! There will also be specialist maritime themed presentations and demonstrations around the town, for people to learn more about the origin and construction of shanty work songs and associated crafts.

These include wooden ship's figurehead carving, willow lobster pot weaving, wooden boat building, flag and pennant meanings, sail making, rope knotting, tales of a Teignmouth adventurer who became a national hero in Iceland, shanty singing talks and workshops, maritime based verses by the poet in residence of the Jurassic Coast, and also sea based storytelling for all the family.

These new events will be family friendly ones held in very relaxed centrally located venues away from the hustle and bustle of the shanty singing in the pubs - though there will be plenty of that as well! Weather permitting, the River Teign Rowing Club will also be providing 'taster' pilot gig rowing sessions at appropriate tide times.

The festival is held over the weekend of 28 and 29 September and coincides with the ever popular Taste of the Teign food and drink festival, celebrating all that is good about the provenance and local flavours of the magnificent Teign River Estuary. ♦ [teignshantyfestival.co.uk](http://teignshantyfestival.co.uk)



The Dorset Wrecks sea shanty group trying to fly!



The sea shanty group Old Gaffers singing on the beach in the final 'mash up' sing around

## KEEPING TRADITION ALIVE

At one time practically every major shipyard would have had a ship's carver to supply the mass of ornamentation required to adorn Men of War, East India ships and larger merchantmen.

Andy Peters set up Maritima wood carving some 30 years ago, in an effort to keep alive this almost forgotten art, and has provided figureheads and related ornamentation for sail

training and replica ships, along with letter cutting boat name boards, restoration work for museums, and contemporary sculpture for maritime environments.

He will be demonstrating the art of the ship's carver along with an exhibition of past projects such as the French replica ship Hermione, and the Swedish East India ship Gotheborg.