

Historic Ship is Restored



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(Written by Sekou Hendrickson) (Photograph by Blaire Simmons)

Renovation work to a replica historic ship is almost done but cash is still needed for further repairs, St George's Foundation general manager Peter Frith said yesterday.

Mr Frith said \$65,000 had been spent on the replica of the *Deliverance*, one of two ships built from the wreckage of the Sea Venture after it was wrecked off Bermuda in 1609, which led to the permanent settlement of the island by Britain.

However, he said another \$25,000 was needed to finish work on the ship, which was badly damaged in a double hurricane strike in 2014.

The money will be used to replace rotten planks and install windows for light and air flow.

Mr Frith said: "It's an ongoing process because you're dealing with a 50-year-old wooden structure that was not designed to be seaworthy, or survive the elements as much as it has."

Volunteers from the **Hamilton Princess** and **Ellie Mae** painted the ship's hull and changed the colour from dark red to a tan colour closer to the shade of the ship's original oak planking. David Chew, the contractor and head of project management on the *Deliverance*, said: "All the volunteers, no matter which group, they're all hard working."

"When they come here there's something totally different from what they do. When they get down here, it's like a playground but with paintbrushes. They just go crazy."

Mr Frith also thanked the American mortgage group Ellie Mae, which offered to help with the restoration while on the island for a conference.

He said: "They wanted to give back to the Bermuda community so they did six projects in St George's. One was to come and continue the painting of the *Deliverance*."

The *Deliverance*, and her sister ship *Patience*, were both created from the remains of the *Sea Venture*.

They were used to continue to the Sea Venture's planned destination of Virginia to bring relief to early colonists, who had struggled against starvation.

After the ship was damaged by Hurricanes Gonzalo and Fay four years ago, reconstruction work was kept afloat by donations from individuals and companies.

Mr Frith said: "We had excellent donations from the NCL cruise line, from the BTA initiative and then the Junior Service League, who were the folks that actually built the ship back in 1967."

Higher railings were installed on the upper deck and a ramp was built into the ship's lower deck to improve safety and accessibility.

The ship opened to the public in March 2016 so visitors could learn about the repairs.

An animatronic version of William Strachey, an English poet and *Deliverance* crew member, was also installed in the lower deck to give visitors a "first-hand" account of the voyage.

A *Deliverance* relaunch is planned. Mr Frith said the ship was important not only to Bermuda history, but also that of the United States.

He explained: "The *Deliverance* is an extremely historic icon and has been a part of Bermuda's history. The tagline for the replica exhibit is 'The Deliverance: the Little Ship that Saves America'."

"It is indeed thanks to the bounteous food that the settlers found when they were shipwrecked that they were able to build the *Deliverance* to take them on to Jamestown and to save the starving colony there."