



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Humber Super Sloop *Spider T* confirmed to take part in the Thames Diamond Jubilee Pageant.**

The afternoon of Sunday 3rd June will see a thousand boats gather on the river Thames in celebration of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. It will be the largest flotilla in modern times on the river with rowing boats, working boats and pleasure vessels of all shapes and sizes beautifully dressed with streamers and Union Jacks, stretching for an estimated twelve and a half miles.

It has proved extremely popular with three boats applying for every place. The pageant organisers and representatives from the river community were involved in the selection process which included considering safety, fitness-for-purpose and range of vessel type as well as exploring whether the vessel was of historical significance or had an interesting story to tell. At the end of 2011, organisers confirmed to applicants the lucky vessels which will take part in this historic event full details only now being made available.

Sailing in the flotilla is the ship *Spider T* owned by Mal Nicholson who is delighted for her to have been selected to take part in the Thames Diamond Jubilee Pageant.

*Spider T*, was built at Warren's shipyard New Holland on the Humber in 1926, for John Joseph Tomlinson of Thorne, who subsequently operated out of Hull. It is the last remaining Humber 'super sloop' a sail powered cargo vessel from 1926.

Owner Mal said: " I feel truly honoured that the *Spider T* has been chosen, she reflects the heritage of our region and is a testament to the ship building skills on the Humber and in particular the men from Warren's Shipyard in Lincolnshire who built her and the genius of Frederick Warren who designed her".

"I would also like to pay a tribute for all the help and hard work by many people who have helped bring this once derelict vessel back to life as living history and to rightfully take her place on the National Historic Fleet".

Work has already begun to prepare her for this very exciting and exceptional event, a special livery for this jubilee celebration is already being designed for that final touch for such an important occasion.

A full inspection of rigging, sails, deck fittings, engine and propulsion gear will take place after her recent voyage to Scotland for the 200th anniversary of the Bell Rock Lighthouse where heavy seas and stormy weather were encountered putting huge strains on her sailing gear and the ship herself. Please visit [www.spidert.co.uk](http://www.spidert.co.uk) for details of the adventurous voyage.

The crew members are now busy booking holidays for the event and getting ready for much hard work in preparation for the day we sail to London. The *Spider T* will leave her berth on the Keadby and Stainforth canal at Keadby on to the river Trent and head down the Humber under the Humber Bridge to Grimsby overnight. An early start from Grimsby, sailing to Great Yarmouth or Lowestoft in an overnight passage, arriving early the next morning. Refuel and rest preparing for our next passage to Harwich before setting off on the final leg of the journey entering the Thames estuary and arrival at the Jubilee Pageant.

*Spider T* has had a very chequered career, being one of only two ships built to this specification. She was fast and capable taking second place in the "Cock O' The North" Humber Regatta just weeks after being launched in 1926 and was a front runner or leading in the remaining years of the event. She was pride of the Tomlinson fleet built to carry bricks from Foster's brickyard at Barrow Haven on the Humber delivering them throughout the region and up and down the east coast. She was built heavier, deeper, and with a fine run aft had a unique hull design which makes her well-mannered at sea. *Spider T* has been "sunk" twice by being left unattended and eventually filling up with water being rescued by Sgt. Keith Bown and his team at Rotherham Police earning him the British Empire Medal for a community project. Over time she fell derelict again and after proving surplus to the needs of the Yorkshire Waterways Museum in Goole, was bought by Mr Nicholson in 1994 and the restoration "love affair" began!

Since then she has slowly but surely clawed her way back with a dedicated team headed by Mal, lovingly putting her back to her former glory with sails and rigging re-instated in 2007.

Prior to winning many accolades with voyages to West Mersea, Whitby, Arbroath, twice, and Rotterdam for the world Port Days festival, last year *Spider T* was runner up in the National Historic Ships "Flagship Of The Year Award" and attended the 200th Anniversary celebrations of the building of the Bell Rock lighthouse on a treacherous reef just off the coast of Scotland. She had more than 2000 visitors at the display in Arbroath and attracted much TV coverage, newspaper and magazine articles in an ambassadorial role for the nations historic vessels.

Further details of the *Spider T* feature on her website and in *Humber Sail and History: Riverside and Waterways Tales* by author/journalist Chris Horan, from on board or through bookshops and tourism outlets.

Cllr Keith Vickers, Mayor of North Lincolnshire, said: "*Spider T* is a wonderful vessel and deserves to represent Lincolnshire in this impressive pageant. It's a fitting tribute to all those people who have worked hard to restore it and I'm delighted that it has been chosen to take part."

National Historic Ships UK has placed a statement of significance for her on its website stating exactly what she means to the nation, rightfully and proudly taking her place on the National Historic Fleet.

Every vessel will proudly take its place in the flotilla alongside Her Majesty the Queen and other members of the Royal Family aboard the Royal Barge, *The Spirit of Chartwell*. It will be a once in a lifetime moment for all those aboard the Historic Ship *Spider T* as part of this glorious moment in our rich royal history.

The *Spider T* is Sheffield Class, 61ft 6ins by 15ft 6in, which when she was built enabled her to pass down the locks on the Sheffield and South Yorkshire Canal. Her length is more than 70ft with her bow sprit lowered.

As well as sailing the vessel is used for promotional events and also boasts a dining experience with an Old Maritime Secret Super Club, at which a top class chef provides a culinary experience of top cuisine for diners on board.